



KIM IL SUNG

*REMINISCENCES*

*With the Century*

(Continuing Edition)

Excerpt (13)

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## *With the Century* (Continuing Edition)

Excerpt (13)

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인민을 하늘처럼 여기신  
위대한 수령 김일성동지께서  
는 인민을 끝없이 사랑하시고  
굳게 믿으시였으며 한평생 온  
갖 풍상고초를 다 겪으시면서  
오로지 인민의 자유와 행복을  
위하여 모든것을 다 바치시였  
습니다.

김 정 일

*Translation from the preceding page:*

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

Kim Jong Il

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

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

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

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

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

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

The continuing series of *With the Century* will contribute greatly to exalting the noble and respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung as a great revolutionary, a great statesman and a great man who dedicated his life of over 80 years to the prosperity of his country and nation and to human happiness in general. The memoirs will celebrate his imperishable achievements and encourage in us the unshakeable belief and honour that the fatherly leader will always be with us.

This book is a selection from *Overcoming Trials*, Chapter 19, and *For a Fresh Upsurge of the Revolution*, Chapter 20, of President Kim Il Sung's reminiscences *With the Century (Continuing Edition)*.

## CONTENTS

1. THE MATANGGOU SECRET CAMP .....	1
2. VILLAGE HEADMAN WANG AND POLICE CHIEF WANG.....	21
3. EXPEDITION TO REHE .....	36
4. MY MEETING WITH YANG JING-YU .....	54
5. GRANDMOTHER RI PO IK .....	69
6. IN THE FOREST OF NANPAIZI .....	89
7. ARDUOUS MARCH.....	108
8. THE LESSON OF QINGFENG .....	138
9. THE SALT INCIDENT .....	155

# 1. The Matanggou Secret Camp

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

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

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

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

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

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

The KPRA was not simply a military force; it was a revolutionary army that considered both political and military affairs to be important. Acquiring political and military



qualifications was essential not only for the armed struggle but also for work among the people, united-front work and the efforts to demoralize enemy soldiers. That was why so much energy was spent on the education and training of the soldiers of the revolutionary army. Studying was an important part of their training.

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

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

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

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

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

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

An *Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party*, allegedly drawn up by a group of proponents for a reconstruction of the Korean Communist Party, and the text of a speech made by a certain Kim at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Comintern, were in circulation and were winning considerable popularity among those who strongly desired communism. It is understandable that Korean communists, who had been swayed to the right and the left in their efforts to find a correct guideline after the dissolution of the Party, tried to get pointers on which way to go from the *Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party* and from the speech made at the Comintern Congress.

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

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

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

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

This was one of the reasons why I wrote *The Tasks of Korean Communists* and used it as a textbook for the intensive political

training we had organized. In this article I dealt again with the character of the Korean revolution and its immediate objectives, and outlined the tasks of the Korean communists in carrying out the Korean revolution along an independent line. I thought it was also necessary to organize military and political training again in order to toughen our recruits politically and militarily.

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

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

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

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

his way through the college. In our unit not many comrades were so well informed or learned as people like Pak So Sim, Cha Kwang Su or old man “Tobacco Pipe”.

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

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

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

I said: “Your answers are correct. You know them from your farming experience, otherwise you would be ignorant about them. The same applies to the work of the revolution. A man who knows what tool is needed for a particular job and how it should be used will be a good revolutionary. An ignorant man does not know that the maple can be used to make a good axe-handle even if he sees it. A man who does not know how to strike the enemy cannot destroy great numbers of them. You don’t defeat the enemy only by using a gun. If you really don’t want to study, we’ll send you back home. How can you carry out the arduous task of revolution when you say that you cannot study because it is too difficult? There is no

alternative but to ask you to turn in your gun and go home to do farm work. Which way will you choose?" He was surprised to hear this and looked very sad.

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

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

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

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

I read it out: It said that he was to do a certain thing by a certain hour and report the result to Headquarters. The order was urgent.

But he had come to me with the message far too late to report. Having failed to execute the order given by his Commander, he hung his head, sweat pouring down his face.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

education at Matanggou because these clarified our independent attitude towards the revolution.

We also devoted great efforts to military training at Matanggou. The central task of this form of training was to assimilate completely the contents of *Guerrilla Actions* and the *Guerrilla Manual*, in which the systematic rules of guerrilla warfare were listed. Commanding officers concentrated on tactical training, and the men were instructed mainly in marksmanship and drill movements. It was training in rules, combined with practical skill.

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

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

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

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



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

Kang Ton was a man we had dug up and trained in West Jiandao. Although he had finished only the advanced course of primary school, he had continued to teach himself by reading written lectures for middle school and a history of social development. He had undertaken mass enlightenment work in the initial period of his activity and contributed greatly to inculcating anti-Japanese patriotism in the people's minds. The night schools he had established and guided became renowned and he had trained numerous revolutionaries at these schools. There were many of his pupils in our unit, among them, Ri Ul Sol. Nowadays, a man who has promoted and developed a youngster who becomes a hero is praised a great deal. In this context, Kang Ton was a highly meritorious man.

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

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

Kang always participated in seminars with great enthusiasm and wrote many articles for army publications. One of his articles

in *Jongsori* was very impressive: it exposed the atrocities committed by the Japanese imperialists in Changbai after provoking the “Hyesan incident”. The article described the author’s own experiences very vividly.

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

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

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

Kang Ton’s heroic career shows that a man who studies sincerely can be exemplary in revolutionary practice and perform distinguished services that will live for ever in the memory of the country and his people. As far as I remember, guerrilla heroes, without exception, regarded studying as highly important. No hero worthy of the name was ever produced from among those who neglected to study. People who imbibe a wealth of mental

nourishment will perform great exploits no matter what they do and no matter what the circumstances. According to officers of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, Hero Ri Su Bok also worked hard in his school days.

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

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

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

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

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

In those days we paid special attention to order in the daily routine. Just as we cannot expect to see a sound mind in a sloven,

so we cannot hope for steel-strong combat power from disorderly ranks. In those days even the sight of our camping sites or the sites of our camp fire often caused the enemy to abandon the idea of pursuing us, for they could measure the discipline, order and combat power of our units.

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

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

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

I told O Jung Hup to inspect the men's weapons. He called the company to line up and first got his own weapon inspected by the 1<sup>st</sup> platoon leader. Confirming that it was a pass, he began examining the men's rifles.

I made sure that all the visiting officers joined him in the inspection of the company weapons, the state of the uniforms, barracks, kitchen, and the ablutions area. After the inspection,

I told them to point out any shortcomings they had found. They unanimously agreed that the mark was an A.

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

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

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

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

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

people or their country.

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

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

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

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

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

the revolutionary army.

When I asked if he had had any thoughts on what would be a proper penalty for the man, Ju Jae Il said he had none. I told him to go back to his quarters and give some careful consideration as to what kind of penalty would be most appropriate. The carelessness of the recruit who had lost the weapon was a serious mistake, but I found it more serious that the political instructor was so rash and irresponsible as to have put the weapon in the hands of the recruit in the first place without at least cautioning him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ju Jae Il criticized himself again before the man.

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

On the closing day of military and political training, I removed his penalty and reappointed him political instructor of the Guard Company. Kim Ju Hyon, who had been dismissed from the job of logistical officer of Headquarters, was also reappointed regimental commander about the same time, for he had improved himself ideologically and studied hard.

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

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

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

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

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



said to have influenced the people in Antu a great deal.

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

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

In one battle we captured several machine-guns from the Japanese. Some of these machine-guns had magazines fixed on the top of their chambers, and some of them had the magazines fixed sideways. The former was simple to handle, but the method of shooting the latter was very sophisticated. We took a Japanese soldier prisoner and told him to explain how to work the machine-gun, but he refused. We then found out he was an opium addict who would probably reveal any secret whatsoever when given opium—so we gave him opium and got the secret of the machine-gun out of him.

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

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

hundreds of new men, Choe Hyon sent us dozens of weapons.

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

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

Every single recruit became literate during this training period. To test their new abilities, we got them to write to their parents and siblings at home. Each of them was able to express his thoughts and feelings freely in the Korean language. They also mastered the methods of handling, disassembling and reassembling different types of rifles, pistols and machine-guns. Some of the recruits even wrote articles for army publications.

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

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

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

and boiling the beans.

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

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

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

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

## **2. Village Headman Wang and Police Chief Wang**

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

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

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

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

Ju Jae Il had heard about the village headman from a man he

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

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

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

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

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

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

march. The men were too exhausted.

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

Near Dahuanggou was a village by name of Xiaohuanggou. The underground organization at Xiaohuanggou was also connected with the man who had been admitted to the Party by political instructor Ju Jae Il at Niuxinshan. It was now in great danger. The organization had done a good job and was spreading offshoots in neighbouring villages. But the enemy caught it by the tail and fell upon the village, killing the organization members and setting fire to their houses. Even old people and children were shot or stabbed with bayonets.

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

I sent my operatives to Dahuanggou to approach the headman.

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

Nevertheless, I did not doubt our success, for I judged him to be a man of conscience. I had learned that during his office as village headman and Self-Defence Corps chief he had harmed no one in his area, and that was a major indication that he was a

conscientious man. In those days, any man blinded by a sense of self-protection and by greed for fortune did not scruple to harm a few patriots in order to score in his own favour once he was installed in the post of Self-Defence Corps chief or village headman.

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

In fact, it took more guts than normal to allow the survivors of the Japanese atrocities to settle down in his village and to look after them. Doing this would involve the risk of exposing the village headman himself to severe punishment. We could therefore say that Wang was ready to face the worst.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I cannot find words to express my gratitude to you for your confidence in a man like me. I’ll remember your words all my life. General, and I’ll do my best to fight,” he said.

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

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

His father was a Manchu who was born and grew up in Dongning County. Driven by poverty from place to place until he



was 40 years old, his father finally married a woman with whom he had fallen in love.

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

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

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

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

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

The boy went to school in the Korean village, so that he got used to Korean customs and spoke Korean well.

Some years later, a political storm between new and old parties began to sweep over Russia. The new party meant the Bolshevik Party, while the old party was the White Party. The villagers suffered greatly in that storm. When the stronger force of Bolsheviks drove out the counterrevolutionaries from the village, the village became a Bolshevik world; when the White Party prevailed, the village

changed into a White world overnight. The villagers were gradually divided into opposing camps, one supporting the Communist Party, the other the White Party. Even families split up in support of one side or the other; for example, the eldest brother siding with the Communist Party and the second or third brother siding with the Whites, both arguing against each other.

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

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

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

The foster-father was named Wang, originally from Shandong.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Police Chief Wang was also won over much the same way as Village Headman Wang. Kim Phyoung, political commissar of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, was the first to tell me about the police chief. At one point Kim had taken Choe Il Hyon's company to Changbai and Linjiang and directed small unit activities there. While sending off the small units to different places and supervising them, he worked among the local people. One of his small units was active round Sandaogou and Wudaogou, Linjiang County.

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

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

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

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

I told the political commissar that since he was the only man who knew the hunter, he himself should obtain the hunter's assistance in approaching the police chief. So far the process was similar to that of winning over the village headman. It was rare that a former organization member was on intimate terms with a policeman, but it was possible. Nevertheless, it was necessary to know how the hunter had become friends with the police chief. This knowledge would assure a direct access to the police chief.

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

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

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

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

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

The hunter won the game and Wang treated him to a drink. They drank in the mountain hut. Wang proposed that they swear brotherhood. The hunter declined, however, saying that he would think the matter over a little further because he would have to be Wang's elder brother if he was to agree to the proposal. He then asked casually how Wang, a man with the heavy duties of substation chief, could afford to be away from his office so often to go hunting.

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

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

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

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

much, and his answers were direct and clear-cut.

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

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

"That's what Commander Kim Il Sung's men are like," the political commissar replied.

"Take me to Commander Kim," Wang said. "Then I will let him know my decision, but on condition that you join my *jiajiali*, so that I can trust you completely."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From then on the police chief helped us a great deal. Under his protection the hunter formed a subordinate organization of the ARF in Jiajiaying.

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

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

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



transformation of people's ideology.

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

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

In human transformation we do not question people's official positions or nationalities either. We unhesitatingly joined hands with Chinese people and welcomed even those Chinese who served in enemy institutions as long as they had a strong conscience and loved their country. Since we had the experience and ability of transforming Koreans working in enemy institutions, it meant that we could transform Chinese working in enemy institutions as well. The principle of human transformation is not limited by nationality. Since we had brought Korean policemen round to the side of the revolution, we could do the same thing with a Chinese policeman and a Chinese village headman, right? During the anti-Japanese revolution, there were high-ranking, medium-ranking and low-ranking officers of the puppet Manchukuo army among the Chinese with whom we joined hands. They did many things that helped us, just as the two Wangs did.

Our nation has the task of reunifying the country as soon as possible. In south Korea there are many people who have different ideas from ours—landowners, capitalists and other people belonging

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

### 3. Expedition to Rehe

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

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

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

The gist of the directive was that the anti-Japanese armed forces operating in Northeast China should advance towards Liaoxi and Rehe, first, to link up with the Chinese Worker-Peasant Red Army advancing towards Rehe under the slogan of "Eastward

attack for the recovery of lost land”, and second, to help forestall the Japanese imperialist aggressor forces, which were invading the mainland of China. The strategic objective set by the Comintern was to effect a pincer movement on the Rehe line by the Worker-Peasant Red Army (renamed the 8<sup>th</sup> Route Army later), which was advancing northward and eastward, and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces advancing westward, so as to unify the anti-Japanese struggles on the Chinese mainland and in Northeast China and bring about a fresh upsurge in the anti-Japanese movement as a whole.

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

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

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

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

on the mainland greatly encouraged the people in the Northeast.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wang De-tai was sceptical about the plan from the outset. He said he was not convinced that sending thousands of guerrillas to surround the capital of Manchukuo, where enemy forces were concentrated, and the scheme of moving guerrilla forces to the plains far away from their mountain bases were such good ideas.

He pointed out that the plan was contrary to guerrilla tactics and that there was no reason why we should advance westward simply because the Worker-Peasant Red Army had started advancing eastward from the mainland. And finally he warned that we needed to be careful about following footsteps that had already failed previously in the attack on large cities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

in their determination that they had to carry out the Korean revolution on their own. Prospects for the revolution were bright, but we had a mountain of work to do.

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

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

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

When the armed forces in southern Manchuria were advancing towards Rehe and Liaoxi, Wei Zheng-min, the messenger from the Comintern, followed us, instead of going with the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps.



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

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

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

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

We judged the expedition plan to be unrealizable also because it did not accord with the requirements of guerrilla warfare. For a guerrilla army to leave the mountain area for the plains was as risky as fish leaving the water for land. The mountainous regions in northern, southern and eastern Manchuria had been settled by the communists for a long time. There were

solid mass foundations in these regions and their geography was familiar to the guerrillas. The march route from these regions to Rehe or Liaoxi led over a wide plain along the railway in southern Manchuria, an area of numerous strategic enemy concentrations.

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

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

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

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

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

I told him that naturally it was necessary to bring about a high tide of anti-Japanese struggle throughout China, to demonstrate the stamina of the Communist Party, and to bring Chiang Kai-

shek round to an active anti-Japanese struggle, but that he must not think of gaining such results at the expense of the revolution in Northeast China. I reminded him of the enormous bloodshed that the Korean and Chinese peoples and communists had already suffered for the revolution in Northeast China.

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

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

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

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

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

He came from Shanxi Province in northern China to

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

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

I told him: "I understand your intention to carry out the expedition to Rehe in spite of the risk of sacrifice. However, I cannot help wondering seriously whether or not the Comintern, when planning the expedition, correctly understood the situation in Northeast China and the requirements of the Chinese revolution, whether or not it made a correct calculation of the military feasibility of the plan, and especially whether or not the attempted expedition accords with the characteristics of guerrilla warfare. I can say that not only does the expedition plan lack an insight into the present state of the Chinese revolution, but also the Comintern has failed to give any kind of consideration to the Korean revolution. I think Wang Ming is a man of extraordinary subjectivity, even though he is a representative of the Chinese Communist Party to the Comintern."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wei Zheng-min wanted the KPRA to move into the Hailong region and the area of Jihai line, where the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps had been operating. To do this would make it impossible for us to consolidate the military and political success we had achieved in the Mt. Paektu area. I therefore answered that we would conduct

mobile operations in Linjiang, Fusong and Mengjiang over a period of time for the development of the Korean revolution, and then move gradually into that area when the time was ripe.

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

Wei Zheng-min agreed to my policy.

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

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

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

Cheng Bin's surrender was a great shock to us as well. The 1<sup>st</sup> Corps was in danger of crumbling. In order to help it, we prepared weapons and other war supplies and ordered part of our force to start moving towards the Tonghua line by way of Jinchuan and Liuhe counties by skirting Mengjiang County.

The aim of this movement was to scatter the enemy force,

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

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

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

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

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

I said, "By undertaking this construction, you are, of course,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

The policy of internment villages, pursued by the enemy in real earnest at this period, cut off ties between the guerrillas and the people. As the enemy put it, it was a “separation of bandits from the people”. This policy consolidated the ruling institutions of the enemy, whereas it laid many obstacles in the way of the anti-Japanese armed forces. These obstacles kept the expedition almost out of contact with the masses, hence from its route of food supplies. The people, confined in their internment villages, had no means of getting in touch with the expeditionary forces, still less of sending supplies to them even though they wanted to. In these circumstances, the expeditionary forces had no alternative but to capture food and clothing from the enemy. The sound of their gunshots provided the enemy with ceaseless information about their whereabouts and strategic manoeuvres.

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

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

Any line that is not accepted by the masses or that cannot

touch their hearts will invariably fail to bring good results.

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

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

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

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

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

The directives from the Comintern had much in them that did not suit the actual situation. Nevertheless, we approached

each of the directives with care and tried to think carefully and act shrewdly so as to combine international and national interests while carrying out these directives in the context of our specific situation.

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

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

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

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

I told the Chinese cadres about how many twists and turns the Korean revolution had gone through because of pressure from those around us and about the torments the Korean communists had experienced—more than anyone else—because of the prevailing circumstances. I pointed out that a large number of Korean revolutionaries had been sacrificed during the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign, and that in the latter half of the 1930s especially we had suffered great losses in strengthening the KPRA and developing the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole because some people at the Comintern forced upon us a line that did not at all suit the situation.

At this, Zhou En-lai remarked that Wang Ming was to blame for the mistake, and that Wang Ming had obviously done much harm

not only to the Chinese revolution but also the Korean revolution.

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

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

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

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

## 4. My Meeting with Yang Jing-yu

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

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

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

Throughout the anti-Japanese armed struggle we attached great importance to the joint efforts of the Korean and Chinese people and took great pains to keep up our alliance with different units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. All of this fully accorded with the interests of the joint struggle of our two peoples. This

was also why we made two expeditions to northern Manchuria, fought battles in cooperation with Cao Guo-an's 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, and expanded our relationship with the fighters in southern Manchuria.

Since the southern Manchuria forces often requested reinforcements of our troops, we sent them many military and political cadres whom we had trained with great effort.

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

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

In Mengjiang County there is a large forest called Paizi.

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

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

The eastern section of the forest was called Dongpaizi, the western section Xipaizi, and the southern section Nanpaizi. We had military and political training at Dongpaizi in the winter of 1937, and held an important meeting with the cadres of the Anti-

Japanese Allied Army at Nanpaizi to discuss the task of eliminating the aftereffects of the expedition to Rehe. The rugged terrain of Nanpaizi, with its innumerable quicksands that swallowed up men and horses in an instant, was an ideal place for secret meetings by our units. The meeting at Nanpaizi is also called the Mengjiang meeting because Nanpaizi belonged to Mengjiang County.

In the days before and after the meeting at Nanpaizi, our revolution was in a very complex and difficult situation. One aspect of the difficulty was the enemy's constant offensives aimed at crushing our revolution, and the other was Left-adventurist scheming on the part of some officials working at the Comintern.

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

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

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

At that time I eagerly awaited Yang Jing-yu's arrival, for I knew that he had suffered the heaviest losses in the expedition and that he

was having to come to Mengjiang through many hardships. Yang Jing-yu was also said to be impatient for the day of our meeting.

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

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

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

We chatted briefly over a small fire. After warming himself a little, he casually broached the topic of the Koreans in the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps. He said that there were many Koreans in the corps, all renowned fighters, and that not all of them had been left alive to come with him. He lamented over and over the loss of these excellent comrades.

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

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

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

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



Manchuria. The enemy's top-secret documents often mentioned Yang's name and mine side by side, as did newspapers and magazines.

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

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

Another article in those days said:

"Kim Il Sung, a dyed-in-the-wool communist guerrilla, is a young man this side of thirty. ... However, he seems to have about 500 men under his command, with hide-outs in areas beyond the reach of punitive operations, such as Linjiang, Fusong, Mengjiang and Changbai. His is the strongest force now in the area of Dongbiandao." (*Tiexin*, May issue 1937, p. 106.)

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

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

He said, "I have heard that you, Commander Kim, are hospitable to your guests, but I never dreamed of being accorded

hospitality as warm as this in this valley, in this severe winter!” He hesitated to enter the tent. I told him to go in, have a sleep and break the fatigue that had accumulated for so many months, but he declined my offer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I was surprised to hear that he had once studied textile design at an industrial school. How interesting it was that a man, destined to be a commander of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, should have studied textiles! He said he had done this in the hope of some day beautifully clothing his fellow Chinese who had been so ill-clad and had lived in poverty for so many generations. I think this was

an expression of his class consciousness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Among the comrades who had been sent to the guerrilla army in southern Manchuria was So Chol, who had been doing work for the Young Communist League in Harbin with us. Although he was

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He said his unit had not only shed a great deal of blood during the expedition, but had also gone through terrible hardships on the march from Jian to Mengjiang. The enemy had pursued them without giving them a single moment to breathe, even using airplanes and heavy weapons, including artillery, against them. At one point the whole unit was surrounded by the enemy and fighting desperately for its life. They were being attacked from the air, Cheng Bin was shouting at them to surrender, and the enemy was tightening the noose around them, showering them with artillery fire from all directions. He had the feeling there was no way out. But the Korean soldiers in the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, he said, were first-class fighters, and he praised over and over again Pak Son Bong's regiment and Pak Song Chol's company who had displayed their courage at this most difficult battle of Waichagou. He had been prepared for the worst at Waichagou, he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the Beidadingzi meeting in spring 1939, we reaffirmed the policy adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting and decided to advance into the homeland. Had it not been for the important policy

adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting, it would have been impossible for us to trek across the snow-covered ridges and fields of Changbai to advance into the homeland and sound our gunshots in a situation where we were ringed by a dozen layers of the enemy. The roar of KPRA gunshots in the Musan area was the direct result of the meetings at Nanpaizi and Beidadingzi.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

To my surprise, at the head of these "punitive" operations was Cheng Bin, who had been commander of a division under Yang's own command and who had surrendered. Cheng Bin became commander of the Tonghua police force in January 1940. In an encounter with Yang's main force Cheng Bin had a six-hour battle with him at Xigang, Mengjiang County. In early February he, with the support of an additional battalion, had another clash with Yang's main force.

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

heavy fire with the enemy until he fell, a pistol in each hand.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In an article on the significance of the guerrilla war in Northeast China, written by a leader of the Chinese Party after liberation, the author said that the three most arduous periods of warfare in the twenty-odd year history of the Chinese Communist Party were, first, the Long March of 25 000 *li*; second, the three-year-long guerrilla campaign by the Red Army forces remaining

in the south after the main force of the Worker-Peasant Red Army went on the Long March; and third, the 14 years of bitter combat by the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China.

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

## 5. Grandmother Ri Po Ik

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

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

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

Since ancient times our country has been known to its neighbours as a “nation of good manners in the east”. Even Western visitors to our country in the olden days were unanimous in their

opinion that Koreans were courteous, sympathetic, highly loyal to their country and dutiful to their parents. Some tsarist Russian scholars, who had travelled around our country in the closing years of feudal Korea, said in their report to the tsar that the Koreans were the most courteous nation in the world.

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

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

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

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

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

at this old country woman, she would obey meekly. That was a gross mistake on their part.

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

The news left me in shock; my blood boiled and I shook with rage. Was it really possible that those wolves in human skin could drag about an old woman in her sixties over the frozen wilderness at 40 degrees below zero?

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

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

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

After his departure, I, too, wept. The thought of grandma suffering at the hands of the enemy within only a hailing distance was hard to bear. I had not hesitated to organize battles to capture a few rifles or sacks of rice or to save a few patriots.

Imagine my feelings as I had to sit there and fight against the idea of saving my own grandma from all sorts of cruelties at the hands of the enemy—and only a short distance away! To repress my burning desire to save her: this was my anguish as the commander of the revolutionary army, an anguish that I had to keep to myself. It was not easy to suppress my personal feelings this way.

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

In my childhood and boyhood, grandma was no less dear to me than my mother. The childhood memory that made the greatest impression on me at Mangyongdae involved a toffee peddler who carried a flat wooden box with toffee in it and who used to shout, “Buy my toffee, buy my toffee!” Sometimes toffee peddlers came with pushcarts in which they collected rags and worn-out rubber shoes. When they clinked their broad-bladed scissors to announce their arrival, all the village kids used to run out and gather around them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After my father's death, grandma's affection for me grew even stronger. She found the joy of life apparently in my growth, in the growth of the eldest grandchild in her family. What else could ever



have given her joy in life? Could she afford good food, or smart clothing or the luxury of travel? Her simple and earnest dream was to see her country independent. Her work and pleasure was to do all she could for her children, who were fighting for Korea's freedom, and to give them her loyal support while she waited for the day of independence.

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

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

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

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

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

My grandmother was, in short, a woman of strong will. She was full of a spiritual toughness rare for someone of her age. Very amiable and gentle as she was towards the poor and unfortunate and honest-minded people, she hated those whom she saw as not worthy of being called human beings because of the lack of

their own humanity. She never yielded to any coercive power or injustice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ri Jong Rak, embarrassed, said, “The newspaper lied. Song Ju is alive and continues taking part in the unsuccessful independence

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

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

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

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

The agents of the "surrender hunting team" hauled my

grandmother around the mountains of West Jiandao for nearly a full year. What torture it must have been for a woman on the other side of sixty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

her beck and call from then on.

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

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

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

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

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

Hearing Pak Cha Sok's account of what he had seen and experienced with the "surrender hunting team", I felt a deeper respect than ever for my grandparents, as well as my heartfelt gratitude to them. When leaving the secret camp, Pak Cha Sok pledged that although he had switched sides under coercion, he would never

again carry out such disgraceful acts against his country and nation, and especially against me, who was struggling with great hardship in the mountains.

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

The grandparents at Mangyongdae kept the letter with care until Comrade Kim Il Sung returned to the homeland after liberation. The letter was published in the newspaper *Jongno*, in its issue dated May 29, 1946, and thus came to the attention of the public. *Jongno* was the precursor of *Rodong Sinmun*.

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

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

The text of the letter is as follows:

“I treasure your warm heart, Grandma.

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

“Please set your mind at ease: the day I come back to you

in joy is not far off.”

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

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

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

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

This hunting team first meant to take Uncle Hyong Rok as a hostage. Probably they thought it would be useless to take grandma because she had not obeyed them the first time.

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

Finally, grandma was forced to go to Manchuria again. She was absolutely determined to show them that they would never break the will of General Kim’s grandmother. She set out, ready to die in place of my uncle, and was taken around the rugged mountains of

North Jiandao for several months, but she never yielded an inch to the enemy that time either. Whenever Rim Su San hurled abuses at her for not obeying the enemy, she flung back, “You have betrayed my grandson, but dead or alive, I am for my grandson, for Korea. I’ll see how long you will live.”

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

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

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

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

Because it had produced many patriots and even the commander of the revolutionary army, my family suffered indescribable hardships for several decades. In the closing years of Japanese imperialist rule, Uncle Hyong Rok got himself some simple fishing tackle and lived by fishing in the waters off Nampho, away from enemy oppression.

Grandma suffered the most in my family.

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

“My problems cannot be compared to yours,” she said with a bright smile. “As for suffering, the Japanese were the ones who



finally suffered the most. I don't think I suffered much. You went through all the hardships of fighting to win back the country, and the Japanese suffered while pushing me around. I got a lot of sightseeing done, and I owe it all to you. That was more like luxury than suffering."

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

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

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

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

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

I think that my family tradition and the revolution turned her into such a heroic woman. What do I mean by my family tradition? I mean that to my family the country and the people are the most precious in the world and that they feel they must give their lives without the slightest hesitation for the good of the country. In short, it's their love for the country and the people, love for the nation. Grandma was greatly influenced by her children. She could not help

being influenced by her sons and grandsons, because they were all committed to the revolution.

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

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

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

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

wonderfully overbearing manner.

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

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

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

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

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

original principles.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grandmother had a dream deep in her heart. She lived with a distinct aim in life and spent every day in a worthwhile manner. Her life might seem to have flowed on the current of events, but that was

not the case. Every single step of hers had meaning and was directed towards her aim.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Had I been an ordinary citizen, not Premier, I'm sure I could have done more for her. I could have cut trees with my own hands and built a tile-roofed house for her, taken her to the theatre to see *The Tale of Sim Chong* and so on, made sure that she lived in comfort the rest of her life.

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

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

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

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

## 6. In the Forest of Nanpaizi

In the latter half of the 1930s when the anti-Japanese armed struggle was at its height, the Japanese imperialists stepped up their military offensive against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, while at the same time doggedly pursuing a scheme they had cooked up to get what they had failed to get with guns. They figured that if they set in motion a "hunt for surrender" by sending traitors to the revolution as emissaries to the guerrilla army, they would be able to undermine the revolutionary fighters ideologically. They made turncoats and those who had dropped out of the revolutionary ranks their "surrender hunters". Among these stooges were some of the great leader's schoolmates and others who had had some connection with his revolutionary activities.

Whenever he referred to the meeting at Nanpaizi, the great leader mentioned Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok, his mates at Hwasong Uisuk School as well as his comrades in the days of the Down-with-Imperialism Union, for it was these two who had come to the secret camp on a mission to hunt for the great leader's "surrender".

I think I will touch in passing upon Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok who came to see me at the time of the meeting at Nanpaizi. They were my mates at Hwasong Uisuk School, and joined me in organizing the Down-with-Imperialism Union and the Society for Rallying Comrades. They had also worked with me in raising the Korean Revolutionary Army. People working together for revolution over several years become bonded to each other as closely as if they were blood brothers. These two schoolmates were



also my comrades in the revolution for four to five years.

Pak Cha Sok and Ri Jong Rak became my close companions a little earlier than Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su and other comrades in my Jilin days. When we were forming the DIU at Huadian, Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su had not yet joined us. Pak Cha Sok and Ri Jong Rak were the core of the organization. I can say, therefore, that they were my earliest comrades and companions in the revolution.

It's a highly significant moment when people who were committed to a student and youth movement and an underground struggle happen to meet again after many years of forced separation. People who have been unable to hear from one another and have no idea whether the other was alive or dead because one might have been fighting arms in hand in the mountains while the other was locked up behind bars by the enemy—such people will have a deeply meaningful reunion.

To my regret, however, our reunion was not even pleasant, because Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok had come to the secret camp on a mission from their Japanese bosses to cajole us into “surrender”. They came to see me not as old comrades of the revolution, but as marionettes of the Japanese under orders to bargain for my capitulation. That these erstwhile prisoners had undertaken such a bargain meant they had betrayed not only me but the revolution as well. Hence they could not be seen as honourable guests.

I found it a bitter experience to sit together with these old schoolmates who had betrayed the revolution.

I seem to remember it was in the latter half of the 1930s that the enemy launched their “surrender hunting” campaign against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army on a large scale and in a more atrocious manner than ever before.

In the early days the Japanese imperialists had not yet

adopted “surrender hunting” as the basic strategy in their war against the anti-Japanese armed forces. They had concentrated all their efforts on armed attacks against the young anti-Japanese guerrillas and the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist forces. They had not recognized or used or permitted any other method than the armed attack. They had concentrated only on the policy of the “punitive” attack. In this context, Japanese army headquarters had not even approved of “surrender hunting”, probably considering such a thing to be childish and contrary to their *samurai* spirit. As a matter of fact, they had actually enforced a rule they called “strict prohibition of inducing surrender”.

From this we can see that Japanese army headquarters had looked upon the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China as a target capable of being destroyed by armed attack alone and countered us only by that means. No doubt it had boosted their confidence in their military capabilities when they saw Zhang Xue-liang’s 300 000-strong army collapse overnight at the time of the September 18 incident.

However, their armed strike had failed to check the growth of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army and the development of the armed struggle against them. In these circumstances, the Japanese imperialists invented what they called “cultural punitive operations”, by which they meant “rooting up basic evils”, “ideological indoctrination” or “surrender hunting”.

It is interesting to see what the Japanese imperialist aggressors had to say and to discover why they came to employ the tactics of “cultural punitive operations” which were supposed to “eradicate the basic roots” of the anti-Japanese armed struggle and “prevent the regrowth of these roots”.

The *Thought Monthly*, published by the criminal bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Justice, has the following to say in its issue

No.77 (pp. 139-41, November 1940):

“As for the reason why it is so difficult to punish the communist bandits, this is because the communist army burns with a fanatical fighting spirit based on communism. It uses cunning propaganda as well as guerrilla tactics expressed in phrases such as, ‘We retreat when the enemy attacks, and we advance when the enemy withdraws.’ It operates from the guerrilla zones, that is, dense forests in deep mountains, and wins over the people by means of clandestine propaganda activities. That is why it is understandable that armed punitive attacks alone are unsuccessful. ...

“Recourse to armed forces alone may be effective for a time, but will never eradicate the basic roots or prevent their regrowth; it will have no more effect than brushing away flies from food, or cutting off weeds at the shoot.

“In other words, the main reason for the failure to prevent them from acting as they please in spite of repeated punitive operations is that so far only armed efforts have been made. We have neglected the work of eradicating the basic roots, that is, ideological work, and have left the matter to the army alone, without enlisting the cooperation of all the state machinery.”

While conducting “surrender hunting” on a large scale in the name of “cultural punitive operations”, the enemy pursued the policy of “wiping out bandits by using bandits”. They formed “punitive” forces with those who had deserted the anti-Japanese armed ranks and surrendered or defected to the enemy, putting them to work conducting “punitive” operations against their former comrades-in-arms, superiors and subordinates.

The fact that the enemy stepped up the use of such a non-military method as “cultural punitive operations” in the latter half of the 1930s is a clear indication of the total failure by that time of their one-sided policy of military action, a ploy they had

considered unbeatable at that time. That was why they had to resort to the despicable scheme of “surrender hunting”.

In the 1937-38 period our anti-Japanese armed struggle was in full swing. Our force was very strong, and our battle results were brilliant. We could even attack a number of large walled towns without difficulty. Under the influence of the armed struggle, the mass struggle also increased in intensity. However, the anti-Japanese revolution, which was at its peak thanks to our unremitting efforts, suffered a tremendous setback with the expedition to Rehe. Yang Jing-yu’s 1<sup>st</sup> Corps and many other units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China lost the bulk of their troops in the expedition. Deserters and defectors appeared among the anti-Japanese forces. Several commanding officers abandoned the armed struggle and surrendered to the enemy.

With these developments the enemy judged that the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China were on the verge of collapse. They believed that we had been demoralized into a rabble and were divided among ourselves beyond remedy, and that one way or another, they could wipe us out.

I think that a few instances of success in their “surrender hunting” also stimulated their appetite for these “cultural punitive operations”. The surrender of some major commanding officers from our side left the enemy with the belief that there was a limit to the faith and will of the communists. With this assumption, the enemy undertook a campaign to demoralize the People’s Revolutionary Army.

The Japanese imperialists made the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army the main target of their “cultural punitive operations” by intensifying the military offensive on the one hand, while on the other persisting in “surrender hunting”.

Why did they direct their main “punitive” efforts at the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army? Obviously, because the KPRA

was their main enemy, having threatened the Japanese imperialists most dangerously all through the first half of the 1930s, and also because the KPRA was the strongest of the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China, the most difficult enemy to destroy.

That was why the operations of the KPRA so often appeared in press reports. The news of our struggle even reached the United States.

An article published in *Sinhan Minbo*, a newspaper for Korean compatriots in the United States, reads in part:

“A detailed Tianjin news dispatch says that the most courageous and efficient fighting force among the Korean and Chinese volunteers is the Korean division under the command of General Kim Il Sung, a Korean. (According to newspapers in Japan and news from Korea, Mr. Kim Il Sung’s armed force, operating from its base in Jiandao, crossed the border last June and attacked Pochonbo, Kapsan, to strike terror into the hearts of the Japanese army and police. The subsequent actions of his army were frequently reported by *Dong-A Ilbo* and other newspapers.)...

“They are solidly united and determined to share life and death with each other. Their unity is all the stronger because it is supported by a sort of systematic family rule and by traditional spiritual training leading to self-sacrificing cooperation, loyalty and courage. Under the Commander’s orders the men will go through fire and water. ... Their aim is to destroy the enemy to save their nation, and their strategy is based mostly on guerrilla warfare—appearing from God knows where and disappearing to God knows where—to throw the enemy off balance.

“A Soviet military expert observed, ‘If China and Japan declare war formally against each other, the Japanese will need 200 000 troops to cope with the volunteer forces in this one corner of Manchuria.’ If this observation is reliable, then they are truly a great force.” (*Sinhan Minbo*, September 30, 1937.)

The Japanese imperialists tried to wipe out the KPRA by resorting to military means, misleading propaganda and so forth, but they failed. They were literally helpless.

The more the enemy intensified their offensive, the stronger our forces grew, and the wider the news of our fighting spread.

Failing in both their “punitive” operations and their lying propaganda, the Japanese imperialists adopted the idea of “surrender hunting” because they were at their wits’ end. How much they pinned their hopes on this method can be seen in the fact that they went and dragged out my grandmother for this purpose.

The enemy selected the main targets for their “cultural punitive operations” from among important persons. Their scheme was not simple.

Their scheme to “hunt for the surrender” of Yang Jing-yu was undertaken by the “Provincial Surrender Hunting Section”, while the “hunt” for me was in charge of the “Central Special Surrender Hunting Section” that belonged to Police Headquarters under the Public Security Ministry of Manchukuo.

It was said that an official document of the Japanese imperialists existed dealing with their military and police attempts to use my teacher from my days of Fusong Primary School for the purpose of their “surrender hunting”. But there was no instance of my teacher coming to see me or sending a message to me.

Pak Cha Sok and Ri Jong Rak appeared at the Nanpaizi secret camp in the midst of the enemy’s “surrender hunting”. When the enemy failed in their scheme to use my relatives, they sent my old schoolmates to do the job.

I guessed that the Japanese had sent Pak Cha Sok to sound out my reaction to their “surrender hunting” and that they had kept Ri Jong Rak for a showdown at the end.

Pak Cha Sok came to our secret camp when my unit was at Nanpaizi.

One day the security NCO at the guard post sent an orderly to notify me that a man, Pak Cha Sok by name, had come to see me. I was surprised at the news. He had been captured by the enemy while operating in the homeland in the summer of 1930. I became suspicious of his purpose in coming to Nanpaizi from prison all of a sudden. Even if he had been released after serving his term, how could he, who had to be on the blacklist, evade the strict surveillance of the enemy and slip into this secret camp through double and triple rings of Japanese troops? If he had come all the way to work for the revolution again, I might have hoisted him on my shoulders and called for cheers, but it was not normal for the enemy to have given him such freedom. Despite my suspicion, however, I decided to see him, since he had come all this way. I also thought he could tell me how Uncle Hyong Gwon and Choe Hyo Il were getting on in prison, and many other things I wished to know.

I found a different man in Pak Cha Sok, although his appearance was the same as before. He was glad to see me as if he had met a member of his family from whom he had been forced to separate. But at the time, he looked dispirited somehow.

I asked him where his former high spirit had gone, and why he had become so timid. I told him to look into the future and pluck up his courage now that he had survived penal servitude.

He said, however, that he had become a turncoat in prison, and confessed in tears how he had become a stooge of the enemy and why he had come to Nanpaizi. While suffering in prison for several years after being sentenced, he had lost his confidence in the triumph of the revolution and had begun to waver. When he saw Uncle Hyong Gwon tied to a cross and being beaten he had completely lost his spirit to resist. Sensing that Pak Cha Sok was vacillating, the enemy had moved him to another prison.

Releasing him before his term expired, they had forced him to switch sides and involved him in the “surrender hunting team”.

Pak Cha Sok was recruited by Jang So Bong specifically for the “surrender scheme” aimed at me. Jang So Bong, himself a turncoat, had distinguished himself earlier in revolutionizing Kalun, working together with Kim Hyok and Kim Won U when we were pioneering in central Manchuria. He was also arrested with Ri Jong Rak at the Changchun railway station in early 1931 while working to obtain weapons. The enemy put a geisha in his service and made a home for them in Changchun, then went on to use him as their full-time special agent. As the Japanese espionage organization searched for people who had been closely linked with me, Jang So Bong recruited Ri Jong Rak, who in turn picked up Pak Cha Sok.

Pak Cha Sok confessed to me honestly that when interrogated by the enemy, he had owned up to all the details of his connection with me—that he had been close to me in our DIU days, how we had formed the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, what he had done in Jilin and its surroundings after the formation of the Young Communist League, how he had become a member of an armed group and how he had been sent to the homeland.

I asked whether he was doing this thing on his own, or on someone’s orders.

He said that he had no official position, but was forced to come here by the Japanese. He added in tears—although he knew that such a trick would have no effect on me—that he had availed himself of this opportunity just to come and see me in person. I thought he told the truth when he said he simply wanted to see me.

Pak Cha Sok gave us several pieces of information we needed. He also told me about his journey to Mangyongdae to wheedle my grandmother into “surrender hunting”. He was born in Pyongyang, and as a boyhood friend of Uncle Hyong Gwon’s he



often visited Mangyongdae to see my uncle. In the course of this, he had got to know my grandparents.

Pak Cha Sok said that Ri Jong Rak had informed the enemy of Pak's background and had suggested that Pak was the right man to play a big role in the scheme to "hunt" me. Pak said he deserved to be put to death a thousand times for the crime of dragging my grandmother around, but that he had taken care of her personal safety as best he could. He admitted that he and Ri Jong Rak were worse than beasts and said he wouldn't complain even if he were punished with death a hundred times.

When among us, Pak had had a keen sense of justice and had worked with great enthusiasm and ambition as a young revolutionary strong in his anti-Japanese spirit. After the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army, he had worked in a highly responsible manner.

When arrested and put in chains, however, his ideology degenerated and his human qualities crumbled. If anything at all remained of his old self, it was the thread of friendship that tied him to me.

Though on the payroll of the Japanese imperialists, he had not volunteered to cooperate with them, nor had he thought of gaining money from such cooperation. He had simply failed to foresee victory in the revolution because he thought Japan was too strong. He had thought himself lucky just to stay alive. The hunger for life had led him to switch sides, and as a turncoat he had had no other choice but to obey the Japanese meekly. Although involved in the "surrender hunting" scheme, he was acting against his will.

Having to obey the will and orders of the Japanese imperialists in spite of hatred for them was the tragic lot of a man like Pak Cha Sok, who had abandoned his revolutionary convictions.

Seeing Pak Cha Sok, I thought deeply about genuine human qualities. He had grown older, but the look of his face had not

changed. And yet he was a different man. His shell remained, but it seemed empty. He had lost his soul. I have to say that it's a man's ideology that makes him a real being. What can remain of a man who has lost his ideology? An empty shell. Once your ideology crumbles, your personality will also crumble. Pak Cha Sok became a soulless man because he had abandoned his ideology. Such a man's face looks like the face of one who has lost his sight.

In spite of my knowledge that Pak had degenerated, I explained things to him and advised him from various angles, with the feeling of pulling him back from the enemy's grip. This was my reaction to the enemy who had deprived me of my old comrade. I wished to revive at least his love for his country, although it might be impossible to bring him back to the Pak Cha Sok of his days in the DIU. My heart also retained some of my old friendship towards him.

I said that a man guilty of crimes against his nation could neither live nor die like a man. Pak Cha Sok affirmed that it was true. He went on, "With my surrender to the Japanese imperialists, living itself has become a nuisance, my daily existence is a torture. What is the use of living like this? I have made up my mind to die, but I have no courage to kill myself. Seeing you and talking to you today lightens my heart, but I have no wish to live any longer. Please kill me. I wish to die at your hands."

"Would it make me feel better if I killed you?" I said. "Make a decent, fresh start with a clear conscience so as to atone for your wrongdoing. Do it for the sake of your moral obligation towards your old comrades in the revolution."

Pak said he would keep in mind what I told him.

To tell the truth, my comrades were all set to execute the turncoat, but I dissuaded them. Because he had confessed and repented honestly, I wanted to treat him humanely.

I feasted him on the meat of a wild boar my men had hunted

down and drank few glasses with him. While sharing sleeping quarters with him at the Headquarters' tent overnight, I advised him to live like a man, and then sent him back.

He lived up to his pledge to me. He delivered my letter to my grandparents as I asked him to do.

Seeing him return safely from the secret camp at Nanpaizi, the enemy sent along Ri Jong Rak some time after. A small unit of the guerrillas who had been to Linjiang brought Ri Jong Rak back with them.

We had sent the small unit to Linjiang to procure clothing for the winter. While performing their mission, the unit met a trader who was a good wheeler-dealer. He was serving the Japanese and at the same time supplying goods to the guerrillas, benefiting from both sides. He entered into a bargain with our unit. He said he would offer the cloth and the cotton wool we needed if they agreed to take a civilian in the service of the Japanese army to Headquarters of the revolutionary army in return.

The unit leader agreed to the bargain on condition that the trader approach his superiors and let them suspend "punitive" actions for a while so that the bulky loads of supplies might be carried away without encountering trouble on the way. As a result, the enemy's "punitive" forces, which had been operating over a wide area ranging from Jiazaishui, Linjiang, to Nanpaizi, suspended their operations and remained quiet for some time.

Taking advantage of this, the small unit was able to carry large amounts of supplies in safety to Nanpaizi. The civilian who came with the unit at that time was Ri Jong Rak.

Ri Jong Rak behaved arrogantly from the outset, earning the dislike of our comrades. Without showing any sign of fear and behaving with much imprudence in the camp of the revolutionary army, he laughed, talked wildly and carried on like a thoroughly thick-skinned man. On meeting O Jung Hup, who was at the

entrance to the secret camp in charge of the guards, Ri Jong Rak offered a present of a watch to him, saying that he must be having a hard time in the mountain in the cold. O Jung Hup produced his own pocket watch and said he did not need another watch.

“Don’t stand on ceremony, take the watch!” Ri Jong Rak insisted. “It’s better to have two watches than one.” O Jung Hup retorted that one should keep time by one watch, not by two watches—by a revolutionary watch one day and a reactionary watch the next. His words were a severe criticism of Ri Jong Rak’s treachery to the revolution.

Although Ri Jong Rak behaved in a supercilious way from the moment of his arrival in the secret camp, I did not berate him for his crimes from the start. It seemed to me that friendship could not be slashed off at a stroke or burnt up at once. My old friendship with him was too deep for that.

Ri Jong Rak had been one of my closest friends in the old days.

In his days of the DIU he was a stalwart revolutionary with his own strong views. He was the most informed of us all on military affairs, and was responsive to new ideological trends. Around the age of sixteen he had joined the Independence Army and acted under the leadership of *Thongui-bu*. At that time he was strongly patriotic and acted in a bold, impressive way. He was a man of feeling.

We recommended him to a responsible post in the Korean Revolutionary Army, an expression of our great hope and trust in him. He was very popular among us. What a disappointment it was to us to hear the news of his becoming a turncoat, betraying our love for him and confidence in him! Ri Jong Rak did not hide the fact that he was now a civilian employee of the Japanese army and belonged to its “surrender hunting team”.

“Nothing would be better,” he said, “than destroying Japanese imperialism, liberating the country and realizing communism worldwide, as the DIU programme said. However, that’s all just a

pipe-dream. When I joined the DIU and helped to form the Korean Revolutionary Army, and even when I was jailed, I believed that the ideal could be realized. However, the September 18 and July 7 incidents changed my mind for me. In Korea the communist movement has already been wiped out, and the motto 'Japanese and Koreans are one' has become an established fact. Japan has become the master of East Asia. There is a saying that whoever is in possession of the Central Plain (area to the south of the middle reaches of the Yellow River-Tr.) will rule the Oriental world. Look how the Sino-Japanese War is developing! Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing have fallen, and the operations against Xuzhou and Wuhan and the attack on Guangdong have been successful. How can you cope with the invincible empire of Japan, which has swallowed up three provinces in Northeast China and has now occupied more than half the vast East Asian continent? Song Ju, you don't know how the general situation is changing, because you are always in the mountains. I came here to help you out of your futile suffering here in the mountains." He pretended to have come to do me a great favour.

His words and behaviour were proof to me that he was rotten to the core and that there was no hope of saving him.

In order to keep the enemy who surrounded us from disturbing us until we finished the meeting, I told Ri Jong Rak to send them a note. I dictated it to him, to the effect that on his arrival in the camp of Kim Il Sung's army he found that Headquarters had moved towards Mt. Paektu, that it would take some time to get in touch with it since it was many miles away, that he was approaching one of Kim Il Sung's units to get in touch with him and that they should wait quietly until further notice from him.

We sent the note, in Ri Jong Rak's handwriting, to the surrounding enemy and continued the meeting with calm and composure.

One day I said to him that he looked well, that his hands were plump and smooth, and that he seemed to be faring pretty well. He replied that he was living well on the payroll of the Japanese, and that he owed his good fortune to me. He said that because Kim Il Sung was a great man, the Japanese were trying hard to bring him round to their side, and for this purpose they had gathered his close acquaintances and old friends and were according them high treatment.

“If men like me are given such high treatment,” he went on, “think of the honoured position you would hold if you came over to the Japanese! They are ready to give you, General Kim, whatever post you want, if you come round to them, the post of the commander of their Korea army or anything else you may ask for. You may administer Korea as their Korea army commander, or have Manchuria under your command here. You can do as you please. They want you to cooperate with Japan in either way. They say that in future the United States will most certainly extend its force to the west coast of the Pacific and try to gulp down Japan, Korea and Manchuria, and they want the Asian people to join hands with each other in containing and fighting back the United States for the sake of Asian co-prosperity.”

The Japanese were very foxy. When they sent Ri Jong Rak to me, they knew that the word “surrender” would have no effect on me. So they told him to negotiate with me in terms of “cooperation” as a compromise.

The idea of Asian cooperation to contain the force of the United States was the expression of the doctrine of “great Asia” which the Japanese loudly advertised in those days. They fussed about building “a prosperous Asia for the Asians” under Japan’s leadership. Who would be foolish enough to believe such nonsense? Their doctrine of “great Asia” was simply a cloak to hide their own greed for their monopoly over Asia.

Whenever they invade others, imperialists cook up a pretext to justify their aggression. The Japanese imperialists loudly preached the superiority of the “Yamato race” and spread the idea of a “world family”, with Japan at its centre. When they were invading Korea, they said Japan would “take charge of this nation, which is incapable of independence, and lead and protect them.” When they were occupying Manchuria, they claimed to be exercising their “right to self-defence”; when they were fabricating Manchukuo, they fussed about the “concord of five races” and the construction of a “royally blessed land”; and when they were provoking the Sino-Japanese War, they shouted the motto, “Punish the mobsters’ land!” (which meant meting out punishment to China which had turned into a land of mobsters), or they talked about the “construction of a new China”, and the “union of Japan, Manchuria and China”.

As Ri Jong Rak persisted in preaching the doctrine of “great Asia”, I said, “If we push into Japan, keep the Japanese under our iron fists and declare that we will enforce the doctrine of ‘great Asia’ under Korea’s leadership, what will happen? Will the Japanese accept the doctrine as valid?”

I also asked why the Japanese, if they were really so invincible, had been suffering such a headache for so many years, unable to defeat the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army, and why they were using such a childish trick as “surrender hunting” through a man like him instead of fighting honourably against us.

Ri Jong Rak could not give me a plausible answer to that question either. He said that it was probably because the Japanese meant to spare Kim Il Sung’s life, there would be no other reason. He insisted that the strong defeating the weak was an immutable law of nature; that I should give up my idea of resistance, which stood no chance of success, and accept the Japanese proposal; and that if we continued our resistance, the three Japanese divisions that surrounded Nanpaizi in tight rings might destroy us to the last man

by using poison gas or a new type of high-performance gun.

I declared that even if the Japanese were to make me their prime minister rather than merely their Korea army commander, we would continue fighting, and that even if they fired poison-gas bombs or high-explosive shells, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army would never yield to them.

He then went on to tell me about Han Yong Ae. When they were preparing the "surrender" scheme for me, he said, the Japanese intended to bring her into the scheme. But she flatly refused to cooperate.

Ri Jong Rak said that he and Han Yong Ae had been in the same prison in Sinuiju, and that she remained unusually loyal to me. By order of the Japanese, he said, he had asked her to cooperate in the scheme, but she rebuffed him. She had severely criticized him, saying, "I won't do such a dirty thing. You shouldn't either. Kim Song Ju is not a man to be fooled by a stupid 'surrender' trick."

Hearing this, I felt thankful to her and detested Ri Jong Rak all the more. I told him, "See! A woman like Han Yong Ae refused to turn traitor and remains honourable. By contrast, you not only abandoned the revolution, you're also acting as a Japanese dog. Shame on you! You've turned into a thoroughly vile person!"

Realizing it was impossible to persuade me, he tried to hook some of my men. He asked one of my guards if he had parents at home, and if he didn't want to see his family. He tried coaxing him, saying that formerly the Japanese used to kill all the guerrillas they captured, but that now they would not only keep them alive but also give them a chance to start a new life. He suggested that if the guard wanted to lead a comfortable life close to his parents and with a handsome woman by his side, he should go with him, Ri.

Hearing about this, I gave up on him as a dog, a loyal servant of the Japanese. Unlike Pak Cha Sok, who was running errands for



the Japanese against his will, Ri was serving the enemy of his own free will, not caring a straw about his country or nation.

At the unanimous verdict of my men, Headquarters branded Ri Jong Rak a traitor to the nation and executed him. We covered his dead body with a warning that traitors, whether they were my schoolmates or anybody else, would be executed in the same way.

My account of the interviews with Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok at Nanpaizi has been seen by many people as similar to a fictional story. If the event were described vividly, it would make an excellent story. It's a rare real-life event in which a man who has pledged to share life and death on the road of revolution becomes a turncoat, spreads a propaganda about the strength of Japan and stresses the futility of resistance, then tries to get the commander of the revolutionary army to turn traitor and join the enemy. This was one of my most extraordinary experiences.

Frankly speaking, both interviews cut me to the quick. If total strangers had come on such errands, I would not have been so bitterly hurt.

Both of them had been so spirited when we were forming the DIU. We all pledged to share life and death, none of our oaths portended treachery. However, the two people I loved most dearly and held in deepest trust betrayed me.

When the revolution is going strong, many people take part in the struggle and seldom waver or drop out of the revolutionary ranks.

But when the situation is disadvantageous to the revolution and difficulties start to crop up, waverers, deserters and capitulators appear. This is why officials must carry out ideological work properly among the people when the situation is grim and the country is in difficulty. True, people's ideology is not visible. Nobody has his ideology branded on his forehead, so it is hard to pick out waverers and defeatists who have lost their revolutionary

faith. However, people's ideology will never fail to reveal itself through some aspects of work and life. Officials must do ideological work prudently to suit an individual's state of preparedness in order to consolidate his revolutionary faith.

What is the lesson here? It is that one's ideology must be made one's conviction. If it remains mere intellectual awareness, it will be of no avail. An ideology that is not also one's conviction is liable to degeneration. If one's ideology degenerates, one will become like Ri Jong Rak or Pak Cha Sok. So: if you acquire an ideology you think is just, you must make it your unshakeable conviction. Intellectual knowledge can serve as a genuine tool for creating that which is new only when it is supported by revolutionary belief. One's eyes see the present reality, whereas one's belief looks into the future.

If one's belief breaks up, one's spirit will die; and if one's spirit dies, one will lose all value as a human being. A person's morality and conscience are both based on his faith. People without faith cannot hang on to their conscience and morality, nor can they maintain their humanity. Only with strong faith can they shape their destiny properly, remain loyal to their comrades and contribute truly to the Party and the revolution, to their country and their fellow citizens.

Comrade Kim Jong Il declared that loyalty must be kept as our faith, conscience, moral obligation and everyday concern. This is profound philosophy. I fully agree with this proposition.

## 7. Arduous March

When we talk about the Arduous March, we refer to the trek made by the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army from Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, to Beidadingzi, Changbai County, from early December 1938 to the end of March the following year. Over half a century has passed since the march, but our people still remember this epochal event.

The great exploits performed by the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung during this march and the indomitable revolutionary spirit displayed by the anti-Japanese guerrillas are a priceless heritage our people will pass down through generations as a source for their inspiration.

The following is the transcript of the great leader's recollections about the Arduous March, of an address he made to historians and writers.

You comrades have worked hard to create and disseminate systematic accounts of the revolutionary traditions established by our Party. Our writers have produced many literary works of great educational value that deal with the revolutionary traditions.

Over a long period of time I have been getting requests from you to tell you about the Arduous March. I shall take this opportunity to dwell on that event.

Late 1938 to early 1939, the time spent on the Arduous March, was our bitterest time of trial in the entire history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The situation in those days was not suitable for us to advance into the homeland in a large force. Developments were so unfavourable to us that a man like Om Kwang Ho openly wailed that the revolution was on the wane. A large expedition to the homeland in these circumstances, in fact, involved a great risk.

Yet we ventured upon this expedition towards the Amnok River in order to push into Korea. Why? Because we wanted to turn the adverse revolutionary situation in our favour. Merely worrying about the state of affairs was not a solution to the problem. If we had stayed put in a hide-out somewhere, we could, of course, have passed the winter in safety and preserved our force. Maintaining the status quo in that manner, however, was not the kind of attitude that would overcome the difficulties facing the revolution. This was why we decided to undertake the march towards the homeland, even though it would be arduous.

We knew that this was the only way to bring new hope and energy to the revolution.

In 1938 the people in West Jiandao and Korea were in low spirits. During the “Hyesan incident”, many underground organization members were arrested and the revolutionary movement in the homeland got bogged down. On top of that, the enemy gleefully boasted that there was no more People’s Revolutionary Army. The Japanese propaganda, though a total lie, had its effect on many people. Ominous rumours were so rife that people who normally did not believe the enemy propaganda were feeling apprehensive. Even renowned revolutionaries were losing heart and turning to Mt. Paektu for encouragement.

The enemy was in a much better position than we were to make information work, having a powerful mass media at their command. A plausible, shocking story that a KPRA unit had been annihilated at a certain time in a certain place, carried in a newspaper with a circulation of thousands of copies, would be

read by thousands of people. The radio also gave out such propaganda, of course.

Our own “mass media” were only a few newspapers, magazines, handbills and written appeals, published by guerrilla units. Occasionally we used some materials printed by underground organizations in different provinces. What is worse, the circulation of these “illegal” publications was carefully monitored and very difficult. Simply scattering a handbill could easily cost the life of a patriot. An underground worker had to risk his life to go into Korea with a knapsackful of leaflets.

Advancing into the homeland and shooting off our guns there was the best way to declare that the KPRA was still very much alive and to expose the enemy’s propaganda lie that the KPRA had been destroyed. The sound of our gunshots would help set the underground organizations back on their feet.

A liaison man from West Jiandao told us that most of the underground organizations in Changbai had been destroyed. A lot of organization members had been arrested in Korea and there was no knowing where those who had escaped were hiding out, he said.

Listening to his report, I thought that even if the organizations were scattered, something might still remain of them, and that these remnants could be patched together to create new ones. So I decided to go to Changbai to rebuild them and then advance into the homeland.

Some people suggested that we hold military and political training in a secret camp during the winter, as we had done in Matanggou, and then launch new operations when warm weather set in. They said there was no need for us to take needless risks in the severe winter cold.

We did not accept this suggestion. How could we remain onlookers when the anti-Japanese struggle in the homeland was

undergoing such severe trials? Hardships were nothing new to us; we had gone through them ever since we started the revolution. Had we experienced only a few, unheard-of problems up to now? How could we, the revolutionary army who had taken the cause of national liberation upon ourselves, merely look on with folded arms when the anti-Japanese struggle in Korea was in such trouble and the people were looking up to Mt. Paektu for help? We had to advance into the homeland, even if it meant living on tree bark and it might involve sacrifices and tribulations. Naturally, we would have to cut our way through a forest of bayonets and face enormous hardships on the way. Nevertheless, we would make big strides and strike the enemy. This was what I thought at the time.

This, then, was the motive of the Arduous March—to make the homeland seethe with renewed hope.

As you know, we made many hard treks during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The march from Antu to Wangqing in autumn 1932, the march coming back to Jiandao after the first expedition to northern Manchuria and the Fusong expedition in early spring 1937 were all difficult excursions.

However, the trek from Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, to Beidadingzi, Changbai County, was such an unprecedented ordeal that it is beyond comparison with any other expeditions in terms of duration and misery. Because it took about one hundred days, this march is also called “the hundred-day march”. To be exact, our journey took 110 days and was indescribably arduous, so it finally came to be known as the Arduous March.

I read many works about other treks in the past. I read the novel *Iron Flood* and watched its film version. However, I have never read anything describing a trek as full of twists and turns and beset with hardships as our march. In my secondary school days, as I read the *Iron Flood*, I wondered whether such a tough

journey had ever really taken place. I was deeply impressed by Kojuh, who managed to break through one hardship after another. After I experienced the Arduous March, however, I thought Kojuh's trek was nothing compared to our march.

The Arduous March was, in a nutshell, a constant, non-stop struggle against the worst of natural conditions, hunger, exhaustion, diseases and of course the brutal enemy. All of these were accompanied by yet another severe struggle: that of not giving in to all these hardships. It was primarily a struggle to survive and to destroy the enemy. These were the main contents of the Arduous March. Indeed, it was a series of incredible ordeals and hardships from beginning to end.

That year the first frost fell before Harvest Moon Day and after that the first snow fell heavily. Already early in winter rumour had it that a birch tree had frozen and cracked up in the severe cold.

Hunger and emaciation piled on top of the cold—and we had to fight several battles a day without rest or sleep. The hardships were beyond description.

Just think: It was only a five or six day walk from Nanpaizi to Beidadingzi, yet it took us more than 100 days to cover the distance! This was because we had to fight the enemy every single step of the way.

You have no doubt seen the map of the march route. What do you think of it? You must have found it incredibly complex.

The Arduous March was a trek that dwarfed all previous expeditions just in terms of physical exertion and suffering.

What made this trek such an unprecedentedly horrendous one in the history of the KPRA? The enemy's continuous pursuit and encirclement and nothing else explains it. You cannot imagine how tenacious the enemy was in chasing and constantly surrounding us.

The Japanese imperialists concentrated all their "punitive" troops

on our main force, sending all their forces out on the “punitive” campaign against Kim Il Sung’s unit, the only force remaining now that the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps had been virtually annihilated. They whipped up their men’s fighting spirit against us. They even used carrier pigeons for their campaign.

The enemy’s tactic was quite simple: to deny the KPRA any chance to rest, eat or sleep. They hurled hundreds of troops continually against us, to the point where sometimes we had to fight 20 battles a day.

If we had slipped out of Nanpaizi, as we had done for previous expeditions, we would not have gone through such severe troubles. However, it was impossible for us to do this.

We had to let our gunshots be heard right from the start. Obtaining food for the march also required a battle, so we attacked internment village as soon as we had left the secret camp. Having heard our fire, the enemy immediately tailed after us. Knowing where the 2<sup>nd</sup> Directional Army was moving to, the enemy did not leave us alone for a minute.

The Japanese, who had encircled Nanpaizi, started their pursuit at once. They moved very fast. As we were starting to prepare a meal after a forced march of 20 kilometres, they fell on us, so we could not cook, but had to repack our wet rice. This sort of thing was to take place frequently. Had it been a simple march without battles, we would have had nothing to worry about. It was the enemy’s non-stop hounding and encirclement of us, as well as the ceaseless battles, that doubled our difficulties and made the march our worst trial yet.

Shortage of food supplies added to our problems. For several reasons our food supplies had run out. In the autumn of 1938 we had stored up enough provisions for the coming winter, but we then consumed a large portion of the food during the meeting at Nanpaizi. The remainder was distributed among the units that left earlier for



their theatre of operations in other directions. In the cold winter it was impossible to gather edible herbs or plants. If the enemy had not been so frantic, we could have hunted wild animals and eaten their raw meat. But firing between battles was disadvantageous for our activity. Only once did I allow hunting: O Paek Ryong had found a bear sleeping in a hollow tree and suggested shooting it. I said he might shoot if he could kill it at a single shot after assuring himself that the enemy was not nearby. He killed the bear, which was as large as an ox, with one shot. At the beginning of the march we had two meals of gruel a day. As the food ran short, we had just one meal a day. Finally we went without food altogether, only eating snow. Our vision became blurry and when we got up to continue the march, we felt dizzy and could hardly walk.

This is why, whenever I talked to cadres after liberation, I used to say that people who have experienced starvation know how valuable rice and peasants are and that no one without this experience can claim to know all about revolution.

One day O Paek Ryong went down to Qidaogou with my permission, raided a lumber mill and brought back several horses. Because our provisions had run out, we decided to eat horsemeat for our meals. We could not roast it in the enemy's encirclement and had to eat it raw and without salt. At the second meal our stomachs revolted. The raw meat caused loose bowels, which were even more painful than hunger.

In spite of their suffering from diarrhoea, the men continued to eat the horsemeat because that was the only thing they had. However, in four or five days, even the frozen meat ran out.

There are many short men among the anti-Japanese veterans because they did not get proper nutrition in their youth and because they had to go through all kinds of hardships. These factors stunted their growth.

When we were fighting in the mountains, we often had to do

without proper food, eating such things as wild herbs, grass roots, tree bark, malted wheat, rice bran, the residue left over from brewing and so on. We ate mainly coarse food at irregular times, so we suffered from all sorts of troubles of the digestive canal.

When Fidel Castro was on a visit to our country, he asked me how we had obtained food and clothing, where we had slept and how we had endured the severe cold of 40 degrees below zero during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. I told him how we had suffered hunger and the biting cold during the Arduous March.

He was deeply moved by my description. Apparently, he had not experienced hardships such as ours during his own guerrilla-fighting days. It is very warm in Cuba, unlike Northeast China or our country, and food is readily available.

When I was fighting in the mountains, I felt sorriest to see my comrades-in-arms unable to eat their fill, suffering all kinds of problems and unable to get married at their most marriageable age.

No matter how much I might describe the hardships we suffered during the Arduous March, you who have not experienced it cannot imagine what it was like. Let me tell you further about the difficulties of the march that followed.

From the very beginning the enemy used the tactic of “violent attack and tenacious pursuit”. This attack and pursuit was so stubborn that we had to keep constantly on the move, chewing raw grain because we had no time to cook.

Their tactic was, in essence, the “*dani* tactic”, which meant harassing the opponent ceaselessly by clinging to it like a tick. The Japanese word *dani* means “tick”. With this tactic the enemy placed a “punitive” force at every single vantage point. As soon as guerrillas appeared, the enemy attacked immediately, and after the attack, tailed after them tenaciously in an attempt to annihilate them. The goal was to chase and strike the guerrillas continuously without giving them time to rest, sleep or eat until they were completely

exhausted and destroyed. The enemy themselves could rest by shifts, but the guerrillas were compelled to fight without a breathing space, so their tribulations were beyond description.

An old book on war says that an army caught by a long-distance pursuit by the enemy that comes in shifts will certainly be defeated, so that a good general will avoid such a trap. In other words, once in such a trap, there is no way out. Unfortunately we fell into such a trap. The enemy converged on us from every direction and clung to us like ticks. We found ourselves in a real predicament and had to develop elusive tactics to get out of it.

I racked my brains and thought out a new, zigzag tactic. I summoned the regimental commanders and said: "From now on, we'll march in a zigzag; at every turn of the zigzag we'll lie in ambush and pepper the approaching enemy with machine-gun fire. This is the only way to take away the Japanese ticks." The zigzag tactic was the best way to strike the pursuing enemy in the Manchurian mountains covered with deep snow. That winter there was an unusually heavy snowfall, so that the men at the head of the column had to tramp down the snow to open a path. The snow was so deep that even the healthy ones among us were totally exhausted after advancing only fifty or sixty metres. In some places we had to roll bodily on the snow to make a path, and in others we tunneled through. Where the snow was too deep, the men took off their leggings, linked them in a long line and held on while forging ahead. This prevented anyone from falling behind.

The enemy had no choice but to follow the zigzag we were making.

Bringing up the rear of the marching column, O Jung Hup would post two or three men with a machine-gun in ambush at every turn of the zigzag to hit the on-coming enemy. While the enemy was disposing of their dead, O Jung Hup moved his ambush to the next turn and beat the pursuers by the same method. Because the enemy

had to take the single path we had opened, they could not avoid being struck each time. They were thrown on the defensive and suffered heavy casualties, whereas we took the initiative and dealt a series of heavy blows at them.

We continued the march through the heavy snow until we finally arrived at the end of Qidaogou, Changbai County, early in January 1939. Over the course of it we fought many battles, including the raid on the Yaogou internment village, and the battle near Mayihe, in Linjiang County, and the raid on Wangjiadian. You probably know about them.

As the days went by the enemy poured more troops into its “punitive” operations. In their continuing pursuit their casualties increased, but they went on attacking us stubbornly with fresh replacements. Since the enemy had enormous forces in reserve, they thought nothing of hundreds of deaths.

My men walked, dozing, even dreaming. You can imagine how tired they were. As enemy planes frequently came to find our whereabouts, we could not build campfires either. The planes were similar to the plane we use now on Farm No. 5 for spraying agricultural chemicals. Anyhow they were planes. These planes flew over us every day and informed their ground forces of our location.

One day the enemy fell upon us, attacking our marching column in swarms. There were foes everywhere, in front and at our back, on both sides and even in the sky. The situation was so urgent that I ordered the machine-gun platoon to strike the enemy in front of us, the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment to check the enemy attacking from behind and others to break through the encirclement sideways.

We managed to get out of the crisis in this way. We could do so once or twice, but it would be no good to have to walk this kind of tightrope all the time. Marching as a large force was disadvantageous in every respect. First of all, it was difficult for us

to conceal ourselves. Next, obtaining food was a problem. The food dozens of men brought on their backs with great effort ran out in only a few days. Soldiers fell one after another, exhausted because they were fighting without eating or sleeping.

How were we all to survive and arrive in Changbai safely? After much thought, I decided to disperse our marching column. Not that dispersion would guarantee that everything would go well, of course. Other burdens and difficulties would no doubt result from dispersed actions.

Dispersing the entire army into several directions, I made up my mind to go with the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment. But commanding officers present at the officers' meeting unanimously objected to my going with the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment. They insisted that Headquarters should go to the Qingfeng Secret Camp, the safest in the secret camps around Qidaogou. They were concerned about my personal safety, worried that if I went with the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, which fought the most frequently, I would be in personal danger.

I could not agree with them. I said that only the wounded and sick soldiers should be sent to the Qingfeng Secret Camp, and that our people needed a fighting Kim Il Sung, not a Kim Il Sung that sat in hiding with his arms folded. When I said this, they no longer objected.

In the end we decided to disperse our forces into three directions. Headquarters would go to Jiazaishui, via the Qingfeng Secret Camp, in command of the Guard Company and the machine-gun platoon, O Jung Hup's 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment advancing towards Shangganqu, Changbai County, and the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the Independent Battalion operating around Donggang, Fusong County.

We can call this dispersion the second stage of the Arduous March.

Today we remember it simply as a past event, but at that time our hearts ached at this parting. The comrades who were leaving

me shed tears of sadness. They hugged the men of the Guard Company and earnestly requested them to protect me carefully. Their determination to safeguard me with lives moved me to tears as well. Some of the soldiers' uniforms were terribly torn, exposing their bodies, and the footwear of others was so worn out that they bound their feet with their leggings. Some soldiers used cowhide as foot wrappings. And yet they felt no concern about themselves, but instead worried about my safety. I could not help shedding tears because of this.

As I found out later, before parting from me O Jung Hup said he would lure away the enemy towards his own regiment, and told O Paek Ryong's Guard Company to avoid battle so as to get me to the Qingfeng Secret Camp one way or another.

The spirit of self-sacrifice and loyalty displayed by O Jung Hup to ensure Headquarters' security during the Arduous March is still fresh in my mind today.

From the moment he left Qidaogou, O Jung Hup fought one battle after another to lure the enemy in his direction in order to draw danger away from Headquarters. Having disguised his regiment as Headquarters, he shouldered all the heaviest burdens. Because the Japanese thought this regiment was safeguarding Kim Il Sung, whom they were making such frantic attempts to catch, they naturally concentrated their heaviest attacks on the unit.

I was told that O Jung Hup's regiment fought ceaselessly to fool the enemy and ate nothing for over a week. At the time of our battle on Mt. Hongtou, hearing the sound of our gunfire, he had come running a long way to defend Headquarters.

Thanks to him, we were not harassed too much, and he scattered the enemy force that had been concentrating on Headquarters. But there was no way for us to obtain food and we marched towards Qingfeng with empty stomachs. At one point in the past we had sent supply-service men to Qingfeng to plant potatoes. I intended to

give my men a few days' rest eating these potatoes if any remained. There was nothing to eat and we were almost starving to death.

Near Qingfeng we unexpectedly found a field of foxtail millet. Looking around the natural features, I recognized that this was the field where we ourselves had sown seeds the previous spring on the way to the Xintaizi Secret Camp. Apparently a man engaged in opium farming in a mountain valley had cultivated the field, and when we arrived there in spring, he had been doing his spring sowing. At the sight of our men he had run away. He took us for mountain bandits or Japanese troops, I think.

My men had been very sorry to see the owner of the field running away. We thought he might not come back because he was so scared, so we planted foxtail millet there. We felt we should not leave the field to lie fallow for a year, but sow seeds on behalf of the owner, who had run away because of us, so that he might have something to harvest in autumn.

However, the foxtail millet had remained in the field unharvested. The men were delighted to find the ears of millet in the snow. One man jokingly said that "God" seemed to exist in the world, because nobody but "God" could save us from the danger of starvation. Another man told me, "General, 'God', too, is now on the side of the revolutionary army."

In fact, we did not benefit from the grace of God, but owed our salvation to ourselves. If we had not sown the seeds after the landowner fled, we would not have made such a lucky find.

Whenever we arrived in a new camp, we made it a rule to break fresh land not far from the camp and plant foxtail millet, potatoes and pumpkins, then mark the field so that we could find it afterwards. Whenever we did it, my orderlies would ask, "General, will we be coming here again in the future?" They meant that such efforts were useless, since we would not be coming back.

I explained, "We may or may not return. Most probably we will

not come back. But our liaison men or small units may come. If they can get potatoes or pumpkins when they are hungry in this desolation, think of how glad they'll be!" The routes taken by our units were named Route One, Two, Three and Fifteen. When I asked liaison men or small units on their return from a mission which way they had taken, they replied that they had taken Route Three or Fifteen, and so on. When I asked them if they had not suffered from hunger, they replied that they had picked pumpkins or dug potatoes from the field my unit had planted while camping on the march. They had boiled or roasted the vegetables.

Food shortages during the anti-Japanese revolution were so serious that we even consumed white-birch juice, which was used both as medicine and food.

We picked up the foxtail millet ears one by one from the snow, milled them and cooked them into gruel. We improvised our own treadmill for this.

About a week of millet-gruel diet gave us back our strength. But even the foxtail millet soon ran out. The only way to get food was to go to Qingfeng and obtain one knapsack of potatoes for each man.

On the way to Qingfeng we came to a river. We had to cross it, but it was not frozen. The mid-streams in steep mountain valleys do not freeze even in winter. We did not want to cross it by the bridge, because an enemy sentry might be guarding it, but there was no other alternative. Risking our lives, we crawled across the bridge one by one.

Hardly had we crossed when the enemy closed in on us and we had to fight. We quickly climbed the mountain on which the potato field was supposed to be. My plan was to contain the pursuing enemy while some men loaded their knapsacks with potatoes. But we discovered that neither the potatoes nor the hut that had been on top of the mountain remained. Apparently the supply-service men from the secret camp had dug them all up. The "punitive" force was



almost upon us, firing machine-guns. It was a real crisis. I told my men, "We must get down through the valley to that moor. Then as soon as it's dark we can find a way out. The snow is awfully deep and we have no food; worse still, the 'punitive' force is still on our tail, so we have to disappear and get as far away as possible by a forced march along the road."

On the forced march we came upon a mountain rebels' hut. The rebels had fled, frightened by the sound of gunshots, and the hut was empty. There was plenty of food, including rib meat. Some comrades said that the food might have been poisoned by the Japanese, but it did not seem so. Playing-cards scattered on the floor showed that it was a hut belonging to mountain rebels and that they had fled in the middle of their meal. The heated floor was still warm.

The room was so cosy that if the enemy had not been chasing us, we would have slept off our fatigue. But we had no time to eat the rich food spread out on the table. At a guess, the food was enough for two days' rations for our Headquarters.

I ordered the men to pack it all up.

Hardly had we left the hut when the enemy caught up to us. It was a frantic pursuit indeed. We had no time to sit comfortably to eat a meat dumpling or a cracker.

One of the reasons our Headquarters was pursued by the enemy so hard was that a man surnamed Kim who had been engaged in underground work in Jiazaishui, was arrested by the enemy. He had joined the revolutionary army in Changbai after our move to West Jiandao. Before joining the army he had worked in an underground revolutionary organization, and in the army, too, he had fought well. For a few years he had fought among us before being dispatched to a local area for underground work. On being arrested he had probably stained his honour by telling the enemy where we were going.

It was thus the enemy found out that O Jung Hup's regiment, which was fighting around the Changbai area, was false

Headquarters, and so they concentrated all the “punitive” forces on us. Enemy planes, too, flew over our unit every day. Because the enemy attacked us from every direction, we had no room to escape. The men were pale with worry. O Paek Ryong, too, grew anxious, even though he had experienced all kinds of difficulties under my command since our days in Wangqing. The commanding officers, convinced that there was no way out of this trap, could only look at me with apprehension. A stirring speech was necessary in this situation. During a break, I summoned all of Headquarters and said,

“... Even the eyes of ten thousand people will not find a needle in a forest. If we use elusive tactics, we can conceal ourselves from the large enemy force, just as if we were a needle in a large forest. Admiral Ri Sun Sin defeated a large Japanese fleet with only a few warships in the naval battle of Myongryang. This turned in his favour the tide of the war against the Japanese in 1592. It was a miraculous success worthy of special mention in the world history of naval engagements. How did Ri Sun Sin defeat the enemy? Of course, his intelligence, tactics and courage contributed to the success. But an even more important factor was his love for his country. He knew that if the Japanese invaders were not destroyed, they would conquer his country and enslave his people. That was why he rose to the occasion and defeated the Japanese. Because of his ardent love for his country he was able to muster all his wisdom and courage.

“If we love our country, we also can break through this difficulty. Needless to say, our situation is grave, but if we have a firm confidence in the victory of revolution and if we do not give in to difficulties, we can reverse the situation. Let’s continue our march with confidence.”

When I finished the speech, my men said, “General, give us the order. We will follow you to the end.” They resumed the march with brighter faces. I, too, felt more encouraged by their reaction.

On the Arduous March we used a variety of combat methods and tactics. We can say that the march was a testing ground for all the strategies and tactics that had evolved in guerrilla warfare.

Let me give a few examples of the flexible tactics we used.

To conceal the traces of our march in the snow, we filled up or erased our footprints before disappearing; we also slipped away to the side by treading only on fallen tree trunks. A most thrilling experience was to throw the enemy into chaos by disappearing off to the side so that their forces, closing in on us from the front and back, ended up fighting against each other. We called this the “telescope tactic”. It meant that we made the enemy forces fight each other while we looked on from a safe distance. We used this tactic in Hongtushanzi, Changbai County, and on the Fuhoushui tableland to drive the enemy into a mess.

Hongtushanzi was a big mountain, the top of which was bare of trees. At that time, we marched around the mountain with the chasing enemy in our wake, and on the second round, when another enemy force appeared in front of us, we dodged away, picking our way across the fallen trees. The enemy forces came up against each other while one was in pursuit and the other in search of us. Mistaking each other for the revolutionary army, they fell into an exchange of heavy fire. The duel, caused by mistaken identity, ended in a tremendous life-and-death struggle.

On the Fuhoushui tableland, too, we used a similar tactic. A large enemy force was coming in our wake, but we had no way to throw them off, so we circled around the Fuhoushui tableland, as we had done in Hongtushanzi. During the second round, another “punitive” force appeared, this time between us and the chasing enemy. One round was a long enough distance to take us a whole day, so the two enemy forces pursuing us were out of mutual contact. It was a queer situation.

I had earlier ordered each of my men to cut a tree as long as

a sleigh pole while on the march. Now we threw them across the tree stumps and slipped away to one side, using the poles as bridges over the stumps.

While we were taking rest under some bushes, wearing white capes and chewing on raw barley, one enemy force closed in upon the other and they battled it out between themselves. We watched them calmly from a distance as they fought and killed each other in large numbers. Having suffered this rather foolish loss on the Fuhoushui tableland, the enemy later said in despair that we were so slippery, it was totally impossible to catch us.

We employed versatile tactics such as this several times a day, killing a lot of enemy soldiers. Still, the Japanese had a never-ending reserve of fighters. Japan's enormous supply of manpower was one reason they set up a clamour for overseas expansion, using the excuse of overpopulation. No wonder it was able to send ready replacements for lost "punitive" troops, no matter how many we killed off. By contrast, we who were fighting in the mountains had no immediate source of replacement, even for a single dead comrade.

After the battle of the Fuhoushui tableland, we did a forced march straight through to Jiazaishui, going all through the night.

When I ordered the march towards low hills, my men anxiously said, "General, there is a moor in that direction. We may land up in an internment village."

I said, "In this situation it is better to move straight to the hillock area than to stay in the forest. If we are chased ceaselessly like this, we'll end up totally helpless. The enemy replenishes its forces every day, but we can't. Only our casualties can increase. If one dies today, another tomorrow, and if our force continues to decrease this way, how many men will remain alive? Our comrades of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Regiments may not be aware that we are in this tight corner, we can't send for them to help us, so there's no other

way for us. We must advance to the hillock area and throw off the enemy in the forest. Because the enemy pays little attention to that particular area, we have to go in that direction to preserve our force and recover our breath.”

As the saying goes, it’s darkest at the foot of the candle, so the place near the village might well be the safest place for us.

We camped on a small hill that commanded a view of the village of Jiazaishui. The hill was dense with pine and oak trees half again as tall as a man. The hill was fringed with a cliff under which a stream flowed. The sound of dogs barking in the village could be heard on the hill. Jiazaishui was also called a watermill village.

We relaxed and studied in combat readiness, making camp at night and striking it early in the morning. That was our first camping since we left Nanpaizi.

We rested ourselves for some time there. I often sat together with my Headquarters and discussed our future course of action and tactics with them. Our plan was to assemble all our scattered forces with the approach of warm weather after the lunar New Year’s Day and advance into the border area and the homeland, striking the enemy everywhere and rebuilding the damaged organizations.

In the midst of all this, however, we ran out of food and again came close to starving to death.

I sent Ri Pong Rok, the political instructor of the Guard Company, to Jiazaishui. In this village the underground organization originally built by Kim Il was still active. An organization member called An lived there. He was a farmer with unusual connections to us. When his father was kidnapped by the mountain rebels, I had written to their chief to set him free. The chief owed us a favour from former days, so on receiving my letter he sent the farmer home. The farmer had been helping the revolutionary work under the influence of Kim Il, and after this event, he joined the underground organization.

I asked Ri Pong Rok to meet the owner of the watermill in Jiazaishui and try to get in touch with the farmer.

He went down the mountain and first met the watermill owner. He introduced himself vaguely saying that he had come down to find a human habitation because the enemy's "punitive" attacks were so frantic and the food problem was so serious. He asked if they could have a chat, even though it was late at night.

The owner coldly asked him whether he had come down to surrender. Ri said yes, to sound him out. The miller was very disappointed at Ri's reply and answered, "You must have gone through many hardships in the mountains. However, you should not surrender. Once you take up arms to liberate the country, you can't just give up halfway, you have to fight to the end. You must not surrender, even though you have to endure severe hardships." And he asked if General Kim Il Sung was keeping well."

Ri Pong Rok replied that he did not know where the General was exactly, but that he was making strikes at the enemy in command of the revolutionary army. Having heard this the miller rebuked him, "It's not proper that you should betray the General by surrendering while he leads the revolutionary army in good health."

After this confirmation that the owner was a man he could trust, Ri admitted that he had not come to surrender, but had come down to obtain food, and that his comrades-in-arms were still up on the mountain. He asked the owner to help him obtain food, offering money.

The watermill owner said, "Buying it is dangerous. I will bury the grain in the heap of husks, the grain I received as payment for milling. You can carry it off in secret when no customers are around." The owner was really a good man.

While obtaining food in the village, Ri found out also that the watermill owner was a member of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. He was on friendly terms with farmer An.

The organization in Jiazaishui had not been destroyed even after the “Hyesan incident” because our operatives had kept it secret.

When I heard about the watermill owner, I said to myself, “Very good! The people continue to support us as ever. As long as we enjoy support from the people we will win. Now there is a way out.” The watermill owner was as good as having joined our Arduous March, carrying food supplies on his back. Had it not been for the food he provided, it would not have been possible for us to plan our future course of action with confidence or to relax by playing chess and similar games. We would in all probability have starved to death.

Not only the watermill owner but all his villagers helped us.

One day Ri Pong Rok asked for my permission to go to fetch food supplies, including those for the lunar New Year Day party the villagers had prepared.

When I thought of my men having to get along, eating raw rice, raw meat or only water for so many days since we’d started the Arduous March, I had no mind to decline the kind offer of the villagers. I told the men to fetch the festive food, prepared with such warm kindness by the villagers. The prospects of being free from need on New Year’s Day in 1939, thanks to the people of Jiazaishui, gave me some relief. My feelings of guilt at having to see my men go hungry seemed to be more or less eased.

Unfortunately, we were finally unable to accept their present: Ri Ho Rim, who went to the village with Ri Pong Rok, suddenly deserted. Ri Pong Rok returned empty-handed and reported to me that he had abandoned all the food because of Ri Ho Rim’s desertion. It was the first time that a deserter had appeared among the Headquarters Guard Company men.

There had never been a deserter among them, no matter how terrible the conditions on a march. During the Arduous March, however, four men ran away from our ranks. They took off because

they simply could not endure the terrible hardships any longer.

Ri Ho Rim had not served long in the guerrilla army, but I had loved him dearly. My love for him was special, for he came from Korea. He spoke Japanese fluently. When there was a need to reconnoitre enemy movements, I used to assign him to the task. He would take one or two men with him and climb telegraph poles to tap the wires. He was so healthy and knowledgeable that I singled him out for a future officer. Apparently he ran away because he had lost confidence in the success of the revolution.

His defection exposed us to great danger. We had to move out as soon as possible and take safety measures.

We decided to leave the hill behind the Jiazaishui village and pass through the vast plain in broad daylight. I ordered my men to march non-stop, whether the enemy came after us or not.

Dispersing our force to evade a large force of the attacking enemy was a general principle of guerrilla warfare. We maintained this principle thoroughly during the Arduous March. As a result, we were able to scatter the enemy force considerably. On this dispersed march, however, our Headquarters with a small force went through many crises which threatened its very existence.

Why? It was because the enemy knew we were Headquarters and concentrated all their forces on us.

Learning a lesson from such experiences, we widely discussed tactics when reviewing the Arduous March at Beidadingzi. I emphasized that dispersed action was a tactic of guerrilla warfare to cope with a large attacking enemy, but that we should not apply it indiscriminately. Other commanding officers, too, asserted that for Headquarters to move alone separately without any support of a larger unit was an adventure that should not be repeated.

Reviewing the Arduous March, I keenly realized the truth that we should not commit dogmatism in applying tactics, even though they might accord with the principles of guerrilla warfare.



Immediately after we started the march in broad daylight, two other defectors appeared in our ranks. One was “Instructor Li”, a graduate from Beijing University, introduced by Wang De-lin, and the other was a Chinese soldier. Worse still, there were many wounded men in the unit. For one thing or another, only a small number of men remained. If our unit decreased any more, it would be impossible even to relieve guards.

When I gave the marching order, O Paek Ryong asked, “General, if we start the march, the enemy’s gun batteries will open up on us. How can we cross the open country?” I said, “Don’t ask how! Keep one machine-gun in front and another in the rear. We must make a forced march. Shoot at the enemy wherever they appear, in our front or in our wake. There is no other choice.”

Strangely enough, the enemy did not touch us as we moved out, just looked down at us from their batteries. Their main force had gone to the mountain areas for “punitive” actions and only a small force remained in the village. Moreover, the enemy was overwhelmed by the sheer audacity of our move. We crossed the open country in broad daylight without any disturbance and arrived in the forest. There we cooked and ate our meal and took a brief rest.

Perhaps people might call such experience good luck. After passing through the plain without the slightest trouble, we ourselves thought it somewhat strange. Naturally we had thought the enemy would fire, but they had not as much as sneezed, let alone fired at us, only looked down at us from their batteries. During the guerrilla struggle, we sometimes experienced such peculiar things, though not often.

After passing the plain safely, my men were delighted and said that “God” had helped the revolutionary army again.

When in a tight corner, take the plunge and ignore all danger as you fight. If you’re unafraid of death, you will be able to break through any difficulty whatsoever.

As we were marching after coming out of the forest, I got the report that the enemy had appeared behind us. Apparently, the defectors had revealed our route, no doubt saying, “Kim Il Sung is leading a few dozen men after sending the large units in other directions, so you can beat him easily.”

Shortly after, I received another report from the scouts that another enemy force had appeared before us. We were now in a critical situation, with the enemy closing in from both directions.

Looking me in the face, O Paek Ryong asked, “General, the enemy probably knows that we are Headquarters. What shall we do?”

I replied, “There is no other alternative but to fight to the death. The enemy before us is totally ignorant of our existence. They are not even aware that they’re about to encounter us, so they will be off their guard. But the enemy behind us knows how many we are and how tired we are, so it’ll be difficult to fight them off. Let one squad contain them and commit the main force to striking the enemy in our front. That’ll open the way out for us.”

The enemy chasing us was Japanese, and the enemy approaching us in front was a Manchukuo force. We knew the latter would be afraid of confronting us, so the enemy in our front was the weaker one.

“Strike the enemy ahead of us and open the way!” I ordered O Paek Ryong. “If they flinch, hit them without giving them a moment to breathe and chase them to their barracks to teach them a lesson.”

O Paek Ryong set a machine-gun at the head of our column and sent off a running stream of fire at the enemy, then charged them, blowing a bugle. Having suffered heavy casualties, the Manchukuo army fled, throwing away their packs. Probably they thought we were a much larger force.

We collected the food and shoes from their packs and pursued them to a highway. In this way we also eluded the pursuing enemy

and seized the initiative.

We now changed our tactics from escaping the enemy to forestalling them through attack. Constant and elusive escaping was no way to survive.

A book on war says that the best way to deal with a strong enemy is to parry his bayonet, harass him and wear him out, and when he wavers, attack him violently. If he retreats, pursue him hard enough to weaken him and turn the tide in your favour.

By employing these tactics widely during the Arduous March, we broke through many crises and seized the initiative.

I decided to attack an internment village to obtain food while throwing the enemy on the defensive. With the lunar New Year's Day just around the corner, I was eager to feed my men to their fill, the men who had gone hungry for so many months. Thus the battle of Shisandaowan was organized.

Before the battle we tapped the enemy's telephone line. An officer of the puppet Manchukuo army, who had withdrawn to Shierdaogou, was reporting to his superior in Linjiang County. He said, "We encountered Kim Il Sung's unit. They attacked us so violently that we could not resist. We retreated to Shierdaogou. I expect your instruction about our action after this." He also rang up his colleagues in the neighbouring internment villages and warned them of our possible raids.

Based on this information, we attacked the closest enemy and another village and captured large amounts of rice and other foodstuffs. The supplies contained meat dumplings the enemy had prepared to eat. The loads were too heavy to be carried away, so we buried some of them in the snow and marked the spot. We feasted ourselves on New Year's Day.

The guerrilla struggle was not always one of constant hardships. Hunger and poor clothing were our usual companions, but once in a long while we ate our fill and had a well-heated shelter.

After the battle of Shisandaowan, the enemy concentrated more “punitive” forces on our Headquarters. “Punitive” troops were everywhere. The enemy chased us so tenaciously that we had to pass a couple of nights on a height in temperatures of 40 degrees below zero.

Even in such difficulties we maintained the initiative and attacked another internment village. It was a battle to signal our location to our large units in dispersed action. I cannot remember the name of that village. On hearing the news about our battle, O Jung Hup’s 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, which had been in action around Shanggangqu, Changbai County, judged that Headquarters was in danger and attacked internment villages in order to draw the enemy forces. It also signaled their location to us.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment came to Beidadingzi first to meet Headquarters and it was followed by the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the Independent Battalion. The service units, which were in the Qingfeng Secret Camp, came to Beidadingzi as well. I called the roll and found that our strength remained much the same as when we had left Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, in the previous year. Nearly all our fighters survived.

Our deep emotion at that time was beyond description. We experienced many partings and reunions during the anti-Japanese war, but I had never felt greater excitement than at this time. Beidadingzi was a scene of jubilation, as if we were holding a festival. The men, who met after more than one hundred days of hardship in the shadow of death, hugged each other or rolled over on the ground, laughing and talking.

The harder our trials, the happier our reunion. Comrades realize how dear they are to each other most when they are reunited after a separation. Partings and reunions between comrades who spill blood in a common cause strengthen their comradeship. Such close friendships do not break even in the strongest tempest.

The Arduous March was not a mere movement of our forces. It was a large-scale military operation that was equal to a campaign. It was the epitome of our anti-Japanese armed struggle, so to speak. During this march we went through every kind of suffering a soldier could go through and experienced every kind of trial a man could experience.

Through the Arduous March we demonstrated once again to the world that the communists who took part in the anti-Japanese armed struggle were the true sons of the homeland and the people, and that the revolutionary fighters were unfailingly loyal to their nation and to the cause of national liberation. Every anti-Japanese guerrilla that went through the march developed his character to the highest level possible. The noble image of the Korean communists formed in this event is a model that our people must learn and follow through the coming generations. The Arduous March created typical communists who defeated the enemy because they were rallied rock-solid behind their leader and did not relinquish their faith in any adversity. This was an important success in the Arduous March, as well as one of the great achievements of the anti-Japanese revolution.

All the participants in the Arduous March were heroes, whether they are still alive or dead.

There are many factors that led the guerrillas to survive their hardships and emerge victorious, like immortal beings. Let me tell you some of these factors.

First was their indomitable revolutionary spirit, the spirit of self-reliance, fortitude and revolutionary optimism. I can say that this spirit contributed to their triumph over all their difficulties. Going through the most terrible suffering, we never lost heart or became pessimistic, but endured all our miseries by picturing in our minds the day of victory. In short we were absolutely convinced of our eventual victory. If we had lost heart or

taken a gloomy view of the revolution, overwhelmed by all the difficulties we faced, we would have sunk into the snow, unable to face our grave trials.

Another factor for the success in the march was our love for our comrades in the revolution. I still remember how I met O Jung Hup and his unit towards the end of the march.

He wrapped his arms around me and cried. I also shed tears when I saw him. The joy of reunion with my blood relations would not have been so great as the joy I felt at that time. I was so glad that I could not get rid of the lump in my throat. I made up my mind never to part with these priceless comrades-in-arms again, not under any circumstances.

That winter I had worried myself sick after dispersing my comrades—I had never in my life missed my friends and companions as much as I did at that time. As many of you are discharged soldiers, you probably know how warm the love for one's comrades can be. No love in the world is warmer or stronger than love for one's comrades-in-arms and no moral obligation is nobler than the loyalty between them.

Revolutionary comradeship was an important factor in victory. It ran all through the anti-Japanese revolution. However, during the Arduous March the sense of moral obligation of our men was displayed more intensely than ever before. The anecdote of "a cup of parched-rice flour" was only one of many anecdotes about good deeds done in those days. One of my orderlies was carrying a cup of parched-rice flour in his pack as my emergency ration, but I could not eat it alone, so I shared it with my men, and this event has been handed down as a legendary tale to our children. This was not a rare instance.

Our men would have given their very flesh if their comrades had needed it, they were that willing to give their all to their comrades in the revolution.

As I mentioned once before, when Ri Ul Sol saw a recruit shivering with cold after his clothes were burnt while he was sleeping by the campfire, he took off his own padded jacket and gave it to the recruit. He went through a terribly cold winter in an unlined jacket, but he did not freeze to death. That was because his comrades, too, showed their burning love to him. We did not starve to death because we lived and fought in the spirit of sharing a cup of parched-rice flour throughout the Arduous March of over 100 days. Though we went through severe cold in worn-out clothing, our hearts were always warm. This was the secret of why nobody starved or froze to death and why all of us survived like immortal beings. The power of love defeated death.

This experience has convinced me that a community firmly united in comradeship will never perish.

Another factor that helped to bring the Arduous March to a successful conclusion was the people's love and support for us.

All through the march we received great help from such benevolent people as the owner of the watermill in Jiazaishui. You should not think that only our guerrillas took part in the march. The people, too, joined in. I would say that the people from Erdaohuawen and Yaogou who brought aid-goods such as rice, salt, shoes and cloth at the risk of their own lives participated in our march.

As we experienced on the Luozigou plateau and at the Tianqiao pass, the people saved us, helped us and became our companions whenever we were faced with a crisis. I was able to summon my courage because I was convinced that as long as we had such people, we would emerge victorious in this strenuous journey.

Our victory can also be explained by the fact that we applied flexible guerrilla tactics throughout the march to suit different situations.

Today we are still building socialism in a difficult situation. Our revolution continues to follow a rugged path, so we can say that we are even now continuing the Arduous March. In those days hundreds of thousands of the Japanese troops encircled and harassed us, but nowadays atrocious imperialist forces incomparably stronger than the former Japanese troops are trying to crush our country. In fact, we are living in a situation little short of war.

What is the best way for us to survive in this adversity? The only way is to display fully in our lives the same revolutionary spirit of Mt. Paektu that the anti-Japanese revolutionary forerunners displayed during the Arduous March.

Not only in the anti-Japanese war, but also later, in the days of building a new country, during the Great Fatherland Liberation War, and in the period of postwar reconstruction, we overcame all hardships and emerged victorious in the revolution by displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, fortitude and optimism.

Nothing is impossible for a people with as great a history as that of the Arduous March. No force can ever conquer the people who have inherited the history of this march.



## 8. The Lesson of Qingfeng

The books and textbooks that deal with the history of the anti-Japanese revolution mention two places of the same name—Chongbong (Qingfeng in Chinese transcription—Tr.). One is the Chongbong bivouac in Samjiyon County, Ryanggang Province, Korea, a historical place where the great leader President Kim Il Sung spent his first night while advancing to the Musan area in May 1939 in command of the main force of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army. The other is Qingfeng in West Jiandao, China, which the anti-Japanese guerrillas developed into a secret camp for the service units in the latter half of the 1930s.

Every Korean knows about Chongbong in Samjiyon County, but not many people are aware of Qingfeng in West Jiandao. The Qingfeng Secret Camp has entered the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution along with the Arduous March because a grave incident took place there that tested revolutionaries’ faith and loyalty and taught the soldiers of the KPRA a serious lesson. This incident still teaches today’s younger generation a great deal.

The following is part of the great leader’s recollection of the incident.

At the start of the Arduous March, we sent the wounded and sick guerrillas to the Qingfeng Secret Camp for service units. There were many secret camps of this kind around Mt. Paektu and in West Jiandao. In the camp area our supply officers had already planted potatoes. The wounded and sick guerrillas were able to stay there in safety for a few months without worrying about food.

After the battle of Shisandaowan in 1939 I sent part of the

enemy booty to the secret camp. In Qingfeng they had potatoes, but how could they celebrate the lunar New Year's Day with only potatoes? So I got special foods singled out and sent them to our comrades-in-arms in the secret camp.

A messenger from our unit went to the camp with the food. On his return he reported to Headquarters the surprising piece of news that an "incident of a spy ring" had taken place in the camp. The staff of Headquarters were quite startled. If there really were a spy ring in the revolutionary army led by communists, this would be a grave matter indeed.

The messenger produced a letter from Ri Tong Gol, outlining the alleged incident, as well as a packet of "poison" seized as "evidence". Ri wrote that it had been exposed that the women guerrillas Kim Jong Suk, Kim Hye Sun, Kim Son and So Sun Ok were spies of Japanese imperialism and that they had attempted to poison our comrades-in-arms in the revolution. The messenger told us that in the secret camp he had seen the women guerrillas with their hands bound and showing evidence of torture.

The shock I got at that time was several times stronger than the one I experienced when Hunter Jang, Han Pong Son and other fighters had been charged with being "Minsaengdan" suspects. As you know, the issue of "Minsaengdan" was resolved finally at the Nanhutou meeting in 1936. From then on we hated to even mention the word "Minsaengdan" because the losses we had suffered from it were so great and the wounds it had caused were so deep.

And now a spy ring similar to "Minsaengdan" was apparently exposed in Qingfeng. What was I to think of this?

From the very moment I heard the news, I judged the incident to be cooked-up nonsense. The charge made by the officers against the women guerrillas whom they had labelled as spies was not based on any convincing evidence. The "poison" they had sent us as evidence was actually tooth-powder. Though my men tried to

hold me back, I tasted it with the tip of my tongue and found that it was undoubtedly nothing more than tooth-powder. How absurd of them to allege that the tooth-powder was poison! The women guerrillas in Qingfeng had been trained and tested fully in revolutionary practice. They were single-heartedly loyal to the revolution.

Their sole ideal was to liberate their motherland. Why else would they take up arms in their tender hands, forgoing marriage and treading a difficult path wearing snow-shoes, eating grass roots and tree bark and enduring hardships that even men found hard, if it weren't for this ideal?

To label them as spies was not only far-fetched but insulting, ridiculous and criminal.

I will not dwell on what a woman Kim Jong Suk was. I could vouch for her without a second thought. Judging from her class origin and her fighting record, she had no reason whatsoever to collude with the enemy. It made no sense that this woman, who had lost her parents and brothers at the hands of the Japanese imperialists, would act as a spy for the enemy.

Kim Hye Sun, Kim Son and So Sun Ok were all highly prepared for the revolution. They were not the sort of people who would be taken in by wicked individuals.

It was preposterous to accuse them of spying.

What difference was there between this accusation and the reckless acts of Kim Song Do and Cao Ya-fan, who had branded so many people in Jiandao as "Minsaengdan" members and executed them?

In our unit there was not a single woman guerrilla who was likely to become an enemy spy. Neither in our days in the guerrilla zones nor after we had abandoned these zones was there a betrayer among the women guerrillas. Look for a woman guerrilla among those who deserted their comrades during the Arduous March:

you will find none. Rim Su San, when surrendering to the enemy, took with him a woman he had been intimate with, but she did not spy for the enemy while she was a guerrilla.

Women in the army took greater trouble than men. Those people who appreciate the responsibilities women have in their homes today will understand what I mean. Though they work for society on an equal footing with men, they bear most of the heavy burdens of household chores. We have put forward a number of policies to relieve them of this burden, but our mothers, wives and sisters still carry it to a certain degree on their shoulders.

In the days of the anti-Japanese revolution, women guerrillas also worked harder. They took part in every battle and cooked meals in addition. They carried most of the cooking utensils and provisions. When the men guerrillas sank with fatigue and fell asleep around the campfire, women did the needlework to mend the torn uniforms of the men. Tears could be stitched up, but burnt parts had to be patched. When pieces were not available, they cut the edges off their own skirts to patch the holes.

Seeing them doing this, I made sure the women guerrillas were supplied with two skirts each.

They overcame difficulties as persistently as men guerrillas. In some aspects, they were even more persistent.

By the way, I shall speak more about Choe Sun San. She is the wife of Song Sung Phil, a renowned worker of the arsenal. She was a veteran party member who carried out party activities underground in the Yanji area, worked as a cook in the guerrilla army and had been a part of the united front with the National Salvation Army. The fighters from Yanji were unanimous in their opinion of her as a responsible, tough woman.

After joining the guerrillas she worked as a cook for a long time. One day during break on a march, she pricked the palm of her hand with a needle while washing rice in preparation for

supper. The broken tip of the needle went deep into the flesh, but she had no time to pick it out. She had to cook supper quickly so that the unit could resume march.

From that day she suffered sharp pains in her palm. An ordinary woman would have asked to be excused from kitchen duty for the time being, but this tough woman neither complained about the injury nor did she ask anyone to pull out the broken needle for her. When her platoon leader scolded her for a delay in cooking, she did not try to defend herself. She was aware that if she stopped cooking, another combatant would have to do it in her place.

Meanwhile, the needle tip worked its way to the back of her hand. Only when it popped out through the skin on the other side did she ask her comrades-in-arms to pull it out. They plucked it out with tweezers. This woman, who cooked for her comrades-in-arms for a fortnight, silently enduring the pain caused by the broken needle, is typical of the women fighters in our ranks who went through the flames of war against the Japanese.

I thought and thought, but I could not understand why these women fighters had been given the shameful name of spies. Om Kwang Ho, the head of the secret camp, had done political work for some years. How could he be so rash as to suspect them without any grounds and accuse them of being spies? Didn't he know that the women guerrillas he had manacled and locked up in a log cabin were patriots, spotlessly loyal to the revolution? If these people were spies, as Om testified, then whom could we trust in this world?

I could not make out the real state of affairs from the written report of Ri Tong Gol or tell what was going on.

I called Kim Phyoung, ordered him to go to the secret camp to investigate the case and then bring back to Headquarters not only all the arrested women guerrillas, but also Om Kwang Ho, the

head of the camp, and Ri Tong Gol, political chief, who were said to have detected this “spy ring”.

On his return I met one by one those involved in this incident.

What emerged was something surprising beyond imagination.

Om Kwang Ho was in charge of the camp. We had sent him to the service camp out of comradely consideration in order to help him to rectify some bad habits. He had been seriously affected with bad ideology and a bad style of work.

He had pernicious habits that should be avoided at all costs—the habits of a factionalist. Factionalists had a way of putting on important airs and looking down upon others. Being contemptuous of others, they ran their comrades down and found fault with them.

Factionalists are greedy careerists without exception. When they have no chance of promotion, they try their best to get promotion either with the backing of others or by resorting to trickery. That is why they are denounced as being ambitious. Om Kwang Ho was a man of this sort.

From the first day he joined the revolutionary ranks he revealed his ambitious streak. Having drifted into the revolutionary movement by the whirlwind of the May 30 revolt in the Yanji area, he worked as the political instructor of a company in the 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Division, but from the very start he earned a bad reputation among his men, for he gave excessive prominence to himself and constantly belittled his comrades-in-arms. No one likes a man who is self-opinionated and ignores his comrades and seniors in the revolution.

He attempted to turn the struggle against “Minsaengdan” into a springboard for his own promotion and branded many people as reactionaries. His ultra-party phraseology rang loudest at meetings where “Minsaengdan” members were indicted and condemned. Though he had forsaken many of his comrades deliberately, the

revolutionary organization did not abandon him; it pardoned him with magnanimity and gave him a chance to make up for his past.

When we were forming a new division around Maanshan, he called on me and pledged that he would rectify his mistakes by working faithfully. I believed him and appointed him political instructor of a company.

However, he betrayed my trust. He often shouted at his men and instead of helping out the company commander behaved like the cock of the walk by merely admonishing him. Conducting himself as if he were a retired veteran, he refused to put his shoulder to the wheel and do the hard work required. In the battlefield he did not fight in the first line, but hung about outside the range of enemy fire. He was not fit to be a political instructor who had to set an example for the masses and steer them.

For this reason, we dismissed him from his post and sent him to the service camp, hoping thus to give him a chance to correct himself.

When sending him to Qingfeng, I gave him the tasks of ensuring proper medical care and living conditions for the wounded and of growing good crops in cooperation with the supply-service men so as to build up food reserves for the unit. But he neglected the tasks. He did not build additional barracks either, which was another task given by Headquarters.

The wounded and sewing-unit guerrillas who had parted with us at the end of Qidaogou and arrived at the Qingfeng camp suffered great discomfort because of inadequate accommodations. They had to live in tents in the severe winter cold. Medicines and provisions were also running short in the camp.

However, the guerrillas, tempered as they were by hardships, did not utter a word of complaint. They endured all the difficulties, thinking of their comrades-in-arms who would be fighting bloody battles. They also strictly observed the daily routine of the camp

and held regular study sessions.

As the saying goes, an awl hidden in a sack will pierce its way out in the end. During the study sessions his harmful ways of thinking and his real self as a defeatist finally revealed themselves.

One day a debate was held in the secret camp on the policies adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting. Taking an example of the Russian revolution, Om Kwang Ho said, “Any revolution will experience a high tide and a low ebb. A high tide requires a high-tide strategy and a low ebb needs a low-ebb strategy. To meet these requirements it is necessary to make a correct judgement of the changes in the situation and be frank enough to admit the arrival of a low ebb when its indications are in evidence. If this is true, then which stage does our revolution find itself in at the moment? I would say it is at a low ebb. Look! The expedition to Rehe ended in failure and in the ‘Hyesan incident’ many revolutionary organizations were destroyed. Isn’t this a low ebb? In this situation we should learn from the lessons of ‘one step forward and two steps back’. In other words, we must avoid offensive and frontal confrontation and retreat until an advantageous situation presents itself. This is the way to save the revolution.”

He attempted to bludgeon all the soldiers in the camp into accepting this argument. Since the revolution was going through some twists and turns at the time because of the disastrous expedition to Rehe and the “Hyesan incident”, his argument might have sounded logical to casual hearers.

Nevertheless, the women guerrillas in the camp instantly felt that his opinion differed radically from the policy of Headquarters. They disproved his argument then and there. They asserted, “Of course we don’t deny the great influence the objective situation exerts on the revolutionary struggle. But we must not consider it absolute. The worse the revolutionary situation gets, the more revolutionaries must react to it and make redoubled efforts to turn a



disadvantage into an advantage. This is the intention of the Comrade Commander. The Korean communists have continued fighting at all times, whether or not the situation was favourable. If they had gone into hiding when the situation was unfavourable and operated only in an advantageous situation, could they have formed such a standing armed force as the KPRA? Could they have advanced to the homeland, breaking through the enemy's tight border watch, and carried out such a daring military campaign as attacking Pochonbo? Marxism-Leninism is a communist theory, so it is, of course, a good thing to follow it in our revolutionary activities and practice. But as the Comrade Commander always emphasizes, we must apply Marxism-Leninism creatively to suit the actual situation of the Korean revolution, not mechanically. You seem to have misunderstood what 'one step forward and two steps back' means. Don't you know that the Korean revolution has advanced through manifold difficulties? You claim that it is best for us to retreat in the present situation; is there any rear we can retreat to? If we retreat, who will usher in the period of revolutionary upsurge for us? As the Comrade Commander declared at the Nanpaizi meeting, we must make headway against obstacles in the difficult situation. Thus, we must turn the disadvantageous situation into an advantageous one."

Kim Jong Suk led others in criticizing Om for his defeatist tendency. She fought without compromise against wrong ideas that ran counter to Headquarters' lines and strategic policies. She was a dyed-in-the-wool advocate of our ideology.

Under this counterattack by the women guerrillas, Om tried to rationalize his opinion by every means, even reciting this or that proposition of Marx and Lenin. The more he tried, the more offensive he smelled. His true colours as an ambitious opportunist were laid bare during the debate. Only now did the women guerrillas realize why he had idled away his time in the camp the

whole summer without making preparations for treating patients or for wintering.

However, they did not brand him as a betrayer or a capitulationist. Since the debate was held during a study session, the matter would have been settled without trouble if he had admitted his fallacy and accepted the others' opinion with an open mind. We never made an issue of this or that misconception revealed in debates during study sessions. On account of the difference in their qualifications and level of preparedness, people differed from one another in understanding and grasping things and phenomena. No one can attain ideological perfection right from the start. One overcomes one's ideological immaturity through studying and revolutionary practice, and in this process one is tempered and matures ideologically. That was why we did not denounce or criticize people whose opinions conflicted with revolutionary principles; we convinced them of the errors in their opinions by the method of argument.

But instead of accepting the women guerrillas' opinion as a just one and trying to transform his ideology, he started retaliating against them while trying to gloss over his own image as a capitulationist. His true colours were fully revealed in his persecution of them.

The crime he committed against them differed in no way from that committed by those involved in the "purge committees" during the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle in Jiandao. His motive and purpose, however, were even more dastardly and insidious.

His attack on them was to cover up his own crime. In order to gag them, he resorted to the mean method of inventing a crime and making a false charge against them. He thought that if they were labelled criminals, they would not dare to touch him or report the matter to Headquarters. What a cowardly and dangerous way of thinking!

There was a young recruit in camp. One day he left his post without Om's leave. Making a fuss about him as a deserter, Om dispatched a search party. The party found the recruit eating potatoes he had baked near the camp. On their return they reported truthfully that he had left the camp, not to desert, but to bake potatoes and eat them, as he could not endure the hunger. The recruit was not yet used to hunger.

Om Kwang Ho, who had been looking for a chance to cook up an incident to startle the camp, branded him as a deserter. He went so far as to call him a spy, charging that he had made a fire not to bake potatoes but to signal the enemy. The recruit protested repeatedly against the charge, but to no avail. Om even tortured him, forcing him to confess what orders he had received from the enemy and whom he had turned among guerrillas in the course of carrying out his orders. How appalling it was of Om to brand the youth a "deserter" and a "spy" and put him to torture, the comrade he had shared board with, even if the boy's act had not been particularly praiseworthy!

The young recruit Om had branded as a spy was highly class conscious, though he had not yet been trained fully. He had no reason to desert his comrades or to spy for the enemy. Despite this, Om tortured him until he made a false confession that he had coaxed the women guerrillas into performing "acts of sabotage" and attempted to kill his revolutionary comrades in the secret camp with poison. In the end Om detained the women guerrillas with this confession as grounds and inflicted violence on them without hesitation.

I could not see why Om, who for many years cried for unity in the ranks while conducting work with people, had come to this pass. Only through investigating his crime at a later date did I realize the motive of his sinking to such a degraded state.

When he was sent to the service camp, he saw himself as

having been demoted. Unhappy with the Headquarters' decision to relieve him of the post of political officer, he did not perform the duty of supply officer but loafed about intentionally. After the debate with the women guerrillas, he made one ultra-revolutionary demand after another in order to cover up his stained reputation as a defeatist. On the pretext of keeping the camp well prepared for action he put it frequently on alert, tormenting the weak and wounded; on the pretext of economizing on provisions, he reduced two meals a day to one, starving them. The secret camp was not really so short of provisions as to be forced to eat only one meal a day. Rice was not available, but a considerable amount of potatoes was stored in a cellar. In the plateau in a forest not far away from the secret camp there was a fairly large field under cultivation with plenty of potatoes and cabbage. Had Om performed his duty faithfully, he could have provided enough food for our whole unit throughout the winter in Qingfeng.

From the moment he judged that the road to his promotion was blocked, he felt weary of the revolution. As the situation at home and abroad grew more complex and difficult, he began to see the future of the revolution as uncertain. This ideological malady was revealed at long last during the debate in the study session.

Ri Tong Gol, political head of the secret camp, was the only man who could have restrained Om from acting arbitrarily. As the political commissar of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, he was Om's senior in rank. Since he had been wounded, we had sent him to Qingfeng on assignment to take charge of political work in the secret camp at the time we were switching over to scattered operations at the end of Qidaogou. But taken in by Om's flattery and trickery, Ri failed to see the nature of the incident. Had we not sent a messenger to the camp, Om could have carried out his plot to kill the women guerrillas.

While investigating the case, I realized that Om was a man

more degenerate and wicked than even Ri Jong Rak had been. Ri's crime was committed after he was arrested and forced by the enemy to surrender. But Om became degenerate ideologically while he was still in the revolutionary ranks, and in order to cover up his own corruption he plotted against his comrades and maltreated them.

Except for the first half of the 1930s, when the guerrilla zones were in chaos because of the "Minsaengdan" there was no torture or punishment inside our ranks. Errors and defects revealed in the ranks were rectified through explanation, persuasion and criticism. Such an extremist act as an officer torturing his subordinates was inconceivable to us.

As his true nature came to light, Om regarded his relationship with his subordinates as irreconcilable—that of one person conquering another—and plotted against them without hesitation. He thought that if he was to survive, he had to kill them. To put his plot into practice he branded as a deserter and a spy the recruit who had slightly violated discipline and defined as poison the tooth-powder the women guerrillas had used. He went to the length of charging the women guerrillas, the owners of the tooth-powder, of being spies.

Om had conducted underground work with Kim Jong Suk for some months in Taoquanli, yet he was still vicious enough to stigmatize her as a spy. He knew only too well what type of woman Kim Jong Suk was.

The example of Om Kwang Ho shows that a man obsessed with careerism will become a villain who does not care a straw about his organization, comrades or moral obligation and who will betray the revolution. As Om confessed, he had planned that if his plot against women guerrillas had failed, he would have run away in order to escape responsibility.

As we learned from Om's case, ultra-revolutionaries, extremists,

double-dealers, those who criticize others in public while scheming with them in secret, capricious, disgruntled or self-opinionated people, fame-seekers and careerists always cause trouble in a revolution. Unless you take measures to deal with such people before it is too late, you will find yourself in a terrible mess.

Om's case also teaches the lesson that if a person fails to cultivate himself ideologically in everyday life, he loses confidence in the victory of the revolution and grows discontented and faint-hearted, yielding to even the most ordinary hardships. In the end he becomes a defeatist and does immeasurable harm to the revolutionary struggle.

The spy ring incident fabricated by Om was an unusual event that might have played havoc with our unity based on ideology and will, morality and ethics. This was why we of the Headquarters' Party Committee examined the case very seriously before putting it to the officers and men at a meeting held in Beidadingzi for mass judgement.

When the events at the Qingfeng Secret Camp were made public, all the officers and men unanimously supported the women guerrillas who had kept our line without yielding their faith in adversity. On the other hand, they demanded that Om Kwang Ho and Ri Tong Gol, who had failed to view the real nature of the incident with a keen political eye and had overlooked Om's crime, be executed in the name of the People's Revolutionary Army.

At first Om tried in every way possible to defend himself. Only after he was denounced by the masses did he admit his crime. He begged us to spare his life, shedding tears.

By contrast, Ri Tong Gol did not utter a word of excuse from the start; he admitted his mistake and asked for execution himself. He accepted the criticism of the masses open-mindedly and repented bitterly.

Ri was a man of strong will, warm heart and amiable character.

He was efficient in both political and underground work. When appointing O Jung Hup commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment at the Nanpaizi meeting, we appointed Ri political commissar of the same regiment, because we had a high opinion of his qualifications and experience in political work.

He made the mistake of playing into the hands of his subordinate because he was taken in by Om's flattery. This happened because he remained in his room and failed to get in touch with his men. As he had been wounded seriously, he must have found it difficult to go out among them, but even though he could not go outside, he should have called them to his room and had frequent talks with them.

If he had met even one guerrilla when Om was making a fuss about his "spy ring" he would have discovered the truth about the incident. However, he met no one after hearing the report from Om and left the latter to do whatever he wanted. When Om said he would interrogate a recruit, he told him to go ahead; when Om asked if he could detain the women guerrillas, he made no objection.

Ri listened only to Om, not to the other guerrillas, so he could not safeguard people's political integrity from the cunning plots of such an ambitious fellow as Om. This was the greatest mistake of Ri Tong Gol as a political worker. That was why all the officers and men put him in the same category with Om. Whenever a political worker stops breathing the same air with the masses, he will invariably land in this kind of mess.

Officials who deal with people's political integrity must not stop breathing the same air with the masses, not even for a moment. This means that they must pick up a spade when people take up spades, eat millet when people eat millet, and share everything with them. Officials who neglect their work among the masses do not understand people's feelings or mentality, their demands or aspirations.

Some of our officials overtly or covertly persecute those who criticize them, and depending on the seriousness of the criticism, toy with the political integrity of innocent people. Some officials are swayed by the words of a few flatterers and deal thoughtlessly with matters that decide the people's destiny. If officials abuse their authority and deal with people's political integrity as they please, they incur people's resentment and hatred and thus divorce the Party from the masses.

Our Party carries out benevolent politics, and in our country every one leads a harmonious life in one great family, enjoying the benefits of the benevolent politics. Our kind of politics has assumed the mission of taking care of people's political integrity as well as their physical existence. Our Party values their political soundness more than anything else.

People with the same ideology and ideals get together and form an organization, a political party, and each of them acquires political uprightness in that collective. For this reason the political purity of the masses numbering in the millions immediately becomes the lifeline of the organization, the party. Therefore, dealing with people's political integrity improperly or tarnishing it reduces the life-span of the party. If the party is to remain strong and sound until it carries out its highest programme, it must work among the people efficiently and safeguard their political soundness. This is the lesson we must learn from the incident in Qingfeng. You must bear it in mind at all times.

Though his mistake was serious, Ri Tong Gol was a man deserving mercy. He made a mistake because he had forgotten his duty as a political head and had been fooled by Om Kwang Ho. He did not mastermind the plot but acted passively—siding with Om and overlooking his scheming.

Taking this into consideration, we simply demoted him.

As he was let off with a demotion instead of severe punishment,



he called on me and insisted that the punishment was too light. He said, “I want to be given a heavier punishment. Please send me to the most dangerous place so that my mistake might be rectified at the cost of my blood and life. My comrades-in-arms will pardon me only when I shed blood and sacrifice my life. They will then call me their comrade as before.”

Later he faithfully discharged the assignments handed to him by Headquarters. He was finally arrested by the enemy and hanged in Sodaemun prison on the eve of the liberation of the country on August 15, 1945.

During the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle he went by the assumed name of Kim Jun along with his original name.

## 9. The Salt Incident

In June 1949 the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung presided over a small meeting of the Cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The topic of discussion was the cancellation of salt rationing and the free marketing of this condiment.

Recounting his experiences in the anti-Japanese armed struggle in his concluding speech at that meeting, he said that nothing was more serious than a shortage of salt and that the anti-Japanese guerrillas had done their best never to run short of salt, even though they might go without food. He said that since salt production had increased sharply and it had become possible to store reserves of it, unrestricted salt sales should be introduced.

Having adopted this measure, he told officials about the trouble he and his men had experienced because of a salt shortage during the Arduous March. This had come to be called the salt incident. The following is a selection of his accounts of the incident.

The salt incident I am going to talk about took place in the spring of 1939—the last days of the Arduous March. I still clearly remember the incident. One cannot live without eating salt. If you do not get enough salt, your hands and feet swell and you become so lethargic, you can't even move. Even grass-eating animals have to eat salt to live. Many fallen antlers are found in the vicinity of brine puddles in the mountains, as deer use these puddles as salt-licks.

Guerrillas experienced shortages in four essential consumer

goods—food, footwear, matches and salt. If asked what was the most unbearable of the difficulties felt from the shortage of these essentials, the majority of the veterans of the anti-Japanese revolution would say that it was the lack of salt.

Salt was scarce in North and West Jiandao, and to make matters worse, the authorities strictly controlled its sale. This made the seasoning a rare commodity there. Salt was an item sold under a government monopoly in Manchuria.

The enemy strictly controlled salt-dealing so as to prevent it from leaking through civilian channels into the hands of the People's Revolutionary Army.

Peddlers smuggled salt from Korea and sold it secretly, making the rounds at residential quarters, but they didn't help people much. Many households in the backwoods of Jiandao boiled down wood ashes and drank the water as a salt substitute. In my days in eastern Manchuria I saw a family eating a grain of rock salt for a meal. When I was in Wangqing, I once went to Choe Chun Guk's company and asked Ko Hyon Suk what her greatest difficulty was in her work as a cook. She replied it was the shortage of salt. She had lived next door to O Paek Ryong before joining the guerrilla army to take revenge on the enemy who had killed her large family during their "punitive" atrocities. In the guerrilla army she was appointed a cook. Whenever I went to her company and had a meal, she was always very sorry not to be able to prepare good dishes for me.

When she served food not seasoned with salt, she was ashamed to face me, but stood by the kitchen range with her face flushed. She said that her family had had to get along with only a grain of rock salt for a meal as well. A grain of Chinese rock salt was the size of a kidney bean.

During our second expedition to northern Manchuria we were so short of salt that in some companies the men marched with a

small emergency salt pouch attached to their belts. The pouch was as small as a seal case, about the size of a finger. The contents of the pouch was consumed only when salt was unavailable anywhere else. This might sound like a fairy tale to those who have not experienced this kind of shortage. Nevertheless, quite a few guerrillas lost their lives because they went to the enemy-held area to get salt, and many members of underground organizations were killed in the course of obtaining it. The main channel for getting salt was through underground organizations. When we gave them money, they set people in motion to buy it for us. Some of it was also bought and sent to us by people on their own initiative.

The enemy was well aware through which channels we acquired salt and how hard up we were for it. That was why they cooked up a vicious scheme to annihilate the People's Revolutionary Army by means of salt. They calculated that they could capture or kill all the guerrillas without firing a single shot if they hatched a workable plot by means of salt.

They learned through experience that they could not defeat our army through military or political confrontation, so they resorted to "surrender hunting", the policy of internment villages and scorched-earth operations. They had also organized the "Minsaengdan" in order to destroy our revolutionary ranks from within through the wider international stratagem of driving a wedge between the peoples of Korea and China.

The Japanese attempted to prevent the news of our activities from spreading by even spreading the rumour of "the death of Kim Il Sung", boasting that Kim Il Sung had been killed at their hands and that with his death the independence struggle had now come to an end. In this way they tried to dampen the soaring anti-Japanese spirit of the Korean nation. Quite a few publications in Korea and Manchuria in those days carried plausible-sounding lies in the form of news flashes that I had been killed in such-

and-such a way in such-and-such a battle. The *Kyongsong Ilbo* reported in November 1937 that the Manchukuo “punitive” force had succeeded in killing me after a fierce five-hour battle and that Kim Il Sung, who had succeeded his father in leading the anti-Japanese, anti-Manchukuo movement, had ended his stormy life at the age of 36 after being driven into a tight corner by the “punitive” force.

*Tiexin*, a magazine published by the puppet Manchukuo army, also carried an article about my death under the title, *Detailed News of the Punitive Operation against Bandits Led by Kim Il Sung*. According to the article, I had been surprised by the Manchukuo army in the vicinity of Yangmudingzi, Fusong County, and was killed with eight other guerrillas after a hard battle. The people from a nearby village had confirmed that the dead commander was Kim Il Sung. For this “exploit” a company commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army by name of Li received a special promotion, a certificate of merit and 10 000 *yuan* in prize money from the commander of the Kwantung Army and the Public Security Minister of Manchukuo. But as Kim Il Sung made his reappearance later, they said that their plan had hit a snag.

Japanese imperialists even conducted vivisection on Koreans and Chinese. What was their purpose in doing this? They aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the peoples and the revolutionary armies of Korea and China and the total extermination of all hostile forces that obstructed their domination of the Orient.

However, the enemy found that they could neither put out the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution nor wipe out the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army, no matter what they did.

As things had turned out this way, the enemy, at their wits’ end, attempted to do us harm by poisoning wells and bread, as well as the salt and cereals we bought.

As soon as we went to Changbai, we were nearly caught in by the enemy's trickery. After fighting a battle in Dadeshui and another one in Xiaodeshui in West Jiandao, we went to Mashungou and began making preparations to celebrate the Harvest Moon Day. One day the sergeant of the guard hurried to me and reported that an old man had come to the sentry post and wanted to see the Commander. The sergeant wanted to know what he should do with the old man. When I met the old fellow, he told me that the salt we had obtained in Changbai had been poisoned by the enemy. To confirm this, we fed the allegedly poisoned salt to an animal. It proved poisonous there and then. If the old man had not told us about it in time, we might all have ended up in big trouble. The more difficult our salt situation was, the more sinister became the enemy's attempts to exterminate us through poisoned supplies.

In the spring of 1939 we experienced great difficulties for lack of salt. At this time the regiments that had been conducting dispersed actions had reassembled and were moving with Headquarters on the last leg of the Arduous March. As the march was nearing its end, the guerrillas were in high spirits. By that time we had obtained food and the weather was warm. With the advent of spring every one was in a happy frame of mind. But one day I saw a very strange thing: the guerrillas were staggering around as if they were drunk. This would not have been a problem if only a few had been in this state, but it was alarming that there were so many. Their faces were swollen too, some of them so puffed up that they could not open their eyes properly.

I decided the reason for this was a lack of salt. The serious swelling was all caused by the same deficiency.

The staff of Headquarters had not had salt for about ten days. I asked O Jung Hup when his 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment had last taken it. He replied that the regiment had gone almost entirely without it after parting with Headquarters. It was clear that salt deficiency lay at

the bottom of the trouble.

I was horrified to see this sight just at a time when I was planning our advance into the homeland to strike the enemy after the conclusion of the march. We had to get salt, no matter how. Otherwise, the whole unit might be destroyed.

I looked for a man fit enough to go to the enemy-held area for this purpose. O Paek Ryong who was in command of the Guard Company recommended a recruit named Kim Pong Rok. He had carried booty for the guerrillas and had joined our unit instead of returning home. A mere recruit though he was, he was good at daily routine and fighting. O Jung Hup also said that he was a loyal man and that as his parents were living in Xigang, he would get salt without fail if he went there.

I called him and asked him if he could do this for us. He replied that he would try. He further said that his father went to the mountains around this time of year to gather firewood and that if he himself went in plain clothes, he could meet his father unnoticed by enemy agents and ask him to obtain the salt.

I gave him the assignment and attached an assistant to him. The two of them went off in search of this vital substance.

His father was delighted to see him. He said he was very proud that his son had become General Kim's soldier and felt relieved that his boy should be in the care of the General. He mentioned that the Japs were recently claiming that General Kim had been killed and asked whether this was true. Kim Pong Rok replied that he had just received an order from the General himself at camp before coming to see his father and that the General was perfectly hale and hearty. His father, wiping away tears of relief, said that he had thought so, but he had nevertheless been terribly worried when he had heard all these ominous rumours about the General. He was so happy to know that General Kim was alive. When his son explained why he had come home, the old man was surprised.

Regretting the fact that the revolutionary army should be unable to fight because of a salt deficiency, he promised that he would get it by any possible means to relieve the General of this burden.

Though he reassured his son, the old man found it not so easy to get salt after all. He could buy one or two kilogrammes by himself, but he would be suspected by the enemy if he bought more than that. The Manchukuo authorities and police forbade shops to sell salt beyond a prescribed limit. They also spied on shops now and then, investigating in secret the sale of the condiment. Some shopkeepers were enemy agents; they regularly reported their customers' purchase of goods to the enemy.

Although he himself could buy a certain amount, the old man asked his neighbour and a close acquaintance of his to help him as well so as to obtain as much salt as possible, for he had heard from his son that the guerrillas on the march numbered hundreds. The neighbour promised to cooperate. Then the neighbour told one of his friends proudly that General Kim Il Sung had sent a man from the mountains to obtain salt and that he had promised to do his share. He told his friend to buy as much salt as possible if he was willing to help the guerrillas. Thus the third old man also set out to obtain salt—and this was where the trouble started. Unaware that his son was an enemy agent, the third old man revealed the secret to the young man, a member of the Concordia Association. In those days the Japanese imperialists were bent on “surrender hunting” by forming “pacification squads” and “surrender-hunting teams”. The Concordia Association members took part in the operation. The enemy agent reported to his superior what he had heard from his father.

Informed that we were planning to obtain large amounts of salt through the old men, the intelligence service of the Kwantung Army ordered the police to buy up all the salt from the shops in the area of Xigang and to replace it with salt transported by air



in haste from Changchun. This salt had been poisoned. If one ate this particular salt, one did not die on the spot, but got a headache and became weak in the legs, and lost all combat efficiency. The old men, including Kim Pong Rok's father, who went around making their purchases, were ignorant of this. The enemy had planned the scheme in so strictly confidential and crafty a manner that even the shopkeepers, who were said to be sharp-witted, got no scent of the plot.

The two old men then left with Kim Pong Rok for the guerrilla bivouac. They arrived at around 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

I thanked them and instructed that the salt be shared out among the units.

In those days Comrade Kim Jong Suk always carried vinegar with her for safety's sake, as she was in charge of cooking for Headquarters. After putting some of the vinegar to the salt that had been allotted to Headquarters, she said that the salt seemed to be poisoned. Vinegar is an instant reagent to food poison.

The staff of Headquarters and the soldiers of the Guard Company did not eat the poisoned salt. They regarded it as their moral duty and discipline not to eat before their Commander. That day they had not eaten either, for they were waiting for me to close a meeting and come to my tent.

It was during the meeting that I received the report about the possible poisoning of the salt, so I quickly adjourned the meeting. I threw some salt into a campfire and saw a blue flame spurting out of it. Poisoned salt flares up in blue flames.

I ordered a supply officer to collect all the salt that had been distributed to the units. Some of the guerrillas were embarrassed at the order, for they had already eaten small amounts of it. Some units, though ordered to collect salt, would not return it, doubting that it had really been poisoned. Worse still, some guerrillas hid it in their small pouches.

The worst problem was that the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Regiments had already left for a raid after eating it.

We had planned to attack the enemy that evening and obtain food before going in the direction of the Heixiazigou Secret Camp, so I had given the regiments a combat mission.

It was obvious that the enemy who had fed us poisoned salt would fall upon us at daybreak, and I was quite worried, as the main combat forces had been committed to battle. Just as I was about to send my orderlies to call them back immediately, the combatants themselves returned, dejected and panting. I had never seen O Jung Hup making a report on his arrival in such a sluggish manner. The others were no better than him. Some of them felt so weak, they fell even before reaching the bivouac.

Obviously the enemy intended to pounce on us when we had lost all our combat energy and to capture or destroy us all at one go. The cunning enemy must have calculated when the salt would arrive at our unit, by what time we would eat it and by what time all my men would be lying around, helpless. The situation was serious. The whole unit except Headquarters was going to be exposed to the enemy's attack while they were intoxicated. We found ourselves in a truly critical situation. It was a question of whether the whole unit would be annihilated, or remain alive to continue its resistance against Japan.

I felt far more apprehensive than in Xiaotanghe in the spring of 1937, when we had been surrounded by thousands of enemy troops. I do not know how I can describe my anxiety at that time.

Though surrounded by large enemy forces in Xiaotanghe, I was determined to break through the encirclement by striking the enemy hard because my men were able to fight. But now things were different. It was terrible to be anticipating an enemy attack while my unit was suffering from the effects of poison.

We discussed the threatening situation. Some of the soldiers,

furious, suggested executing the old men then and there. They said the old men must be the enemy agents, otherwise they would not have brought the poisoned salt.

They were wrong in their judgement. If the old men had been in secret contact with the enemy and had known that the salt was poisoned, they would have handed it over to the guerrillas who had gone to the village in Xigang; they would not have taken the trouble to bring it to us themselves. And a father would certainly not have brought poisoned salt to kill his own son! I severely criticized those who had suggested killing the old men. I said, "How absurd it is for you to suggest executing these old men, who carried heavy loads of salt at the risk of their lives to support their fighting sons! You should instead be giving them a warm welcome. Apparently you have lost your senses because you ate the poisoned salt. They were obviously as ignorant of the fact that the salt was poisoned as we were. We've been caught by an enemy trick. The enemy is bound to attack us when the poison has taken its effect on us, so all of you who can still move must quickly get ready to fight and take antitoxic measures. There is no other choice. At daybreak the enemy will come. Not many of us can fight now, so it's going to be a do-or-die battle today."

But the soldiers of the regiments, the major units, said they were too weak to move.

"However weak you are, you must leave this place before the enemy attacks us," I urged. "As long as you are alive, you have to get to a safe place, even if it means crawling on all fours. Otherwise, we'll all be killed when the enemy planes start dropping bombs on us and when their ground forces surround us and open up with their artillery."

In response to my instructions the regiments crawled on all fours to the safety of the forest. I got the Headquarters guards and the machine-gun platoon fully ready for combat.

Some hours later the enemy came to attack us, as we had anticipated. We fought the enemy fiercely for two days. As the main force of the regiments were sheltered in a safe place, only the machine-gun platoon and the Headquarters guards fought the enemy. They battled well, unafraid of death.

Judging from their use of the slowly acting poison, the enemy must have planned to take us all prisoner. If they had captured us, they would have advertised to the world that they were “finished with the punitive operations against the communist bandits” in Manchuria. In those days they kept bragging that the “punitive” operations against the guerrillas would end once they had destroyed Kim Il Sung’s unit.

After repulsing the enemy, we went to the forest where the regiments had taken shelter. We set up a hospital there and treated the soldiers for about a week, feeding them boiled green beans and pumpkins. Everyone fully recovered.

While the salt incident was a most trying experience for me, it was young Kim Pong Rok who was most upset when he heard that the salt had been poisoned. How humiliated he felt at the thought that the salt he and his father brought had been poisoned! They were both pale and at a loss, unable to utter a word, like guilty persons waiting for punishment.

I eased the old men’s minds, insisting that we not only did not suspect them in the least but felt grateful to them for their sincere efforts. Then I told Kim Il, who was familiar with things in West Jiandao, to take them to a safe place, not to their homes for I was afraid that the enraged enemy would commit an atrocity against the innocent old men by blaming them for the failure of their scheme and for the heavy loss of their men. They would kill Kim Pong Rok’s father and his neighbour for the simple reason that the two men had bought salt for the guerrillas, being in secret contact with the guerrilla son of one of them.

Kim Il carried out the assignment responsibly. He took the two old men to a safe place first, then took their families there in secret as well. He also found out how it was that the salt had been poisoned in the first place: the son of the third old man was an evil renegade.

During the Korean war, enemy spies who had wormed their way into our health establishments did not hesitate to kill patients by poisoning their food. It was a deliberately harmful act aimed at damping the people's spirit and planting the seed of mistrust and discord among the medical workers. US imperialists also resorted to germ warfare without hesitation to exterminate our people.

Counterrevolution always resorts to every possible means and method in its attack on revolution. As the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shows, imperialists, both Eastern and Western, are skilled butchers of humanity. They constantly practise their skill to wipe out those who want to live independently, unshackled by others. Modern imperialists these days are conducting operations not just to wipe out hundreds of revolutionaries, or tens of thousands of revolutionary army troops, but carrying out mad procedures meant to destroy all socialist countries at one time. Therefore, we must always be vigilant against their manoeuvres.

Because I suffered such difficulties from lack of salt in the mountains during the anti-Japanese revolution, I questioned the people from the northern border areas after liberation about their salt situation whenever I met them. I once talked to a man who was vice-chairman of the Huchang County consumers' cooperative and asked him what was most lacking among the goods needed by the people in the county. He said it was salt.

In the summer of 1947 I met in my office a boy from Changsong who had come back from a camping trip in the Kumgang Mountains. At that time the boy told me that the people in the Changsong area were suffering serious salt shortages.

After this, I instructed the officials in the commercial sector to take measures to supply sufficient salt to people living in remote mountain areas. As Ryanggang Province is a mountainous region far from the sea, like North and West Jiandao, its inhabitants may experience salt shortages. When I was in Kosanjin during the war I found that salt was in short supply in Jagang Province, too, so I myself ensured that salt was supplied to the people in Kosanjin even though we were going through the difficult period of our temporary retreat at the time.

Officials must always make sure the people living in inland regions are not suffering from a lack of salt.

Deer farms should also feed salt to the animals on a regular basis.