



KIM IL SUNG

*REMINISCENCES*

*With the Century*

(Continuing Edition)

Excerpt (14)

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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

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).

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# 1. Battle of Taehongdan

In May 1939, General Kim Il Sung crossed the Amnok River, again in command of the main force of the KPRA, and destroyed a large number of enemy troops on the Paektu Plateau.

At that time the soldiers of the KPRA spent their first night in the homeland in the forest of Chongbong, which is not far from today's Rimyongsu Workers District, Samjiyon County. This bivouac site was rediscovered after nearly 20 years and made known to the public. Afterwards, the Musan and Yonsa historical sites were also found.

This section compiles the fatherly leader's descriptions of the operation in the Musan area, given on several different occasions.

The question of our advance into the homeland, which was brought up at Nanpaizi, came to a final decision at the Beidadingzi meeting.

My men were eager to advance into the homeland as soon as possible. They wanted to fight a larger battle in Korea than those fought at Pochonbo or Jiansanfang to shake the world. We were afraid of nothing because we were strong, having become as tough as steel through the Arduous March of more than 100 days.

Demonstrating this newfound strength, we attacked many county towns and villages along the Amnok River that spring, then slipped into the homeland.

I think I have recounted the purpose of our advance into the homeland more than once.

As I mentioned before, the number one priority of the political

and military activities of the KPRA was the advance into the homeland. The final objective of the many large and small military operations we had conducted in northern and eastern Manchuria had always been to advance into the homeland and liberate the country. We had concentrated all our efforts on this goal.

A careful timing of the operations in Korea was important. As June 1937 was the right time, so was May 1939. Why? The prevailing situation, our own strong desire and the hopes of the people back in the homeland made a KPRA push into Korea imperative.

We made a decision to expand the armed struggle deep into Korea, based on a detailed analysis of the circumstances at home and abroad.

In May 1939 the Sino-Japanese War was raging in the East and World War II was brewing in the West.

The Japanese imperialists were trying to wind up the dragged-out Sino-Japanese War, concentrate on the possibility of invading the Soviet Union and draw up a strategy for advancing towards the south. In order to build up their home front, they stepped up their offensive against the KPRA, while intensifying their economic plunder and fascist repression of Korea. A typical example was the “Hyesan incident”.

In this incident, revolutionary organizations in West Jiandao and some of those in the northern part of Korea suffered serious damage. Some survived, but most of the important organizations were destroyed. Even those that escaped trouble were cowed.

Following this incident, the enemy continued to spread the lie that the KPRA had perished. In some places they held celebrations for our “destruction” and their “victory”. Some revolutionary organization members who had been deceived by the false propaganda about our supposed demise reasoned this way: “If it is true that something has happened to General Kim Il Sung,

the Korean revolution is as good as finished. What's the use of carrying on a hopeless struggle?" They came in person to our political operatives' camp to find out if the rumour about me was true.

In this situation, the best way to bring about a resurgence in the anti-Japanese revolution was for a large KPRA force to advance into the homeland and strike the enemy hard to show that it was still alive to those at home and abroad. Even if some political operatives managed to penetrate into Korea and tell the people that the KPRA was still in operation, that General Kim Il Sung was healthy and that the revolution was advancing, limited information work such as this would have little effect on the situation.

Another main objective of our advance into Korea was to resurrect destroyed revolutionary organizations and expand them, and at the same time build Party organizations and develop the united front movement to rouse all the people to a nationwide resistance.

It was immediately after the Battles of Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng that revolutionary organizations in the homeland had suddenly multiplied. The sound of gunshots awakens the people, and the awakened people naturally flow into revolutionary organizations. If we had not fought battles after moving to West Jiandao following the Nanhutou meeting but had idled away our time eating the food supplied by the people, revolutionary organizations would not have expanded in the Changbai area so rapidly and on such a large scale.

Revolutionary organizations had sprung up like bamboo shoots after the rain in West Jiandao, partly because we had conducted our ideological work successfully, but mainly because we had fought many battles, demonstrating the mettle of the KPRA and convincing the people that the anti-Japanese revolution was bound to emerge victorious.



When I selected the Musan area as the theatre of our operations in Korea, some commanding officers were quite bewildered because they knew that after the Battle of Pochonbo the enemy had reinforced its guard troops in this area to several times their former strength, and with the most vicious elements at that. To venture in there with a large force would, in fact, be extremely difficult and dangerous.

Nevertheless, I made a decision to move to this area, precisely because it was most difficult and dangerous. If we destroyed the enemy here, the results would be several times greater than operations in any other part of northern Korea.

In those days there were large numbers of workers in the Musan area, including iron miners, the builders of a hydroelectric power station and lumbermen. The sound of our gunshots would make a strong impact on the workers, and through them the news would rapidly spread all across the country.

Our aim was to use the roar of our gunfire to awaken the workers of Musan, as well as the workers and peasants in North Hamgyong Province, and thus go on to stir up all the people into a revolution against the Japanese.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1939 the KPRA units advanced into the Musan area.

We crossed the Amnok River at Dam No. 5. I carried Ri O Song across the river on my back. Wading through the water, I asked him if he knew the name of the river. He said no. In those days my men had almost no idea of where the national boundary lay. When I said it was the Amnok River, he asked me to lower him into the water: he wanted to drench himself in the waters of a Korean river.

Near the dam were many azalea bushes. When they saw the azaleas of their homeland, the guerrillas shouted for joy.

My most lasting memory of the occasion is that of the women guerrillas kneeling around a thicket of azaleas, laughing and crying

at the same time with emotion as they gazed at the flowers. Some of the women threw their arms around the blossoming bushes. Their faces were beaming, but their eyes streamed with tears.

The azaleas we saw that day were not simply flowers. They were part of the homeland, a part of its flesh, so to speak, occupied by the Japanese imperialists. To my mind the azaleas were smiling too, but it was a sad smile. As the guerrillas shed tears at the sight of the azaleas, the flowers themselves seemed to weep. Patriotism is indeed a strong feeling. Can flowers feel sorrow or shed tears? What difference is there between the azaleas of those days and those of today? To us, who were grieving the loss of our national freedom, even the azaleas seemed to lament over the ruin of our country as they flowered and shed their blossoms in a land occupied by the Japanese.

On that day these were no mere flowers to the guerrillas, but the azaleas of the homeland. This flower was a symbol of the ardent desire of the guerrillas who so greatly loved their homeland and their people, a desire to hurry the spring of national liberation so that a paradise for people could be built in a liberated Korea.

Whenever I see azaleas now, I recall the anti-Japanese armed struggle and feel an urge to quote poetry. The azalea of the homeland, the azalea of Mt. Paektu, light pink azalea that heralds the spring of Korea! How full of meaning this lovely flower is!

Just as we arrived at Chongbong, the fog lifted and the sun came out. The weather was perfect. I still remember that we built a campfire and dried our leggings, which were wet with dew.

I climbed the hill to see if there was any sign of enemy movement and to get an idea of the terrain. I saw smoke coiling up at a distance and heard the sound of chopping wood, so I warned my officers of possible enemy presence and ordered them to maintain stealth in movement. I chose camp sites for every unit,

posted sentries and sent out reconnaissance parties.

When camp had been set up, some of the men stripped the bark off trees and wrote mottoes on the trunks. During the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the guerrillas wrote mottoes on trees in many of the places they stopped. Among such writers was Ju Yuan-ai from Xinglongcun, who had studied hard and was good at calligraphy. Yan An-ji, who had been a teacher in a secondary school, was also a good calligrapher. Comrade Kim Jong Suk, too, wrote many mottoes.

We have lost these excellent comrades, but the trees and their mottoes remain, so it seems as if the writers were still alive. Our people have now discovered these priceless treasures.

The motto-bearing trees at Chongbong preserve the revolutionary spirit of our comrades-in-arms. When I see these trees I feel as if I saw the fighters themselves. The mottoes written by the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters are not mere phrases, but valuable revolutionary documents. The mottoes glow with the spirit of these fighters. They are lasting treasures for our Party and people to preserve and cherish.

We bivouacked overnight at Chongbong and then moved to Konchang the next day.

While we were camping at Konchang, the enemy sent two spies disguised as anglers into the bivouac area. Around Konchang there was hardly any place for fishing, yet these “anglers” were sneaking around our bivouac area in broad daylight. Their demeanour was so suspicious that the sentry tried to arrest them to examine them. One of them ran away, while the other obeyed the sentry. The captured man was even carrying a pistol.

The spy confessed that the enemy had already caught wind of our presence in the homeland and had sent out a large number of garrison and police troops to search the forests thoroughly.

As we had anticipated, the enemy forces were concentrated in

this area. The best way in this situation was to slip away from their encirclement.

I made a tactical feint against possible enemy actions. I grouped two small forces and sent one detachment to strike the enemy at Phothae-ri and ordered the other to make footprints towards Changbai across the Amnok River, then disappear. I did this to confuse the enemy by giving them the impression that the KPRA was operating at several different places.

At dawn the next day we left Konchang and marched towards Pegae Hill. That day the fog was so dense that we could not see an inch ahead. The scouting party had a trouble trying to find its way, so I joined it and decided the direction we should take by using a military map and a compass. Our march was very risky. If an enemy search party suddenly appeared and encountered us, it would mean trouble. We would have no problem in destroying them, but the sound of gunfire would lay obstacles to our future action. We were therefore very nervous while on the march.

On arriving in Pegae Hill, I ordered the unit to bivouac and sent out reconnaissance parties. They discovered a splendid, newly-built highway that ran through the primeval forest east of Pegae Hill. I confirmed that this was the Kapsan-Musan guard road, which I had already been informed of. It was a road for emergency use, connecting uninhabited areas between Kapsan and Musan. This road was supposed to be for moving the “punitive” forces by mobile means to any spot on short notice in case the KPRA pushed into Korea. I was told that because the project had been finished only recently, the road was kept clear for inspection, and no unauthorized traffic was allowed. The scouts said that “Off Limits” notices had been put up everywhere.

The Japanese imperialists created such “Off Limits” and “No Admission” zones in different parts of our country and strictly prohibited Koreans access to them. Under Japanese rule, in the

heart of Pyongyang were streets where only Japanese lived. When Koreans appeared in these streets the Japanese policemen or merchants scowled at them. Korean children were not allowed to hang around the gates of Japanese schools. If a Korean boy who was ignorant of such a rule happened to wander through the gate into the playground now and then, he got his ears boxed or was treated as a beggar. However, Japanese children were free to enter Korean school grounds or the Korean sections of town, where they did anything they pleased. One day a group of delinquent Japanese boys from Pyongyang raided a melon field near the Changdok School, trampled all over the field and made off with the melons a poor farmer had carefully cultivated all through the summer. I and my classmates went after them, taught them a lesson and drove them back to the city.

Though the enemy had made even the border area an “Off Limits” zone to Koreans, we would not tolerate this. I thought that in order to challenge the Japanese rule over Korea we should demonstrate the strength of the KPRA by dealing a blow to the enemy who had built the Kapsan-Musan guard road.

The road that had been constructed on the frontier and was kept under strict guard was an apparent attempt by the enemy to make up for their ignominious defeats in Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng.

I summoned my officers and gave them the following briefing:

“We are now on the march within the enemy lines. The enemy is everywhere, in front and rear and on both sides of us. Suspecting that we are operating in the homeland, the enemy has mobilized large ‘punitive’ forces from border garrisons and police troops in different parts of North and South Hamgyong provinces and is preparing a large-scale encirclement and search operation. Because the escaped spy saw us, the enemy may be following us

now through Konchang after making a search for us at Chongbong. We must slip away quickly into the Musan area and put into effect the operation plan we drew up in Beidadingzi, but the situation makes our advance difficult. There is danger that we may be caught in the mesh of complete encirclement. How can we advance with speed into Musan?"

The commanding officers made one suggestion after another. Some comrades said that we should dispatch a small unit to lure the enemy in the direction of Changbai before the main force advanced into the Musan area. Other comrades asserted that we should fight a big battle around Pegae Hill, as we did in Jiansanfeng, now that the way to the Musan area was blocked.

All their opinions sounded good, but none of them convinced me of the possibility of moving fast to Musan.

I heard all their suggestions and organized a debate before giving my own idea. My plan was to march in broad daylight along the new highway that was waiting for inspection.

The officers were taken aback at my proposal. This was natural, for my plan meant that a large force would march, not along a back lane, but a special highway the enemy had built solely for the "punitive" operations against us. Their faces showed that they had little confidence in my suggestion. This very fact rather proved that my plan to march boldly in the daytime along the highway was a tactically correct one.

I outlined for them the tactical intention of my plan and the possibility of realizing it.

"Your own attitude proves that it is possible to march in broad daylight along the Kapsan-Musan guard road. When I suggested this plan you were stunned.

"The enemy, too, will never be able to imagine that a large KPRA unit would march along their specially-built guard road right in the middle of the day. This very fact makes it amply

possible to carry out the march. Doing boldly what the enemy regards as impossible is a tactical guarantee of success in this move.”

The commanding officers all left Pegae Hill full of confidence.

So many azaleas were in full bloom everywhere, the faces of our guerrillas looked rosy.

On Lake Samji, too, there were many azaleas. Masses of them along the shore and their reflection in the water made such a picturesque scene that I felt I would like to build a hut and live here for ever. It was wonderful to see such rare scenic beauty in an alpine region like the Paektu Plateau.

Highland scenery has a peculiar attraction. The scenery around Lake Samji is as majestic as Mt. Paektu and at the same time it looks delicate, as if spangled with jewels. The landscape of Lake Samji in which the scenic beauty of the highland blends in harmony with the serene plain, is worth its weight in gold.

That day I felt in the marrow of my bones how lovely was the land that had been taken from us.

I was so fascinated with the picturesque scenery of Lake Samji that I made up my mind to build this place into a holiday centre for our people after driving the Japanese imperialists out of Korea and show it off to the world. This ideal has been realized today.

Lake Samji has become a revolutionary battle site that attracts many visitors from different countries. It is also renowned as a health resort for its unique highland charm.

Until 1956, when Comrade Kim Jong Il visited the revolutionary battle sites in Ryanggang Province with the first expedition party in our country, only fallen trees and piles of leaves were seen on the lake, and most of the area remained untouched. There was only a worn-out skiff and an old-style

pavilion that the local people had built before the Korean war to enhance the beauty of the lake.

When I returned from my official visits to the Soviet Union and the people's democracies in East Europe, Comrade Kim Jong Il told me about the activities of his expedition. He recounted in excitement what he had learned and felt during the visit to the revolutionary battle sites. He said he regretted that these historical sites, so alive with the spirit of the revolutionary forerunners, had not been laid out properly, but remained in a natural state without guides to explain their history to visitors.

In 1956 a campaign just started to eliminate flunkeyism and dogmatism and establish Juche in ideological work. Until that time Juche had not been firmly established in the ideological work of our Party. As a result, the materials and relics associated with the revolutionary history of our Party had not been unearthed widely, the revolutionary battle sites were not laid out properly and a full-scale study of revolutionary traditions had not been made.

It was a significant event that in this situation Comrade Kim Jong Il decided to form an expedition to the revolutionary battle sites in the Mt. Paektu area with his fellow students from Pyongyang Secondary School No. 1.

After we had left Lake Samji, we marched as fast as we could to the Musan area by the Kapsan-Musan guard road. We called such a march tactic "one thousand miles at a run".

During the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we employed this tactic several times, each time with good results. But never before had there been an instance of a large force of hundreds of soldiers moving over a long distance in broad daylight on a highway like the one they called the guard road. It was we ourselves who opened the guard road for the Japanese, so to speak. We marched in fine array along the straight highway in broad daylight, reached



Mupho on the Tuman River on that same day and pitched camp there.

I was told that when the enemy found out later that we had marched in the daytime along their guard road, they groaned in despair and called our bold move an “unprecedented oddity”.

The march made a greater impact than the annihilation of several enemy regiments or divisions.

At Mupho I gave my officers a briefing in which I reviewed our march and set forth the task of pushing into the Tachongdan area. We decided to carry out military and political activities first around Sinsadong and Singaechok.

We left Mupho the next morning and arrived at the Tachongdan tableland. On arrival we had lunch in the vicinity of a mountain shrine and moved our forces in two directions, the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment going to Singaechok by way of Tujibawi and the Guard Company and the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment under my command to Sinsadong at the foot of Mt. Soroun.

At that time, we conducted political work at Sinsadong. I placed Headquarters on a small rise by a brook and went with several guardsmen and orderlies to the biggest lumbermen’s residence in the village.

Seeing our sudden appearance in the Musan area, the people exclaimed in great excitement and joy that it was a colossal lie of the enemy that the entire KPRA had frozen to death last winter. They wondered how it was possible for so many soldiers to appear suddenly in their midst from nowhere.

Their barracks was no better than a cowshed or a stable. I noticed a rope stretched low down the centre of the room like a wash-line. I asked one of the workers what the rope was for. He replied that they put their feet on it while sleeping. The room was so narrow that the men who were to lie on both sides of the rope could not stretch their legs, so they had to crisscross their feet on the rope.

The workers were treated worse than cows or horses. A cow or a horse at least has human protection.

That evening many people gathered in the barracks. Both the room and yard were crowded. I made a speech before the people of Sinsadong and conducted organizational and political work among them.

The warm hospitality the villagers gave us that night is still fresh in my mind. There were many slash-and-burn peasants in the village who were unable to do spring sowing for lack of seeds. Nevertheless, the village women prepared a meal of cooked glutinous millet and potato-starch noodles for us “to treat the Korean army under the command of General Kim Il Sung,” they said.

Our men were so moved by their kindness that they unpacked and shared out all their provisions among the villagers when they left Sinsadong. Comrade Kim Jong Suk cooked all her wheat flour into dough-flake soup for the host’s family and applied her face-cream to his daughter’s hands. When we left, the villagers saw us off in tears.

I foresaw that the enemy who had been hit at Singaechok would naturally chase us, and made a decision to destroy them in the Taehongdan tableland, where the terrain features were in our favour. After leaving Sinsadong, we lay in ambush on a low hill on the tableland, waiting for O Jung Hup’s 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment to return from Singaechok. As I instructed, the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment had struck the enemy in Singaechok and were now coming back. But they were somewhat elated at their success in destroying the enemy in Singaechok and in capturing several Japanese foremen, so they were not aware of an alarming fact: an enemy force was trailing close behind them in secret. The force was made up of border garrisons and Changphyong police troops that had come running at the news of the defeat of their colleagues in Singaechok.

At first my men, lying in ambush, took the soldiers coming at the heels of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment for a friendly force. They could not distinguish between friend and foe partly because the fog was so thick, but mainly because the enemy was so close behind the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

I realized instantly that the helmeted soldiers coming in the wake of our regiment was an enemy force. The situation had developed as I expected, but the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment was in a very dangerous position, right in front of the muzzles of enemy guns. Because of this situation, the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Guard Company were going to have to fire with special care at the open-fire signal, otherwise there was the possibility of their killing their own troops. But we could not wait indefinitely until a wide enough gap was created between friend and foe. If we delayed, the enemy might attack the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment first. In such a case, the supply-service men and the lumbermen who were carrying packs for us might suffer great losses.

As soon as the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment had passed by the area of our ambush, I signalled the supply-service men and lumbermen to throw themselves on the ground, then ordered my men to open fire.

Hundreds of rifles opened up with a deafening roar. The guerrillas were in a fever of excitement at the time. They were charged with emotion and energy at the thought that the whole country would hear the sound of this particular gunfire. I, too, was every bit as excited as my men. We mowed down the enemy troops. Those who survived, however, resisted desperately. The army and police troops of the enemy on the border were much more tenacious and ruthless than those in other areas. Their resistance was really formidable. Apparently the Japanese deployed their elite troops in the border regions.

The supply-service men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment and workers

between us and the enemy could not raise their heads under the blanket of fire. The workers were at a loss as to what to do. Among the supply-carriers there were some Japanese.

At that time a somewhat peculiar thing happened on the battlefield. The workers were divided into two sides, with Koreans running towards the KPRA with the supplies on their backs and the Japanese crawling towards the Japanese troops, tossing away their loads.

No Korean worker went over to the Japanese.

At this sight, I keenly felt that the heart of the nation was beating as it should.

Most of the enemy who encountered us in Taehongdan were killed.

One of us was killed and two wounded. Kim Se Ok fell in action. He was the fiance of Ma Kuk Hwa, younger sister of Ma Tong Hui. He was shot through his chest while guiding the supply-carriers to a safe place with the sergeant-major of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Seeing his wound, I knew it was hopeless. Apparently Kim Song Guk carried him on his back. I remember that Kim Song Guk's uniform was soaked with blood.

I intended to send back the lumbermen before crossing the Tuman River. But they followed us, saying that they could not return while Kim Se Ok was in a critical condition after saving their lives.

Kim Se Ok was in a coma as we crossed the Tuman River.

When he finally died, all of us cried. The supply-carriers who followed us could not keep back their tears either.

He was buried at the foot of the Changshan Pass. After liberation we moved his grave to Taehongdan.

On the day when we buried Kim Se Ok we evacuated Nam Tong Su, also seriously wounded, to a nearby secret camp. It turned out that in that camp he lived alone for over one hundred

days, like Robinson Crusoe. Some people may not believe that a seriously wounded man who could hardly move stayed alive for one hundred days without a regular supply of food in an isolated situation without any contact with the unit, but it was a fact.

The man who was supposed to nurse him was a Chinese called Old Man Zheng, who had recently come to us from a mountain rebels' unit. Fooled by the Japanese propaganda that the People's Revolutionary Army was a "bandit group" he had joined our unit to earn money. He thought that robbery with the "communist bandits" would give him a better chance at making money than with the mountain rebels. When he realized that the People's Revolutionary Army was an honourable army, not a gang of bandits, he decided our unit was not the place for him, an idler. He made up his mind to kill Nam Tong Su before he returned home, thinking that he would be safer if he killed a communist before going back.

Nam Tong Su guessed his evil design and crawled out of the hut at night. He hid himself for two days, covering his body with fallen leaves. After Old Man Zheng had left, he kept himself alive eating tree leaves, grass sprouts and the meat of squirrels and snakes, waiting to meet our liaison man. But to make matters worse, the liaison man himself was killed in a "punitive" attack.

He had to live again in isolation. While wandering about, looking for our unit, he went to Kapsan where his mother was working in an underground organization. Afterwards, he moved to eastern Manchuria to help the Chinese revolution. I cannot remember clearly when he came to the homeland in response to our call.

When he arrived, he burst into tears and said, "General, I come to you only now. I even lost the blanket you gave me."

Our comrades-in-arms left traces in many parts of the Musan area. Jong Il Gwon, nicknamed "shorty", once worked around

Pulgunbawi with Pak Song Chol.

The Japanese imperialist invaders were astonished at the news that the KPRA had appeared in the Musan area, annihilated a large number of their troops at Tachongdan and crossed back over the Tuman River safely. The mere fact that the KPRA had appeared on Korean soil was enough to drive the enemy mad.

After the Nanhutou meeting the main theatre of operations for the KPRA was the West Jiandao area southwest of Mt. Paektu.

Following our advance into the Mt. Paektu area, our guerrilla actions in West Jiandao often hit the headlines of newspapers and news services in Korea and Manchuria. The Japanese army and police, deployed along the Amnok River from Hyesan to Junggangjin via Singalpha, were constantly on the alert and desperate to block a KPRA “border invasion”.

The police department of South Hamgyong Province collected information about our actions from every angle under the title of “The Movement of the Bandits on the Other Side of the River” and sent it regularly to the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, the headquarters of the Japanese Korea army, the police departments of North and South Hamgyong, North Phyongan and other provinces along the border area and the headquarters of the Ranam 19<sup>th</sup> Division.

The intelligence services of the Japanese army and police often predicted where we would appear and what we would do next.

However, the fact that we appeared at the foot of Mt. Paektu, especially in the Musan area, which was strictly guarded by their border garrison, and annihilated the “punitive” troops at one blow, and then disappeared like a whirlwind—this was completely beyond their powers of imagination. They were left aghast.

The enemy made the mistake of thinking that the KPRA was on the verge of collapse because of its losses in the Arduous

March and the failure of the Rehe expedition. They thought that only a trifling remnant of our force was struggling for survival in Changbai, Linjiang and other areas along the Amnok River, or in Mengjiang, Fusong and other northern Dongbiandao areas.

Along with the Battle of Pochonbo, the operation in the Musan area was the largest-scale action of the greatest significance in the military operations we performed in the homeland. The Battle of Pochonbo demonstrated that Korea was not dead, but very much alive, whereas the Battle of Taehongdan was an event of historical significance in that it showed in a concrete way that the KPRA was not only still alive, but also had grown stronger and was dealing a crushing blow to the Japanese imperialists even as the enemy was going around claiming that it had been destroyed.

The gunshots of the KPRA in the Musan area gave hope to the dispirited people in Korea with proof that our revolution was back on its feet and invigorated the revolution in the homeland, which had suffered a temporary setback because of the “Hyesan incident”. Our military triumph in the Musan area exposed to the world the lie of the enemy propaganda that the KPRA was totally destroyed. After this battle our people no longer believed the enemy about anything they said. Following the battle in the Musan area the workers, peasants and other broad masses from all walks of life in the homeland joined in the current of the anti-Japanese revolution, each more convinced than the other that as long as the KPRA remained alive, the day of national liberation was close at hand.

## 2. The *Tano* Festival at Yushidong

After the Battle of Taehongdan, the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army shifted the theatre of its activities to the northeastern part of Mt. Paektu and conducted brisk military and political activities along the Tuman River. Typical of its military actions in that period was the battle of Wukoujiang, and its most conspicuous political work among the masses of people was the *Tano* festival at Yushidong.

Yushidong in Helong County, China, is a mountain village across the Tuman River from Musan County in Korea.

Years later, during an on-the-spot guidance tour of the Taehongdan area, on the Tuman River, the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung recalled with deep emotion the historical events that took place in the course of the KPRA's military and political activities in the northeastern part of Mt. Paektu after the operation in the Musan area.

I remember the football game played at Yushidong on the *Tano* festival in 1939. Over 30 years have gone by, but I can still recall that particular event. Some people may not believe that we guerrilla fighters took time out to play football; nevertheless, we didn't spend every day of the year shooting and battling. While fighting, we also had a life of culture and leisure suitable to the characteristics of a guerrilla army. In the first half of the 1930s we frequently held sport events in the guerrilla zones. There were quite a few good football players in the Wangqing guerrilla unit.

Later, we had football games in Luozigou before our second



expedition to northern Manchuria, as well as at Yushidong; they were quite interesting. The Korean residents in Jiandao were good footballers. The best among them were those living in Longjing.

After the Battle of Taehongdan, we moved the theatre of our struggle to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu, as planned, to build a strategic base for our revolution in that area. At the meeting of military and political cadres, held at Dagou, Antu County, late in May that year, I set out the policy of building another strong bulwark of our revolution in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu through intensive military and political activities in this area.

Our revolutionary bases, which had been newly established after the dissolution of the guerrilla zones, were mostly in West Jiandao and in various parts of the homeland centring on Mt. Paektu. Given the situation, if we set up new revolutionary bases in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and the northern part of Korea along the Tuman, we would be able to extend the area of KPRA activities and operations, as well as its bases in the rear, over the whole territory of Korea, and while relying on those bases, give a stronger impetus to the Korean revolution as a whole.

Developing the revolution over a wider area is not a special undertaking. It is mainly a matter of building up the ranks of people who can be the motive force of revolution, extending the bases of activities, and obtaining more weapons. In other words, solving the problem of manpower, land and weapons to suit the objective situation and increasing them steadily means developing the revolution in depth. As long as there are people, territory and weapons, we are fully able to defend revolution, expand and develop it.

In order to establish bases, it is necessary above all to overwhelm the enemy through active military operations and to create favourable circumstances for free political work and activities, so that organizations among the local inhabitants of

the areas concerned can be built. Only then will the enemy be prevented from hampering the activities of the revolutionary army. Immediately after crossing the Tuman River following the Battle of Taehongdan, we struck the enemy at Dongjingping, Huifengdong, Wukoujiang, and Qingtoucun, and raided the lumber station near Qingshanli. All these battles were aimed at overwhelming the enemy militarily and creating conditions favourable for KPRA activities.

After each battle we conducted political work among the masses and built new organizations. The joint celebration of the *Tano* festival by both the army and people at Yushidong was a particular example of our political work.

Whenever we were in a new area, we stepped up the revolutionary transformation of the masses and strengthened mass foundations for the armed struggle through lively political work among the local inhabitants by applying a variety of forms and methods suited to the area. This was our traditional work method and consistent mode of activities.

At first we had no plans to celebrate the *Tano* festival at Yushidong, so no preparations were made. The enemy's suppression in the area was so harsh and the situation so grave that no one even thought of holding a celebration. We only decided to celebrate the festival after we had met the residents of Helong, where we moved after our offensive in the Musan area.

As seemed to be the case everywhere we went, the people in Jiandao at that time were full of fear and in low spirits.

The first people we met in Helong were two young peasant brothers, both addicted to opium-smoking. In those days the northeastern area in China was infested with opium addicts and opium was even used as money at that time. The more misruled the country is, the more prevalent are drugs like opium. The

peasant brothers had drifted to Jiandao on the wind of emigration from Korea.

I wondered why these young people of fine appearance took pleasure in opium-smoking. I asked them why they were interested in a terrible habit that sapped their strength in both body and mind, a strength so essential to their work as farmers.

They replied without any compunction: "How can we live in this rotten world without smoking opium? We are living simply because it's impossible to die, and opium is the only thing that helps us forget the world. We first tried to console ourselves with drinking, but drinking needs companions to make it fun. The Japanese ban gatherings of people for pleasure even on holidays, calling it illegal, so we can't drink liquor, can we? That's why we decided to smoke opium."

They continued: "In a few days, it will be the *Tano* festival, but what's the use of such a holiday when people are not allowed to get together even for a bit of home-brewed liquor? In the past when we were at our native village, we used to have a good time on this day, wrestling, playing on the village swing and eating rice cakes mixed with mugwort. Now that we are deprived of our country, we can't even think of such a holiday."

Listening to their complaints, I felt my heart ache. A human being without dreams is as good as dead. We live for the sake of meaning in life, not simply to eat and sleep. By life's meaning I mean its worth, the pride one feels in one's life. A worthwhile life means that one lives the life of a worthy person, exercising one's rights as a human being and creating one's own course in life. The lives of the young brothers who were addicted to opium were worth nothing. What life was there for people confined by a wall or a wire fence? That was mere existence, not life. Existence without life is worthless and without meaning.

From my childhood I had not liked opium-smokers, but I felt

a certain sympathy for the young peasant brothers.

I persuaded them: “It’s a crime for you as Korean young people to idle away your time, smoking opium, when the nation’s destiny is at stake. Look! These young orderlies and even these women fighters have taken up arms to save the nation. Shame on you! You must give up opium-smoking.”

The elder of the two scratched his head, saying that he did feel quite ashamed of living without a purpose.

After meeting the peasant brothers, I decided that we should conduct military and political activities more energetically in order to invigorate the people and encourage them to live with more hope in freedom. Political activities through speeches alone would not inspire the people. The people wanted to see and hear about the victorious revolution. Fighting made the revolution tangible for them. The 1930s was a period when a gunshot made a far greater impact than a long-winded speech.

We therefore stepped up our military actions along with our political work. First we attacked the enemy at Huifengdong, where the peasant brothers were living, and a nearby internment village. Our attack was so strong that the enemy was unable to fire even a single shot, but ran off into the mountains in disarray. At this sight the inhabitants of Huifengdong were beside themselves with joy.

Alarmed at our move to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and the ensuing battles, in which we killed several hundred enemy troops through successive attacks on more than ten internment villages situated along the Tuman River, the Japanese imperialists made frantic efforts to hold us in check. This was the time when the Kwantung Army had ignited the brush-fire war in Khalkhin-Gol. When the war broke out, tens of thousands of Japanese troops moved to the front, and the enemy made a great fuss, saying it was really a time of emergency. Right at this time of emergency, the

revolutionary army made one attack after another in their rear, thus adding to their confusion.

The Japanese were everywhere in the mountains around Helong. Their forces for the “punitive” operations were so large that one day my chief of staff who had watched the enemy through his field-glasses returned, his face pale with alarm. He told me that we would incur heavy losses if we fought any more battles. He meant that enemy strength was incomparably greater than ours.

I told him: “From the moment it was organized, our army has fought an enemy dozens and even hundreds of times larger than us. It’s absurd to give up our planned operations simply because our force is smaller than the enemy. In such a situation we must strike the enemy even harder, without giving them a breathing space and by employing diverse tactics.”

Around that time our Headquarters obtained reconnaissance information that a Japanese officer, who had been awarded his emperor’s commendation for distinguished services at the front in northern China, had arrived in Bairiping to command the “punitive” forces. The officer was said to be on his way to Japan on leave for his military exploits. Hearing the rumour that the main force of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army had appeared in Antu and Helong, attacking the internment villages there, he bragged; “It is the shame of the Japanese army and nation that we have been suffering one defeat after another, unable to deal with a guerrilla army. I will wipe out this disgrace by annihilating Kim Il Sung’s army.” It seemed he was rather full of himself.

I was told the Japanese officer liked to pass himself off as a commander of matchless valour. He had even had his chest tattooed with *Asura*, a Buddhist “demon fighter”.

Our scouts, who had been to Bairiping, brought, in addition

to the story about *Asura*, the strange piece of news that the Japanese police in Helong County were preparing some *Tano* festival gifts to us. How comical it was that the “demon fighter” who had been awarded the emperor’s commendation and was on his way to his native village on leave should come to Bairiping of his free will to “punish” our army on the one hand, and for the police to be preparing festive gifts for us on the other! If this was true, the enemy’s gift preparation was surely a comedy without a precedent. It was obvious that the gifts would be a fake.

I decided that the enemy was so impudent as to prepare gifts because they had simply not been hit hard enough by the revolutionary army. I therefore planned alluring them from Bairiping towards the Wukou River and annihilating them at a blow.

The battleground we had chosen was a reed field not far from Bairiping. The field bordered the Wukou, along one side of which was a motorway. On both sides of the river and the motorway were forests favourable for ambush. The enemy appeared on the shore of the Wukou in the late morning as the fog was beginning to lift. Several hundred heavily-armed troops were marching in high spirits with a number of machine-guns at the head.

Just as the column entered our ambush area, a Japanese officer wearing a long sword at his side suddenly stopped by a ditch and shouted that there were some strange marks. At his shout, the enemy column came to a halt. Some of his subordinate officers ran towards the ditch and looked into it, cocking their heads. One of our comrades might have left footprints there. When the fight was over, our men searched the battlefield, uncovering the chests of the dead bodies of the Japanese officers; they found that the officer who had been wearing the long sword and had first discovered our traces by the ditch was the *Asura* himself, the commander of the “punitive” force.

The moment the *Asura* rose from stooping by the ditch, I gave the order to fire. In no time we had killed or captured over 200 enemy troops. The *Asura* fell right there beside the ditch, without drawing his sword from its sheath. Our soldiers sneered, saying that if he had gone home and spent his leave in comfort, nothing would have happened to him. He died because of his blind arrogance.

That was the well-known Battle of Wukoujiang or Bairiping. Jo Myong Son wrote his reminiscences about the battle and I read it. After their bitter experience in that battle, the enemy did not dare to reappear in that area. From then on, the people called the villages on the shore of the Wukou the “off-limits villages”, closed to the enemy. From then on we could conduct our political work there freely.

The *Tano* festival that year turned into a festivity celebrating the KPRA units’ brilliant victories on the Wukou and in various other battles fought on the Tuman River.

The villages on the Tuman were enveloped in a joyful atmosphere, as if on liberation day. The young and middle-aged people prepared swings and wrestling grounds, all set to enjoy the coming *Tano* festival day to their hearts’ content.

On our way back from the Battle of Wukoujiang, an interesting event took place. A peasant called on us, bringing with him a variety of food, cigarettes and wine. At first we thought they were aid goods sent by the people. To our surprise, however, the peasant waved his hands, saying that they were not his own gifts but holiday goods sent to General Kim Il Sung by the chief of police in Helong County. The information brought earlier by our scouts had proved to be true.

The gift package sent by the enemy contained also a sealed letter to O Paek Ryong. The enemy addressed to O Paek Ryong in particular, probably because they knew that I held him in trust.

The letter said: “Having fought the Japanese empire for nearly ten years, you have no doubt found out just how strong the empire is. As the *Tano* festival approaches, what about taking our gift, giving up your fight, and paying an annual tribute to us? If you refuse to listen to this warning, you will be taught a bitter lesson.”

Later on we found out that the warning letter had been written by Unami, commander of the police “punitive” troops active in Helong County, on the instructions of the Japanese imperialists. Unami was concurrently holding the office of chief of the police affairs section in Helong County. When he was young, he had come over to Manchuria and worked as a policeman for the Japanese consulate, pledging himself to devote his life to the fight against the communists.

We first met with him in the autumn of 1932. On our return from the expedition to southern Manchuria, we had attacked the Dunhua county town, and he had fired back at us frantically from the police station of the Japanese consulate in the town. Thanks to his survival in that battle, he had been given a commendation from his superiors.

The Japanese army had an institution whereby the dead in battle, either in victory or defeat, was promoted to one rank higher, and received a large sum as a bonus. Even the wounded received a bonus. In a capitalist army controlled by money, there would be no other way of stimulating the fighters except with money. Ri To Son, too, got one more star on his shoulder-strap after his death.

Serving in different places in eastern Manchuria, Unami climbed up the police intelligence ladder and around 1939 became commander of a police “punitive” force of several hundred troops.

In his interview with journalists years later, Unami referred to the letter as a “warning note”, but to us it was something of a



request. Having failed in their military attempt, the enemy tried to placate us in order to achieve their purpose.

To be effective, a warning note needs to be sent at an opportune moment: for instance, when the other side is on the defensive and in confusion, or when it is too exhausted to fight.

Unami, however, was mistaken both in his timing and in choosing his object. In those days we were on the offensive rather than on the defensive, and our armed struggle was at a high tide, not at a low ebb. The KPRA was strong in both its forces and tactics. He was obviously afraid of us, yet at the same time he seemed to be regarding us as an army running short of resources.

Unami sent us his warning note at a time when Tsutsui, the chief of the police department of North Hamgyong Province, went down to Samjang Subcounty, Musan County on the instructions of Minami, the Governor-General of Korea, with a lot of comfort goods and journalists. The purpose of the visit was to console the soldiers and policemen who had been hit by us. After the Battle of Pochonbo, too, Minami had dispatched the so-called inspection team, headed by the chief of the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, to the battlefield on a mission to investigate the situation after the battle.

Even though Unami had hectored us in his so-called warning note with his talk of a “bitter lesson”, his words were nothing but a bluff. I told O Paek Ryong to write in reply to the letter. O Paek Ryong was not a particularly good writer, but that letter he wrote quite well. He said: “You have gone through all sorts of hardships for seven or eight years to ‘punish’ us, and where the hell did it get you? You have only supplied us with arms and food. What else did you manage to accomplish? It’s you who are wretched, not us. You poor sods, why don’t you stop your futile efforts and go back home where your wives and children are waiting for you? In a few days it’ll be the *Tano* festival. I suggest you prepare

some cake and wait for me. I'll be your guest and I'll teach you what you need to do." His letter was worded rather strongly.

I instructed that on the *Tano* festival day all the inhabitants living along the twelve-kilometre Yushidong valley, as well as the people of Huifengdong and its neighbouring villages, be invited to the sports event.

In Yushidong there's a tableland several hectares wide. We set up goalposts there and held our football game. The news that we had even held a football match, enjoying the holiday in a calm and composed manner right in the heart of Helong at a time when the enemy was massing its "punitive" troops, would have a far greater effect than a few battles or several hundred words of speech. The football match in the enemy-ruled area was another unique example of our political activities.

The football match between the soldiers of the revolutionary army and the young villagers was great fun. Their technique was not worth mentioning and their teamwork was loose, but the players of both teams did their best, kicking at the air now and then, or slipping and falling down on the grassland, drawing bursts of laughter from the onlookers.

The old folks said it was the first time since the village had come into being that the villagers of Yushidong were able to laugh and forget their worries.

The match ended in a draw, but its political score was ten out of ten.

Both the swinging competition and the wrestling match were enjoyable to watch, and the joint amusement of army and people and art performances recorded a volley of encores, exceeding the scheduled time by far. The villagers expressed their gratitude to the revolutionary army for organizing the festival.

On that day scores of young villagers in Yushidong joined our ranks, proof that our political work had hit its mark with the

villagers. We must regard sports events and entertainment as one form of political work.

In our country there are thousands of theatres, cinemas and cultural halls. If the assembly halls in institutions and enterprises are all added up, they will number tens of thousands that can serve as nice places for political work and mass cultural activities. Our officials, however, are not using them effectively. These halls have been built with a large investment, yet they are often left vacant, except for times when important events or meetings are taking place. How good it would be if officials were to organize in those nice buildings lectures on scientific developments or the current situation, oratorical contests or poetry recitals, and public meetings with noted scientists, writers, artists, sportsmen, heroes and labour innovators!

As guerrillas we had no microphones, theatres or radio stations, yet in spite of our difficult situation we conducted uninterrupted political activities among the masses by doing our best with what we had.

In the years that followed, the inhabitants of Yushidong and its vicinity helped our struggle actively. I think the young peasant brothers in Huifengdong must have given up opium and joined the fight as organization members.

The great leader's activities for the revolutionary transformation of the villages on the Tuman River were not confined to Helong. He paid close attention to the revolutionary movement in the homeland as well. Some days before the *Tano* festival he had come over to Peak Kuksa in Korea and held a meeting of the chiefs of underground revolutionary organizations and political operatives in the homeland. Peak Kuksa is situated on the Sodusu River, a tributary of the Tuman.

The principal architect of the meeting on Peak Kuksa, from preparation to convocation, was Ri Tong Gol, who was the chief of the

political operatives team. Whenever this meeting was mentioned, the fatherly leader used to recollect Ri Tong Gol with a feeling of special affection and intimacy, always speaking highly of him as a loyal commander.

After the Battle of Tachongdan we moved to Helong, where we immediately held the meeting of the Headquarters' Party Committee and wrote off Comrade Ri Tong Gol's penalty. On the same day we entrusted him with responsibility for political work in the homeland.

The revolution in the homeland had a mountain of work lying ahead of it. The major task was to restore and expand as soon as possible the underground revolutionary organizations, destroyed in the "Hyesan incident". We sent Ri Tong Gol to the Musan area to build a strong network of underground organizations there similar to the ones Ri Je Sun and Pak Tal had once built.

I told him that I had plans to hold a meeting of the heads of underground revolutionary organizations and political operatives in the homeland at a suitable place in the Musan area, and I instructed him to make preparations for the meeting. Ri Tong Gol did a good job of the preparations. He first worked actively with the Korean inhabitants of the Chinese villages on the Tuman River; relying on their help, he then spent time in the homeland, finding out the organizational line and expediting the preparations for the meeting carefully.

Kim Jong Suk helped him greatly in those days, acting as a liaison between Headquarters and Ri. We sent her to the frontier villages on the Tuman River for frequent contacts with Ri Tong Gol. She conveyed our instructions and intentions to him in time. In those days the peasants in Samjang Subcounty, Musan County, did not have enough farmland. They used to go over to China to grow their crops throughout the summer, returning in autumn

to Korea with the crops they had harvested. The inhabitants of Musan called this “Jiandao farming”. Even among the peasants of Kapsan there were quite a few engaged in “Jiandao farming”. Kim Jong Suk worked first with the peasants who came to China for farming and through them got in touch with the homeland.

Ri Tong Gol and Kim Jong Suk played the leading role in converting Musan and Yonsa to a revolutionary line.

Less than 20 days after he had been assigned the task, Ri Tong Gol had already finished the preparations for the meeting.

On the day of the meeting, Ri Tong Gol took me across the Tuman River over a dam built by raftsmen, and we climbed up Peak Kuksa, the prearranged meeting place. At the meeting we discussed measures to expand underground revolutionary organizations and to set the Korean revolution on a path of continuous expansion.

After the meeting Ri Tong Gol made two suggestions to me: one was to expand and develop the organization he had set up in Samjang into the Yonsa area, as pointed out at the meeting, thus developing it into a model of Party and ARF organizations; the other was to invite the heads of the homeland organizations and all the other participants at the meeting to the *Tano* festival at Yushidong so that they could see for themselves our methods of political work.

I agreed to his suggestions.

After the meeting Ri Tong Gol accompanied us to Yushidong and celebrated the *Tano* festival. He then went to a secret rendezvous to pass on the policy set forth at the meeting on Peak Kuksa to ARF organizations. As he was preparing to leave for the Yonsa area in touch with a member of homeland organization, he was surprised by the enemy, wounded and captured.

After his arrest an organization member came to the Wukoujiang Secret Camp, carrying a secret note Ri Tong Gol had

entrusted to him. The note contained the ciphered account of the state of the underground organizations in Dagou, Antu County, and in Yushidong, Helong County, as well as in Samjang and Yonsa in Korea, together with his plan of activities in the Yonsa area. Apparently, Ri Tong Gol had made a note of necessary information from time to time and handed it over to the organization member as a precaution.

According to Pak Tal, even behind bars Ri Tong Gol encouraged the revolutionary comrades to struggle, communicating with them by knocking at the walls of his cell. He also fought well in court. Whenever he appeared in court, he demonstrated the spirit of a communist by shouting the slogan, "Long live the Korean revolution!"

Ri Tong Gol, like Kim Ju Hyon, had committed a serious mistake in the course of his work, but had corrected his error through revolutionary practice and ended his life honourably. A human being is not a machine, so he may commit errors in his work. How he corrects his errors depends on his ideology and preparedness. Ri Tong Gol had not only criticized himself sincerely for his errors, but had also trained himself ideologically after his dismissal from the post of regimental political commissar. That was why he was trusted again by his comrades before long.

A man's true worth reveals itself most clearly when he has been punished. When punished by his organization, an ill-prepared person usually complains about the punishment, saying it is too severe or undeserved or exaggerated instead of accepting it honestly. And he takes revenge in one way or the other upon those who have criticized him. He also gives a wide berth to his comrades in the revolution. What pleasure is there in such a life? If he keeps his heart shut to his comrades, he will drift away from his collective and end up dreaming of something else.

Enlightened people, however, always accept their comrades' criticism honestly and seriously, no matter how severe it may be. Such people regard criticism as a tonic.

Even after they were given the heavy penalty of being dismissed from the post of commander, Kim Ju Hyon and Ri Tong Gol did not lose heart or degenerate, but corrected their errors instead, for they had fully absorbed their comrades' criticism and regarded it as something invigorating.

One's ability to accept comrades' criticism is a barometer of one's personality and self-enlightenment. Ri Tong Gol was a communist who can be held up as a model in terms of personality and edification.

Even after his death his painstaking efforts became hundreds of sparks on the Tuman River and in the depth of the homeland. After Ri Tong Gol's arrest, Kim Jong Suk went to the Yonsa area in his place to link the members of the Party and ARF organizationally and to develop these organizations as Ri had intended. The organizations constituted a great force in the all-people resistance.

As you can see, the Tuman River should never be viewed with indifference.

### **3. Women Fighters and Revolutionary Honour**

Throughout his life the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung often recollected women guerrillas who had heroically laid down their lives in the battlefield and on the gallows, not seeing the day of national liberation, women who remained loyal to the revolution until death.

This section contains some of the fatherly leader's recollections on women fighters who sacrificed their lives without the slightest hesitation during the most trying period of our struggle for the sake of the revolution and who preserved their honour as communists to the very end.

I am greatly satisfied with the newly-built Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery we have just seen. You have worked hard to build it.

How many women fighters are buried here? More than ten, certainly. That is as it should be. They all deserve to have their monuments set up and epitaphs inscribed on these monuments.

Ri Sun Hui fought well as a worker of the Young Communist League. She had once been the head of the Wangqing County children's department. I know her well. She was a woman of principle. Showing contempt for this young woman, the enemy attempted to squeeze the secret of our underground organizations out of her, but they failed. She was put to cruel torture, but she refused to divulge the secret. Such fighters as Ri Sun Hui must be held up as models for the coming generations.

Jang Kil Bu was not a guerrilla herself, but she lived a worthy



life as the mother of Ma Tong Hui, a revolutionary. She also sent her daughter and daughter-in-law to the guerrilla army and helped other revolutionaries in their work. Her son, daughter and daughter-in-law all fell in the armed struggle. Everyone who fought, arms in hand, against the Japanese is a hero or heroine. Had there been an official Hero award in those days, Mother Jang's children would have all been awarded the title of Hero. Therefore, as a mother of one hero and two heroines, she must naturally be enshrined in the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery. Old as she was, Mother Jang also played an active part in socialist construction.

All the other women who are buried here fought, arms in hand, shoulder to shoulder with us men for the revolution against the Japanese.

Two women fighters are placed in the same row as comrades Kim Chaek and Kang Kon. This is evidence of the position and role of our women in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. Some veterans, particularly Kim Il, Rim Chun Chu and Choe Hyon, requested me earnestly to have Kim Jong Suk's bust put up there, saying that this was the unanimous desire of the people and of her comrades-in-arms.

I recommended Choe Hui Suk for that row. She was an honourable fighter who deserves her place in the top row. In view of their friendship during the anti-Japanese revolution, it is also natural that she should be placed in the same row with Kim Jong Suk. When Kim Jong Suk was carrying out her difficult task in the enemy-ruled Taoquanli area, Choe Hui Suk, who was active in Yaofangzi, helped her in secret. Kim Jong Suk was able to apply herself to the work of building organizations at Sinpha because Choe Hui Suk in Yaofangzi was of such great help to her. Also, in the autumn of 1939, when a large number of uniforms were needed in the Wukoujiang area, Choe Hui Suk did a great job

while working hand in hand with Kim Jong Suk. In recognition of her high sense of responsibility and success in completing this job, I made a present of a gold ring and a watch to her.

Choe Hui Suk was a ranking veteran among women fighters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. She joined the army probably in 1932. This was when the anti-Japanese armed forces were being organized throughout the counties of eastern Manchuria, wasn't it? There were many women fighters in the KPRA, but only a few of them had enlisted as early as 1932. A soldier who took up arms in 1932 is worthy of being treated as a veteran.

As far as I remember, I met her first in the spring of 1936. In that spring many women who had been fighting in the units active in Yanji and Helong were admitted into our main force. Kim Jong Suk and Choe Hui Suk were among them.

All the women fighters addressed Choe Hui Suk as "elder sister". Many men fighters did too. By age, she was an elder sister to most of us. She was several years older than I. I think among the women soldiers she was one of the elders, next to Kim Myong Hwa and Jang Chol Gu.

She was called "elder sister", not just because she was older, but also because she was always so exemplary in her everyday life and in carrying out her duties. And she took good care of her comrades-in-arms. She had worked for several years in regional organizations, such as the Young Communist League and Women's Association, and among the Chinese anti-Japanese units. In the course of all this she had acquired high political qualifications and leadership ability, so I used to give her a lot of difficult assignments. She continued to work as the head of the sewing unit of the KPRA after the Xiaohaerbaling meeting because she enjoyed our trust.

The commanding officers and soldiers of the main force

constantly marvelled at her absolute loyalty and revolutionary spirit. Everything she did touched the hearts of her comrades-in-arms. More than once I was moved by her noble sense of morality and by her personality. During the Arduous March I saw her mending the torn uniforms of her comrades by the campfire, warming her frozen fingers now and again, in the dead of night when the others were all asleep. She never rested for a few days before finishing any job, even if it meant having to allay her hunger with water. Whenever we talked about success in her work, she always gave credit to her comrades-in-arms for it. I can still remember her embarrassment on receiving her gold ring and watch at the awards ceremony for men and women of merit as she stammered out: “Many of us worked hard to make uniforms. If I alone am accorded special treatment in this way. ...”

After the Xiaohaerbaling meeting, she took part in small-unit operations. On her way to Headquarters to convey some important information one day, she encountered “punitive” enemy troops, who were going over the mountains with a fine-tooth comb in search of us.

Discovering her small unit, the enemy pursued them tenaciously to capture the guerrillas. She was surrounded, got a bullet through her leg and was captured.

The enemy put her to torture brutal beyond all description to extract the secret information from her. They even gouged out her eyes. No threats or torture, however, could break her revolutionary spirit.

Just before her death she shouted:

“I have no eyes, but I can still see victory in the revolution!”

Enraged by her shout, the enemy carved out her heart to see what sort of heart a communist had. What difference is there between the heart of a revolutionary and that of others? A heart bears no marks to indicate a revolutionary or a traitor. The heart

of a revolutionary beats for his country, nation and comrades-in-arms, whereas the heart of a traitor beats only for himself.

I was told that as soon as they took Choe Hui Suk prisoner, the enemy robbed her of the gold ring that we had awarded her. Nevertheless, they could not take away her cherished trust in us and her loyalty to us.

Even after they had torn out her heart, they failed to understand how she could have remained so honourable.

Those who do not love their country with a pure heart can never know what revolutionary honour is, nor can they understand the noble and beautiful spiritual world that grows out of a communist outlook on life.

At the news of Choe Hui Suk's death, all of us mourned, bitter with regret that she had died without seeing the day of national liberation for which she had longed so eagerly. The women guerrillas were so overcome with grief that they could no longer eat.

I was lost in sorrow for a long time.

However, we derived great strength from her words, "I can still see victory in the revolution!" She had shouted this under the worst imaginable circumstances, manacled as she was and with her eyes gouged out by the enemy. What an unbreakable, proud revolutionary spirit shines through these words! Not everyone could shout such words of defiance under similar circumstances. These are famous words, the kind that can be spoken only by those convinced of the validity and truth of their cause, only by fighters with a strong sense of revolutionary honour. The words are the very summary of the life of the woman fighter Choe Hui Suk.

"I can still see victory in the revolution!"—this has now become the maxim of our people, especially our younger generation, which symbolizes revolutionary optimism. This

woman fighter's shout still rings in the minds of our people.

I value optimism and love optimistic people. "There will be a way out even if the sky falls in!" is one of my important mottoes. Because I am an optimist myself, I have been able to go through hell and high water without vacillation or deviation and continue to lead the revolution and construction in good health today.

I still remember the words that Choe Hui Suk, robbed of her eyes, shouted at the last moment of her life because they represent the strong will and unshakeable conviction of all Korean communists.

I repeat that Choe Hui Suk is a woman revolutionary who can take her place proudly in the first line of our revolutionary ranks amongst all the others who overcame trying ordeals.

Pak Won Chun, Choe Hui Suk's husband, served a prison term in Sodaemun Prison.

There were many other women fighters who died with enormous courage, as Choe Hui Suk did.

An Sun Hwa also ended her life heroically. It is not easy to die a heroic death.

An Sun Hwa was Ri Pong Su's wife. They fought in the same unit, her husband working as the surgeon and she as the head of the sewing unit.

They had had five children. All of them, however, were either killed or separated from their parents during the guerrilla fighting. Their first child, who had all his toes amputated because of frostbite, was sent to the Soviet Union along with other serious cases; the second died of measles, and the third was stabbed to death with a bayonet by the Japanese who attacked the guerrilla base. The fourth starved to death, and the fifth was given to another family. There is no knowing whether he is alive or dead, or where he lives. Since Ri Pong Su's reminiscences have been published on several occasions, the fifth child, if still alive, could be

expected to get in touch with his father, but I have not heard of this happening yet.

The fifth child, if given to another family before he was two years old, may well not know about his real parents. His foster parents may not have told him that he had been adopted.

An Sun Hwa was captured by the enemy in the spring of 1938. One day when the guerrillas in the secret camp were preparing to leave for southern Manchuria by order of Headquarters, the enemy's "punitive" force suddenly pounced upon the camp.

The secret camp at that time was staffed mainly by medical personnel and members of the sewing unit. An Sun Hwa was captured by the enemy and put through cruel suffering.

The enemy tortured her, demanding the whereabouts of the guerrillas, foodstuffs, ammunition and medicine stores. The commander of the "punitive" force also tried enticing her with honeyed words, saying it was pointless for her to shed her blood and waste her precious young life in a hopeless cause.

Had An Sun Hwa answered their questions obediently, afraid of torture, the enemy would not have killed her.

The Japanese in those days used the method of offering "generous treatment" to defectors in order to disintegrate our revolutionary ranks. A defector could escape death by writing down his guarantor's name and putting his thumbmark on the defector's application, even if he had been engaged in armed resistance and had been shouting "Down with Japanese Imperialism" only the day before.

It was really great that An Sun Hwa, a frail woman, should have resisted the enemy's cajoling and endured their torture. The enemy kicked her, stomped on her and pulled out her hair. As she stubbornly resisted, yelling "You, beasts!", "You, fiends!" at them, the enemy drove wooden stakes into her chest and belly, saying they would not waste bullets to kill her.

A man instinctively makes a face if a thorn pierces the palm of his hand. What agony An Sun Hwa must have suffered as the stakes were driven through her body, tearing into her flesh and bones!

Despite the pain, however, An Sun Hwa never gave up her principles as a revolutionary. She said what she wanted to say and remained faithful to her convictions to the end. The moment the stakes penetrated her body, she shouted with all the strength she could muster, “Long live the Korean revolution!” and “Long live the emancipation of women!”

After her death, her comrades-in-arms took everything out of her knapsack to dispose of her few possessions. Among these was a serge skirt that her husband Ri Pong Su had bought her with the money he had earned as a stevedore in Vladivostok towards the end of the 1920s, as well as a desk cloth she had not finished knitting.

She had kept her serge skirt in her knapsack without wearing it for ten years, I was told. Why had she kept it so carefully? She must have wanted to wear it after the country was liberated. This fact alone shows us how firmly convinced she was of the coming victory in the revolution. The desk cloth she knitted at odd moments with thread she had unravelled from a worn-out shirt must also have been intended to be spread over her husband’s desk after the liberation of the country.

When covering her dead body with that serge skirt, her husband sobbed bitterly at the sight of the pleats of the skirt, which were still perfectly straight after ten years.

In the anti-Japanese armed units fighting in northern Manchuria also there were many women fighters like Choe Hui Suk and An Sun Hwa.

Han Ju Ae is a good example of how strongly devoted Korean women fighters in northern Manchuria were to their

revolutionary principles. In charge of the sewing unit, Han Ju Ae was making padded uniforms of the guerrillas at a service camp. One day, caught in a sudden attack on the camp by the enemy's "punitive" force, she was captured with her little daughter. The Japanese seized her while she was firing back hopelessly at the "punitive" troops, deliberately exposing herself to them in order to give her comrades-in-arms the chance to get away safely.

She was kept behind bars for several months. The enemy put mother and daughter into separate cells, saying it was an "extravagance" to keep mother and daughter in the same cell. In order to bring Han Ju Ae to her knees, they brought her daughter to meet her mother occasionally in an attempt to take advantage of Han Ju Ae's maternal love. No enemy trickery, however, could make her abandon her revolutionary principles.

The enemy finally shot her on the bank of the Ussuri River. The interrogators at the Japanese gendarmerie had told her that they would spare her life if she admitted that she repented of what she had done, but she refused to give in to the last.

Eight members of a sewing unit of the guerrilla army active in northern Manchuria, including An Sun Bok and Ri Pong Son, while fighting against the enemy that was closing in on them, threw themselves into the deep waters of the Mudan River before they could be captured. There was a similar instance also among the women fighters of the guerrilla army in eastern Manchuria. On their way to Naitoushan, seven young women fighters encircled by the enemy committed suicide by drowning themselves into the Fuer River. Their heroic death created yet another legend in the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

One year when I was visiting China I saw and was deeply moved by a film describing the struggle of the eight women martyrs of Mudanjiang.

Not only the women fighters in northern Manchuria, but also



Ri Sun Jol, a dear “sister” to the guerrillas in southern Manchuria, kept her honour as a revolutionary.

Another heroine, Kim Su Bok, was arrested and killed while conducting underground activities in Zhujiadong, Changbai County.

A hero or heroine is not a special being. Ordinary women, such as Choe Hui Suk, An Sun Hwa and the seven women martyrs of eastern Manchuria, can also become heroines.

When Jo Ok Hui, chairwoman of the Women’s Union of Pyoksong County, was captured and killed by the enemy while fighting as a guerrilla in an enemy-held area during the strategic retreat in the Fatherland Liberation War, we awarded her the title of Hero of the Republic. She also was a woman of strong will, loyal to the revolution just as Choe Hui Suk and An Sun Hwa had been. The enemy pulled out her fingernails and toe nails, gouged out her eyes, cut off her breasts and burned her with a red-hot iron rod. However, she never succumbed, but denounced them and died a heroic death, shouting “Long live the Workers’ Party of Korea!”

How many of the enemy might Jo Ok Hui have killed—if any—while waging the guerrilla struggle? We value her high spirit and the revolutionary constancy with which she held her head high and declared the downfall of the enemy on her way to the execution site, rather than the number of enemy she actually killed. This was why we decided to honour her with the title of Hero. How marvellous it is that an ordinary woman, who had been engaged in farming and the work of Women’s Union, should have crowned the last moment of her life with such honour! I wanted to bring her to prominence in the eyes of our own people and to prod the conscience of world community, so I had a film made about her. I also set up her statue and named the cooperative farm in her native village after her.

The respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, while looking around the Korean Revolution Museum, paused for a long while before a braid of hair on display there. It belonged to the anti-Japanese fighter Ri Kye Sun. She had cut the braid off at the age of 16 and sent it to her mother as proof of her strong desire to devote herself to the revolution.

Looking at the braid for a long time that day, the great leader earnestly requested that it be carefully looked after, for it was a precious piece of history. Later he warmly recollected Ri Kye Sun.

The story of the hair is eloquent proof of what a great and laudable revolutionary Comrade Ri Kye Sun was. Looking at it, I think of the pure-hearted, strong-willed devotion of all Korean mothers, sisters and women revolutionaries to their principles.

Korean women are outwardly gentle, but strong-minded on the inside. They are also strongly faithful to their fundamental beliefs. I keenly felt this in the course of our revolutionary struggle against the Japanese. I must say that Ri Kye Sun's hair symbolizes the faith of all our women revolutionaries.

When I was carrying out the underground struggle in Manchuria, my mother had placed her hair inside my shoes, the cut-off hair she had kept carefully for several years since in her days in Korea. One cold winter day I trudged across an uninhabited region in a raging snowstorm. I walked a long distance, yet my feet were not cold; on the contrary, the longer I walked, the more warmth I felt in the soles of my feet. Reaching my destination, I pulled off my shoes, inspected them and found my mother's hair lining the interior.

I thought at that moment that there is no greater affection than that of a mother. My mother's hair inside my shoes was the truest manifestation of her maternal love.

When the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai was set up and Independence Army organizations such as *Jongui-bu*,

*Chamui-bu* and *Sinmin-bu* came into being in Northeast China, imposing taxes on the Korean residents, a considerable number of Korean women sold their hair for independence contributions, I was told. Their hair was a symbol of their patriotism.

I am recounting past events related to hair while talking about Ri Kye Sun because her hair can give us a full picture of her personality.

Comrades Kim Il and Pak Yong Sun also know about her because they fought together with her. If you want to collect materials about Ri Kye Sun, you had better interview the First Vice-Premier Kim Il and Comrade Pak Yong Sun. Some people claim it's dull talking to Kim Il because he is so taciturn. They don't know him well enough. Though he never boasts of himself, Kim Il is loud and voluble in praise of others.

Ri Kye Sun took the road to revolution in the wake of her brother, Ri Ji Chun. When I was in the Jilin Yuwen Middle School, Ri Ji Chun studied at a normal school in Jilin and was engaged in the revolutionary struggle under our guidance. Later, when he returned to Helong where his parents lived to guide the work of the Young Communist League there, he was arrested and killed by the enemy. The enemy set fire to his dead body, so that he was killed twice, so to speak.

Ri Kye Sun heard of her brother's death in the Yulangcun guerrilla zone, where she had been staying.

At dawn the following day she untied her hair, cut it off and braided it. She sent the braid to her mother with the following note:

“Mother! What pain you must be feeling at Brother's death in addition to my leaving home!

“Please do not grieve over it, though. Do not show your tears to the enemy.

“I am sending you my braid, Mother. I may not come back

to see you for a long time. Look on this braid as if it were me. With all my heart I wish you the best of health till the day of victory in the revolution!”

This was her farewell to her mother. There was no doubt that she was determined to devote the rest of her life to the revolution.

According to Pak Yong Sun, who did underground work in Helong for several years, since her childhood Ri Kye Sun had been loved by many people for her revolutionary awareness and extraordinary talents.

In the summer of 1933 she was instructed by the party organization to go to the city of Longjing for underground activities. Her main task was to restore the wrecked underground organizations and form new ones where there were none. The Longjing area, one of the Japanese major strongholds, was infested with enemy soldiers, policemen and secret agents. Japanese intelligence agencies there had highly sensitive tentacles.

The fact that the revolutionary organization in the guerrilla zone dispatched Ri Kye Sun, who did not have much experience in underground work, to that place showed how much confidence it placed in her.

In those days the party, the Women’s Association, the Children’s Vanguard and other mass organizations in Longjing had been destroyed and most of their members were behind bars.

With strong determination to solve everything on her own, Ri Kye Sun became an odd-job woman in a noodle shop, a popular place frequented by many people. No one would have thought that a country-woman doing odd jobs in the kitchen of a noodle shop, her face stained with soot, might be an underground operative from the Communist Party. The noodle shop was an ideal base for her activities.

Ri Kye Sun fetched water, washed clothes and the dishes and did whatever her employer told her. Her employer felt lucky

to have such a good servant.

In order to restore the destroyed organizations and build new ones, Ri Kye Sun needed a job requiring her to work outdoors all day long. For this purpose, the job of delivering noodles would be perfect. In those days rich and influential families used to order noodles and have them delivered to their door. Sitting cross-legged in their homes, they would order several plates of potato-starch noodles and meat soup, which the delivery men then carried in separate containers on large wooden trays to their homes.

By earning the confidence of the wife of her employer, Ri Kye Sun took the job of delivery woman. Whenever she went out to deliver noodles she used to meet members of various organizations at odd moments. In the meantime, she set out to restore the Children's Vanguard organizations. Her job, however, was not as easy as one might think, for she had to walk several miles a day, carrying the wooden tray full of noodles on her head. One day, hurrying to a customer's house with the wooden tray on her head, she suddenly noticed a Japanese police van rushing towards her. In trying to dodge it, she dropped the tray and broke all the noodle dishes.

Because of this accident, she was given a dressing down and taken off the delivery service. She did not despair, however; after her daily work in the kitchen was over, she practised walking with a wooden tray full of stones on her head in the back yard of the noodle shop till late at night, in spite of her fatigue.

Her great enthusiasm won her employer's sympathy.

Probably she was about 17 years old at that time.

By the time they were 15 or 16 the women fighters had already launched themselves into political activities. In their teens, they would make stirring speeches, do underground work in the enemy-ruled areas and participate in building organizations. At that age they had a good knowledge of the world. As a generation that

had grown up through hardships brought on by the loss of their country, they were more developed than young people nowadays.

This does not mean, however, that everyone who experiences hardships will automatically understand the world before anyone else, or commit himself to fighting. What is important is one's ideology. Only when one is prepared ideologically can one make an early revolutionary start and render distinguished service in the revolution. One cannot carry out the revolution unless one is sound ideologically. Ri Kye Sun was loyal to the revolution because she was a woman of sound ideology.

Some people nowadays turn a deaf ear to what 20-year-olds have to say, dismissing them as "babies smelling of their mothers' milk".

Even those dealing with personnel management often consider young people in their twenties to be still ignorant of world affairs. They think that only people in their thirties, forties and fifties are qualified to be cadres. They are grossly mistaken. Young people in their twenties, if entrusted with responsibilities, are perfectly able to discharge them. I keenly experienced this in the struggle to build the Party, the state and the army immediately after liberation.

During the anti-Japanese revolution young people in their twenties worked as county or provincial party secretaries, division commanders and corps commanders. I myself commanded the revolutionary army in my twenties. If young people are not promoted to leadership, the ranks of our cadres may become senile and our advance will lose momentum. The old, middle-aged and young must be properly combined when cadres are being promoted.

Ri Kye Sun came into the limelight in eastern Manchuria when her husband Kim Il Hwan, who was the party secretary of Helong County, was killed by the chauvinists on a false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". At that time the people in the

Jiandao area all cursed and hated those who had masterminded the murder of her husband and sympathized with her.

Many people thought that Ri Kye Sun might abandon the revolution or leave the guerrilla zone, disillusioned by the doings of the party leadership in eastern Manchuria. In those days many organization members and guerrillas in Jiandao abhorred the Leftist, reckless acts of the eastern Manchuria party leadership and turned their backs on the guerrilla zone. The ultra-Leftist anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle, in fact, tarnished the image of all communists.

An ordinary woman would have left the guerrilla zone, disgusted at the revolution, or might have felt disheartened and idled away her time lamenting over her lot. Ri Kye Sun, on the contrary, braced herself with strong determination and strove to discharge her duty so as to contribute to the revolution and prove that her husband, a man of rectitude and conscience, had done nothing to disgrace the revolution.

A famine in the Chechangzi guerrilla zone left her undernourished in the last month of her pregnancy. In spite of this, she gathered edible herbs and stripped off tree bark almost every day for the starving invalids in the guerrilla zone. She worried more about them than about herself and the new life to come. When the source of this wild food ran short, she caught frogs and gathered spawn for people on the verge of starvation.

When the baby was born, she could not yield milk. To make matters worse, the guerrilla zone was dissolved. After putting her little daughter in the care of her mother-in-law, who was leaving for the enemy-ruled area, Ri Kye Sun joined the guerrilla army. The baby she had handed over to her mother-in-law was the daughter of Kim Il Hwan, born after his death.

Her parting with her daughter was a tearful event. The infant was kicking, refusing to be torn from her mother’s embrace, her

mother-in-law weeping and Ri Kye Sun herself turning back and hugging her daughter again and again, sobbing in pity for her baby. It was a tragic parting indeed!

When relatives, friends and comrades-in-arms had to go in different directions because of the dissolution of the guerrilla zone, everyone bid farewell to each other in tears, just as Ri Kye Sun did.

Ri Kye Sun's mother-in-law is said to have taken great pains to bring up her granddaughter. Suckling on charity could be done once or twice, but not constantly. So her mother-in-law herself had to chew up grains of barley or maize, and then put them into the baby's mouth, I was told.

Ri Kye Sun was a fighter who took up arms with unbearable misery and pain in her heart. She joined our unit in Fusong.

Some time after her enlistment we sent her to a field hospital because she was suffering from frostbite and unable to fight in the combat unit. At first she refused to go, begging me in tears to be allowed to remain on the battle front.

However, I did not listen to her entreaties. I told her: "You don't seem to know how dreadful frostbite can be. You will have many chances to fight later, but you must go to hospital right now. My father also died as a result of cold injuries. How useful will you be if all of your toes rot and you become a cripple, walking on crutches?" At this, she reluctantly agreed to get treatment at the hospital.

She was treated at the field hospital of the Heixiazigou Secret Camp quite near Mt. Paektu. On the lunar New Year's Day, 1937, I looked around the service camps in the Hengshan area. On that day the members of the weapons repair shop headed by Pak Yong Sun made potato-starch noodles for me with a noodle press made of tin.

When we went to the hospital, Ri Kye Sun bustled about,



treating us to food. According to Doctor Song, Ri Kye Sun was not content to merely get treatment, but became nurse and cook on her own, overtiring herself.

Leaving the hospital I told Ri Kye Sun to get treatment only and refrain from doing anything else. I warned her in a half threatening tone that otherwise she would never be cured.

I never saw her again after that. I only sent letters and aid goods to those in the hospital through messengers on several occasions.

While we were away from the Mt. Paektu area for a while, the enemy hurled “punitive” troops at the service camps of our unit. The hospital in charge of Doctor Song was also taken by surprise. Pak Sun Il fell in the battle and Ri Kye Sun was captured by the enemy and dragged to Changbai County. Only Ri Tu Su survived.

Unaware of the incident, I sent Kim Jong Phil and Han Cho Nam as messengers to carry food to the comrades in the hospital. I told the messengers that they should bring all the patients back, believing that they would have been cured of their illness. They returned with only Ri Tu Su, however, who had changed beyond recognition and looked like an animal. Only then did we find out about the calamity that had befallen the field hospital.

I sent reconnaissance teams to various places to find out Ri Kye Sun’s whereabouts and fate. They all brought me the heart-rending news that she had been killed ten days or so after her capture. Members of the reconnaissance team met some Changbai people who had said they had witnessed Ri Kye Sun’s death.

According to them, Ri Kye Sun was shot to death on a market day. The enemy had gathered all the local residents in a school playground, boasting that a “converted” woman of the communist army would make a public “recantation”. They had also herded all the peddlers from Hyesan into the playground.

Why had Ri Kye Sun asked the enemy to give her an official opportunity for addressing the local people? I think we can see

here the true nature of Ri Kye Sun as a communist. She wanted the people all together in the playground because she intended to bid farewell to them by speaking up for the revolution and against the Japanese. Had she truly recanted, the enemy might have spared her life. Ri Kye Sun, however, had not chosen such a despicable course of action, but was prepared to face death. Anyone ready to die fears neither guns nor swords and feels free to say whatever he wants.

She addressed the assembled people with the words: “I will die, but the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army is strong and its Commander is in good health. No force in the world can defeat the KPRA. The day when Japanese imperialism is destroyed and our country is liberated is very close at hand. All of you must unite in mind and body, rise up against enemy suppression and fight the war of resistance to the Japanese.”

Ri Kye Sun did her best to the last moment of her life to discharge her mission and duty as a servant, educator and information worker faithful to the people.

What a great surprise it must have been to the enemy to hear the woman of the communist army speaking up for revolution against the Japanese, quite contrary to their bragging that she would “recant”.

I’m told the old-time inhabitants of Changbai still remember vividly the sight they witnessed that time. This means Ri Kye Sun’s speech obviously made a great impact on the inhabitants of the area.

Ri Kye Sun became a famous woman fighter because she illuminated her last moments with such a heroic deed. The crowning glory of her life was her last moment. It can be said that the high point in one’s life means the time when a person’s mental powers and activities reach their apex. The arrival of this high point varies with people. Some may experience it in their twenties, some in their fifties, and still others in their sixties or seventies.

People like Ri Kye Sun and Choe Hui Suk who end their lives brilliantly become a part of history for ever, while those who win fame but meet their last moment with dishonour sink into oblivion.

That is why I still remember Ri Kye Sun. We can be rightly proud of such a woman fighter as Ri Kye Sun in the eyes of the world. Her heroic life can be a good theme for a revolutionary novel or film. She was a true daughter of the Korean nation and the perfect model of a woman revolutionary.

Ri Kye Sun's mother had worried herself sick for a long time because she did not know whether her granddaughter, Ri Kye Sun's daughter, was alive or dead. Only after the Korean War did she find out that her granddaughter was studying at Kim Il Sung University. It was then that she handed over her daughter's braid to her granddaughter. The braid that had been handed back and forth over three generations was a symbol of the valuable life of martyr Ri Kye Sun. The mother, whose face and voice had faded from the memory of her daughter because of their forced separation when the daughter was still only a baby, coming back to her daughter as a braid of hair—what a tragic meeting it is! The daughter wept and wept, rubbing her cheek against the braid.

Ri Kye Sun's daughter is now faithfully carrying forward the revolution her parents pioneered at the cost of their lives.

There would be no end if we were to enumerate all the examples of women fighters who lived up to their dignity and honour as revolutionaries by sacrificing their lives without the slightest hesitation.

My assertion that women push forward one wheel of the revolution is not an abstract notion. It is based on the history of the bloody revolutionary struggle against the Japanese and on my own actual experiences as a direct participant in the emancipation of Korean women, as well as an eyewitness to their struggle.

## 4. A Woman Came to Visit the Secret Camp

One day in the autumn of 1956 the secretary of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung received a long phone call from the secretary-general of the North Hamgyong Provincial People's Committee. The message was that the secretary-general was sending a woman working at the creche of the Hakpho Coal Mine to Pyongyang because she said she had fought in the Korean People's Revolutionary Army before liberation and had eagerly requested him to let her meet the fatherly leader.

A few days later the woman called at the building of the Cabinet. When the great leader's secretary asked her why she had come, she barely managed to answer, with tears in her eyes: "Simply because I'm eager to see. ..."

At that time the great leader was very busy working with a foreign delegation. When he had finished the work, his secretary reported about the woman's visit. Hearing this, the leader said, "Ji Sun Ok, Kang Hung Sok's wife... so she is still alive," and sank into deep thought.

What sort of a woman was Ji Sun Ok? We compiled the following account of Ji Sun Ok's activities by combining the fatherly leader's remarks on three occasions: in May 1972, as he looked around the Korean Revolution Museum; in March 1976, while attending the music and dance epic, *Large-Unit Circling Operations*; and in October 1985, when he was inspecting the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt. Taesong.

I suppose it was in the summer of 1939 that this happened, for we had just wound up our successful offensive in the Musan area

and were conducting military and political activities in the northeastern area of Mt. Paektu. I was giving guidance to the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

One day O Jung Hup, commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, came to see me with a report about the state of affairs in his unit. Finishing his report, he added that on his way to Headquarters he had met Kang Hung Sok's wife on the upper reaches of the Wukou River and had brought her to the secret camp of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment. This was Ji Sun Ok.

When she suddenly appeared in our secret camp, saying she had come because of her desperate longing to see her husband, we all admired her passion.

The mountain areas along the Songhua and Wukou rivers were dangerous zones of guerrilla activity, crawling with enemy soldiers, policemen and spies. One might easily die from a stray bullet, or be executed on a charge of being "in secret contact with communist bandits". Yet despite such dangers she, a lone woman, had come to see her husband. It was natural that we should admire her courage.

Kang Hung Sok, Ji Sun Ok's husband, was famous not only as a crack shot but also as a devoted husband. His knapsack was rumoured to be full of letters addressed to his wife. They had married as teenagers, and soon after the wedding Kang had left home to join the revolution. Since then he had not seen his wife for nearly ten years. Ji Sun Ok also yearned greatly for her husband.

The Japanese imperialists, it was found out later on, had made inquiries into this through intelligence channels and inveigled Ji Sun Ok into espionage activities under threat.

Anyhow, it was going to be a happy event for Kang Hung Sok to hold a dramatic reunion with his wife.

Kang Hung Sok was not with us just then because he was out

on a mission to obtain provisions, so we sent him word to come back to Headquarters immediately.

When I met Ji Sun Ok, I found her neat in appearance and well-mannered. I had lunch with her that day. My men told her that the char on the table had been caught for her by the General himself, and asked her to help herself. Ji Sun Ok seemed to be astonished to hear this, but she took only a few spoonfuls. No matter how we encouraged her to take more, it was of no avail.

I made one woman guerrilla keep her company. They seemed to have talked a lot throughout the night, sleeping under the same blanket.

With the couple's reunion approaching, everyone was boisterous, as if personally awaiting a happy event. This was the first reunion of a young married couple in nearly a decade of tough armed struggle. I was eager to congratulate them too. Everyone was waiting with impatience for Kang Hung Sok's return.

Having met Ji Sun Ok, however, I was suspicious about one thing: How had she found out her husband's whereabouts and come to this mountain, a place that was virtually the jaws of death? How had she discovered the exact location of our unit? Others who talked with her also said that she was inconsistent in her statements.

Three or four days after her arrival at the secret camp, O Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong came rushing over to me, out of breath. O Jung Hup reported that out of his tender heart he had brought a spy of the Japanese imperialists to Headquarters without checking out her identity first. The report was like a bolt from the blue. He begged my pardon. O Paek Ryong said it was an evil thing that the wife of a platoon leader in the revolutionary army should have come as a spy for the Japanese instead of coming to help the guerrillas. His suggestion was that we shoot her there and then.

They told me that the woman guerrilla in whose tent Ji was staying had become suspicious about her because her conduct was so dubious and her statements were so incoherent. So in the middle of the night she had closely examined Ji's lined garment and had discovered a packet of poison stitched into the lining. At that time our comrades were so used to the enemy's poisoning schemes that they could easily discern that sort of thing.

When I asked whether Ji Sun Ok knew that the poison packet had been found, they said no, but added that they were keeping a close watch on her.

I was greatly shocked by this incident and could not calm myself down for quite a while. As a matter of fact, there had been other instances of either Japanese spies or saboteurs slipping into our unit and being exposed. And many of the exposed spies were people from the lower classes, who in general should not have been hostile to us. The Japanese imperialists sent even simple-hearted farm servants or workers to us to act as their spies.

However, there was no precedent for training as a spy a woman who had sent her husband to the revolutionary army, the wife of a platoon leader at that, and dispatching her to our military camp. The appearance of such a person on an espionage mission was a new trick indeed. Those working in Japanese intelligence services were really base and cunning.

Having received O Jung Hup's report, I wondered how Kang Hung Sok would take this astonishing news. There was great danger of his marriage breaking up.

Despite the objections of O Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong, I decided to meet Ji Sun Ok again.

I had a comparatively long talk with her. I asked her about Kang Hung Sok's family, about the hardships she had undergone on her way to look for the revolutionary army and about her maiden home.

The topic of our conversation naturally changed to Kang Hung Sok. When I said that Kang Hung Sok would be coming back to camp the next day or the day after, Ji Sun Ok suddenly burst into tears, covering her face with her hands. She then tore off the stitched part of her coat and took out the poison packet. Shivering all over, she said, “General, I’m a wretched woman who must be punished by God. I deserve death.”

I got her to drink some water and calmed her down somewhat. Then I said: “It’s a good thing that you confessed. The revolutionary army shows leniency to those who frankly confess their crimes. Moreover, you are the wife of platoon leader Kang Hung Sok. Don’t be afraid and tell me everything. Tell me in detail how you became a spy, what kind of training they gave you after you became a spy and what tasks you were given before you set out to find the revolutionary army.”

Ji Sun Ok confessed everything in detail and talked about how she had got to the mountain.

O Paek Ryong, who witnessed this scene, said later in recollection:

“At that moment I felt as if my life had been shortened by ten years. A cold shiver ran down my spine and my whole body broke into a cold sweat. How dared she appear before the General with poison! What would have happened if she had sneaked it into the cooking pot or rice bowls? That little woman was on the verge of spoiling the entire Korean revolution! The mere thought of it still makes me shudder.”

For this reason the anti-Japanese fighters are still reluctant to think of Ji Sun Ok even today.

The confidential documents prepared by the Japanese consul in Hunchun contain the following information about the aim of sending Ji Sun Ok as a spy, and about other things:

The circumstances of sending her

1. The content of order



- (1) Disrupt the guerrilla ranks after catching Kang Hung Sok in mesh.
- (2) Poison senior officers.
- (3) When interrogated by the guerrillas, the agent should state that she has come to the mountains to see her husband under the coercion of her parents.

## 2. Method of communication

The agent should report about herself and the guerrillas directly to Police Field Officer Katada of the secret service section, or to Police Lieutenant Minami.

## 3. Date, time and place of entering the mountains

Obtained her parents' approval for this operation, gave her all the necessary information in Yanji for five days, from August 5 to 9, and sent her to the mountains on August 10, accompanied by a man in charge of her. Let her proceed to her destination—Height 1088 southwest of Menghedong, Helong County, and Yilangou, west of this, both considered to be guerrilla hide-outs (judging from the fact that at 10 p.m. on August 8, 120 soldiers of Kim Il Sung's main-force unit raided Longzecun, Helong County and fled into the thick forests in the southwest).

## 4. Estimated date of return

An estimated two to three months are needed. (Secret information of Hunchun consul No. 186, July 26, Showa 15 (1940), report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi Tadao)

The Japanese imperialist special service agency called Ji Sun Ok a "live agent". A "live agent" is a term used in Sun-tzu's *Art of War*. It means an agent who must come back alive without fail. Judging from the fact that the enemy chose Ji Sun Ok as a "live agent", it seems they expected a great deal from her. They might have intended to use her as a professional agent later.

The enemy said to Ji Sun Ok: "Your husband as a machine-

gunner of the guerrilla army has killed numerous soldiers of the Imperial Army, so you cannot atone for this crime even if we kill three generations of your family. However, if you go to the communist army and persuade your husband to submit to us, and if you carry out the task we assign you, we'll give you a liberal reward and provide you with a life of comfort."

Ji Sun Ok had no choice but to obey the enemy because they had threatened to kill three generations of her family. Having heard her confession, I felt my heart ache with pity for her.

I could not repress my indignation at the vicious cowardice of the Japanese imperialists who did not hesitate to use even a woman's pure love and affection against us. The imperialists resorted to all kinds of methods to stifle the revolution. It was the habit of the Japanese imperialists to abuse the love between a man and his parents, a husband and wife, a man and his children, brothers and sisters, or even the love between a teacher and student, in order to disrupt and undermine the revolutionary ranks from within. Not satisfied with their scheme to crush the soul of our nation, they attempted to stifle even the beautiful nature of our people. In other words, they tried to turn Koreans into brutes.

Our armed struggle was not only a struggle to regain our territory and sovereignty, robbed from us by foreign forces; it was also a showdown against beasts to safeguard man and defend everything human.

The real nature of imperialists is to turn people into brutes and cripples and to deform them. Giving espionage training to a wife, forcing her to interfere with what her husband is doing and to poison her husband's Commander and his comrades-in-arms—this was nothing less than making a brute of her.

The world is talking a lot about environmental pollution these days. It is true that environmental pollution is a great threat to mankind. However, a greater danger than this is the moral collapse

and human pollution being perpetrated by the imperialists. In the gutters and refuse heaps of this world, beasts, monsters and defectives in human form are produced every day by the imperialist reactionaries and their henchmen. Human pollution is the greatest brake on the progress of history today. Placating Ji Sun Ok, who was lying prostrate and sobbing, I said:

“Don’t worry. You have realized your crime, although belatedly, so we don’t think ill of you in the least. You’ve been forced to commit the crime to avoid death, so it cannot be helped. Please get up.”

Everyone in the secret camp was aghast when they heard that Ji Sun Ok had come there with an espionage mission. I intended to keep Ji Sun Ok’s case a secret, but comrades O Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong made it public for the sake of the safety of the unit and to get the soldiers to maintain a sharper vigilance.

Kang Hung Sok, who came to Headquarters at a run, almost lost his mind when he heard the others talking in whispers about his wife. He had a pistol in his hand and was going to finish her off himself. He looked as if he really were about to do something terrible, so I got him to cool down and sent him off to the upper reaches of the Hongqi River, where his regiment was stationed. I felt sorry to have to separate once more this couple, who were supposed to meet again after such a long, long time apart.

Even Chen Han-zhang, who held the position of a corps commander, had wanted to behave with disrespect towards his father, who had come to talk him into submission. So it was understandable how Kang Hung Sok must have felt.

One year even An Kil, a magnanimous and extremely sympathetic man, was going to personally dispose of a member of his family who had come to urge him to turn traitor. He gave up the idea after he had been persuaded not to do it.

Whenever they reacted violently, I reasoned with my men:

“You should not wield your weapons recklessly. Just think: If soldiers fighting in the interests of the people shoot to death their own blood relations for the sake of upholding revolutionary principles, who will support them? The enemy wants our revolutionary army to think exactly as you’re thinking right now. It wants father and son, brothers and sisters to become enemies and to carry on a fratricidal war. You must understand this and not act recklessly.”

However, this kind of reprimand did not have much effect on Kang Hung Sok.

For this reason, the majority of the men in the secret camp did not trust Ji Sun Ok, but guarded against her for some time. They even suggested that she be punished severely.

However, I trusted Ji Sun Ok. She had been compelled to accept the espionage mission to save her kinfolk, and she had misunderstood the purpose of the revolutionary army, deceived as she was by the enemy propaganda. One can fall into such a trap if one lacks class awareness. Ji Sun Ok had not received systematic education through any revolutionary organization. However, once she understood the truth about me and our army, she frankly confessed her crime without delay, resolved to face death if need be. Had she not abandoned her evil intention, she would have poisoned our food rather than confessing. She had ample chance to do so. However, she had confessed, even though belatedly. Such a woman will inevitably come to our side; she cannot go over to the side of the enemy.

Once I heard from Comrade Kim Chaek about Ri Kye Dong’s murder. Ri Kye Dong was a veteran Party member who served his term in prison with Kim Chaek and organized the Zhuhe guerrilla unit. A graduate of the Yunnan Military Training School, he was said to be an efficient commander in battle. A spy named Zhou Guang-ya killed this excellent military and political officer.

Following his infiltration into the guerrilla unit, Zhou Guang-ya had wormed his way into the post of chief secretary in a unit. Taking advantage of the slackened discipline in the unit, he murdered Ri Kye Dong.

With this example in mind, our men naturally guarded against Ji Sun Ok.

Nevertheless I forgave Ji Sun Ok. Why? Because I had read her conscience, which had made her confess her crime out of her own mouth. A human being is the most developed being in the world because he has reason, conscience, moral sense and sense of duty. Without a conscience we are worthless. When we disgrace our conscience, we forfeit our value as a social being.

Although Ji Sun Ok had defiled her conscience, she regained it through struggle with herself. She disclosed her mistake because of her good intentions towards us. It is easy to slip into a quagmire, but not easy to get out. However, Ji Sun Ok managed to escape, thanks to our help and through a hard struggle with herself. This showed that she had the strength to turn over a new leaf. Why should we then push back into the quagmire a woman who had candidly reflected on her wrongs and resolved to make a fresh start?

Revolution is a struggle to defend human conscience and preserve it. I wanted to make Ji Sun Ok remain faithful to her conscience.

Even if there was just one revolutionary in a family, the Japanese imperialists schemed to isolate and exclude him from his kinsmen. The enemy's consistent scheme was to crush our patriotic forces at random, disintegrating and destroying them one by one. Sometimes they misused the ties of kinship among our nation for their "surrender" schemes. The enemy's ultimate aim was to sever the communists from the masses. The most pernicious method in their scheme was to make blood relations mistrust each other, hate and kill each other.

Nothing would be stupider than for us to continue to be fooled by such an evil design by the enemy once we are aware of it. Therefore, we saw to it that even though she had come on an espionage mission, she was pardoned and encouraged to turn over a new leaf, because she had not committed the unforgivable crime of betraying her country and her fellow countrymen.

Once a spy dispatched by the Government-General came to see us in the guise of a Christian. The spy brought several bags of flour. He said that the flour was a gift he had brought from Korea for the revolutionary army who were experiencing such hardships far away from home, and asked us to make dumplings with it.

I told the cooks to prepare dumplings with the whole lot of the flour. Before long a cook came to me with a dish full of dumplings. The spy declined my offer to have some. When I asked him to help himself to the dumplings again, his face turned pale. Small wonder, since he had mixed poison with the flour.

I said to him: "Why on earth are you trying to kill us when we're having such a hard time living and fighting in the open air to regain our lost country? Being a Korean, you should behave like a Korean. You should not act so contemptibly. You can still mend your ways even now and make a fresh start." I reasoned with him in this way. We treated him well in a hut before sending him back. I heard later that this story was reported in a magazine.

Despite O Paek Ryong's objection, I saw to it that Ji Sun Ok remained in the secret camp and was educated by us. Some time later we sent her to the sewing unit. The sewing unit had been assigned the task of making 600 uniforms for the coming large-unit circling operations, but it was having difficulties because of the shortage of hands.

Kang Wi Ryong, who was working with the sewing unit, did not welcome Ji Sun Ok. Therefore, I gave Choe Hui Suk and some other women Party members the task of treating Ji kindly

and of educating her carefully. They took sincere care of her and educated her well.

Leaving for Hualazi after we had celebrated the Harvest Moon Day, I summoned Kang Hung Sok, who was with his unit on the upper reaches of the Hongqi River.

This is how the dramatic reunion of the couple finally took place in the thick forest of Hualazi.

Staying there for some time, we conducted military and political studies. Ji Sun Ok studied hard, using the teaching materials we had prepared. She was a fairly learned woman who had received primary school education. Later during the march she managed to keep pace with the unit and cooked meals for the men. She was unaccustomed to the guerrilla life and found it hard, but the smile never disappeared from her face.

However, just as everything was going well for her, she was hit by a tragedy: Kang Hung Sok fell in the Battle of Liukesong.

For some time we did not tell Ji Sun Ok about this because we thought she would not be able to bear the great shock.

Whenever the unit was on a march, Ji Sun Ok would gaze at the machine-gun on Kim Un Sin's shoulder. It was the machine-gun Kang Hung Sok had used while still alive. My men told Ji Sun Ok that the machine-gun had been handed over to Kim Un Sin because Kang was out to work in a local area, but this was merely a way to sidetrack her.

After the Battle of Liukesong we organized an art performance in a forest on the Songhua River. At the performance I noticed how melancholy Ji Sun Ok was.

Now that her husband was gone, we could not keep her in the unit any longer, so later we sent her back home. Otherwise, there was a danger of her kinfolk being killed by the Japanese.

As she left the secret camp, we gave her a travel allowance and sent a guide to accompany her. I still vividly remember her

looking back at me again and again until she disappeared into the forest.

After the armistice I heard that Ji Sun Ok had come to see me, but I could not meet her then because I was so pressed for time. She might have been disappointed by this. After that I had no time to spare with one thing or another. Many people had to go away without meeting me after covering a long distance to come to Pyongyang.

Judging from the fact that Ji Sun Ok proudly came back to see me, it seems that she must have been living without committing any crimes against the country after parting from us. If I had met her at that time, I might have heard in detail how she had lived after leaving the mountains. Fortunately, comrades sent me a book entitled *Information of Modern History*. I could roughly piece together the outline of her life through the contents of the book. I was able to guess how Ji Sun Ok had behaved back home in front of the enemy who had sent her to the secret camp and how she had described the life of the revolutionary army.

The contents of the report submitted by Kiuchi, consul in Hunchun, to his superiors are as follows: All the cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army have sound ideology and constantly strive for victory in the revolution. It is therefore natural that the fighting men are charmed by this, completely trusting them and obeying their orders without a murmur. This is why they find it so easy to carry out all their operations. The Second Directional Army is fired by a fighting spirit and has a full capacity for united action. This is because Kim Il Sung, Commander of the army, has intense national communist ideology and is strong and healthy. Moreover, he is skilful in controlling his men.

I believe that the real state of things in our unit is comparatively fairly outlined in this report, which means that Ji



Sun Ok correctly described the life of our revolutionary army and the psychological state of our men. Her description was free of bias.

If one wants to know how the enemy treated Ji Sun Ok after she returned home, it is sufficient to read the following from the report submitted by consul Kiuchi:

I. My view of her and disposal

1. My view

(1) Her testimony is convincing because it is perfectly logical in view of the prevailing situation. Nevertheless, she was not punished and lived with the communist bandits for over one year; moreover, she was set free despite the fact that the poison she concealed when leaving for the mountains was discovered. From this one may suspect that her return is a sham, fabricated in accordance with the intention of the guerrilla army. Therefore, serious attention needs to be paid to her speech and behaviour.

...

2. Disposal

(1) We have handed Ji Sun Ok over to section leader Katada in Antu. Watching her in secret, we are trying to appease her under the premise that her coming back home is a sham. At the same time as examining her, we have assigned her to a special task. (Secret information of Hunchun consul No. 186, July 26, Showa 15 (1940), report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi Tadao)

It is said that the Japanese imperialists were very nervous about Ji Sun Ok's safe return. No wonder, for how were they to understand this when they themselves regarded human beings as nothing more than talking animals?

Some claimed that Ji Sun Ok should have been punished. Nevertheless, we pardoned her without prosecuting her for her

crime. What would have happened if we had punished her? Her husband's home and all her relatives would have been labelled a reactionary family.

Our revolution is aimed not at ostracizing people but at loving and protecting them, as well as at upholding human nature and allowing it maximum expression. It is easy to ostracize a person, but very difficult to save him. We must, however difficult it might be, give those who have committed mistakes a chance to redeem themselves. We must trust them and help them to lead a true human life. The value and greatness of the revolution lie in the fact that it treats people as human beings and helps them to renew their lives.

The imperialists forsake people like pieces of rubble, but we must value them as the most precious beings and save them. And once we have gone so far as to trust a person, we must never neglect him. As I frequently say, the best point in Comrade Kim Jong Il's disposition is that he highly appreciates people and dearly loves them, and that once he trusts someone, he never abandons him.

Once Comrade Kim Jong Il said to his subordinates: "Napoleon said, 'Because you trust me, I also believe in you.' On the contrary, I tell you, I trust you. You believe in me, too.'" This is Comrade Kim Jong Il's philosophy.

Whenever I see Comrade Kim Jong Il who believes in the people, shows affection for them and works devotedly for them, I feel relieved about the future of our country and our people.

Whereas the imperialists habitually disgraced man and destroyed his destiny, our leader Comrade Kim Il Sung showed in practice that the communists value people most dearly and protect their political integrity, and that human relations must be integrated with the noble morality and faith that rest on the principles of love and trust and on the principle of saving people. These are the sacred moral principles of the Korean revolution.

## 5. Chinese Landlord Liu Tong-shi

After liberation one day, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung met Chinese comrade Peng Zhen and recollected with deep emotion the days when the people and communists of Korea and China carried out their armed struggle together against the Japanese.

Peng Zhen praised the close class solidarity and noble proletarian internationalism displayed by the Korean people and communists in the joint struggle for national liberation. He then digressed and told the great leader that during the operations to liberate Northeast China he had noticed that many Chinese landlords produced certificates with the signature and seal, *Kim Il Sung, Commander of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army*, which stressed that they had helped the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. In those days Peng Zhen was political commissar of the Northeast Democratic Allied Army.

Later, replying to the questions about the certificates, raised by those who were studying the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the great leader recalled the following story:

The certificates remind me of Liu Tong-shi. If I tell you his story, you will have a better understanding of what was meant by the “aid-the-army” certificates.

Liu Tong-shi was a wealthy Chinese whom we met in Helong County after we moved to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu. He ended up having as close a relationship with us as was the case with Kim Jong Bu, the patriotic Korean landlord whom we had met in Changbai County.

His real name is Liu Yi-xian. He spoke Korean as fluently as his own mother tongue. When Chinese and Koreans had anything to discuss, he volunteered to act as interpreter. So people called him Liu Tong-shi. Tong-shi means “interpreter”.

After the Battle of Wukoujiang in the area northeast of Mt Paektu, we carried out mobile operations in Helong, in the Samjang area of the homeland, and then in Antu County. Later, staying in the Wukoujiang Secret Camp for a period, we conducted intensive political and military activities.

In those days the main force was fighting elsewhere, and only the machine-gun platoon and the Guard Company were with Headquarters. We were suffering an acute shortage of provisions. All the Koreans living in the neighbourhood of the secret camp were poor peasants, so they found it difficult to help us, even though they wanted to.

When we moved into Helong County, our operatives said that the enemy controlling the area had spread a rumour that the revolutionary army would come there and take away all the food, so they had all the food collected and fixed the daily amount of food consumption per capita, allotting only two days' rations at one time to those village representatives who came with ox-carts. The enemy even ordered every household in the county to obtain two bottles of kerosene in order to pour it over even these provisions if the revolutionary army demanded them.

I racked my brains over a solution to this problem. One day we went to a village and talked with the inhabitants there. I happened to meet a man who said he had lived in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone and came to Helong County when the guerrilla zone had been disbanded. In the course of talking to him, I heard in detail about the wealthy Chinese, Liu Tong-shi.

It seemed that if we succeeded in winning over Liu Tong-shi, it would help us both in keeping the anti-Japanese patriotic forces

under our control and in obtaining the supplies we needed.

However, my men Ju Jae Il and Kang Wi Ryong, who had lived in Helong before they joined the guerrilla army, said that we should not pin any hopes on Liu. They even suggested that we should punish him because he was a detestable anti-communist who had occupied the post of head of a Self-Defence Corps at one time. They knew Liu Tong-shi relatively well.

According to them, Liu Tong-shi's family lived at the foot of Mt. Niuxin, about twelve kilometres away from the Helong county town. I think that his village was called Longtancun. His house was an imposing one, surrounded by a long earthen wall with gun emplacements at the four corners.

His elder brother was already over seventy and was treated as the elder of the family without doing anything. Liu Tong-shi himself, the second brother, was the mainstay of the family, taking charge of public affairs and courting the government authorities. Liu Yi-qing, the third brother, managed the family property with his clerks.

According to Ri Pong Rok and Pak Jong Suk, veterans of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, Liu Tong-shi's family had 100 *shang* of land alone. One *shang* amounts to 3,000 *phyong*, so 100 *shang* is equal to 300,000 *phyong*. In other words, the equivalent of about 100 hectares. They also owned a soybean oil factory, a dried-starch noodle factory, a distillery and several shops. In Helong they had a department store, a restaurant and a shop that had a monopoly on salt, all of which they ran through agents.

Liu Tong-shi's family was famous for its large property, but its members were also notorious for their opposition to communists. Guerrillas from Helong called this family the most wicked of all vicious elements. Liu Tong-shi's son was serving as a policeman

for Manchukuo in Helong. The guerrillas considered that this fact alone was enough to point to the true nature of this family. Exercising his authority as a policeman, Liu Tong-shi's son used armed force to prevent coolies and tenants from moving about freely. And Liu himself informed his son's police station against those whom he suspected of having connections with the Communist Party, thus setting them up for an interrogation, or destroyed their way to earn a living by depriving them of tenant rights.

Nevertheless, I did not agree to the proposal of some people, that we should punish Liu Tong-shi's family immediately and dispossess them. This was partly because I had learned a lesson in my relations with Kim Jong Bu, and partly because some people saw Liu Tong-shi in a different light. We could not dispose of him rashly and carelessly without studying him in greater detail.

I thought we should give Liu Tong-shi the benefit of the doubt because he spoke Korean well and also because he mixed unreservedly with the ordinary people.

Furthermore, some people said that when the question of Korean tenants was raised at the government office, he had volunteered to be the interpreter and sided with the tenants. This was also a good factor; there was nothing bad in this.

Others said that he pitied the Korean tenants, who were deprived of their own country and were leading a hard life in a foreign land, and that he took special care of them.

Moreover, it was said that Liu Tong-shi's concubine in Niufudong was a Korean. This was also an interesting bit of news.

He sympathized with Korean peasants living in a strange land, he kept a Korean woman as a concubine, and he was fond of the Korean language and Korean customs. Then why was he regarded as a vicious landlord by some people? Why had this man, known to be kind-hearted, tormented Ju Jae Il's and Kang Wi Ryong's

families by having them dragged off to the police station?

To solve this mystery, I sent my comrades to Longtancun. They returned with a lot of information about Liu Tong-shi. Their inquiry revealed that Liu Tong-shi had become the enemy of those engaged in the communist movement because of the May 30 Uprising.

As you well know, the Left adventurists ran amok in the May 30 Uprising. They tarred with the same brush all those who owned land, regardless of whether the owners were pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese. Egged on by the Leftists, the rioters committed all sorts of violent acts, such as breaking through the front gates of landlords' houses and setting fire to the granaries. Such ultra-Leftist behaviour disgraced the image of the entire Communist Party.

Since then Liu Tong-shi had regarded the Communist Party as his sworn enemy and mercilessly persecuted those families that supposedly had communist fighters among their members. At the same time he was on very intimate terms with the warlords who shielded the landlords.

Liu Tong-shi became still more opposed to the Communist Party when he heard that, with the formation of the guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area following the September 18 incident, the party had divided the residential areas into "Red territories" and "White territories" and was hostile to everyone who lived in the "White territories". He hated both the Japanese, who acted as the masters in Manchuria, and the communists.

Liu Tong-shi would often say, "The Communist Party is my sworn enemy."

I believed that he was against communists because of a temporary misunderstanding, and that if we exerted a positive influence on him we would be able to persuade him to stop opposing communists, become our ally and love his country. Liu

Tong-shi was also displeased with the Japanese because after their occupation of Manchuria they disarmed and disbanded his private army. I paid particular attention to his anti-Japanese sentiments.

Instead of punishing Liu Tong-shi or confiscating his property, we resolved to urge him to cast aside his anti-communism and to develop his anti-Japanese and patriotic spirit. In this way we hoped to turn him into a supporter and patron of our revolution. For this reason we sent an operative group, with O Il Nam from the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment as its head, to pay him a visit.

On meeting Liu, O Il Nam told him that General Kim Il Sung had sent the group to hold talks with him, and asked him whether he was willing to comply with the request.

Hearing this, Liu Tong-shi smiled bitterly and said in fluent Korean:

“If you want to arrest me, arrest me without going into details. Why do you veil your intentions with the word ‘talks’? You’re probably saying that the Commander of the communist army requests an interview with me, a landlord, simply because you can’t come right out and say you’re going to arrest me. When I heard the rumour that you were going around in Helong County, I, Liu Yi-xian, already knew that I would not be able to escape the fate of a fish on the chopping board. Now that I’m all ready and prepared for death, don’t beat about the bush with a word like ‘talks’, but do as you please—kill me, take me away, or confiscate my property.” He was spiteful because he thought O Il Nam’s operative group had come to kidnap him. They told me the old man spoke with great disdain.

Liu Tong-shi treated O Il Nam and his party so coldly that the latter thought at first that their operation was a failure. The more obstinate Liu Tong-shi became, the more firmly O Il Nam resolved to try every possible means to get the old man to come to



Headquarters. He explained that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was a group of genuine communists entirely different from those who during the May 30 Uprising knocked down at random all rich people, regardless of whether they were pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese, or whether they were patriots or traitors. He also explained that the noble mission of this army was to achieve the liberation of both Korean and Chinese people and to protect their lives and property. Then he added that if Liu Tong-shi really declined the request of our Headquarters, he would have his party quietly withdraw.

Hearing this, Liu Tong-shi, his mouth tightly shut, lost himself in thought for a good while. Then with a change in attitude he told O Il Nam that he had better stay there for a little longer and tell him more about the current situation. He asked O Il Nam why he had bothered to come so far if all he was going to do was to leave suddenly. He then said that if Commander Kim had really invited him for talks, he would take the Commander's request into consideration.

Perhaps he had been afraid of evil consequences of his refusal. Moreover, O Il Nam had behaved like a gentleman and outlined the situation with calm good humour, so probably Liu Tong-shi became curious and his anger left him.

"I've heard that Commander Kim's unit fights well. However, Commander Kim is also said to be a communist, so he must despise rich people. To tell the truth, I have heard something about your army; judging from your speech and behaviour, you are somewhat different from other armies. ... Anyway, I'll go, since General Kim has asked me."

Then he said: "If you want to take me, bind me with a rope as if escorting a criminal. If the Japanese become aware of the fact that I have obediently followed you of my own accord in compliance with Commander Kim's request, they will dispatch

their ‘punitive’ force and behead me. And my family will never be safe again. So take me as if you were kidnapping me.”

Although O Il Nam thought Liu Tong-shi’s idea a good one, he hesitated because my order was to bring Liu Tong-shi in a decent way, not as a captive. O Il Nam thought that if he were to take Liu Tong-shi by binding him with a rope without approval from Headquarters, the same thing would happen as had happened when Kim Ju Hyon’s group acted violently towards Kim Jong Bu in Changbai County. It was fortunate that O Il Nam made this judgement.

Hearing O Il Nam’s report, I also thought that the scheme proposed by Liu Tong-shi was an ingenious one. I was about to support it, but some of the commanding officers cautioned that if we followed this idea, Liu’s son, the policeman, might create a commotion and even the garrison would make a great fuss. If gunshots were heard in Longtancun, the enemy in Helong county town would immediately send reinforcements.

If we were to put Liu Tong-shi’s idea into effect, we had to operate over a wide area and carry out large-scale military activities. Having decided to attack simultaneously the enemy in the three villages centring on Longtancun, where Liu Tong-shi’s house was located, we took with us the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Regiments as well as the Guard Company.

I commanded the operations, having established Headquarters at the village next to Longtancun, the village in which the house of Liu Tong-shi’s in-laws was situated.

Before launching the operation we changed our original plan and decided to make Liu Tong-shi, who had to manage all the affairs of his family, stay at home for the time being. Instead we would take Liu Yi-qing, his younger brother, because we thought that by so doing we would achieve the same result as by taking Liu Tong-shi without provoking his son and the army and police too

much. Liu Yi-qing had no children. From olden times the Chinese had a peculiar custom of loving, among all brothers, most dearly the one who had no children. Therefore, if Liu's family established contacts with us under the pretext of negotiating the safe return of Liu Yi-qing, the enemy and their neighbours would not suspect too much.

Our operations were successfully conducted as planned, and our units withdrew from the three villages simultaneously. When the unit of the revolutionary army was leaving his village, Liu Tong-shi called out his elder brother's third son and made him accompany Liu Yi-qing, his uncle, to take care of the latter. I suppose he sent his elder brother's son to the mountains to reduce Liu Yi-qing's loneliness.

My men told me they had had a great deal of trouble on their way back to the secret camp because of Liu Yi-qing. He could not walk too well because he was overweight. On top of that, he was an opium addict and apparently the effects of the opium he had been smoking were wearing off. So we carried him on a stretcher. The revolutionary army, walking many miles, carrying an overweight opium fiend on a stretcher! Can you imagine it? Such an instance must be pretty rare. Indeed, in those days we went through all sorts of strange experiences.

I told O Paek Ryong, commander of the Guard Company, to take good care of Liu Tong-shi's younger brother and nephew. The men of the Guard Company pitched a tent for the guests and looked after them well. Although we had difficulties with provisions in those days, we managed to give them good meals of rice and meat soup.

However, Liu Yi-qing did not eat very much. We thought it was because the meals did not appeal to him since he was a wealthy man, used to eating all sorts of delicacies at every meal. However, this turned out not to be the reason. He had no appetite because of

his craving for opium. Every day Liu Yi-qing pestered the men of the Guard Company for opium, saying he could go without meals but not without opium. He said he would pay them as much as they wanted, if only they would give him some.

My men could not comply with his request. At that time we had only a small amount of opium for emergency use at the medical centre as a substitute for anaesthetic. Finally losing his reason because of his craving Liu Yi-qing started hurling all sorts of abuse and insults at the men of the Guard Company.

It was an absurd situation—the son of a landlord screaming for opium from the revolutionary army at their secret camp!

I told my men to bring the guests to the tent of Headquarters. Liu Yi-qing was in a terrible state. When an opium addict stops smoking opium, his vision becomes blurred and he cannot keep proper balance.

I told the men at the medical centre to supply a small amount of opium to Liu Yi-qing every day, even if they had to use up all the emergency supply of opium. As soon as he lit up his pipe, Liu Yi-qing became animated and walked on air with a broad smile.

It seemed he had never in his life done any physical work. He did not even know how to put away his bedding, so his nephew did it for him. Indeed, he had idled his time away living in clover, never lifting a finger for anything.

One day, as I was winding up my talk with him, I told that a man could feel the meaning of life and have a good appetite only if he worked as hard as his physical strength allowed him. I went on to say that in olden times a certain princess had made others do everything for her, so she was finally unable even to peel an apple. I pointed out that if one depended only on others, one would eventually become this kind of fool. Liu Yi-qing said that he differed little from that princess. He added, nevertheless, that he was good at one thing: making dumplings. I was glad to hear that.

It was fortunate that the man I had judged to be nearly an invalid at least had the skill of making dumplings, even though it was not an extraordinary skill.

I told one of the cooks at Headquarters to bring the stuff for making dumplings. Liu Yi-qing made the dough thin and smooth, put in the stuffing and made the dumplings with astonishing skill. He not only shaped them nicely, but made them as fast as lightning.

Eating his dumplings with my men, I praised his extraordinary skill. From the following day on, whenever we were about to make dumplings, Liu Yi-qing rolled up his sleeves and helped the cooks. On such days he became talkative and even cracked jokes with me. One day, when he returned after making dumplings, he said that he felt joy in living now that he was working, as I had suggested. He said this sincerely.

However, we did not make dumplings every day. When there was no job for him to do, Liu Yi-qing was bored to death and smoked more opium than on other days. I told him a lot of instructive stories, starting with the story about the Opium War and telling him about Confucius and Mencius. I even talked about certain patriotic men of property who had made their names in Chinese history. The names of Zhang Wei-hua and Chen Hanzhang, revolutionaries from wealthy families, naturally became the topic of our conversation.

Liu Yi-qing listened to me with great interest. One day he asked for a writing brush and some paper. He wrote a letter to Liu Yi-xian, saying that he wanted to help Commander Kim with money and property, although he was not quite ready to commit suicide for the sake of the revolution, as Zhang Wei-hua had done. He even showed me the letter.

Reading it, I could see it was not in vain that we had treated him humanely. Liu Yi-qing started the letter by writing about how he and his nephew were getting along. He specially emphasized

that he shared the same tent with me, that he was making dumplings with me and that the men of the revolutionary army were kindly looking after him like their own brother. Then he wrote that since he had been treated hospitably and kindly, he had to return the favour. He went on to say that if his elder brother sent such things as rice, cloth, shoes and the like, they would be a great help in the operations of the revolutionary army, and in that case he and his nephew would be able to return home soon. Our education and enlightenment of him had proved fruitful.

Liu Tong-shi, who was anxious about the safety of his younger brother and nephew after sending them off to the mountains, was extremely pleased to receive this letter. He sent us notice of the date by which he would prepare the goods we needed, and asked me to send some people to carry these things. We dispatched Ri Pong Rok with men numbering the strength of about one platoon to carry the goods. They brought back cotton cloth sufficient to make hundreds of uniforms, workmen's shoes, rice, flour, pancakes, pork and soybean oil. Liu Tong-shi sent such goods to our secret camp on three occasions.

As dealings with our comrades became more frequent, he requested a formal interview with me and asked to be brought to our secret camp. He wanted to meet me, the Commander of the revolutionary army, to exchange greetings with me now that he was helping this army. I saw to it that he was brought to our secret camp.

When Liu Tong-shi was about to leave for his meeting with me, his policeman son came to oppose the trip. He said: "It seems that you, father, have decided to go to the secret camp of the revolutionary army after receiving Uncle's letter. You'd better give this matter some thought. Uncle wrote that he and cousin were living with General Kim Il Sung in the same tent and making dumplings with him, I can't believe that. How can the

Commander of the revolutionary army share bed and board with civilians? Moreover, Uncle is a landlord's son. The Communist Party says all landlords must be overthrown. It's obviously a whopping lie that the Commander of the revolutionary army shares bed and board with a member of the hostile class and that they make dumplings like housewives together. One of Commander Kim's men must have forced him to write this."

Liu Tong-shi answered: "Don't talk nonsense. I've met Commander Kim's men several times. All of them are polite and warm-hearted young men, so I think Commander Kim has good men under him. Their behaviour towards me alone is enough to show me Commander Kim's personality and the discipline of the unit. Now that I'm in touch with the revolutionary army, I would like to go to the mountains to meet Commander Kim and personally confirm the truth of your uncle's letter."

When Liu Tong-shi came to see me, he brought with him a uniform and a coat made of plain but good-quality woollen cloth, a pair of boots and a cap. These were all gifts for me. After exchanging a few words with him, I found him to be no ordinary man and not to be compared with his younger brother, either in personality or knowledge. He was gentlemanly, and his speech and conduct were noble and dignified.

Liu Tong-shi spoke to me in Korean, saying that we must have gone through many hardships in the mountains. Then he expressed his gratitude to me for the good care we had taken of his younger brother and nephew. On my part, I thanked him for the large amount of goods he had sent to help our army, and for visiting us despite his advanced age.

We pitched a separate tent for Liu Tong-shi and had him meet his younger brother and nephew there.

Liu Yi-qing said to his elder brother: "What do they mean by saying the soldiers of the communist army are red devils?"

That's nonsense. No one in the world is as good-natured as these people. Commander Kim's army is a gentlemanly army." He thus praised the revolutionary army to the skies, even adding that he had been enlightened, thanks to Commander Kim.

Liu Yi-qing spoke so highly of us that after meeting his younger brother, Liu Tong-shi called on me again and repeatedly thanked me.

On meeting Liu Tong-shi I was most surprised by the fact that he had excellent knowledge of not only the Korean language and customs, but also of its history and culture. He and I understood each other very easily.

I was most impressed when he said he could not help but sympathize with Koreans when he saw them leading a hard life in a foreign land, deprived of their country. Just as I liked Chinese and was attached to them, so did Liu Tong-shi love Koreans.

He asked me suddenly: "Commander Kim, people call your army 'communist bandits'. Is it true that you are a communist?"

"Calling our army 'communist bandits' is a fabrication of the Japanese, but it's true I'm a communist."

"Then, Commander Kim, what do you think of me, a man who has been against all communists up to now?"

Probably one of the reasons he had come to our secret camp was to get a reply to this question, so I had to give him a prudent answer.

From the first days of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, I had held a lot of negotiations with people who were against communism. Commander Yu was opposed to communism, as was Wu Yi-cheng at first. Ryang Se Bong, a Korean, was also hostile to communists although he was a patriot. It was only in his last years that he allied with communists. In each of my negotiations with Commander Yu, Commander Wu, and Commander Ryang, I was in a position to speak in defence of communism and to



convince them of the need to ally with communists for the sake of a united front. The choice between alliance with communists and opposition to them was up to them. Therefore, even though I always led the negotiations and took the initiative, I had to wait for their answer anxiously.

The situation was different, however, in my talk with Liu Tong-shi. I was in a position to denounce his anti-communist acts, but he had to listen to my judgement. It was very gratifying that he wanted to find out our attitude to his anti-communist acts of his own accord. Anyhow, he was candid and broad-minded.

According to my experience, there were two categories of anti-communism. One was deliberate and active anti-communism, pursued by those who wanted to destroy communism because they thought they would meet their end if communists gained the upper hand. The other was blind anti-communism, pursued by those who either loathed communism at the sight of the wrongdoings perpetrated by pseudo-communists, or by those who automatically rejected and gave communism a wide berth, deceived by the pernicious propaganda of the imperialists. It could be said that Liu Tong-shi belonged to the second category.

If we were to lead him from opposing communists into allying with them, we had to be candid with him about our attitude. I had to refrain from currying favour with him just to receive aid goods from him; at the same time I could not denounce him to his face as a wicked man simply because he was a landlord and anti-communist. It was important to tell him clearly the good and bad points in his deeds, thus inducing him to ally with us and love his country, instead of opposing us.

“I feel extremely sorry that you are against communists. However, we do not intend to punish you in the least, since you oppose communism because you do not understand it. Moreover, you love China and the Chinese people despite your opposition

to communists. You do not want to see your country ruined, and you want to be a Chinese in your own country, even though you are a landlord and against communists. I attach great importance to this. A man who loves his country can easily ally with communists.”

As I said this, Liu Tong-shi took my hand, full of emotion.

“Thank you, Commander Kim. Although there are many people and many mouths in Helong, you are the only person who has recognized that I am a patriot. That’s enough to help me sleep in peace.”

He confessed that he had been against communists because of narrow-mindedness, and asked what he should do to cooperate with us.

I said: “It is not hard to understand what alliance with communists means. Opposing Manchukuo, resisting Japan and helping our revolutionary army all mean alliance with the communists. You already started cooperating with us the day you sent your younger brother and nephew to us. Those who truly love their country and nation will eventually understand communism and reconcile with the communists, because the latter also love their country and nation. Alliance with communists and opposition to Japan is the most important patriotic deed for both Korean and Chinese landlords.”

Liu Tong-shi said that he was fortunate to discover his own worth, although belatedly, thanks to Commander Kim.

The following day, however, he was strangely reticent. When I asked him if there was anything wrong, he simply replied no.

I summoned O Paek Ryong and asked him whether anything undesirable had happened while the Guard Company had been looking after Liu Tong-shi.

O Paek Ryong said there was nothing particularly wrong. He added, however, that because Liu Tong-shi had asked to be

allowed to inspect the secret camp, O had taken him around, showing him the training of the soldiers and inviting him to a recreation party. When Liu Tong-shi was inspecting the cooking area, he was rather displeased at the sight of a pot in which gruel, a half-and-half mixture of sorghum and edible grass, was boiling.

Liu Tong-shi asked: "Why are you preparing this sort of meal instead of rice, now that I have sent you dozens of sacks of rice? Of course, it's understandable if you cook gruel in order to spare your rice, but it's unreasonable to serve even the Commander with gruel because of the shortage of provisions." Probably he was shocked by the fact that the Commander ate the same meals as his men. He was still more deeply moved, while inspecting the medical centre, to learn that the centre had given his younger brother all the opium it had been saving to treat patients in an emergency.

Having heard all this from O Paek Ryong, I thought I'd better send Liu Tong-shi and his party back home.

Liu Tong-shi, however, said that he would return home alone, and requested me to allow his younger brother and nephew to stay a little longer in our secret camp for the time being. He said he wanted to send more goods to our unit, but there had to be an excuse for him to do this. He said that if his younger brother and nephew remained in our secret camp, this would be a good pretext in front of the Japanese, even if they found out about the delivery of the goods.

It was extremely gratifying that Liu Tong-shi volunteered to give us more help. It seems to be human nature for a person to try to prove himself worthy if complete confidence is placed in him.

Prior to Liu Tong-shi's departure I gave him a modest farewell party. At the party he apologized to me for having been hostile to communists and for having mistaken our revolutionary army for "bandits". He said that he would be sparing with neither money nor

goods to help the revolutionary army.

Before parting from us, he asked me to write a certificate for him, so that when the 8<sup>th</sup> Route Army liberated Northeast China, he could show them that he had given material assistance to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. I wrote on a piece of silk in Chinese: "Liu Tong-shi is a fine patriot. He has given moral and material assistance to the Anti-Japanese Allied Army." Under that I wrote "Commander Kim Il Sung" and then affixed my seal to it. The certificate Peng Zhen saw was probably this kind of document.

In those days many Chinese landlords in Manchuria pretended to cooperate with the Japanese, but secretly helped anti-Japanese fighters. They believed that the day would come when the Japanese imperialists were destroyed and the puppet state of Manchukuo was returned to China.

Whenever they helped the People's Revolutionary Army, Chinese landlords asked us to write a certificate with the words, *Zhu Shi Kang*. I wrote such documents for landlords in Changbai County and for others in Emu and Dunhua counties.

*Zhu Shi Kang* are Chinese words, *Zhu* meaning "pig", *Shi*, "eat" and *Kang*, "bran". Thus they mean that a pig eats bran. If we use the ideographs for "red", "eat" and "peace", they are also pronounced *Zhu Shi Kang*, but in this case these ideographs mean that Zhu De conquers Kang De. In those days the 8<sup>th</sup> Route Army was called Zhu-Mao Army, with the ideographs standing for the surnames of Zhu De and Mao Ze-dong. Kang De was the reign-title of Pu Yi, Emperor of Manchukuo, set up by Japanese. When the Chinese said, *Zhu Shi Kang*, it was a secret code, meaning that the 8<sup>th</sup> Route Army would liberate Northeast China.

After Liu Tong-shi had returned, many more goods than before arrived at the Wukoujiang Secret Camp. He sent all kinds of supplies by truck, which helped us greatly in our preparations for winter that year.

He also sent us a lump of opium as large as a wooden pillow in return for the opium our medical centre had given his brother.

With the Harvest Moon Day of that year near at hand, we sent Liu Tong-shi's younger brother and nephew back home. Bidding farewell to us, Liu Yi-qing shed a lot of tears. He said that once he was back home he would give up smoking opium and live like a decent human being.

Not long after we had sent them back, we also left the Wukoujiang Secret Camp. Since then, we never had any more contact with Liu Tong-shi or his brother. However, I always remember Liu Tong-shi and believe that he lived conscientiously.

Among Liu Tong-shi's relatives there is a man named Liu Zhen-guo, one of his nephews. This man sent a letter to the Party History Institute. According to this letter, Liu Tong-shi also recalled us frequently until his death. It seems that back home from our secret camp, he clearly expressed his intention to oppose Japanese imperialists and gave wide publicity to us.

It is said that Liu Tong-shi kept the certificate we had written at the Wukoujiang Secret Camp to the end of his life as a family treasure. I have been told that after his death, his younger brother's family kept the document. I was very touched to hear that.

The heart-to-heart talks I had with Liu Tong-shi at the secret camp made us lifelong friends who never forgot each other. We remained on friendly terms with each other, although we were separated across a long distance.

What does this mean? It means that while those capitalists who seek only their own interests and pleasure, caring nothing for their country, nation or kinsmen, will never share our ideas, the conscientious capitalists who love their country, nation and fellow citizens can become our companions, irrespective of their nationality, party affiliations or political views. Differences

in ideas or property status cannot be an absolute criterion for judging people. The broadest criterion for judging people is how much or how little they love their country, love their nation and love their fellow human beings. It is a rule that one who values human beings also loves one's nation, and one who loves one's nation also loves one's country. This is an indisputable truth.

Anyone who disregards this truth will make Right or Left mistakes in one's work with people. For some time, several articles dealing with the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle defined Liu Tong-shi as a vicious anti-communist landlord. We cannot regard this estimation to be correct. If one indiscriminately judges people only by their class origin and past records, or deals imprudently with them, one will commit a colossal blunder in one's work with them. One will take a patriot for a traitor and vice versa, or denounce a supporter of the revolution as a counterrevolutionary element.

One day, when he was received by the great leader, Son Won Thae, a Korean residing in the United States, asked: "President, there are many capitalists in south Korea. How are you going to deal with them when the country is reunified?"

The fatherly leader replied:

"I intend to join hands with all of them no matter who they are, except for the stubborn reactionaries who are betraying the nation with the backing of foreign forces. The Ten-Point Programme of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation for the Reunification of the Country incorporates our stand on this."

## **6. Confronted by Hundreds of Thousands of “Punitive” Troops**

From the autumn of 1939 to the spring of 1941 the Japanese imperialists conducted unprecedentedly large-scale “punitive” operations in the three provinces in southeastern Manchuria against the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army. They called this procedure a “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace”.

After reading the accounts of Nozoe, the mastermind of the campaign, and those of his subordinate commanders of the “punitive” forces, about their defeat in this campaign, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung told his officials, “Considering the fact that the Japanese officers, who loved to talk big, spoke dejectedly like this, they must have had a tough time of it. Not to mention the hardships I and my men went through. The battles were decisive.”

He then recollected the confrontation with the enemy in detail.

The period from the late 1930s to the early 1940s was the most difficult in our armed struggle. Both the Arduous March and the large-scale “punitive” operations conducted by the Japanese imperialists in the three provinces in southeastern Manchuria in the name of a “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace” were a tremendous trial for us. Jilin, Tonghua and Jiandao were the three southeastern provinces. The struggle at every stage was both stressful and complicated, and I cannot forget the tribulations we experienced at that time.

It was by pure chance that we found out the enemy was

planning to launch long-term, large-scale “punitive” operations from the autumn of 1939 on.

A company commander of the Chinese “Fengtian unit”, who had been captured by us at the Battle of Wukoujiang in June that year, revealed the secret to us. In that battle we captured many enemy officers and men. They wondered why the revolutionary army released all the prisoners of war and even gave them travelling money. Before releasing them, we selected a number of intelligent men from among the POWs who wanted to join the guerrillas and gave them an assignment to help us while serving in the enemy forces. One of the officers who returned to the puppet Manchukuo army after being educated by us was a company commander. He informed us that a “Jiandao area punitive force” had been organized, that his company had been attached to the force, that the “punitive” operations would be launched in early October on an unprecedentedly large scale, and that if the revolutionary army did not take countermeasures promptly, it might suffer heavy losses.

Thanks to his information, we were able to take time to prepare against the enemy attack.

This scheme of a “special clean-up campaign” was quite extraordinary.

In the first place, it involved all the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo army and police in an unprecedented “punitive” offensive.

It was, in fact, a large-scale war that was to mobilize as many as 200,000 army and police troops from Japan and Manchukuo, including even paramilitary organizations of all types, under the direct supervision and command of Umez, chief of the Kwantung Army, and the Public Security Minister for the puppet state of Manchukuo.

After we declared war against Japan, the Japanese imperialists



launched annual “punitive” operations against us, enlarging the scope of these operations year after year.

Their siege operations in the years after 1934 and the “punitive” campaign in northern Dongbiandao from the autumn of 1936 on were large in scale.

The new “punitive” campaign being prepared in the name of the “special clean-up campaign”, however, surpassed all previous campaigns not only in the number of men used but also in the size of the area in which it would be carried out.

During the “operations for public peace in northern Dongbiandao” in 1936 the theatre of operations of the “Tonghua Punitive Command”, headed by Sasaki, was confined to one province, but the theatre of operations of the “Nozoe Punitive Command” in 1939 covered the three provinces of Jilin, Tonghua and Jiandao, as well as Ningan County in Mudanjiang Province—our provinces in effect.

An article in *Manchukuo Army* describes part of the preparations for the “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern areas” as follows:

“The Kwantung Army budgeted three million *yen* for the campaign and says no more can be earmarked on any account. On October 1, the first day of the punitive campaign, Iimura, chief of staff of the Headquarters of the Kwantung Army, Hoshino Naoki, Minister of General Affairs of Manchukuo, Susukida Yoshitomo, Deputy Public Security Minister, and Kitabe, staff officer representing Major-General Nozoe, held a meeting. Kitabe explained the plan of the campaign, pointing out on a map the roads to be constructed or repaired, the location of communications and internment villages, and requested 30 million *yen* for the punitive campaign.

“Minister Hoshino promised that he would do his best to secure the fund. Paymaster-General Iizawa expressed his hope for the success in the

campaign in the three provinces, adding that he would squeeze out the fund. Thus the thoroughgoing campaign for public peace was finally set in motion.” (*Manchukuo Army*, p. 400, Lanxinghui)

The new campaign carried out by the “Nozoe Punitive Command” covered an area three to four times greater than the campaign carried out by the “Tonghua Punitive Command”, with a commitment of 12.5 times the troop strength and 13 times the expenditures of the former. From these figures one can guess how much the Japanese military authorities expected from this “punitive” campaign.

The top hierarchy of the Japanese and Manchukuo army and police did not confine their campaign to military operations alone, but combined it with their “surrender-hunting operation”, “ideological operation” and “operation to eradicate the basic roots”. As a result, the campaign surpassed by far all previous campaigns of this sort in scope and depth and in the elaborateness of the means and methods used.

Launching the “punitive” campaign, the Japanese imperialists described it as a “sacred war” and “sacred punishment”. We thought it quite ludicrous that they should “beautify” their campaign in that manner.

The Japanese had unleashed a number of aggressive wars but they had never declared actual war, nor had they described their activities as a war. It had been their habit to rationalize and validate their acts of war by describing them as “events” or “incidents”.

Their designation of the new “special clean-up campaign” as a “sacred war” and “sacred punishment” was therefore quite meaningful. It showed that the Japanese military authorities had abandoned their previous view of their confrontation with the People’s Revolutionary Army as a one-sided “punitive” campaign or a “clean-up of bandits” and began to see it as a genuine bilateral conflict.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung also explained why the Japanese imperialists were forced to launch a total war at that time and what objectives they planned to reach through the war.

Owing to the successive failures of the Japanese in the Sino-Japanese War and in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol, the Japanese military was suffering from inner turmoil.

The Sino-Japanese War, which they had bragged would be finished in three months or half a year at the most, was dragging on for two years without any hope of victory. The main force of the Japanese army had been drawn deep into the quagmire of war.

Certain sections of the Japanese military ascribed their failure in China's mainland and in Khalkhin-Gol to the factional strife among themselves, or to the backwardness of their military and technical equipment; at the same time, quite a few military bureaucrats and experts pointed the finger at the harassment of the People's Revolutionary Army in the rear, which brought about instability of their rear, disconnection of supply routes and confused war psychology. It is true that the enemy suffered great losses because of repeated attacks by the People's Revolutionary Army in the rear.

Apparently this made the Japanese come to their senses. They realized that they could carry out neither the war against China nor operations against the Soviet Union with the People's Revolutionary Army constantly plaguing them from behind. They had to change their view of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

As you see, the inevitable result of their assessment of the fight against the People's Revolutionary Army was that they drew up the new plan of a "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern areas" and went on to implement this plan through all-out war. This campaign was aimed at wiping out the People's Revolutionary Army once and for all.

Nozoe's orders took the form of the boast that he would annihilate our army. He declared that as the guerrilla army had not decreased, despite repeated "punitive" operations over several years in the three provinces of Jilin, Jiandao and Tonghua, he was taking up a high mission—to ride his horse to Mt. Paektu and root out the evil bandits with a single stroke of his sword. He ordered his men to wipe out the People's Revolutionary Army to the last man.

From his statement that he would finish off "the evil bandits" on Mt. Paektu with a quick stroke of his sword, one can see that the enemy's main target was the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

We closely examined the strategy and tactics to be used by the enemy in the large-scale campaign of a total war and discovered that the Japanese military authorities, on the basis of their long study and review of our own guerrilla tactics, were going to adopt a new fighting method—that of countering guerrilla tactics with guerrilla tactics.

We were able to confirm this insidious plan after reading their reference book for operations against "bandits", which we had managed to obtain. In those days the enemy distributed to each unit of the "punitive" force a printed collection of their experiences in the "punitive" operations against us. It was a sort of anti-guerrilla warfare manual.

The Japanese military authorities dressed the soldiers of their special units for anti-guerrilla warfare in uniforms like ours and demanded that they drill and behave like guerrillas. All this shows how hard they now studied and worked on their tactics to wipe out the KPRA.

I knew that the showdown with Nozoe would be a fierce fight, and that if we wanted to emerge victorious in this fight, we ourselves would have to work out and employ new tactics

we had never used before.

In order to frustrate the offensive of hundreds of thousands of enemy troops and ensure the continuous upsurge of the revolution, we had to invent ingenious tactics that would render our operations more elaborate and energetic than ever before. We adopted large-unit circling operations for this purpose. In brief, this meant long-term mobile operations by large forces moving around in a vast area over a number of secret routes. These operations would not be mere manoeuvres, but mobile actions combined with attacks on the enemy by various methods. Without such mobile operations it would be impossible to emerge victorious in the fight against a 200,000-strong enemy force.

The net of “district punitive forces” and “subdistrict punitive forces”, cast out by the “Nozoe Punitive Command”, spread not only over the three provinces of Jilin, Jiandao and Tonghua, but also over Ningan, Dongning and Muling in Mudanjiang Province in northern Manchuria. One slip and we might be caught in the mesh of this vast network.

While studying the network carefully, we found it tight in some places and loose in others. In certain areas the net had already been cast and in others it was in the process of being cast. The mesh size was diverse. The “punitive” forces had been deployed in all counties in Jiandao, the main theatre of our operations.

We planned to direct our movement first towards the area west of Dunhua and Emu. These two counties had many of our underground organizations, and the people there had gone through revolutionary training. We could easily find our foothold in this area. If we attacked the enemy there, we could draw the enemy’s attention to this location. We would then move to Mengjiang, Fusong and Changbai, where we would make a sharp turn to create havoc there. When the enemy came running to Mengjiang,

Fusong and Changbai, following our traces, we would once again do an about-face and return to our original place through the southern tip of Jiandao Province. This was my plan. I estimated that this round movement would take us about one year.

It was my opinion that these circling operations should be conducted by a large force. The aim of the operations was not to avoid the enemy, but to attack him at points favourable to us. When attacking the enemy, we had to annihilate him so that he could have no chance to recover, and for this we had to perform our circling operation with a large force.

I attached special importance to the secrecy of these circling routes. If the routes were revealed, we might be caught by the enemy's "tick tactics" or in his mesh and fall into enormous difficulties. But there was one serious problem with these operations: the difficulty of obtaining provisions. In the case where the guerrillas operated in a fixed area, they could obtain provisions in advance and keep them in storage in the secret camps. But in the case of a large force constantly moving around throughout the entire winter, things would be far different.

Unless the food problem was resolved, our large-unit circling operations would be impossible. This was why I held back the plan of operations for some time, not making it public even after I had drawn it up.

As I set out the routes of our activities, I planned to order the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Regiments and the Guard Company to store provisions in advance at certain key points we would be passing through—first in the northern area of Antu County, and then in Huadian and Dunhua counties. As crops were yet to be harvested, it was very difficult to obtain food at that time. We would be able to buy provisions after crops had been harvested and threshed, but in the present situation we could do nothing. Nor could we buy food from grain dealers in town.

I told the commanding officers who were just leaving on their mission to obtain provisions that they should buy unharvested crops. To obtain food, we would have to harvest the crops in the fields after purchasing them and do the threshing ourselves. It was an enormous, labour-consuming task beyond the capability of the whole unit, but there was no other choice.

In early October of that year, when the problem of provisions had been solved in the main, I convened a meeting of military and political cadres at Liangjiangkou, Antu County, where I formally declared my plan to conduct large-unit circling operations in the vast region northeast of Mt. Paektu.

One of the events I still remember from the days at Liangjiangkou and its vicinity is that a peasant brought to us his 14- or 15-year-old son and asked us to admit him into the KPRA.

Frankly speaking, recruiting a boy when we were about to start the trying, large-unit circling operations was a matter that required deep thought. I explained to the boy that we were an army that walked day and night, and that some days we had to walk 40 kilometres or even 80 kilometres. I asked him if he could keep up with us. The boy, pointing to Ri O Song, replied that if that guerrilla brother walked, he would, too.

I asked the peasant if he would not be worried about his son in the guerrilla army. He asked me in turn how I thought he could send his son into the army without doing some deep thinking first, and then added that he believed in me and that it would set his mind at ease to think of his boy doing his bit. As the old saying has it, he concluded, mugwort grows straight in a hemp field.

The boy was clever and his father was also an excellent man. I decided to admit the boy into the army.

Some people told me they thought I was taking a burden on myself, but the majority of officers and men were delighted,

saying that when they saw the Commander recruiting such a young boy, they felt pretty sure that the forthcoming operations would succeed. They judged that otherwise the Commander would not volunteer to take on this “burden”.

I took him along with me with my orderlies. Quick-eyed and agile, he matured fast. When I went to Liangjiangkou for the meeting, I took him with me. Soon after the meeting we started on our way back. We knew the way would not be smooth, for Nozoe’s first stage of “punitive” operations had started, and the circumstances were very strained. We had to move in great stealth, with a scout party ahead.

In the vicinity of Jiguanlazi we were surprised by the enemy. The name of the place originated from a peak there, which resembled the comb of a cock. The peak soared to the left of the way we were taking. The terrain of Jiguanlazi was such that it was highly favourable for the enemy to waylay us and very unfavourable for us to defend ourselves. I was fairly sure that the enemy, if he were in this vicinity at all, would not miss this terrain feature. He would be lying in ambush, since he was attempting to wipe out the anti-Japanese guerrillas through guerrilla tactics. However, we could not change the march route and take a long, roundabout way. I gave the order to pass through the danger zone quickly, with a machine-gun in the van of the column.

When we reached the area, loud shots rang out all of a sudden from the direction of the peak. The enemy had opened up fire as our column was marching through the narrow, unforked lane.

This attack inflicted fatal wounds on a veteran nicknamed “Shorty” and on Kim Jong Dok.

I was worried over the boy who had joined the guerrillas in Liangjiangkou, so I called to him. He was firing back at the enemy on the height. It was surprising to think that he had



gathered such courage in this critical situation. The boy even tried to take care of me, shouting, “Don’t move, Comrade Commander.”

“No, I must move. Keep changing your position as you fire,” I shouted back.

Then I drew him to a hollow behind a mound of earth nearby.

Meanwhile, the enemy bullets were flying around us ceaselessly. It was quite a predicament. I saw a ditch about 100 metres away in the field and rushed to it, ordering my men to follow me. They rushed to the ditch after me, helping the wounded. But the ditch proved not to be safe either.

We ran down to a river and rushed along its bank for a few minutes, then advanced towards the cliff occupied by the enemy. I had no time to explain to my men why we were heading that way. As I ran towards the enemy position without explanation, the men might have been sceptical. They would have wondered what I had in mind, since it was impossible to charge against so many enemy soldiers with our tiny force of fewer than ten men. Nevertheless, they rushed after me without hesitation. Just as I trusted them fully, they trusted me absolutely.

We reached the bottom of the cliff, while the enemy bullets continued to fly over our heads. I think it was at this point the men saw what I was trying to do.

Thinking that we had escaped across the field, the enemy fired towards it aimlessly. Then the enemy soldiers ran down from the height and encircled the field, raising a great roar. In the meantime, we climbed the adjacent height. Having surrounded the field on three sides, they continued firing at each other for a good while.

The Battle at Jiguanlazi can be called our first encounter with the Nozoe “punitive” force. This battle was clear proof that the enemy had studied our guerrilla tactics in depth before the new campaign. At the same time, I was convinced that my plan

of large-unit circling operations was a right tactical choice. The battle had been a microcosm of the military circumstances we would find ourselves in during that winter.

By the time I returned from the meeting at Liangjiangkou, my men had finished preparing the provisions. The sewing-unit had also made almost all the uniforms I had ordered.

We called the first stage of our operations the expedition to Dunhua. You can understand the course to be from Hualazi straight to Dunhua and then Mengjiang and Fusong. We intended to march from Hualazi towards Mt. Paektu, then turn to the north to fight various big battles in the backwoods of Dunhua before moving into dense forests of Dongpaizi in Mengjiang County, or in Baishitan in Fusong County, then finally take a rest and conduct military and political training during the coldest season in one of our secret camps.

While making preparations for the first stage of the operations, I sent the Independent Battalion and a platoon of the Guard Company to Dongpaizi under the command of Rim Su San, as well as a small unit to Baishitan. Their mission was to prepare secret camps, provisions and uniforms for the main force.

After these preparations we set out on the expedition to Dunhua. You can have a better understanding of the expedition if you remind yourselves of the Battles of Liukesong and Jiaxinzi. These two battles were fought on the expedition to Dunhua.

In order to disguise the expedition route we first marched to the upper reaches of the Erdao River as if we were moving towards Samjang.

Day was breaking when we were about a dozen kilometres from Hualazi. We got away from the river, erased our footprints and went into a nearby forest to take a rest. Refreshing ourselves with breakfast, we marched towards Mt. Paektu, leaving a single line of footprints. In the vicinity of Naitoushan we changed our

course by 180 degrees to make our way to the north along the frozen Sandaobai River. This was all aimed at confusing the enemy once more.

Reversing the course of a march in that way made as strong an impact on the enemy as did several battles. The confused enemy would roam about here and there, either freezing to death in the unmapped areas, or losing combat efficiency from exhaustion. In this way we set afloat misleading rumours and left false trails in order to drag enemy troops on our tail as long as possible, wearing them out and leaving them incapable of moving any further from cold and fatigue.

When crossing over the Mudan Pass, we ourselves were also greatly troubled by the snow, which fell in large flakes, turning all the rocks on the pass slippery with a coat of ice. We had to move very slowly.

Our main force crossed over the Mudan Pass safely and disappeared into the forest of Dunhua.

The large-unit circling operations were beset with hardships and difficulties like this from the outset. But it was a thrilling start. On the first leg of our expedition to Dunhua we did not fight large battles. We struck the enemy only when it was necessary to keep our routes secret. Nevertheless, the enemy suffered heavy casualties.

Whenever he recollected the expedition to Dunhua, the great leader mentioned the meeting of the Anti-Japanese Youth League that took place in the midst of the march.

On the Dunhua expedition we held a meeting of the Anti-Japanese Youth League. The AJYL was a youth organization that developed from the Young Communist League, which had been dissolved according to the decision adopted at the Nanhutou

meeting. The league meeting had to be held for an unavoidable reason.

There is a place named Sidaohuanggou in Dunhua where some years ago I had recuperated for a while after being released from the Jilin Prison and where I had reorganized destroyed organizations. It was in the vicinity of this place that we arrived first after crossing over the Mudan Pass. One of my men, who had been to the village to find out how things were there, brought news of the reaction of the secret organization there to the Pak Tuk Bom incident.

Briefly, the incident involved Pak Tuk Bom, a commanding officer of the People's Revolutionary Army, who had blackened the honour of the revolutionary army merely to get his hands on some supplies.

His unit was very short of provisions and clothing at one point. When supplies were running short, the People's Revolutionary Army used to strike the enemy to capture their supplies, or obtained them with the help of revolutionary organizations. Those were the proper ways to obtain supplies. However, Pak neither thought of fighting a battle, nor did he try to appeal to underground organizations. He was afraid of fighting, so he tried to cover the shortage of provisions and clothing through quite a cowardly method. One feels ashamed to even talk about his method in public.

Pak told an enemy agent, "I'm going to surrender to your side with my division. But right now that's difficult, because our clothes are all torn and we lack provisions. Prepare such-and-such amounts of provisions and cloth, then bring them to a place we'll fix up. I will ensure that my men change their uniforms and recover a little before bringing them to you. But I don't feel safe only with your assurance since you're only an agent. When you bring the provisions and clothing, send along your representatives,

who can guarantee our safety after we surrender.”

The enemy agent agreed and reported all this to his special operation squad. The enemy was greatly interested in this bargain. The enemy bosses in Jilin Province and Dunhua County gathered together soon after they received the report and discussed the measures to be taken. Then they sent their representatives to the rendezvous.

Pak greeted them and held his negotiations with them. When his subordinate officer entered the conference room during the negotiations and reported that the promised materials had all arrived, Pak suddenly pulled out his gun and shot to death all the enemy representatives on the spot. He was severely criticized by us for this and was transferred to the Guard Brigade. In 1940, when he was taken prisoner, he did, in fact, betray the organization and surrender to the enemy. His false surrender had become real surrender.

After this betrayal, Pak formed a “Pak special corps” and ran around, trying to induce his former comrades-in-arms to surrender as well.

The lesson taught by the Pak Tuk Bom incident was very serious. When I heard that he had surrendered, I thought that his false surrender farce had not been entirely accidental. Such a thing can be conceived only by one who is liable to surrender in fact as well as in fancy. His example shows that a man who fabricates a false surrender can commit true surrender any time.

What I found more serious, however, was that quite a few people looked upon Pak’s shabby, deceitful method of obtaining supply materials as a great act. Worse still, the guerrilla who had been to Sidaohuanggou to reconnoitre was of the opinion that Pak, who had carried out a “laudable” deed, had been punished too severely and should have been shown the appreciation due to him. When he was making his report on the outlook of the people

there, he was ill-disposed towards them, as they had said that Pak was an officer who had played havoc with the prestige of the guerrilla army. The guerrilla reporting to me was a member of the AJYL.

The fact that a member of the AJYL was favourably disposed towards Pak's deed was an extremely dangerous thing. I talked to the officer in charge of youth work. He told me that quite a large number of the AJYL members in the directional army were speaking of the incident in the same way as the scout had done. I realized that there were obviously problems with the ideological outlook of the AJYL members, and so I told the commanding officer to convene a meeting of the league members immediately. He replied that they had all fallen asleep the moment they arrived at the camp.

This kind of thing had never happened before. On arrival at a camping site, everyone usually got busy cleaning their weapons, patching their torn clothing, shaving and cutting firewood. They had always lived in such a well-disciplined manner—but not that night. Of course, it was true that they were extremely tired after the march; nevertheless, it was quite disgraceful that they had fallen fast asleep without even setting up camp. With this kind of mental state, we would never be able to carry out the mobile operations full steam.

That night I made O Jung Hup vacate the tent of a company and called a meeting of the AJYL. I was also at the meeting.

The tendency towards hazy ideology revealed among the league members, their lack of the spirit to surmount difficulties, even their neglect of simple hygiene and the half-hearted participation in cultural recreation work among the young guerrillas were criticized. Measures to rectify these shortcomings were discussed.

At the meeting I also pointed out to them the dangerous

nature of the Pak Tuk Bom incident. I emphasized especially that each and every guerrilla should maintain sharp vigilance at all times against deviations that could damage the authority and honour of the People's Revolutionary Army, that they all had to wage a strong struggle against such deviations and keep good relations with the people at all times.

This meeting awakened the commanding personnel to their duty. Some officers had tacitly consented to their men falling asleep without making preparations for camping; they had done nothing about it, as they had felt sympathy for them. After the meeting they realized that they had been wrong.

The meeting was a form of ideological mobilization for attacking Liukesong and Jiaxinzi. This ideological mobilization proved effective, for when we attacked Liukesong after the meeting, all the men fought bravely. They also fought with great success in the Battle of Jiaxinzi. After these two battles the guerrillas understood why their Commander had convoked the AJYL meeting all of a sudden.

The more difficult our work and the graver our situation, the more efficiently must we conduct ideological work. I insist on the importance of ideology. I maintain that ideology must come first and I value ideology far more than any wealth. When we had to fight do-or-die battles with a 200,000-strong enemy force, we drew up a great plan for large-unit circling operations and carried it out forcefully. What did we have to rely on at that time? We relied on the perfect unity of all the guerrillas and their steadfast conviction of the revolutionary idea. Did we have planes or tanks? We had people, soldiers, light weapons, and that was all. So we fought our battles after ideological mobilization, and this proved highly effective.

The respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung also recollected that

the original plan of operations had to be changed during the expedition. This was due to Rim Su San's neglect of his duty.

Just before the AJYL meeting Kim Jong Suk and Ri Tu Ik came to Headquarters and reported a disturbing state of affairs at the secret camp in Dongpaizi. When embarking on the expedition to Dunhua, I intended to spend the coldest one or two months in Dongpaizi, make a circle through Fusong and Changbai counties, proceed to the homeland, and then by way of Helong return to Antu, the place we had started the expedition. This all had to be changed because Rim Su San, who had been dispatched to Dongpaizi, had not made any preparations for receiving the main force. On the excuse that the situation was too difficult and strained, he neglected to make the strenuous efforts needed to carry out the tasks I had given him. Worried over this neglect, Kim Jong Suk and Ri Tu Ik tried to perform the task in place of Rim, but the provisions they had obtained were barely enough as winter supplies for the men already at the secret camp in Dongpaizi.

Because of this, I concluded that we could not use the route we had planned at the outset. It was impossible for the main force to depend on a secret camp where proper provisions had not been stored.

Rim Su San was, in fact, already at that time seriously degenerate. Later he was to run away to the enemy camp, which shows that treachery does not take place in just one day or two. It results from slow corruption, or from ideological fermentation. Ideological corruption will go through a certain process. Although Rim Su San shouted revolution whenever he spoke, he had already degenerated by the time of the "Hyesan incident". We had only failed to discover it because we trusted him.

Baishitan, Fusong County, which we had planned as an



alternate destination, was far away from villages, though its terrain features were favourable. A few villages could be found about half a dozen miles away from the secret camp in Baishitan, but there were not many of our underground organizations in the area.

Provisions would also pose a problem. There was a certain amount of grain, which a small unit and O Paek Ryong had obtained and stored up by the Songhua River. But the store was far away from the camp, and the food had been intended to be consumed in later days. We had sent an advance party to Baishitan, but most of it consisted of women and infirm people.

In this situation it was inconceivable for a large force to go straight to Baishitan by the alternate route. We found ourselves in a quandary. A cold snap was approaching, but the planned route had not been prepared for use, there was no spare time to prepare a new route and the enemy was at our heels; under these conditions we could not hang about at the foot of Mudan Pass for much longer. We were faced with a real dilemma.

If only food were available, we could endure whatever difficulties faced us. At that time, some sympathetic people appeared to help us, and with their aid we were able to buy a whole field of unharvested beans. In this way we were able to ride over the crisis.

Then we attacked the lumber mills in Liukesong and Jiaxinzi and captured various materials, including grain. We immediately changed the course of our march by 180 degrees to the south and went to the secret camp at Baishitan. We can say that this was the terminal of the first stage of the large-unit circling operations.

The battles at Liukesong and Jiaxinzi were the high points of the first stage of the operations. It was a surprising success that we were able to slip away from the Helong and Antu areas, where the enemy's "punitive" forces had cast tight nets. The enemy was

left aghast when we attacked all their strategic points in Dunhua in succession at lightning speed. Receiving the urgent message that Liukesong and Jiaxinzi had been raided and their troops annihilated, the enemy threw their forces into the Dunhua area in great haste, but by that time we had already slipped to the south and reached the area along the Songhua.

I consider one of our greatest successes in the first stage of the operations to be the fact that we expanded our armed ranks with 200 recruits from the lumber mills in Liukesong and Jiaxinzi.

After the battles we staged a performance in the forest on the Songhua, and after the performance many young people volunteered to join the guerrillas from among the workers who had followed us, carrying our supplies. Admitting into our ranks so many young people of working-class origin was an auspicious event, the first of its kind in the history of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. As we could not supply them with weapons and uniforms, we gave each recruit an armband with a red star sewn on it as soon as we admitted him. I still remember that the women guerrillas worked through the whole night to make those armbands.

The military and political training conducted at the secret camp in Baishitan was the start of the second stage of the large-unit circling operations, as well as a review of the first stage of the operations.

After making full preparations at Baishitan, we started off on the second stage. The plan of the second stage was to march from Baishitan through Erdaobaihe, Sandaobaihe and Sidaobaihe (the no man's land northeast of Mt. Paektu), advance to the homeland and then go back to Antu County via Helong County.

While we were giving military and political training at Baishitan, the secret camp was suddenly exposed to the enemy. The soybeans that one food-securing party had brought in sacks

were the cause of the trouble, a simple thing that developed into quite a perplexing situation. Our men did not spot a hole in a sack, so the beans escaped through the hole, bean by bean, and this was spotted by an enemy agent.

On receiving information that the enemy, having discovered the whereabouts of the secret camp, was making preparations for a full-scale surrounding and attacking operation, we planned a move that would cope with the situation. First, I ordered a commanding officer to take with him a company and raid Liangjiangkou in the enemy area, then slip away to Xiawaizi. Next, I ordered a platoon from the Guard Company to strike the enemy at posts situated on the height at the back of Baishitan, then withdraw to the Lushuihe.

In command of the main force, I left the secret camp 30 minutes before the start of the enemy attack and moved to the Lushui. In order to lure the enemy into the trap, we had to feign to be staying in the secret camp.

As soon as we evacuated the camp, the enemy surrounded it. Seeing a quiet camp that offered no resistance, they thought that the place was as good as occupied. They charged the camp at a rush. For all that, the sharpshooters in our Guard Company did not fire a shot; they only watched the enemy in action.

As day broke, enemy planes appeared over the secret camp and dropped bombs on the heads of their own soldiers, who were waving joyfully up at them. The others who were in the barracks rushed out at the sound of explosions. At that moment our machine-guns opened fire.

The simultaneous air-ground attack the enemy had planned turned out to be a joint operation by the People's Revolutionary Army and the Japanese air force, together annihilating the Japanese and Manchukuo infantry.

While the enemy forces were in the midst of their uproar in

Baishitan, we calmly marched down towards Mt. Paektu, struck the enemy at our heels in Lushuihe, crossed the Erdaobai River and disappeared into a forest east of Naitaoshan. Then I reassembled the company that had advanced to Liangjiangkou after raiding a lumber mill near Hualazi, and the Guard Company that had been left in Baishitan. It is probably at that time that I dispatched a reconnaissance team to Samsuphyong in Musan, Korea.

Because of the tight watch by the border guard, the reconnaissance team was chased by the enemy from the moment they crossed the Tuman River. They returned without being able to carry out a proper reconnaissance, narrowly escaping death. In this situation it would be a risky adventure for a large force to march into the homeland.

I decided to postpone the plan of advancing into the homeland for the time being. Instead, we raided a large lumber mill, just to obtain provisions and also to feel out the reaction of the enemy in Korea across the Tuman. We attacked a mill near the river in Damalugou, and the enemy's reaction on the other side of the river was quite explosive. Having received the report that the enemy was strengthening its border watch, I moved the unit to a forest south of Hualazi after fighting for a few days with the enemy troops at our heels. After this we fought a big battle with Maeda's unit at Hongqihe, and thus concluded the large-unit circling operations.

Our series of confrontations with the Nozoe "punitive" force should not be viewed as a mere regional skirmish with an enemy commander and his troops. This was actual war against the military authorities of Japan and the Japanese Empire. The enemy did not succeed in any of its three-way operations—military, ideological and "rooting up basic evils"—to which they had given so much publicity through the so-called "outline plan for cleaning

up bandits”. Their plans all ended in failure, and in the long run it was we who emerged as the victors in this war.

Nozoe lived out the rest of his life in retirement in a rural village of Kyushu following the defeat of Japan. He wrote an article about the events of those days, which reads in part:

“Kim Il Sung’s army operated in several detachments, each claiming itself to be Kim Il Sung’s army. Its tactics were to give the impression that this army was everywhere. There must have been one man named Kim Il Sung, but several people went under the name of Kim Il Sung, so it was difficult to pinpoint just who the real Kim Il Sung was.”

According to the recollections of Nagashima, who took part in the special operations of the Nozoe “punitive” force after winning the trust of his superior for suppressing the Jiandao revolt, we can see that he also had to swallow a bitter pill because of the elusive tactics of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army. He remembered it this way:

“When I was placed in charge of special operations in the Nozoe unit, I was told about the existence of Kim Il Sung’s army. I discovered that the tactics employed by this army were very curious. When it was reported that this army had appeared in a certain place, we would rush there, but almost immediately there would be a report that it had appeared in yet another place. This army seemed to appear and disappear with preternatural swiftness, but in fact the same unit did not appear here and there simultaneously; he divided his army into several detachments and then had them appear in different places at once and claim to be Kim Il Sung’s army.”

Recollecting the hard battles fought with the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army, Nagashima continued, “All the high-ranking cadres of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army were either killed, captured or surrendered, but only Kim Il Sung managed to... survive and return to north Korea after the end of the war. He is now Premier.”

## 7. O Jung Hup and His 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment

One year while reading the novel *Heavy Battle Area*, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung felt such grief at the scene where O Jung Hup falls in battle that he stopped reading and stayed up all night remembering the man who had died so many years before.

Whenever he talked about the Battle of Liukesong in Dunhua County, a brilliant battle that closed the first stage of the large-unit circling operations, the fatherly leader recollected the last moments of O Jung Hup; and whenever he looked back upon his heroic life, he recounted with strong feelings of affection the fighting spirit of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, which defended the Headquarters of the Korean revolution with heroic deeds and great sacrifice of life during the anti-Japanese revolution.

We lost O Jung Hup in the Battle of Liukesong. In that battle we also lost company commander Choe Il Hyon and machine-gun platoon leader Kang Hung Sok. I treasured and loved these three officers dearly, and I lost them all at the same time. I was bereaved of many of my comrades-in-arms during the war against Japan, but the loss of O Jung Hup was the most heartbreaking tragedy of all.

To sketch O Jung Hup in brief: he was a man who cast a large shadow, though he was not an extrovert. When I say he cast a large shadow, I mean that he was a man of great exploits who made his mark wherever he appeared.

No officers in our unit were probably as quiet as Choe Chun

Guk and O Jung Hup. A quiet manner may be construed as unobtrusive or discreet or unassuming. O Jung Hup was unusually quiet and modest for a military officer, and though not boisterous socially, performed great deeds as a fighter. He was so unpretentious and simple that he did not think to push himself forward.

The others compared Choe Chun Guk to a bride, but O was even more modest than Choe. O was the sort of man it was hard to find fault with.

Quiet and reserved as he was in his everyday life, O was a man of strong determination in the revolution, a tiger-like man charging forward through thick and thin once he made a decision. He always finished what he started, brushing aside all difficulties. He would not sleep or rest until he had carried out his assignment.

He had a strong sense of fair play and never compromised with injustice. I think because of this quality he became class-conscious earlier than most others.

One year his family had a crop failure because of drought. His father explained the problem to the landlord and pleaded with him for leniency. The miserly, cruel landlord, however, showed no sympathy and accused O's father of being a thief. He even raised his walking stick to hit the old man. O Jung Hup, who was watching this scene nearby, could not bear it and whipped the landlord with his flail. He was 14 or 15 years old at the time. One can see from this how strong was his sense of justice even in his adolescence.

A man with a strong sense of justice awakens to class-consciousness and participates in the revolution early. He then grows into a stalwart fighter who risks his life in the van of the revolution.

According to his uncle, O Thae Hui, O Jung Hup was fond

of playing at being a soldier of the Independence Army in his childhood. Kim Jwa Jin used to come to their village, riding his horse with its bluish mane. This drew the boy towards the Independence Army. He came to communism later under the influence of his cousin, O Jung Hwa. He acquired revolutionary awareness early in life because he felt strong hatred and resistance against the enemy who had robbed him of his country.

Recalling him now, I can't think of another officer as audacious and courageous as O Jung Hup.

It has been said from olden days that renowned generals, when training their soldiers in the art of war, always attached the most importance to audacity, courage, intelligence and virtue and strove to cultivate these characteristics in their men. Why does a tigress roll her cub over a cliff? Quite simply, to teach it courage.

Although he had never attended military school nor been the disciple of a master in the martial arts, he cultivated his own revolutionary audacity and courage in the flames of the anti-Japanese struggle.

During the raid on a gold mine near Sandaogou, Helong County, fought on the eve of the Harvest Moon Day in 1939, he left a trail of anecdotes behind him.

When he was commanding the raid, an enemy bullet hit him in the forehead. But he was not killed because the bullet apparently did not penetrate the bone. By a miracle he survived and continued commanding the battle, even though a bullet had hit him in the forehead. It was quite incredible that the thin skull of a man could resist a bullet, but it was true. I saw the wound after it had been dressed by his orderly.

When his comrades told him that he had been quite fortunate and God had blessed him, he scoffed, saying that the stray bullets of the Japanese might pierce a coward's skull, but never a communist's.



While he was continuing to command the battle, a hand grenade the enemy had thrown flew over the wall of the fortress and fell just beside the feet of the guerrillas. It was a hair-raising moment. O Jung Hup calmly picked it up and tossed it back over the wall. As their own grenade flew back at them, the enemy soldiers scattered in terror in all directions. O lost no time and ordered his men to charge after them.

Isn't this another miracle? A hand grenade is a lethal weapon effective for use over short distances with two or three seconds' time from the moment of throwing to the moment of explosion. Picking up a hand grenade on the brink of explosion was an appalling risk, but O Jung Hup took the risk without turning a hair.

Just from these two anecdotes you can see what type of a man O Jung Hup was.

He was incredibly adroit in battle. His greatest merits as a commanding officer were, first, the speed with which he judged a situation and made a decision, and second, the precision with which he organized a battle. Once his decision was made, he had a special talent for carrying it out resolutely and without a moment's hesitation: like a skilled wrestler who outmanoeuvres his powerful opponent by employing excellent moves, he never failed to defeat an enemy, however strong, by using appropriate tactics. He was, in fact, a fighter no less efficient than Choe Hyon or Choe Chun Guk, but since he always worked together with Headquarters, he was not as well known as they were.

I have been engaged in the revolution for several decades, but I have seen few people who had as strong a sense of organization and discipline as O Jung Hup. These characteristics manifested themselves, first, in his regarding the orders of his superiors as absolute and in accepting them without reserve. When he was given an assignment he accepted it without question, saying simply, "Yes, I will do it." He never made excuses to get

out of any undertaking.

He would carry out my orders thoroughly and within the set time. If I gave him a command to carry out a mission in a certain place and arrive at a certain rendezvous by a certain date, he would get there at the set time after carrying out the mission without fail. If something unexpected came up in the course of carrying out the mission, he would leave a small unit to finish the job and he himself would return by the appointed time with his main force. He would use the opportunity to educate and encourage his men, saying that the Comrade Commander would worry if they failed to return by the fixed time.

He was an exemplary officer also in always following my instructions in managing his regiment and educating and training his men. In the cramped and awkward circumstances of guerrilla life, he managed his regiment in as assiduous and meticulous a fashion as if he were in a regular army. In his 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment no soldier was allowed to wear worn-out shoes or torn trousers. If he saw his men wearing torn uniforms on the march, he would make sure they all patched them up during the next break. Since he managed his unit efficiently, none of his men had accidents or ran into any kind of trouble.

He even accepted whatever I might say to myself in passing as an order or demand of the Commander.

One day in 1939, with the Harvest Moon Day just around the corner, I took a stroll with O Paek Ryong in the secret camp at Wukoujiang. As we walked, I happened to mumble to myself that the Harvest Moon Day was approaching.

Somehow, O Jung Hup heard what I said. He did not overlook it, for he was more responsive than anybody to my intentions and wishes. He construed it thus in his own way: Why did the Comrade Commander say that the Harvest Moon Day was approaching? Did he mention it because he was worried

over preparations for the festival, knowing that the young recruits would be homesick on the day of the festival? A few days later he organized a battle just to prepare for the festival, returning with a large quantity of provisions and foods, including moon-shaped rice-cakes. At the request of O Jung Hup on the festival day I explained the origin of moon-shaped cakes to the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment and to my Headquarters staff.

O Jung Hup was so faithful to me that he even recognized my gunshots. On the Arduous March we switched over from a large-unit movement to dispersed small-unit actions, which continued for some time. Parting with O Jung Hup at that time, I told him to meet me at Samsugol next spring. In those days Koreans called the valley of Shisandaogou, Samsugol.

Early in March 1939 I organized a raid on a village in Samsugol. As he heard the gunshots, O said, "That's Comrade Commander's gunfire. Headquarters, with its strength of only one company, might possibly have been exposed and surrounded by the enemy. Comrades, we must rush to its defence."

He then came running to us with his regiment at his heels.

O Jung Hup was a true man.

I will tell you what happened when he first joined the guerrillas after conducting underground activities in Yuanjiadian, Wangqing County.

In those days the guerrillas in Wangqing were hopelessly short of weapons. There were many guerrillas and many more were volunteering to join, so the problem was that guns were in extremely short supply. The guerrillas who had no rifles had to arm themselves with swords or spears, as you can see in the film, *Five Guerrilla Brothers*.

O Jung Hup, too, wore a sword made in a smithy when he started out. The Wangqing guerrilla unit kept the recruits without rifles at the rear of the column. When standing guard, O Jung

Hup had to borrow another soldier's rifle. Nevertheless, he felt no shame in this. Because he had been wearing a sword for several months, his comrades would tease him whenever they met him.

One day I asked him seriously, "Jung Hup, don't you hate to tail after others, wearing just a sword?"

"I think this sword is a good enough weapon when there aren't enough rifles to go round. I'm sure I can capture a rifle in a battle some day."

Though he said this, he must still have felt awkward to be bringing up the rear, wearing only a sword and a grenade when others were carrying rifles. But he carried his sword calmly, without showing his feelings.

In order to capture guns for the recruits, we organized a battle. Actual combat was the only way for us to obtain arms. We therefore raided the construction site of a railway that runs from Tumen to Mudanjiang via Sanchakou.

In this raid O captured several rifles and a pistol from an enemy officer. Who was to keep a captured weapon was decided at the meeting to review the battle. We made it a principle to award rifles preferentially to those who had fought courageously and observed discipline in an exemplary manner. I attended the meeting that reviewed the raid on the railway construction site. Only at this meeting was O finally awarded a rifle.

Later he was promoted to squad leader, platoon leader, company commander and then regimental commander. One might call him the model officer of a revolutionary army.

He had many other merits in addition.

Though gentle, he was lively and optimistic in everyday life, sociable in his quiet way, and zealous to learn. Talking no nonsense, he conducted himself well, listened carefully to any criticisms handed out by his comrades and rectified his mistakes immediately. He managed his unit with utmost care and had a

stronger spirit of self-reliance and fortitude than others.

It would not be too much to say that the growth of O Jung Hup as a soldier of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army exactly paralleled the growth of the army's 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

The predecessor of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment was the Independent Regiment. The Independent Regiment had been composed of the companies each from Wangqing, Yanji, Helong and other counties in eastern Manchuria.

From Wangqing County it was the 7<sup>th</sup> Company that came to the regiment. The 7<sup>th</sup> Company had grown from a detachment of the Wangqing 1<sup>st</sup> Company and had become the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the Independent Regiment. O had been the youth instructor of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the Independent Regiment.

The Independent Regiment then became the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Independent 1<sup>st</sup> Division in 1935, and when the main-force division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was being formed after the Nanhutou meeting, it became the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the division. The regiment was the nucleus of the new division.

O Jung Hup, O Paek Ryong and Kang Jung Ryong all developed systematically, along with the development of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and became either regimental commander, company commander or platoon leader.

The majority of the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment were Koreans. As I had trained O Jung Hup methodically from his days in Wangqing, I made sure our efforts were concentrated on his regiment. More intensive guidance was given to it than any other unit to make it a model regiment with the strongest combat efficiency in the new division. In the first place I made sure that the commanding personnel of the regiment, including platoon leaders, political instructors and company commanders, were promoted from among elite soldiers and that they were trained politically, ideologically and militarily under a far-sighted plan.

We taught them everything—various types of manuals for guerrilla warfare, how to set up camp, cook meals, march, find directions, set up makeshift stages, draw up programmes for art performances and write introductory speeches for the performances.

In order to turn the regiment into a model unit, Headquarters and the cadres of the division worked extra hard. They visited the regiment frequently, teaching the officers political and military affairs and helping them to solve problems quickly and efficiently. In the course of this, the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment became the model regiment and pride of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

We sent many soldiers who had been trained in this regiment to other units as commanding officers. When he requested military and political cadres from us, Wei Zheng-min asked for the officers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment in most cases. The commanding officers who had been trained in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment and had transferred to other units went on to train many other officers and model combatants. The 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment played the role of a seed-bed for future political and military cadres. The Guard Company commanded by Ri Tong Hak or Pak Su Man subsequently also became a model company, for a large number of its members hailed from the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

Because there were no regular training establishments for the revolutionary army, we had to meet the demand for cadres by continually appointing military and political personnel trained in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment to other units. This proved to be good practice for later, for the work method of our Party of today—that of creating a model and generalizing it across the country—is based on the experience we gained during the anti-Japanese revolution.

Many of the military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army were produced by the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, among them O Jung Hup, Kim Ju Hyon, Ri Tong Hak, Ri Tong

Gol, O Paek Ryong, Kim Thae Hwan, Choe Il Hyon, O Il Nam, Son Thae Chun, Kang Hung Sok and Kang Jung Ryong. The political instructor of a company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment was a man nicknamed “Wet Eyes”. I think I remember his surname was Choe, but I cannot remember his full name. He had this nickname because his eyes always looked as if they were brimming with moisture. He fought bravely but fell in action along with Kim San Ho in the Battle of Xiaotanghe.

Choe Il Hyon was a man I intended to appoint as the commander of the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army, to be organized in northern Korea. Kim Thae Hwan, company commander, was also an intelligent man.

It seems to me that a strong commander is emulated by his subordinates—a regimental commander by his company commanders, a company commander by his platoon leaders, and a platoon leader or a squad leader by his men. People will resemble their leaders in personality and character in spite of themselves. I should say that the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment became a steel-like unit because it totally resembled O Jung Hup.

The commanders and men of other units quite envied O’s 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

Cao Guo-an, a division commander of the Chinese 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, while living with our unit for some time in the Paektusan Base, asked me for a clever man, an efficient machine-gunner. Cao was coveting Kang Jung Ryong, a machine-gunner and a renowned platoon leader in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Kang was Pak Rok Gum’s husband. I asked him if he wanted to go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, but he flatly refused. At first I thought he refused to go because he hated parting from his wife, but I found this was not the reason after hearing his explanation. He said that he could bear the thought of parting from his wife, but he hated leaving me and O Jung Hup’s 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment. He was quite attached to O

Jung Hup. The two men were childhood friends in Wangqing and fought shoulder to shoulder from their days with the Wangqing 1<sup>st</sup> Company.

O Paek Ryong, too, said that he would not leave the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment led by O Jung Hup when he was appointed to the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment as a machine-gunner.

You can guess from these two facts the degree of popularity O Jung Hup enjoyed. The men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment had a strong attachment for their unit and a strong esprit de corps.

We sent those who made mistakes or who lacked political and military qualifications to the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment for training.

At the secret camp near Xintaizi, Linjiang County, the leader of a machine-gun platoon committed a mistake in 1938. He also had poor qualifications. We attached him temporarily to the 4<sup>th</sup> Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

When sending him to O Jung Hup's regiment, I said to him, "A leader who does not know how to take responsibility for his men is not qualified for his post. He can perform his duties properly only when he really feels the suffering his mistakes bring down upon his men. You'd better learn and train yourself more in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment."

When he returned to his original post after his stint with the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, he had become a different man, thanks to the help of O Jung Hup.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment was the most efficient combat unit in the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. That was why Headquarters always assigned to this regiment the most urgent and responsible tasks. The regiment spearheaded all attacks launched by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

Both on the march and in bivouac I would assign the duty of acting as rear guard to the regiment with the highest combat efficiency and strongest sense of responsibility. The rear guard



was extremely important to the life of the guerrilla army, which was always threatened with pursuit and surprise attack by the enemy.

When bivouacking, we used to post the most efficient unit as rear guard about 300 to 500 metres away from Headquarters, or sometimes at a distance of one or two kilometres. Sentries or watches were posted at regular intervals between Headquarters and the rear guard.

According to our experience, the enemy's "punitive" forces preferred the tactic of pursuit rather than the method of ambush or frontal attack. This was why we posted the unit with the highest combat efficiency to bring up the rear.

When bivouacking at Chongbong on our way to the Musan area in the spring of 1939 we kept the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the rear. The men of the regiment did not make a campfire at night so as not to expose itself to the enemy. Nevertheless, they never complained about their hardship or fatigue.

I have stressed since the early days of the Korean People's Army that it should regard O Jung Hup as its model. This means emulating him.

Already in the early 1960s Comrade Kim Jong Il emphasized that the KPA should study and imitate the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment. In his childhood he had heard a great deal about O Jung Hup and his 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

What, then, should cadres, Party members and the soldiers of the KPA learn from O Jung Hup and his 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment? His merits can be analysed in various ways, but the most important of all his merits was his unfailing loyalty to the revolution.

How was his loyalty to the revolution expressed? It found its strongest expression in his loyalty to his Commander.

First of all he was faithful to all my ideas and policies, accepting all I said about the communist movement and national

liberation movement of Korea as absolutely correct and studying my words in depth. He defended my ideas without reserve anywhere, under any circumstances, and fought staunchly against any practices that ran counter to these ideas.

He regarded my ideas and policies on military operations as supreme laws. No divergent ideas could find room in his mind, they made no sense to him. A man sound in ideology does not become corrupt even in unhealthy surroundings.

As the regimental commander himself was sound, his soldiers also all breathed the same air with me.

His faithfulness to the revolution found its expression in his spirit of implementing his Commander's orders and instructions without question and with a high sense of responsibility. He carried them out accurately, perfectly and without fail. However onerous they might be, he did not utter a word of discontent or complaint.

Having carried out my orders, he reported the results to me without fail and reviewed the defects revealed during their implementation, hiding nothing.

Another of his traits that our officials today should study in his attitude towards the Commander's orders and instructions was that immediately after carrying out one task, he used to ask for another. He hated hanging around and would find something else to do as soon as he'd finished one thing. To use our present-day parlance, he was a man of continuous innovation and continuous advance. Another reason why the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment undertook harder tasks than other regiments was that O Jung Hup, the regimental commander, was such a willing worker.

He was a commanding officer of unusual character in that he was happier when given a difficult task than when carrying out an easy assignment.

His loyalty to the revolution and his Commander also found

expression in his fearless defence of his Commander, not only politically and ideologically but also with his life. For my safety he plunged himself and his regiment into combat as if they were human bullets, and he did not hesitate to commit himself, no matter how hard-fought the battle.

When I was leading a tough battle in command of Ri Tu Su's company against hundreds of enemy troops in Hongtoushan, O Jung Hup, who was on a combat mission far away, raided the enemy camp like lightning, saying that he was worried about my safety. With their rear under fire, the remaining enemy were forced to flee. I was much obliged to O Jung Hup at that time.

When fighting near Manjiang it was O Jung Hup and his 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment that shielded me with their bodies as I commanded the withdrawal of my unit. They did the same during the Battle of Duantoushan. While Headquarters withdrew with hundreds of enemy troops at its heels, the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment brought up the rear to cover the withdrawal.

His exceptional loyalty to his Commander manifested itself most intensely in the period of the Arduous March. During the first days of the march he defended Headquarters by using our zigzag tactic for an entire fortnight, withstanding the immense pressure of fighting a nonstop rear-guard action.

As I mentioned on a previous occasion, at the far end of Qidaogou during the march I judged that a large-unit movement was disadvantageous, so we switched over to dispersed actions. O Jung Hup, taking leave of me at that time, volunteered to act as a decoy Headquarters and lure away the enemy by trekking the steep Longgang and Changbai mountains for two months or so. The 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment went through a lot of trouble, but thanks to this ploy, Headquarters was less harassed by the enemy for quite some time.

When parting with Headquarters at the end of Qidaogou,

his regiment didn't have as much as a grain of rice. In order to obtain provisions, they needed to be close to inhabited areas. Nevertheless, O Jung Hup set his march route through Jiayuhe, the plateau in Sidengfang, the western fringe of Hongtoushan and the northern Shuangchatou to Deshuigou. This route traverses through unmapped areas no better than a desert. The only signs of habitation were huts used by charcoal burners. One wrong step in these areas and a man would end up in a labyrinth of ice and snow and never get out alive.

Nevertheless, O Jung Hup chose this immensely dangerous route while devoid of provisions in order to lure away the enemy who was tailing Headquarters.

At first they raided a lumber yard, captured some cattle and horses and ate the meat. But after entering the deep mountains they could no longer obtain food. The only thing edible was snow, I was told.

One day, realizing that the enemy was no longer pursuing his regiment, he appealed to his men, saying, "I'm afraid the enemy may have realized that we are not Headquarters. If that's true, we have been suffering in vain. We must find out the enemy at all costs and get them back on our tail. Follow me."

With his Mauser in his hand he went several kilometres back the way they had traversed, going through all sorts of hardships and raiding the enemy camp. This brought the enemy back on the tail of the regiment.

From then on the regiment would backtrack and harass the enemy whenever it did not follow. After this, the enemy would trail after the regiment just like a bull calf led by its nose ring.

Having run out of food again at one point, the regiment boiled down the hide of a cow the Japanese soldiers had thrown away after eating its meat. The regiment continued its march and celebrated the lunar New Year's Day of that year, eating frozen

potatoes. While eating them, O Jung Hup still worried about us, saying, “We are eating here on the mountain, even though it’s only this kind of food, but I wonder what kind of food Headquarters has managed to find?”

He encouraged his hungry, exhausted men by saying, “We’ve seen nothing but hardship day in, day out, for ten years, but good times will come after the hard times. Imagine the day we return to our liberated motherland in triumph after defeating the Japanese imperialists. What can be more worthwhile and glorious than that for Koreans? We must not forget that this trying march is directly linked to the liberated motherland. That’s what Commander Kim Il Sung said. We’ve all got to keep going for the safety of Headquarters.”

O Jung Hup was a man of this type. He fought with a large fireball in his heart. The fireball was his burning enthusiasm for the revolution, and the core of his enthusiasm was none other than loyalty to his Commander.

I emphasize again that the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment had this one characteristic: that every one of its men and officers thought first of the safety of Headquarters, no matter where they were or what the situation was. Its most militant traits both in life and in combat were to treasure the Commander’s orders as they would do their own lives and to carry them out with the greatest efficiency. Not only were they more sensitive to the intentions of Headquarters than others, but they also carried out these intentions more perseveringly and with greater devotion once they had understood the aim of Headquarters.

Ri Kwon Haeng, who died while shielding me from enemy bullets with his body, was a member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, as were O Il Nam, Son Thae Chun and Kim Hyok Chol, who laid down their lives while implementing the orders of Headquarters.

O Jung Hup, Choe Il Hyon and Kang Hung Sok dedicated

their lives to the defence of Headquarters and to my great regret fell in the Battle of Liukesong. This is why my heart is heavy whenever I look back upon the Battle of Liukesong. Of course, we fought the battle with good tactics, but we lost three precious commanding officers there.

At 10 o'clock that night O Jung Hup led the attack on the enemy barracks at Liukesong at the head of his 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit. They were the main force of attack. I don't know why, but I did not tell him that day to take care of himself. He was not the sort of man to listen to such words of precaution anyway. He was always at the forefront of the most difficult attacks.

Immediately after committing his 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit to action, I ordered the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment to push into the lumber mill to conduct political work among the workers and to capture provisions and other supplies from the enemy's munitions store.

Leading the penetration party, O Jung Hup climbed over the wooden fence, cut through the barbed wire entanglements and ordered his men to charge. The regiment occupied the forts and barracks at lightning speed without giving the enemy time to collect its forces. The hard-pressed enemy soldiers hid themselves in a passage dug under the barracks. O Jung Hup immediately gave the order to make a fire at the entrances of the underground passage. As smoke began to blow into the entrance, the enemy soldiers crawled outside on all fours, unable to bear it any longer.

Just as victory was in sight, we were dealt a tragic blow. As O Jung Hup led the search, the enemy still hiding in the underground passage shot him. His orderly, Kim Chol Man, was also wounded. The remaining enemy soldiers put up a desperate resistance, and Choe Il Hyon and Kang Hung Sok, two highly efficient officers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, then lost their lives. O Jung

Hup, fatally wounded, also died that day to our deep sorrow. The man who had fought so devotedly for the revolution, treading a rocky road all through his life, died in this way.

All through the anti-Japanese armed struggle I had constantly stressed to my men that they should take particular care at the concluding stage of a battle. Accidents frequently happened at the last moment. We lost three precious comrades-in-arms in this battle in the last five minutes.

Apparently O Jung Hup was somewhat off his guard on this occasion. He seems to have been too confident, as the battle situation was favourable to us and the enemy soldiers were surrendering, unable to endure the smoke of the burning cotton.

By nature, O Jung Hup was a careful man. He lived a flawless life and fought with good strategy. He was more vigilant than any other officer. I don't know why he did not foresee the fact that some of the enemy might still be under his feet. In the first place the scouts had not reconnoitered the interior of the enemy barracks closely enough. If they had scouted it carefully, such an accident would not have taken place. It was a great pity. When the wounded Kim Chol Man came to me and reported, crying bitterly, the news of O Jung Hup's death, I could not believe my ears at first. As I ascertained the brutal fact, I almost lost my mind and rushed to the enemy barracks, shouting, "Who killed O Jung Hup? I can't forgive him!"

I was accustomed to suppressing my feelings in front of my men, no matter how excruciating the pain, but that day I could not endure it. How dearly had I loved him! Even to think of it now, I still tremble. That day we killed a large number of enemy soldiers and captured lots of booty, but it meant nothing to me. Never had my men felt such acute heartache as they did at the time.

At the order to withdraw, we left Liukesong carrying the bodies of our dead comrades-in-arms. Hundreds were marching,

shedding tears; I could not hear a single word being spoken.

We held a memorial service in bitter grief. I stepped forward to deliver a memorial address, but I could not see or speak properly, as tears blurred my vision and I felt a heavy oppression in my chest. I never shed tears in the face of difficulties, but I can shed more tears than anybody in the face of grief.

The Battle of Liukesong was of great importance. It threw the enemy's second-stage "punitive" operations into confusion, and our unit laid a basis for winning victory in the first stage of the large-unit circling operations. As we shot off our guns in the backwoods of Dunhua, while the enemy was concentrating his forces, looking for us in the areas along the Tuman River northeast of Mt. Paektu, they could not but be dumbfounded.

At the Battle of Liukesong the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the backbone of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, again fought well. It was an invincible unit that could be called steel-like for its toughness. Its growth to be a-match-for-a-hundred unit should be attributed to O Jung Hup, the commander of the regiment. Because he was a loyal man and a famous officer, the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment became a strong force.

I cannot forget O Jung Hup any more than I can forget Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su. O Jung Hup was my revolutionary comrade-in-arms and at the same time the man who many times saved my life.

His regiment was a bullet-proof wall, an impregnable fortress, in that it could be absolutely relied upon to defend the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army from the incessant attacks and provocations of the enemy.

After O Jung Hup was killed in action, I treasured and loved my men even more dearly. And I trained them to broaden their vision to the maximum and to behave prudently in battle to prevent as much loss as possible. Nevertheless, nothing I did



could make up for the loss of O Jung Hup.

People say that it was I who transformed him into an excellent revolutionary, but they should not think this was the only reason.

We need to give deeper thought to transforming entire families along revolutionary lines, keeping O Jung Hup in mind as an example.

The family of O Thae Hui was considered to be first in the whole region of Jiandao, including Wangqing, as a patriotic and revolutionary family. Almost every member of this family took part in the anti-Japanese revolution. About 20 of them were killed while operating as underground workers or as soldiers of the People's Revolutionary Army. This figure alone shows how patriotic the members of the O family were.

O Jung Hup became such a stalwart fighter for the revolution mainly because in his boyhood he had received proper education from the senior members of his family.

Many young men from this family would grow to be tough revolutionaries, thanks to the painstaking efforts taken by their four seniors to steer them to the correct course in their life's journey. The four seniors—O Thae Hui, O Song Hui, O Chang Hui and O Jong Hui—were brothers.

The Os paid deep attention to the education of their offspring. They gave them effective moral education, which then served as a solid basis for the education in patriotism and the anti-Japanese revolutionary education they were to get later. Though living in poverty, the family attached great importance to the education of its children and made special effort to send them all to school.

Ten men from the family finished middle school, but none of them took to careerism or officialdom; they all became revolutionaries. Here O Jung Hwa played the greatest role, transforming the family into a revolutionary group with great efficiency. When we went to Wangqing after the expeditions

to southern and northern Manchuria, all the young and middle-aged men and women of the O family were already enlisted in revolutionary organizations.

O Jung Hup's family was the poorest of the Os, so they were revolutionized sooner. O Jung Hup was the first to transform himself into a revolutionary, and then his younger brothers and the rest of the family followed. O Jung Hup and his two younger brothers all fought as military or political cadres of regiments and battalions, and they all fell in battle.

When conducting small-unit operations in the area of Luozigou in the summer of 1941, I was in touch with O Chang Hui, O Jung Hup's father, and Pak Tok Sim, Pak Kil Song's father. In those days the Os were living in Luozigou. When I looked down at the Os' house from the mountain through binoculars, I could see them coming into the yard through the brushwood gate, carrying piles of firewood on A-frames. Even in Luozigou they lived like a family that had sent its children to the revolutionary army. At that time I had Kim Il form a secret organization of the guerrillas' families in Luozigou, with O Chang Hui and Pak Tok Sim at the centre.

When I advanced to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu during the days of small-unit operations, I received much help from O Chang Hui. With the old man's help I crossed the border and went to Kyongwon (the present-day Saeppeyol) to form revolutionary organizations there.

The Os were truly a revolutionary family, one that should be recorded in the history books.

I often think how good it would be if O Jung Hup were still alive. If he had been here, many 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment-type units would have been produced in our country.

Comrade Kim Jong Il is now guiding the movement in the People's Army to emulate O Jung Hup. That is highly laudable.

In the past there were many people by my side as loyal as O Jung Hup. We must educate many people to be as loyal as O Jung Hup, so that they can help Comrade Kim Jong Il in his work.

Comrade Kim Jong Il is the future of Korea, for he is shouldering the destiny of the Korean revolution. In order for our motherland to achieve eternal prosperity, and for socialism in our country to win a continuous victory, Comrade Kim Jong Il should remain healthy and the entire Party and army should support his leadership loyally. Officials must support him as the leader of the revolution and with a firm determination to carry out the revolutionary cause of Juche, pioneered in the forests of Mt. Paektu, they must achieve brilliant, continuous successes in all sectors of socialist construction down through the coming generations. They should also defend the Party Central Committee, the supreme headquarters of the Korean revolution, and Comrade Kim Jong Il with their very lives, just as O Jung Hup and his regiment defended Headquarters in the anti-Japanese struggle.

## **8. “Let Us Defend the Soviet Union with Arms!”**

The Soviet Union, which had established a people’s government for workers and peasants, the first of its kind in the world, and had eradicated the exploitation of man by man, was an ideal society for humanity heading for socialism and social progress.

In the past, communists and revolutionary people throughout the world gave their selfless support to the struggle to defend these ideals and this land. The red flag of the Soviet Union bearing the emblem of the hammer and sickle was permeated with the warm blood of the heroic Soviet people and that of internationalist fighters everywhere.

Each time the Soviet Union was faced with a military threat, the soldiers of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army dealt hard blows at the Japanese imperialists from behind the lines under the slogan of “Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!” Quite a few of our men fell in battle to check the Japanese advance on the Soviet Union.

The great leader recollected the days when the KPRA was defending the Soviet Union with arms.

Communists must have a correct understanding of the relationship between national revolution and world revolution. In the past some people argued that for communists to be concerned with their national revolution was contrary to the principles of Marxism, while others contended that for Korean patriots to talk of the Soviet revolution or world revolution before achieving Korean independence was a form of treachery. Such Leftist

and Rightist interpretations of the relationship between national revolution and world revolution caused a fair amount of ideological confusion and antagonism at one time in the revolutionary movement in our country.

When we created the slogan “Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!” during our armed struggle against the Japanese, a number of people did not welcome it. They said that it would give the nationalists an excuse to speak ill of the communists. Propaganda by Japanese imperialists and their lackeys often warned Koreans against falling “victim to the Soviet Union” or becoming “Stalin’s scapegoats”.

When we suggested fighting in support of the Soviet Union, people who had no true idea of internationalism considered it to be a futile sacrifice.

We fought in support of the Soviet people at the cost of our blood and in spite of our own arduous revolution under the slogan of “Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!” simply because the situation at the time required it. In those days the Soviet Union was in complete isolation, encircled as it was by the imperialists on all sides.

For all communists to defend the Soviet Union was under the circumstances essential to the interests of the revolution, as well as a moral necessity. From the outset of our armed struggle against the Japanese, therefore, we strongly supported and defended the Soviet Union under the banner of proletarian internationalism.

It was not only the 1930s that witnessed the Korean struggle to support and defend the Soviet Union; the support was there even in the 1920s.

Hong Pom Do was not a communist in his early years, but he did not reject the communist movement. Even though he had started his patriotic activities with the nationalist movement in

Korea, he did not confine his activities to this movement alone, nor did he consider the nationalist movement as absolute.

After the March First Popular Uprising (in 1919–Tr.), many of the Korean independence campaigners crossed into Soviet Russia, took up arms and fought there. In the Russian civil war they fought in the Red Army and the Far East guerrilla army, shedding their blood to safeguard the Soviet government. Hong Pom Do was one of these fighters. He distinguished himself in the war and even met Lenin.

In the early 1920s the Japanese imperialists carried out ceaseless armed intervention in the Russian Far East in support of the White army. At that time a Communist Party organization in the Russian Far East requested support from Hong Pom Do, who was active in Russia's Maritime Territory. On hearing this, some high-ranking officers of the Independence Army declared that it was foolish for Koreans to shed blood for others when they were unable to solve their own problems. Hong Pom Do, however, was willing to help the Red Army even if it meant shedding Korean blood; he said that any army fighting against the Japanese was his friend.

Of all the battles Hong Pom Do fought, the most famous was the Battle of Iman on the Ussuri River. His Independence Army fought so courageously in that battle that after it was over, the Japanese and the White armies were said to have trembled and run away at the mere sound of Korean words of command.

A long time ago the Soviet people set up a monument to the soldiers who fell in the Battle of Iman.

This fact alone shows the long history of the ties between the Korean and Soviet peoples in their joint struggle.

Hong Pom Do said to his men: "The Soviet Union is the first proletarian republic in the world, so we must both help her and be helped by her. Fighting single-handed, she must be plagued

with a host of difficulties. Let us help her sincerely.” How thoughtful he was, compared to those who boasted of their knowledge about the world.

Judging from the movements of the Kwantung Army, which was standing face to face with the Red Army on the Soviet-Manchurian border, we could see clearly how frantic the imperialists were in their attempts to stifle the Soviet Union in those days. From 1932 to 1939 the Japanese imperialists ignited nearly 1,000 border clashes, big and small, including the well-known incident of Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol. This meant that they provoked an armed conflict every few days. Not a single day passed without gun-smoke rising somewhere on the Soviet-Manchurian border.

The hostile relations between the Soviet Union and Japan had historical roots. As is widely known, Russia and Japan had a war between 1904 and 1905, with the result that Russia lost many concessions and a wide territory to Japan.

After the October Revolution the imperialist powers, particularly Japan, launched armed interventions against the new Soviet Republic. Japan sent its army to Siberia for overt armed intervention in support of the Whites.

I have been told that the most vicious and atrocious among the imperialist armies to invade Soviet Russia was the Japanese army. The Japanese aggressors soaked the Maritime Territory in blood. It was around that time that the Japanese army captured Lazo, commander of a guerrilla army, and killed him by throwing him into the furnace of a locomotive. Even after the armies of the United States, Britain and France had been driven out by the Red Army, the Japanese army continued its atrocities, bringing in reinforcements. Since their triumph over Russia and the Chinese Qing Dynasty in previous wars, the Japanese imperialists had become infected with megalomania. So elated were they with

their success, they convinced themselves that there was no country and no army equal to theirs. Whenever a major international dispute broke out, the Japanese imperialists came sniffing around to bite off what they could.

Antagonism between the Soviet Union and Japan came to the surface with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. When Japan provoked the July 7 incident, the Soviet Union supported China, and from that moment on the Soviet-Japanese relations went downhill. In August 1937, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with China. It then closed some offices of its consulate in the area under the jurisdiction of Japan and demanded that Japan do the same. With the passage of time tensions between the Soviet Union and Japan mounted.

To make matters worse, in January 1938 the Japanese authorities detained a Soviet plane that had made an emergency landing in Manchuria, and this incident strained the Soviet-Japanese relations even further. It was easy to see that the antagonism and tension between them could lead to a local conflict, or even all-out war.

At their “five ministers’ meeting” in August 1936, the Japanese adopted a state policy of aggression against the Soviet Union. The meeting confirmed their plan for war against the Soviet Union, in which they would reinforce their armies in Manchuria and Korea so as to annihilate the Soviet armed forces in the Far East at the very outset of the conflict. On the eve of the Second World War Nazi Germany planned what they called their “Barbarossa” operation against the Soviet Union, whereas the Japanese military actually anticipated Germany by planning their “Otsu” operation first. Japan was one step ahead of Germany in wanting to get its hands on the Soviet Union, so to speak.

In Japan’s *Programme for the Settlement of Border Disputes*



*Between Manchuria and the Soviet Union*, Ueda, the commander of the Kwantung Army, instructed that in areas where the line marking the boundary was not clear, the field commander should define the boundary line on his own, and that if clashes occurred, he should ensure unconditional victory regardless of troop strength or existing boundaries. The Soviet Union was in imminent danger of being forced into an all-out war by Japan's reckless armed provocations on the border.

Such brigandage on the part of the Japanese against the USSR infuriated us. Our determination to support the Soviet Union by force of arms was a manifestation of comradeship quite natural to the Korean communists, who had been fighting bloody battles almost daily against the Kwantung army.

To us, who were fighting for socialism, the Soviet Union with its worker-peasant government was literally a paradise. We found it a marvel that a society existed in which parasitic oppressors and exploiters had been overthrown. We therefore resolved to help protect the Soviet Union even if it meant shedding our own blood.

Just as they had sown discord between the Korean and Chinese people, the Japanese imperialists now pursued the policy of driving a wedge between the Korean and Soviet people. At one point they formed a border-guard company, made up mainly of young pro-Japanese Koreans from Hunchun, and posted it in the border area between the Soviet Union and Manchuria as a way of pitting it against the Soviet people. They even saw to it that a bonus in the name of the Manchukuo military governor was given to the soldiers of that company.

Meanwhile, the Japanese imperialists unleashed a rumour that they had trained many secret agents from among the Korean residents in Jiandao and smuggled them into the Soviet Union. This had a very poisonous effect in that it made the Soviet people hate Koreans and give a wide berth to them.

When we were operating in the guerrilla zone at Xiaowangqing, some comrades from the Hunchun regiment told me that such wedge-driving moves by the Japanese imperialists greatly aggravated the relations between their regiment and the Soviet border guard. They said that one company commander, unaware of the change in the attitude of the Soviet people towards Koreans, had tried to contact the Soviets according to the former procedure, only to be nearly arrested by them.

In the summer of 1938, rumour had it that a high-ranking official in the Soviet Far East Home Affairs Commissariat had defected to Japan, via Hunchun.

In the middle of the 1930s measures were taken to move the Korean residents in the Soviet Far East to Central Asia en masse. The Soviets explained that the collective emigration of Koreans from the eastern areas to either Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan was a measure that was necessary for their own safety and defence, but the Korean people did not welcome it.

At the news, I also felt our ruined nation's sorrow to the very marrow of my bones.

Nevertheless, we continued to hold high the banner of defence of the Soviet Union for the sake of the greater cause.

All the battles we fought in the Soviet-Manchurian border areas were carried out on our own initiative to assist the Soviet Union, even though we knew that these battles were tactically disadvantageous to us.

In those days we had neither signed a treaty of military cooperation with the Soviet Union, nor had we been requested by the Soviet Union for assistance, as Hong Pom Do's unit had been. All those military actions were decided by us on our own, motivated by our comradely feeling for the Soviet Union and our hatred for the common enemy, Japanese imperialism.

A good illustration of our soldiers' enthusiasm for defending

the Soviet Union can be seen in their efforts in the winter of 1934 to rescue a Soviet pilot whose aircraft had been swept away in a gale during training and had crash-landed in Hulin, Manchuria.

Pak Kwang Son played a leading role in the rescue operation. Right at that time he was working not far from Hulin with Yu Yang's Chinese anti-Japanese army unit as an operative from the liaison office of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. The day the Soviet plane crashed on the shore of the Ussuri River, more than 50 stout young Koreans had just joined Yu Yang's unit. It was an eventful day, I was told.

As soon as he witnessed the crash, Pak Kwang Son dashed into the liaison office and appealed to his comrades-in-arms to rescue the Soviet pilot. In the meantime the Japanese were swarming to capture the pilot as well.

The small force of guerrillas fought a life-and-death battle against 100-odd enemy troops who were firing machine-guns and even small-calibre artillery pieces. The soldiers of Yu Yang's unit, who had been on their way to attack an enemy convoy, joined the guerrillas in the battle.

The Soviet pilot was standing by his plane helplessly, unable to distinguish friend from foe. Pak Kwang Son shouted at him in Korean to come on over quickly and not be afraid, but the pilot, not comprehending, fired his pistol at the guerrillas instead, taking them for the enemy.

To Pak Kwang Son's relief the perplexing situation was straightened out by a Korean who had been working with the Chinese soldiers of Yu Yang's anti-Japanese unit. The man shouted to the pilot in fluent Russian to come towards them, saying they were the revolutionary army.

Only then did the Soviet pilot begin to crawl towards them to be rescued.

The efforts of the guerrillas to ensure the safety of the Soviet

pilot and to bring him back to health were valiant indeed. In those days they themselves were nearly starving for want of even maize gruel. However, for the Soviet pilot they attacked the enemy's convoy and obtained flour, with which they made bread for him, and hunted wild boar to provide him with meat. And in the midst of the cold winter they went fishing in the Ussuri, breaking the ice.

The pilot, badly bruised and having narrowly escaped the disgrace of being taken captive, returned safely to his country under the escort of our guerrillas.

The rescue operation was later used frequently in the education of People's Revolutionary Army units as a good example of internationalism.

In the summer of 1938 the Japanese imperialists provoked an incident at Lake Khasan. That incident, which was also called the Zhanggufeng incident, was one of the largest and most shameless of the border disputes started by the Japanese imperialists up to that time.

Zhanggufeng is a low Soviet hill on the opposite side of the Tuman River across the then Sahoe-ri, Unggi County in Korea. The Soviets called it a nameless height. In its vicinity is Lake Khasan. Terms such as the Lake Khasan incident or the Zhanggufeng incident are all derived from geographical names.

At first the Japanese imperialists claimed that Lake Khasan belonged in their territory, but as their claim did not get by, they attacked the Soviet border guard post on Zhanggufeng. Their aim was to occupy Zhanggufeng and then reinforce their troops to control the area of the Maritime Territory south of Vladivostok.

After seizing the Soviet guard post, the Japanese army massed a large force, mainly from the 19<sup>th</sup> Division in Ranam, in that area. The Soviet side, mobilizing huge forces, beat back the Japanese invaders and drove them out.

At the time of the Lake Khasan incident, we struck the enemy from behind in Linjiang.

The Japanese military were very nervous about the People's Revolutionary Army, which attacked them in the rear each time they carried out armed provocations against the Soviet Union and China. Their failure to wipe out the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, which they called a cancer in their rule, was an acute headache for Japanese politicians and military.

It was in Linjiang County that we held a meeting of military and political cadres and adopted the policy on attacking the enemy from behind to help defend the Soviet Union. All the officers and men of the People's Revolutionary Army actively supported and carried out this policy. The people also supported the struggle of the revolutionary army.

While the KPRA set off military operations against the Japanese in defence of the Soviet Union, patriotic people in the homeland also launched a vigorous resistance struggle.

This is confirmed by the following fact:

“According to *The Current Situation of Public Peace and Order in Korea*, published by the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, over 150 stevedores at Chongjin Port went on strike on the night of August 2 in protest against the Japanese imperialist aggression on Khasan, and many of the strikers joined the guerrilla army.” (*The Korean People in the Struggle for Independence and Democracy*, the Soviet Academy of Sciences Publishing House)

Subsequent to the Lake Khasan incident, the Soviet Union and Japan signed an armistice agreement. The attitude the Soviet Union took towards Japan in dealing with the incident was very hard.

The Japanese military was scared at the tough stand of the

Soviet Union. The USSR was no longer the incompetent Russia of the Russo-Japanese War, but a formidable major power. The Japanese imperialists had to regard the Soviet Union in a new light and ponder over the plan of aggression they had so persistently pursued.

The Japanese imperialists, however, did not abandon their aggressive ambitions in regard to the Soviet Union. In order to test once more the hard-line policy of the Soviet Union, they prepared a new armed provocation on the Manchurian-Mongolian border. In this context, the Khalkhin-Gol incident, the so-called Nomonhan incident, broke out. Khalkhin-Gol is the name of a river in Mongolia near the Soviet-Mongolian border. I've been told *nomonhan* means "peace" in Mongolian.

The aim of the Japanese imperialists in setting off the Khalkhin-Gol incident was to occupy the Mongolian territory east of the river, create a defence zone from which to protect a second railway they were going to construct, and cut off the trunk line of the Siberian railway in order to bite off the Soviet Far East from Russia.

They also wanted to test the Soviet attitude towards a Japanese invasion and its strategy against Japan and its military power. At that time no details about the Soviet military power were known. Much was shrouded in mystery.

Around that time quite a few high-ranking Soviet military commanders were being removed from the battle lines, and Japan was watching the development with interest, for it was keen to know how such a change would affect Soviet military power.

As is generally known, Japan's political and military circles were long divided on the issue of northward versus southward expansion. They were having a hot debate on the strategic issue on whether they should attack the Soviet Union first, or occupy the southern regions first.

Their armed provocation at Khalkhin-Gol was a kind of test battle to examine the possibility of their northward advance.

The Khalkhin-Gol area is a vast expanse of sand dunes and grassland. The Khalkhin-Gol incident was deliberately provoked by the Japanese, who made the absurd charge that the Mongolian border guard had violated the border. The absurdity of the incident lies in the fact that this local war was directly brought on by a flock of sheep grazing on the grassland in Khalkhin-Gol! Do cattle or sheep know anything about borders or military off-limits zones? Yet the Japanese sent out Manchukuo police to search and arrest Mongolians on the preposterous charge of border transgression by a flock of sheep. They seized this opportunity to set off the Khalkhin-Gol incident.

Already in 1935, the Japanese imperialists had forged a map on which they had drawn the borderline of Manchukuo over 20 km deep into Mongolia.

That Japan was preparing such a large-scale armed provocation as the Khalkhin-Gol incident beforehand is clearly shown by the fact that one of the Japanese masterminds of that incident was General Komatsubara, who had previously been the military attache at the Japanese embassy in Moscow.

Because of his finesse in anti-Soviet plotting, Komatsubara had become the commander of the division deployed in Hailaer, the area that could be said to be the forefront in Japanese anti-Soviet operations. At the outset of the incident he manoeuvred his division deep into Mongolian territory, occupying a wide area west of Khalkhin-Gol and making it the bridgehead of the Japanese army. The Mongolian force disposed in that area was quite small, and the Soviet army was stationed 100 km away. Komatsubara took advantage of this weak point.

The Soviet-Mongolian allied army, however, hit back at Komatsubara's division and other large enemy forces, driving

them to the point of annihilation.

The Japanese imperialists regrouped by bringing reinforcements from their mainland and launched a new operation.

The Soviet side dispatched Zhukov, the deputy commander of the Belorussian military district, to the Khalkhin-Gol front. He annihilated the numerically superior Japanese forces by employing mainly armoured divisions and air strikes, using high mobility and surprise as tactics.

The local hostilities in Khalkhin-Gol ended in mid-September that year (1939–Tr.) with the victory of the Soviet-Mongolian forces. While their allied forces were engaged in heavy fighting in Khalkhin-Gol, we ordered the Korean People's Revolutionary Army to launch harassment operations in their support behind the enemy lines.

According to my orders, in the summer of that year all the KPRA units fought numerous battles and made great contributions to checking the Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union.

Typical of these was the battle we fought at Dashahe-Dajianggang in August 1939.

The Dashahe-Dajianggang battle was fought in accordance with our plan to carry out harassment operations at a time when the enemy was busy moving troops and supplies for the formation of its 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, which was to be committed to Khalkhin-Gol. The battle lasted two days and destroyed 500 enemy troops.

At the Battle of Dashahe, Kim Jin blocked an enemy pillbox with his body to open up the way for his unit to charge.

The example set by Kim Jin was emulated by many soldiers of the Korean People's Army during the Great Fatherland Liberation War, when they silenced enemy guns by blocking them with their bodies.



Kim Jin had joined the army at Badaohezi, Ningan County, on our second expedition to northern Manchuria. When we entered the village of Badaohezi, O Jin U brought along a young farmhand by name of Kim Jin who had volunteered for the revolutionary army with such eagerness that we accepted him.

Comrade O Jin U knew Kim Jin well, for he was the latter's platoon leader.

Kim Jin had studied at the village school for only a few days, but after his enlistment he continued learning with the help of his comrades-in-arms. I took him along with me for a while, teaching him how to read and write. He was a simple young man who rendered an enormous service to our revolution and died a heroic death.

It is necessary to give wide publicity to a man like Kim Jin among the younger generation.

I think it is very significant that the hero who blocked an enemy pillbox with his body was produced in the fighting in support of the Soviet Union at the tough Battle of Khalkhin-Gol.

Also, I'll never forget the woman fighter Ho Song Suk who fell in our harassment operations to assist the Soviet Union in that battle.

Having broken with her father, who was the chief of a Self-Defence Corps, Ho Song Suk came to the guerrilla zone alone in her teens and joined the revolutionary army. She told me she had been tormented by the thought of her father working as the chief of the Self-Defence Corps and had asked him several times a day to give up his job. Her imploring had had no effect upon her bigoted father, however.

Unable to dissuade him, Ho Song Suk had left home for the guerrilla zone in Sandaowan. That was in 1933, so she was probably about sixteen or seventeen at the time. I heard of her arrival only some years later.

I thought, however, that whatever her reasons, her turning against her father had to be reconsidered.

When I met her in connection with a women's company that needed to be organized, I reproached her lightly, saying, "You must first correct your attitude to your father. If your father is the chief of the Self-Defence Corps, you must patiently dissuade him from traitorous acts and help him. I think it's rather unreasonable of you to be hostile to your father." But she waved her hand in dismissal, saying I should not broach the subject of her father.

So I told her: "Even if your father has become a pro-Japanese element, you must not take this attitude towards him. Before accusing him you must think of how to bring him around to the revolution. If you turn your back on him and push him over to the enemy's side, what will become of him? How much can you do for the revolution if you are an undutiful daughter who cannot even reform her own father? Before long we are going to organize a women's company; if you don't change your attitude towards your father, we will not admit you into the company."

Only then did she confess in a tearful voice that she had not acquitted herself well and that she would do her best to persuade her father to change if she had the chance. She begged in earnest to be admitted into the women's company. Later she fought well in this company, being so brave in battles that her comrades-in-arms called her "General Ho" or "woman general".

On the evening of the day we fought the Battle of Jiansanfeng, I met Choe Hyon and told him to grant Ho Song Suk permission to visit her home for a few days in order to help her to reconcile herself with her father. Choe Hyon agreed readily. He promised me that he would send her to her father without fail once his unit arrived in the neighbourhood of Mingyuegou.

Ho Song Suk, however, never did meet her father again. She was preparing to visit him just as other preparations were being

made to fight the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang in support of the Soviet Union at Khalkhin-Gol. She decided to postpone her home visit, saying she could not put her private affairs first at a time when operations to defend the Soviet Union were about to start.

On the day of the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang, she unexpectedly encountered at her sentry post a convoy of enemy trucks. It was not her turn to stand guard that day, but she went to relieve an older veteran on duty so he could go and eat. Seeing several trucks full of Japanese troops approaching the sentry post, she told the veteran to hurry off and report the situation to Headquarters. She then took on the enemy single-handed.

She opened fire, exposing herself to delay the enemy even for a few minutes. Naturally, the Japanese concentrated their fire on her.

She got hit in several places, but she hurled all her grenades at the enemy before she fell. Thanks to her heroic deed, her unit averted a possible disaster and was able to move to the battlefield in time.

She was probably about 22 or 23 years old when she died. How many dreams she must have dreamed at her age! She gave up her dreams and her youth to the fight in support of the Soviet Union in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol. She was true flower of internationalism.

The regimental commander Jon Tong Gyu and the regimental political commissar Ryang Hyong U also died in the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang. They were young men with long futures ahead of them, both of them from Hunchun. They had been highly respected and eagerly followed by their men, for they were officers of noble personality and high qualifications, always setting a good example to others.

Ryang Hyong U had fought at the Hunchun guerrilla army

from its inception. In his last battle, his unit had a mission to attack Dashahe first and then occupy a height near Xiaoshahe to contain the advance of the enemy. However, the Battle of Dashahe dragged out so long that his unit failed to occupy the height and the enemy was able to hang on to it. Yet the outcome of the entire battle depended upon the seizure of the height. At that critical juncture Ryang Hyong U seized a machine-gun and led the charge at the head of the attacking formation. The height was very nearly theirs when Ryang Hyong U was shot in the belly.

Pressing down his wound with his left hand, he fired his machine-gun at the enemy with his other hand, shouting, "The Japs are the sworn enemy of our Korean people! Now they're invading the Soviet Union! Destroy the enemy to the last man! Let's defend the Soviet Union with our blood!" The soldiers stormed up the hill in angry waves and occupied the height in a minute.

The regimental commander Jon Tong Gyu, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with Ryang Hyong U from their days in Hunchun, also died a heroic death after annihilating many enemy troops.

The guerrillas who fell in the Battle of Dashahe-Dajianggang are all internationalist martyrs who were loyal to the revolutionary cause.

The Battle of Yaocha was also fought by the People's Revolutionary Army at the risk of their lives in order to help the Soviet Union. The new regimental commander Ri Ryong Un commanded the battle in which he and his men killed hundreds of enemy soldiers. In the battle Ri was shot in the chest, but fortunately the wound was not fatal. After the Xiaohaerbaling meeting, however, he fell in small-unit action in the Soviet-Manchurian border area, fought in cooperation with the

Comintern. His small-unit actions were also motivated by internationalism.

The People's Revolutionary Army fought many other harassment battles behind enemy lines in support of the Soviet Union at the time of the Khalkhin-Gol incident, among them a raid on the police barracks in a gold mine in Sandaogou, Helong County, an attack on Fuerhe, Antu County, and an assault on Baicaogou, Wangqing County.

How annoyed the enemy were by the harassment of the People's Revolutionary Army was illustrated by the fact that they had cut down all the trees and undergrowth within a range of 100 to 200 metres at the sides of all the roads and railways leading to the Soviet-Manchurian border. Nevertheless they were unable to check ambushes and raids by the People's Revolutionary Army. Because of the daring and brisk activities of our fighters, explosions and derailments of military trains took place constantly on the railways in the Soviet-Manchurian border area.

Through their successive attacks in the enemy rear, the People's Revolutionary Army not only wiped out large numbers of enemy troops but also pinned down large enemy forces within the area of their operations, thus preventing the enemy from throwing their full force against the Soviet Union. At the time of the Lake Khasan incident, the enemy had deployed two brigades to Jiandao alone just to check our force. I've been told that in the Khalkhin-Gol incident they were forced to keep large forces in their rear.

As you can see, our harassment of the enemy in the rear under the slogan "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" played an important role in frustrating the Japanese imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union.

To make an all-out effort to provide protective cover for the

attacking elements of the dispersed, advancing formation is a basic principle of military science. From the point of view of the communists, the Soviet Union, the one and only socialist state in the world at that time, could be compared to a soldier charging at the head of the line of advancing formation. The Korean communists struck the Kwantung Army from behind to support both the Soviet Union that was leading the international communist movement.

To do one's utmost to maintain and defend a revolution that has emerged victorious and to preserve and consolidate revolutionary achievements is the internationalist duty of communists as well as their moral obligation. Only when active assistance is rendered to the advanced revolution can the backward revolution advance successfully in tandem with the former. For this reason, the international cooperation of the communists must be aimed at helping, supporting and complementing each other.

The Battle of Khalkhin-Gol ended in the disastrous defeat of the Kwantung Army. The number of casualties, captives and missing amounted to 50,000 troops. The warmongers got what they deserved. I heard later that the Japanese officers who had lost all their men either voluntarily set fire to their colours and committed suicide, or were forced to kill themselves by their superiors. The top-level executives of the Kwantung Army, including Commander Ueda, the chief of staff, chief of operations and operations officers were all dismissed from their posts before the cease-fire agreement was signed.

After suffering this bitter experience in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol, the Japanese imperialists changed their attitude towards the Soviet Union. They shifted from their former high-handed policy to one of temporary appeasement.

Some people may raise the following questions: Was it right

for the Korean communists to have assisted and defended the Soviet Union at the cost of their own blood during the anti-Japanese war? In the light of today's reality, in which socialism has collapsed and capitalism revived in the Soviet Union, was the internationalist assistance of the Korean communists an exercise in futility?

In fact, there is no need to argue about these matters. Few of our people will raise such questions or argue about them. Only those who have abandoned their faith will do this.

We have never considered the internationalist assistance of the Korean communists to the Soviet Union from a nihilistic point of view. Although the Soviet Union has disintegrated, the help we extended to their revolutionary struggle in the past was not futile. Loyalty to one's duty and efforts made on behalf of justice will never be futile.

We regard the setback faced by socialism in the Soviet Union as a temporary phenomenon. Socialism is a human ideal, an inevitable course of historical development, and therefore it is perfectly clear that socialism will rise again in the end. Socialism is justice, not injustice. And since socialism stands for justice, the assistance given to its first embodiment, the Soviet Union, is itself a just and sacred act. Such an act can never be futile.

We are still immensely proud that we helped the Soviet people with arms and at the cost of our own blood when they were in difficulties.

The name "Soviet Union" no longer exists and the veteran revolutionaries who created the Soviet state are all dead. Not many of the soldiers who took part in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol are still alive in Russia, and few people can recall our harassment operations against the enemy in support of the Soviet Union.

But even if no one remembers us, the painstaking efforts we

made to tend the flower garden of internationalism were not in vain.

Whether anybody recognized it or not, we gave armed assistance to the Soviet Union in the past, and this was both for the sake of the Soviet Union and at the same time for our own sake. The Soviet people answered the Korean communists' internationalist deeds with their own internationalist deeds.

Most countries are now acting in their own selfish national interests. Many people seem to be completely self-centred, not caring a straw as to whether others are happy or unhappy. I object to both individual and national selfishness. What human worth is there in a purely egocentric existence? To my mind, the greatest pleasure in the life of any human being is in helping others.



## **9. The End of the “Maeda Punitive Force”**

The Battle of Hongqihe, fought in March 1940, was one of the highlights of the last days of the large-unit circling operations.

The enemy, who constantly boasted that it would annihilate the revolutionary army through the “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area”, suffered a telling blow in that battle. The tragic end of one entire company in its “punitive” force threw the enemy into total confusion.

What was the world situation at that time? The Sino-Japanese War had entered the stage of drawn-out, pitched battles and the Soviet-Japanese relations had become extremely strained owing to the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol incidents. The flames of the Second World War were spreading far and wide.

At this point the top brass of the Kwantung Army launched its “special clean-up campaign”, claiming that it would put an end to the anti-Japanese movement in Northeast China once and for all.

As we used to vanish after each of our attacks, the enemy trekked about the backwoods of Fusong and Dunhua in search of us all through the winter. While the enemy was going around claiming that the KPRA had frozen to death, the main force suddenly appeared in the border areas of Antu and Helong counties and wiped out the “Maeda punitive force” at Hongqihe. What an astonishing blow this must have been to the Japanese!

The Battle of Hongqihe remains so conspicuous in my memory

because it is a major battle along with other major battles, such as Pochonbo, Jiansanfeng, Dongning county town and Fusong county town. This is also why I so clearly remember Maeda.

Company Commander Maeda of the “police punitive force” in Helong County, was, in fact, a small fry for the KPRA to deal with. Nevertheless, he was as rabidly against us as Commander Wang in Fusong and Ri To Son in Antu. Although low in rank, he found notoriety in the end because he was destroyed while attempting to wipe out the Headquarters of the Korean revolution.

During that period we were dealing repeated blows at the enemy, while at the same time relaxing and carrying out training now and then according to our plan for large-unit circling operations.

About one month before the Battle of Hongqihe, as we were conducting military and political training in the secret camp at Baishitan, the enemy came in to raid the secret camp. We struck the enemy like lightning and then slipped away towards Antu. This was the beginning of the second stage of the large-unit circling operations.

From the very start of the second stage we had to face many difficulties. Because Rim Su San at the secret camp in Dongpaizi had neglected the mission given by Headquarters, we had to abandon the planned route and strike out on an alternate route that ran through the uninhabited region northeast of Mt. Paektu.

It was said that there were many map surveyors in the Japanese army, but they dared not venture into that region, so they left it white on the map. For this reason it was called a “white region”.

On leaving Baishitan we planned to march across the white region, fire off our guns once again at Musan and Samjang in the homeland, then return to the central area of Antu, China, via Helong County. This was our new plan for the second stage of the large-unit circling operations.

After fighting a battle at Lushuihe, we marched across the Toudaobai, Erdaobai and Sandaobai rivers towards the southern tip of Antu County.

We passed through the white region with great difficulty. At that time the great snowdrifts and blizzards were our greatest enemies. It was hard to endure the cold and hunger. The biggest problem was that we often lost our way. As everything was white, we could not judge where we were, nor could we see any landmarks. As we approached Damalugou, we had run out of provisions and our clothes and shoes were all worn out. We therefore raided Damalugou to capture supplies. *Damalugou* means “large elk valley” and *Xiaomalugou* “small elk valley”. In those days the elk of Damalugou used to cross the Tuman River to graze in the meadows of Korea and then return to Damalugou in winter to feed on purple eulalia.

In Damalugou, the base of an enemy “punitive” force, there was also the headquarters of a company of rangers. The place could be called a stronghold of the enemy “punitive” force in the border area. The Japanese imperialists plundered great amounts of timber for wartime use from lumber companies and timber forests in the area.

Before the battle we dispatched a reconnaissance party to Damalugou. On their return, the scouts reported that they had seen strange tall men with blue eyes there. They said the men had long noses and that the backs of their hands were covered with thick hair. They did not know who these people were. I sent a man to check on them. He reported that the men were all Russians working as drivers at the lumber station. They were from the families which had supported the white army. There were many Russians in the Harbin area. I had seen them when I was in Harbin in the summer of 1930.

While the enemy’s main force was out on a mission one

day, we took Damalugou by surprise. The Russian drivers immediately offered my men gold rings, apparently taking us for bandits. When my men declined, they cocked their heads as if to say they had never before seen such strange people in this world. Their ideology was obviously a very backward one.

We captured an enormous amount of wheat flour at Damalugou, which we distributed to the local people, one sack for each person. We captured so much that it was impossible for the guerrillas to carry it all. The workers of the lumber station volunteered to carry the remainder for us.

We planned to persuade the Russians to help us get away by truck to some distance, but I was told that they would not cooperate. I sent a man who knew Russian to talk to them, and he managed to persuade the drivers to do the job.

At that time I talked to the Russians. I asked them why they were living in China and not in their own motherland. They replied that the Communist Party did not welcome the people of landlord and capitalist origin like themselves. They added that their fathers were guilty because they had been opposed to the socialist revolution, but that they themselves were not guilty of anything. I asked them whether they would build socialism shoulder to shoulder with the communists if they were sent to the Soviet Union; they answered that they would.

Among those who carried captured goods for us there was also a worker from Japan. I heard that he said good things about us on his return. He said: "I thought the soldiers of the revolutionary army were excellent men. They were all on our side, on the side of us workers. Though they knew that I was a Japanese, they did not discriminate against me and told me that Japanese workers, hand in hand with Korean workers, should fight Japanese imperialism." The superintendent of the lumber station caught him saying this and sent him off somewhere.

Our attack on Damalugou alerted the enemy forces in the Antu and Helong areas, who were hell-bent on annihilating us. Leading this force were Unami, commander of the “police punitive force” of Helong County and head of the police affairs department of the county; and Maeda.

The police authorities of Helong County had organized the “police punitive force” at the time we were fighting a series of large battles on the Tuman River after our campaign in the Musan area in May 1939. The force had been organized hastily for the sole purpose of containing and annihilating our army. Composed of four companies, including the one led by Maeda and two railway guard companies, it was running wild under the command of the head of the Jiandao district “punitive” force, trying to “mop up” the guerrilla army.

They had thought us to be far in the north. When we appeared in the areas bordering Helong and Antu counties all of a sudden and raided Damalugou, the Helong “police punitive force” set off its entire force on a desperate pursuit of us.

As I learned later, Maeda launched himself into the “punitive” operations against us with even more bravado than others, bragging frequently that his company would destroy the main force of Kim Il Sung’s unit for sure.

The “Nozoe Punitive Command” set 10,000 *yuan* as a price on my head. Another source said that an even larger sum had been offered.

When you consider that the public security authorities of Manchukuo set its “police reward” as 10 to 200 *yuan*, the highest reward in the name of the Public Security Minister, you can see that 10,000 *yuan* was an enormous sum indeed.

Having served as a junior policeman in Korea, and then in Manchuria under the garrison command subordinate to the metropolitan police office and as a head of police stations in

areas bordering Korea, Maeda had received a reward from the Public Security Minister for the “exploits” he had performed in the “clean-up operations” in the Jiandao area.

On hearing the news that we had raided Damalugou, Maeda went into a rage, raving that he was going to wipe out the guerrilla army. He wrote pledges in blood to this effect and held a grand ceremony of departure for the “punitive” troops. The joint “punitive” forces of army and police of Japan and Manchukuo were spreading out to encircle the vast forests at the foot of Mt. Paektu, throwing out “such a dragnet that even an ant would find it hard to escape”.

Anticipating that the “punitive” force would follow in our wake without fail, we drew up an elusive plan to dodge it. First we sent a small unit, together with the 40 civilians who had carried the captured supplies for us, back to Damalugou, making sure that they left confusing footprints all over the place.

As a result the enemy lamented that they had failed to catch the guerrillas, whom they had taken such great pains to track, as they had been misled by the footprints. They then combed the forests every day, shouting that they would not be fooled again by the guerrillas and that Kim Il Sung could not very well have sunk into the earth, however elusive he might be. They were convinced that they would locate the Headquarters of the communist army easily enough if they combed Mt. Paektu.

After throwing the enemy off our track, we gave our main force military and political training at the secret camp in Hualazi, having a good rest while we were at it. Then we resumed our march towards Musan. The enemy troops who were trekking about in the Hualazi area in search of our whereabouts, finally detected us and began to tail us.

On the march we met peasants who had been drafted to carry supplies for the “punitive” force. They told us that the enemy

soldiers on our tail numbered about 1,000. It was March, but both we and the enemy were experiencing difficulties while on the move owing to the waist-deep snow. Nevertheless, the enemy was marching faster than we, as they were following us along our trodden trail. To make matters worse, my men began to be afflicted with emaciation. At first they numbered only a few, but later they increased to 15.

I asked Rim Chun Chu how he was planning to treat the patients. Rim, a political officer of the guerrilla army, also had rich clinical experience. He replied that he would give them opium. I granted approval, saying that he should do his best, either by using opium or through any other method he could think of.

Taking opium helped the patients, but they were not well enough to march. We had to put a distance between us and the enemy, but the pace of our march had slowed down because of the sick men, and soon the enemy was only about four to six kilometres behind us.

The Damalugou, on the upper reaches of the Hongqi River, consists of several streams. We arrived at one of these streams just as it was getting dark. We found an old house that had been used by lumberjacks; I posted a guard and told my men to stop and take a break there. Unless they had sufficient rest, we would not be able to continue fighting. As they were well aware that the enemy were on their heels, they were somewhat uneasy to hear my order to stop marching and take a rest in the house, but seeing me lying down, they relaxed.

I decided to attack the "Maeda punitive force" in a valley on the Hongqi. I chose the valley as a place of ambush because I calculated that the enemy, who had been to Hualazi, would pass through the valley without fail on their way back to their base. Moreover, its terrain features were very favourable for an

ambush. As the chief of the police affairs department of Helong County said later, the terrain features of the valley were “so unfavourable that no tactics would work” if one was caught up in an ambush there.

On hearing my choice of the spot for an ambush, O Paek Ryong asked me, “Since the enemy are well aware of our tactics, General, will they walk into such a trap?” His doubt was reasonable. The enemy was most afraid of our method of allurement and ambush. They named it the “net tactic” and carefully studied measures to counter it. “Don’t be caught in Kim Il Sung’s net”—this became a catch-phrase among them. You can imagine the hard time they had because of this tactic. They tried as far as possible to avoid places where guerrillas would find it favourable to lie in ambush. O Paek Ryong had this in mind when he spoke.

I considered that the enemy, aware of our “nets”, would be convinced that the communist army would not repeat this tactic, so I decided to position my men in ambush in the valley on the Hongqi and fight a battle there. In other words, I planned to use once again the tactic the enemy had concluded we would no longer employ.

Next day we marched along the ridge of a mountain toward Xiaomalugou before descending into the valley. The mountains on both sides of the valley were unique. On the right, toward the upper reaches of the river, stood three peaks looking like three brothers. They were ideal places for an ambush. In addition there was a peak on the left with a small forest at the foot of it, which was also a favourable terrain feature for us.

I held a meeting of commanding officers and organized the battle. I positioned the machine-gun platoon and Guard Company on the three peaks on the right side of the valley and the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Regiments on the fringe of the peak on the left.



Next, I ordered each unit to climb down to the valley, then climb up the heights again, erasing their uphill footprints before lying down in the designated positions for the ambush. Finally, I sent a decoy party to resume marching along the valley, leaving as many footprints as possible. I also positioned a group, led by Son Thae Chun, on the northern side of the first height in the valley to cut off any enemy retreat. The decoy party would block the enemy advance at the end of the valley.

That day we fought a battle on the Hongqi, as planned. It suddenly began to thaw, and the snow on the sunny side melted. The paths became muddy.

The enemy appeared in the valley of the Hongqi at the wane of day in the afternoon. I looked at the entrance of the valley through binoculars and found an enemy scout party, larger than usual for a scout party. It was their habit to dispatch one or two scouts, but this time they numbered nearly 10. It suggested that all the “punitive” forces in Hualazi were swarming in. The scout were followed by a point.

As the point was marching past the last height, an officer with a sword at his waist entered the valley. I later learned that this was Maeda himself. The head of the enemy’s main body was walking deep into the trap. Maeda stopped and carefully examined the footprints in the snow and the features peculiar to the valley.

I guessed he was probably thinking about dispatching a scouting party up to the heights, or about withdrawing his unit altogether. However, Maeda, extremely exhausted from his ten days of lost labour in the mountains, seemed to be off his guard just at the fateful moment when he ought to have been thinking and judging the situation coolly. Seeing Maeda standing under a lone tree, his subordinate officers gathered around him. Maeda, leaning on his sword, gave some instructions to them. In the meantime the main body of the enemy was pouring steadily into

the area of our ambush.

Taking advantage of this golden opportunity, I fired my signal shot.

Half of the enemy was killed by our very first strike. Surprised by crossfire from the right and left sides of the valley, Maeda instantly dispersed his marching column on the spot and attempted to direct his main force to the height in the north to capture it, but was frustrated by our flanking fire from the bushes in the west. As the situation grew more and more disastrous for him, he ordered a charge, apparently determined to fight a do-or-die battle. Then, drawing his sword, he led the charge himself. Though seriously wounded, he commanded the battle until the moment he fell.

The remaining enemy put up a desperate fight. Most of Maeda's men did not lay down their weapons until they were mowed down. Except for about 30 men, who laid down arms and surrendered, all the enemy soldiers were killed. Their casualties numbered about 140.

In the Battle of Hongqihe my men fought very bravely. O Paek Ryong, the new regimental commander succeeding O Jung Hup, who had fallen in the Battle of Liukesong, fought with great audacity. Kim Il, too, showed great efficiency as the head of the shock troops.

We searched the battlefield after the battle and captured a large amount of booty, including a wireless equipment and tens of thousands of cartridges. It was difficult to dispose of all the weapons, for we had more than enough of them. We kept a number of the captured weapons to replace the outmoded ones still being carried by some of my men, and wrapped the remainder in oil paper and either buried them in the ground or stored them in the hollow trunks of trees for a future great event.

After we had finished the disposal of our booty, we discovered

the “Fengtian unit” of the puppet Manchukuo army building campfires and watching us in a place not far away from us. Too scared of us to attack, they merely fired a few blind shots. I ordered O Paek Ryong to set up all the captured machine-guns and fire a couple of rounds at them so as to threaten them and test their efficiency at the same time.

That night O Paek Ryong, reporting that the “Fengtian unit” was sneaking towards us, asked me if we should strike back at them.

I said to him, “Leave them alone. Why bother hitting mere on-lookers? It’s better to send them back alive, then they can tell the world how Maeda’s unit was destroyed.”

We discovered that Maeda had made his men write their wills before the battle. We found this out after reading a note in the pocket of an officer’s uniform while searching the battlefield. The note was wrapped in a piece of silk cloth, and its content was very grim. According to the POWs, Maeda gathered his men before departing for battle and made them write their last testaments. He told them that their company, as part of the district “punitive” force, had to fight with Kim Il Sung’s army, and that to win victory in the battle, they needed to cultivate *Yamato Tamashii* (Japanese spirit) and be determined to die for the Emperor. He even had a box made for the ashes of his own dead body.

On hearing this, I realized that Maeda, though only the company commander of a “punitive” force, was also an evil henchman of ultra-nationalist forces.

I think it was the militarism and ultra-nationalism of Japan that turned Maeda into an extremist of national chauvinism and an anti-communist fanatic.

The Japanese imperialists resorted to all means and methods to transform the population of Japan into rabid supporters of ultra-

nationalism, which often hides under the cloak of patriotism. This is why the virus of ultra-nationalism finds its way easily into the hearts of people not awakened ideologically.

As I have mentioned earlier, the militarists of Japan persistently indoctrinated Japanese youth and children with the aggressive idea that Japan would prosper only when it conquered Manchuria. It was said that they even baked slogans into such foods as bread and biscuits, which people consume every day, urging them into overseas expansion. This meant that while swallowing their food they were encouraged to think about swallowing other nations' territories. When propaganda is as persistent as this, its virus must penetrate people's minds.

Some of our people think that the bourgeoisie have no ideology, but they are mistaken. Just as communists have communism, they also have bourgeois ideology. And they persuade their faithful henchmen to espouse their ideology as well.

On the issue of indoctrination in the spirit of the Imperial Way in the Japanese army, some commanding officers in our revolutionary army were at one point teaching our men only about its deceitfulness and absurdity. This consequently gave rise to the incorrect view of Japanese soldiers as insensible robots only carrying rifles. This was a very dangerous way to think.

That we emphasize the political and ideological superiority of our own army does not mean that our enemy has no ideology. While we see our ideology as being superior to the enemy's, this does not mean that we can underestimate the enemy as having no distinct beliefs. I instructed our political officers that they should not place all their emphasis on the vulnerability of the enemy's ideology, and that they should not ignore the fact that the Japanese do inculcate ideology in their soldiers and fill them with a most evil spirit of anti-communism.

In the Battle of Hongqihe the enemy drank a truly bitter cup. They learned the harsh lesson that, however zealously they might track the KPRA, no victory would await them and that instead they would experience a painful end, as the “Maeda punitive force” had done. They also found out that no force in the world could defeat the KPRA.

In this battle we demonstrated to the whole world that the KPRA was going strong, winning one victory after another, and that however severe the trials, it would never yield or perish.

The battle exerted a good influence on the people in the homeland. As the Hongqi was within hailing distance from Korea, the news of Maeda’s defeat in the fight with the revolutionary army spread like wildfire across the Tuman River into Korea. The people, who had been worrying about the fate of the KPRA, drew great strength from the news. After the battle they never again believed the propaganda that the revolutionary army was routed.

The battle occasioned widespread discussions about the power of the KPRA. It was a very good thing that people trusted the KPRA and entrusted their future to it entirely. It helped the anti-Japanese, patriotic forces of Korea promote an all-people resistance with greater confidence, looking forward to the glorious event of national liberation. This was our greatest gain in the Battle of Hongqihe.

In contrast, for the Japanese and Manchukuo army and police, who had been bragging that the anti-Japanese guerrilla war in the northeast would come to an end when Kim Il Sung’s army was wiped out, this was an unhappy bolt from the blue and a tragic defeat.

The police authorities of Helong County, frightened by the annihilation of the Maeda unit, had to admit that they had not exactly been blessed by Divine Providence; they also confessed that the defeat of the Maeda unit had been unavoidable because

of the adroit tactics of the KPRA. The destruction of the “Maeda punitive force” also meant the frustration of the “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area”, in which the Japanese and Manchukuo top brass had invested so much effort.

Unami, Maeda’s immediate superior and chief of the police affairs department of Helong County, returned to Japan after the defeat in the war. He left this article:

“It was from 1938 to 1941 that I, as a Manchukuo policeman in Jiandao Province, took part in the punitive operations against the anti-Japanese army, led by General Kim Il Sung. ...

“It was hard to collect information, but a relatively reliable source said that ‘General Kim Il Sung finished school in Jilin City. With high academic records, he had an outstanding ability to make political judgements. He also had organizational and leadership ability and enjoyed great popularity.’ ...

“It seemed that his outstanding leadership talent found full expression during the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle. We experienced especially hard times because of his deft luring operations and ambushes. ...

“On March 11, 1940, Damalugou, in the gorge along the Hongqi, was raided by Kim Il Sung’s army. Damalugou was a base of the punitive force that also housed the headquarters of a company of rangers. The headquarters was attacked, the motor-car repair shop was burnt down and weapons, ammunition, food and clothing were plundered.

“Nunogami, commander of the district punitive force, ordered the police battalion of the punitive force to trace and annihilate Kim Il Sung’s army in cooperation with Ooba’s and Akabori’s units of the Japanese army.

“I relayed the order to the company, led by Maeda Takeichi. On March 25 Maeda’s company encountered Kim Il Sung’s army not far from Damalugou and fought a fierce battle, but the whole company,

including the commander himself, was annihilated. It was trapped in an ambush. The annihilation of Maeda's company had a shocking impact on the punitive force.

“As Kim Il Sung's army was familiar with the geographical features and employed highly variable tactics, the punitive operations in forests hardly succeeded. ...

“At that time Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army was in high spirits, saying such things as, ‘We are the Korean People's Revolutionary Army led by General Kim Il Sung. There is no compromise in the fight for the liberation of the country,’ and ‘The punitive force is a most welcome guest, for it supplies us with weapons, food and clothing.’

“The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now achieving a remarkable development under the leadership of Premier Kim Il Sung.

“I am convinced, from my own experience, that the Korean people, advancing under the leadership of this outstanding leader, will surely achieve the reunification of their country.”

Recollecting the Battle of Hongqihe later, the great leader stressed the need to heighten vigilance against the revival of militarism. Here is what he said about the latter:

The ruling authorities of Japan are said to have awakened from their wild daydream of world domination after the Second World War. If this is true, then it is good for Japan and fortunate for the people of neighbouring countries.

Nevertheless, in view of the conduct of Japanese authorities, we still have to wonder whether or not they continue to dream of world domination and their “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”. Many reactionaries in Japan have not yet admitted the crime of having invaded and plundered Korea and several other countries in Asia and of having killed millions of people, nor have they yet made reparations for their crimes. Worse still, they

have not admitted their most heinous crime, that of having taken 200,000 women and girls as sex slaves and of having treated them with greater cruelty than they would animals. On the contrary, they are now seeking to become a political and military power on the basis of their economy.

Neo-fascists are now manoeuvring in European countries as well.

This also is highly dangerous.

We must clearly sharpen our vigilance against the revival of militarism.