

IN THE EMBRACE OF KIM IL SUNG



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Preface

The anti-Japanese fighters of Korea are the proud first generation of the Korean revolution. During the military occupation by Japan over Korea, they held Kim Il Sung as the sun of the nation and waged a bloody struggle to achieve the country's liberation and freedom of its people.

They were writhing in sorrow and agony of being deprived of their country's territory and sovereignty by Japan and were at a loss what to do until Kim Il Sung, the eternal president of the Korean nation, embraced them as his comrades and trained them as competent fighters and warriors in the anti-Japanese struggle.

Hewing out the long path of the anti-Japanese struggle under his leadership, they came to learn first the love for the motherland, people and human beings, and in the course of this, they became fighters who were ready to devote even

their lives to the most sacred cause for independence of their country and freedom and liberation of the fellow people.

In these years they felt to the marrow of their bones that only when they were guided by Kim Il Sung could they gain back the independence of their country.

The tradition of the unity centred on the leader the first generation of the Korean revolution created during the anti-Japanese struggle still serves as a source of the greatest pride of the Korean people and foundation of all their victories.

Among the numerous hot-blooded fighters who performed imperishable feats in the arduous anti-Japanese struggle and who still live in the memory of the Korean people, the Editorial Board introduces the materials of struggle by some typical fighters.

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First Chief of Staff of the Revolutionary Armed Force

On April 25, 2022, Pyongyang, the capital city of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, witnessed a military parade held in celebration of the 90th founding anniversary of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

Watching the fireworks dyeing the nocturnal sky of the beautiful city and the columns parading through Kim Il Sung Square, the Korean people recollected the parade of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army (later developed into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army) held in the Antu County town 90 years ago.

Though they numbered more or less 100 in total, the local people and the soldiers of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese unit stationed in the town cheered them.

The man who saluted Kim Il Sung that day on behalf of the ranks was Cha Kwang Su (April 5, 1905-October 30, 1932), whom the Korean people still remember with affection and respect. He was the first chief of staff of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, the first revolutionary people's armed force of Korea.

President Kim Il Sung wrote in his memoirs *With the Century*:

“When I recall my Jilin days, many unforgettable faces appear before my mind's eye. In their forefront

there is always Cha Kwang Su.”

A bespectacled young man with his head inclined somewhat to one side and theoretician—this was Cha Kwang Su. He was nicknamed “boisterous,” which showcased an aspect of his characteristics.

Born of a poor family in Ryongchon County, North Phyongan Province, he was regarded as a prodigy by his neighbours. In his teens, he went to Japan to study by supporting himself.

Reading Marxist and Leninist books, he began to aspire after communism. But, the theories he had read about could not illumine the way for national liberation of colonies.

Thirsty for the truth, he left Japan in the mid-1920s, and wandered here and there including Seoul and Manchuria. In this course, he met many “renowned” persons, who did not strive for national liberation, the most urgent issue, but were indulged in wordplay.

Disgusted with them, he gave up all his dreams and went to Liuxi to become at least a rural teacher, and there he met Choe Chang Gol.

Choe Chang Gol, one of the first members of the Down-with-Imperialism Union, which was organized by Kim Il Sung, advised him to go to Jilin and meet the leader of the new youth movement.

On arriving in Jilin, he went to the Christian Youth Hall, where Kim Il Sung was to give a lecture. He wanted to size him up.

The moment he saw the image of him mounting the stage, he was attracted by his rare personality. Furthermore, his lecture was

also admirable. Listening to his lecture, given in plain language but excellent in its content and composition, he found himself deeply moved and was convinced that his journey was not in vain. As for Cha, he was enjoying the reputation from his colleagues that he was much more intelligent than Marx or Lenin. But, he was quite fascinated by Kim Il Sung, who was seven years his junior.

When the lecture was over, Kim Il Sung met him.

Through much talk with Kim Il Sung that day, Cha could not but be attracted by his modesty and profound knowledge, and felt that his self-respect began to collapse gradually.

While expressing his sympathy with the Marxist-Leninist theory, the recognized line for the international communist movement at that time, Kim Il Sung had a creative approach to it in connection with the reality of Korea which was reduced to a colony.

Cha realized that his dialogue partner was an outstanding man, incomparable to a bookworm like him.

When they met again a week later, Cha said he had been in Jilin for a while to take the air and abruptly asked Kim Il Sung his opinion on the alliance with the nationalists.

At that time, the issue of alliance with the nationalists was in the spotlight in the communist movement as the Chinese revolution was forced to experience an unexpected challenge due to the treacherous Chiang Kai-shek's act of abandoning Communist-Nationalist cooperation. Pointing to the need to draw

a lesson from the current state of the Chinese revolution, some people within the international communist movement even came forward with the extremist argument that communists should not join hands with nationalists. After all, the view on the issue of alliance between communists and nationalists was a touchstone that distinguished true communists from opportunists.

That was why Cha Kwang Su asked Kim Il Sung such a question.

Kim Il Sung answered: Some degenerate Korean nationalists are advocating self-government and national reformism, giving in to the Japanese imperialists, but conscientious nationalists and intellectuals are fighting at home and abroad for the independence of their country without yielding; the Korean nationalists who are experiencing the barbarous colonial rule of the Japanese imperialists have a strong anti-Japanese spirit; so, we should join hands with these nationalists and non-comprador capitalists.

Cha Kwang Su, who had longed to meet a leader who could put forward a correct line, firmly grasped Kim Il Sung's hands.

Then, he began to open his heart.

After saying about his career, he said in an excited voice:

“Song Ju (Kim Il Sung's earlier name—Tr.), can we conduct the communist movement, believing in and loving one another? I mean, without factional strife and a fight for hegemony.”

Afterwards, he settled down in Jilin and became a member of the DIU organization.

In those days, he admired Kim Il Sung for his seasoned and experienced leadership, and felt with great pride and joy that the Korean revolution was finally put on its orbit.

As a matter of fact, Cha Kwang Su had been not only good at writing and making speeches but also well-versed in Marxism and Leninism, and his appearance reinforced the core force of the DIU. Even those, who were boasting of being “theoretical authority” in the Korean communist movement, could not beat him in any debate on Marxism.

Thus, the Korean young communists of the new generation had won a prominent theoretician.

One day in summer 1927 Kim Il Sung told him to go to Xinantun village and work there.

Surprised, Cha asked him with a dubious look, half-jokingly and half-seriously why he was sending him back to the countryside after he had come up from the countryside to join the movement.

Xinantun, which was situated near the road from Jilin to Changchun, was a small village which some Korean patriots had developed as an ideal village. If the village was made revolutionary, it could provide initial access to the peasant masses.

He was wondering what he could do in a small country village when others were going about in big cities conducting the movement and, unsatisfied even with this, were visiting the Comintern.

To him who was disillusioned about the outmoded way of movement of the nationalists but not free from the established conception, Kim Il Sung said: It is wrong to think that only when one is ensconced in a big city can one make the revolution. We should not draw distinctions between the city and the countryside if there are people there. The overwhelming majority of our population is peasants. A large proportion of the Koreans in Manchuria live in the countryside.

Without going among the peasants it is impossible to enlist the people in the cause of national liberation or to think about the victory of the communist movement in our country. I want to go to the countryside and work there after finishing school. Those who are now allegedly engaged in the movement all move up to the county town from the countryside, to the capital from the county town and to the Comintern from the capital. People suppose that only by moving up can they gain the recognition of others. What if those who are allegedly making the revolution for the proletarian masses continuously move up, leaving the masses behind? Let us go down. Let us go down among the workers and peasants.

“Let us go down instead of up,” Cha Kwang Su repeated these words earnestly to himself and remained in thought for a while. Then he said aloud, thumping the desk, “What a good idea!”

After going down to Xinantun, Cha built up Kilhung School, which was closed. Then, with the school as a base, he actively conducted the work of implanting the anti-Japanese spirit and

revolutionary consciousness among the masses.

Wherever he went, he made friends easily with the people. People liked and respected him because he was sociable, boisterous, well-read and eloquent.

In a short time the village was transformed into a revolutionary one.

One day in early September 1927, Kim Il Sung visited Kilhung School in Xinantun.

After exchanging greetings with Cha at the school playground, he asked him about the composition of the villagers, their ideological trend and the work of the branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League.

Then he said: The work of winning the broad sections of the masses could not be successful if it is done in a stereotyped way; it should be conducted in different forms to suit the characteristics and preparedness of the people you work with and the specific circumstances and actual conditions. For example, if you are to win over the elderly, it would be a good idea to awaken first a few old men, who are popular and influential in the village, and have them educate other bigoted old people. You can prepare a guest room where you can have the educated old people awaken the other old people. When talking to the old people, you should not try to inject the revolutionary spirit directly to them as if breaking a live tree, but tell interesting stories related with their life before interlacing them with remarks aimed at awakening their class consciousness.

After listening to him, Cha said that he found the way out at last, adding he would bear in mind his words.

Later, he made a great contribution to pioneering the youth movement, stepping up the revolutionization of the masses and laying the foundations of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

Thanks to the bloody efforts and sacrifices by the young communists, the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, the first genuine revolutionary armed force of the Korean people, was founded on the tableland at Tuqidian in Xiaoshahe, Antu County, on April 25, 1932.

Kim Il Sung appointed Cha of intellectual origin as its chief of staff.

Cha devoted his all to fulfilling his heavy yet honorable duty.

Shortly after its founding, the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was making preparations for an expedition to southern Manchuria under the strategic and tactical plan of Kim Il Sung.

One day Cha Kwang Su appeared before Kim Il Sung and said with a serious look:

“Comrade Commander, as we intend to start on an expedition, what about leaving Xiaoshahe as soon as possible, in a few days? There is a main road in the neighbourhood, and the enemy's convoys frequently pass along it, and this is not good for us. Our food situation is also very difficult. There are only some 40 farmhouses here, but more than 100 of us are eating their food. So how can the villagers of Xiaoshahe bear it, although they are very kind?”

Kim Il Sung said, **“Since we have risen in arms, what about trying a battle?”**

“Do you mean it?”

“Yes, now that we have formed a unit, we should start our battle. When the enemy troops are passing very near us, there is no reason for us to sit with folded arms. When we shall have to leave, we will leave, but let us fire a shot in Antu. We cannot talk about training the men without a battle. If we succeed, I think we will be able to procure the materials we need for our expedition.”

So happy to hear that, Cha went to the road with an officer to scout. The aim of his scouting was to select a suitable spot for an ambush.

They proposed to lie in ambush in Xiaoyingziling at midway between Antu and Mingyuegou.

Kim Il Sung agreed.

Fortunately there was a report from an underground revolutionary organization about the movement of the enemy’s convoy.

Kim Il Sung worked out a scrupulous operation plan before ordering the chief of staff to make the unit ready for a march and battle.

When all the preparations were made, the unit, under his command, marched at night to Xiaoyingziling 6 km away from Xiaoshahe, and lay in ambush on both sides of the road.

They wrapped a white towel around their arms to distinguish themselves from the enemy.

As Kim Il Sung had expected, the enemy's convoy appeared there at night.

The officers and men were all nervous and excited.

When the convoy, composed of 12 horse carts, entered the place, Kim Il Sung fired a shot. With that piercing sound, a battle cry was raised.

After about ten minutes' firing, the guerrillas charged and wound up the battle. The enemy surrendered after suffering more than ten casualties.

That night the guerrillas returned to Mutiaotun carrying the trophies in ten carts. The trophies consisted of 17 rifles, one pistol, a large amount of flour which was enough to feed 100 persons for about a month, cloth and combat boots. It was very impressive as first trophies.

After midnight they sat in a circle around a bonfire in a yard and ate a clear soup with thin pieces of pastry. It was a plain dinner party arranged in celebration of victory in the first battle.

Cha, who had been looking into the bonfire weeping behind his glasses, grasped Kim Il Sung's hand tightly all of a sudden, and said in a choking voice: "I say, Song Ju, now that I have experienced battle, it is nothing special."

After a while, Cha Kwang Su made a speech in front of the bonfire, with his glasses in one hand and gesturing: "Comrades, we have taken the first step. We have achieved the first victory. Who has done this? It is we who are sitting here."

He said: "Once we have taken up a gun, that gun must be fired.

And once the gun has been fired, we must win. Am I not right? This evening we have annihilated a convoy of carts. It is no more than a small incident, but it is the start of our cause. The water of a small stream has left a steep mountain valley and started to flow towards the ocean.”

The listeners were all excited with the victory in the first battle.

He continued: “Comrades, how good fighting is. It gives us guns, provisions, clothes and shoes. This evening I have learned a great and profound lesson. Now, let us distribute the rifles we have captured. Let us shoot more enemy troops with these rifles. Then we will obtain more rifles and provisions. We will also obtain machine-guns and artillery. Let us fill our rice sacks with the captured food. Let us march vigorously, eating that food. Let us make the Japanese imperialists supply us with weapons and provisions as we have done today, until the day when they are completely annihilated. This is the way for us to exist and struggle, isn’t it?”

Kim Il Sung was the first to applaud his speech.

The whole audience responded to his speech with warm applause.

The unit, which left Xiaoshahe with the spirit of winning victory in the first battle, gained another victory in the fierce battle against the Japanese troops that they suddenly encountered near Erdaobaihe, Antu County. It also rehabilitated the destroyed revolutionary organizations in different areas, expanded its ranks

and proved successful to a certain degree in its work with the Independence Army units.

It was one day about half a year after the founding of the AJPGA.

Cha Kwang Su, who had been dispatched to the Dunhua area with a small unit on the order of Kim Il Sung, was returning to the Headquarters after completing his duty.

The small unit found the enemy going ahead of them to the Headquarters.

To leave them to go on their way would make the Headquarters fall in danger. We must defend the Headquarters at any cost.

Cha's unit attacked the enemy.

At first, the enemy was at a loss by their surprise attack, but a few minutes later they judged the situation and attacked them back.

“As long as we live, we must defend the great sun of the Korean revolution,” Cha encouraged the guerrillas with this death-defying determination and mercilessly fired at the enemy.

Aware that the small unit was led by the chief of staff of the guerrilla army, the enemy made desperate efforts.

Cha fought until the last bullet was fired.

Realizing that the last moment of his life came, he missed the image of Kim Il Sung, and felt a sense of guilt that he failed to play his role as his first aide, the chief of staff of the guerrilla army.

But sure of the final victory of the Korean revolution as he

believed in himself and wishing the safety of Kim Il Sung, he died a martyr's death.

The absolute and unconditional loyalty to the leader, boundless responsibility for the revolution and love for the future displayed by Cha Kwang Su in the early years of the Korean revolution are still deeply cherished in the hearts of the Korean people and the rising generations.

Choe Hyon, a Veteran General, and an Amber Cigarette-holder

The Korean people and historians call Choe Hyon a veteran general.

The nickname of Tough Fellow, which is often seen in the classified documents left by the Japanese imperialists, was given to Choe Hyon by them. The Japanese army and police trembled at the mere mention of “Saiken’s unit” (Saiken is the Japanese pronunciation of Choe Hyon–Tr). “Saiken” became synonymous with an invincible general, who struck terror into the enemy’s hearts.

Choe Hyon was a typical soldier.

Choe Hyon was born in Jiandao, a foreign land, in 1907 when the national crisis was at its height. The year 1907 was a grievous year, which witnessed many tragic events in the history of the Korean nation.

That year Ri Jun committed suicide in The Hague by disemboweling himself, King Kojong (26th monarch of the feudal Joseon dynasty) was dethroned, and the Korean army was dissolved. It was also the year, when the right of home administration passed into the hands of the Japanese imperialists, because of the “Jongmi Seven-Point Treaty” and “government by under-secretaries.” Choe Hyon’s parents, who

had brought him into the world in a land, which was struck down by an economic crisis with an unprecedented destructive power, were anxious about his future.

The “annexation of Korea by Japan”, the March First Popular Uprising and the massive “punitive” atrocities in Jiandao in the year of Kyongsin (1920) were dramatic events which made young Choe’s blood boil. He lost his mother during the enemy’s “punitive” operations, and went to the Maritime Province of Russia with his father. The Independence Army, which was offering armed resistance in difficult conditions in a corner of Jiandao, gave him a ray of hope in those despairing, dark days.

Hong Pom Do and Im Pyong Guk were his seniors and mentors. His childhood was linked inseparably with these brave, indefatigable veterans. He learned marksmanship and horsemanship from them. He began to deliver messages for the Independence Army from the age of eleven.

When the small teenager rode like an arrow on horseback through the plain, the Russian people admired and envied him.

After the routing of the Independence Army unit, he joined the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria, thanks to the good offices of Yun Chang Bom. His days in the GFKYEM could be described as the period, when he changed from a nationalist to a communist. It was during his seven-year term in the Yanji prison that the process of his change was expedited.

The reactionary Chinese warlord authorities arrested him abruptly in 1925 and sentenced him to a term of life imprisonment on a charge of raising funds. After the waves of the May 30 Uprising and the harvest and spring struggles swept the land, the Yanji prison was overcrowded with pioneers of the revolution and patriots who had led the masses in the forefront of the struggle. The small society of these vivacious optimists, who lived honourably, although their freedom was restricted, was a tempering school, which played a decisive role in his growth and development. He joined the Anti-Imperialist Union and the Red Guards, the secret organizations inside Yanji prison, referred to by the warlord authorities as Jilin Prison No. 4. His trials in prison finally transformed this former orderly of the nationalist Independence Army into a fully-fledged communist.

Anecdotes about him and the breathtaking risks he took in prison were well known in all the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria.

His life in prison started with a showdown with *Gangtour*, the “Emperor” of the cell. The *Gangtour* in his cell was a criminal, guilty of murder and robbery. He was taken to molesting the inmates. Each time a new prisoner was thrown into the cell, he robbed him of everything he had and made them his own. He used to grab the food portions of other inmates to fill his own stomach.

Determined to teach him a lesson, Choe Hyon put a high-

quality cigarette between his lips and purposely gave one to each inmate except the *Gangtour*. It was a wordless challenge aimed at provoking him.

Angered, the *Gangtour* ordered him to give all his belongings to him. Instead of answering, Choe blew out a mouthful of smoke, thus enraging him.

As the *Gangtour* threatened to beat him, Choe leapt over some of the inmates and struck him in the face with his two handcuffed fists, and roared, “You scum! Whom are you talking such nonsense to? You’ve committed murder outside and you’re harassing your fellowmen even in prison. Can there be a man more cruel and sinful than you? You’re the son of a commoner like us, aren’t you? I’ll be lenient and forgive you this time, but behave yourself from now on. Get down, and take your seat by the commode. This upper seat’s mine.”

Realizing that he was no match for Choe Hyon, the *Gangtour* sat beside the commode, as he had been told, and crouched there cautiously. The inmates, freed from the *Gangtour*’s oppression, followed Choe as their benefactor from then on.

Not long after Choe’s life imprisonment the warlord authorities frequently arranged for students from several schools in Longjing to visit the prison. In this way the enemy planned to benumb revolutionary consciousness and break the fighting spirit of the youth and students in this area, where the ideological enlightenment organizations and anti-Japanese, anti-warlord organizations were forming one after another

and carried on brisk work.

Choe Hyon contacted all the other cells and told the inmates to prepare water pistols. When the students looked around the prison they squirted stinking urine at the reactionary teachers and prison warders who were guiding the students. The inmates shouted at them, “You rascals! Why have you brought these students here?”

The reactionary teachers, taken by surprise, led the students away and fled from the prison.

The prison authorities tried hard to find the mastermind, but to no avail; every prisoner asserted that he was the prime instigator.

During his days in the Yanji prison, he worked as a shoemaker, compositor, tailor, carpenter, barber and other jobs. In all actions, he never pardoned people who molested and harassed him without reason, whoever they might be; he meted out severe punishment to them.

One day he was caught by a superintendent of a workshop in the prison in the act of making chessmen with buckthorn to be used for the manufacture of desks and chairs and was beaten mercilessly. The superintendent thought it his daily job to beat the prisoners. Outraged, Choe Hyon struck him hard with the leg of the chair he was assembling. The prison authorities inflicted on him a week’s confinement as punishment. But after that incident, the superintendent did not commit outrages on the prisoners any more.

Prison escapes constituted his most outstanding achievements in his struggle in the prison. He succeeded in helping his former superior in the Independence Army and other revolutionaries to escape. A man of inborn audacity and tough training in a wild world, he was ready to burn himself and jump off a high cliff, for the sake of justice.

After his release, he joined a paramilitary organization called the Red Guards, in Taiyangmao, Badaogou, Yanji County, and after arduous struggle, joined the Communist Party; he subsequently became a company political instructor of the Yanji guerrilla unit of the people's revolutionary army.

Choe Hyon met Kim Il Sung for the first time in September 1933 after the battle of the Dongning County town. Choe Hyon arrived late at Macun owing to the messenger's carelessness and belated delivery of the latter's orders for Choe Hyon to take part in the battle. He regretted it immensely on learning that the battle was over. He swore at the messenger furiously, and then, recovering his composure, asked him, "As only the good-for-nothings in Yanji were dawdling away, not even approaching the gates of the county town, when the National Salvation Army boys as well as those from Wangqing and Hunchun fought in the battle, how could I stop myself from giving vent to my anger? General, have you a plan to attack any other place, sir?"

"Please don't say 'sir' to a young man. Please call me by my name, Kim Il Sung."

Choe Hyon said in surprise, “What does a man’s age matter here? I’ve long since regarded you, Commander Kim, as the top man of the Korean army. So it’s natural that I address you respectfully.”

“If you extol young people in that way, they’ll soon become self-conceited and giddy. If you keep on extolling me in that way, I’ll not keep company with you any longer.”

“For all my courage, you have the upper hand. From now on I’ll not call you ‘sir’, just as you wish.”

This was the start of comradeship between the great man and the veteran.

After asking Kim Il Sung to organize another battle, Choe Hyon said, “As things have come to this, I’ll stay in Wangqing for about two days and have a chat with you before going. Will I bother you?”

Kim Il Sung agreed on his proposal with pleasure. Then he talked with Choe all night.

The next morning the sentry sent a warning to Kim Il Sung that the enemy was about to attack the guerrilla zone. Kim Il Sung manned the heights with the unit and, before climbing the mountain, said to Choe Hyon, **“Please wait in the barracks. I’ll be back after a bit of fighting.”**

He leapt up on hearing this. “Am I to wait in the barracks when I finally have a chance to fight? Choe Hyon is not a man to stay behind, instead of following you, Commander Kim. Even Heaven seems to understand me today. I want to fight

under your command at least once, so please take me with you to the heights.”

“If you’re so eager, then let’s fight together,” Kim Il Sung said. Choe Hyon kept on smiling as he followed him up to the heights.

The enemy did not attack the line where the guerrillas were lying in ambush; they only fired some shots from a distance and then began to set fire to the grain stacks, permeated with the sweat and blood of the people in the guerrilla zone.

After ordering his men to mercilessly mow down the enemy by long-range sharpshooting, Kim Il Sung said to Choe Hyon, **“By the way, I’ve heard that you’re a crack shot. Will you show me your skill?”**

With a rifle Choe Hyon hit an enemy soldier approaching a grain stack with a fire stick with a single shot. They were about 500 metres away from the enemy, but he killed each of the enemy with one bullet.

“Well, do you feel a bit better now after such regrets about missing the battle of the Dongning County town?” Kim Il Sung asked when the enemy had been repelled. Choe Hyon shook his head and answered, “A little, but I’m still not satisfied.”

That night too, they talked until late mainly about the immediate tasks of the Korean revolution and ways of carrying them out. Choe Hyon was very satisfied with the results of that conversation. “Now, my regrets at missing the battle

of the Dongning County town have been eased more or less by events in Macun.”

Seeing Choe Hyon off, Kim Il Sung gave him four Dataigan (a large-calibre rifle-Tr.) captured at the battle of the Dongning County town and an amber cigarette-holder as a souvenir of their first meeting.

Since then, the cigarette-holder was indispensable to him. It became his favourite thing.

Whenever concentrating on decisive battles and campaigns, his cigarette-holder would belch out thick smoke.

He had fought hundreds of battles including the battles at Sandaogou, Wudaogou, Xiaotanghe, Huanggouling, Jinchang, Pulgunbawi, Komuijari, Jiansanfeng, Naerhong, Laojinchang, Mujihe, Fuerhe, Weitanggou, Tianbaoshan, Dashahe, Dajianggang, Yaocha and Hancongou in the latter half of the 1930s alone.

During the anti-Japanese armed struggle, Choe Hyon nearly lost his life because of the ultra-Leftist anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle and an epidemic. But neither of them could kill this strong man.

What gave him a hope, strength and courage was the affection and trust of the great man. An event which happened in a secret camp in Mihunzhen more than 80 years ago can prove this.

At that time, Choe Hyon suffered from typhoid in the secret camp, which was used as an isolation ward. Being

informed of the fact that his men were suffering from the epidemic, Kim Il Sung visited the secret camp in spite of supply officials' dissuasion.

Choe Hyon got up from the bed with much difficulty and crawled to the door. He looked at Kim Il Sung with blazing eyes, waving his arms, and begged him not to come in.

“Well, it seems the people here are rather inhospitable. I came here to see Choe Hyon, and yet you’re turning me away at the door. Where are your manners?” Kim Il Sung said jokingly.

However, Choe Hyon would not listen. “It can’t be helped, even though you say I’m inhospitable. Don’t you know that this is a gate to Hell?”

“You said you’ve shot a hundred boxfuls of cartridges, but I didn’t know that you’re such a cry-baby. You were as hard as a birch club, so why all this fuss about typhoid?” Kim Il Sung said, trying to hold him by the hand.

Choe Hyon hastily hid his hands under the blanket and said, “My body is full of typhoid germs, Commander Kim. Please don’t touch me, for God’s sake. Why did you come to this storehouse of epidemic germs?”

His voice was full of worry.

Kim Il Sung pushed his hand under the blanket and took Choe’s hot hand and held it for a long time. The latter’s eyes were immediately filled with tears.

Although he had previously begged Kim Il Sung not to

come near him, he now gripped his hands tightly and dropped tears like a child.

“Thank you, Commander Kim. I’m not worth... I thought I’d die without seeing you.”

After recovery, Choe Hyon’s reverence for and loyalty to Kim Il Sung grew even more ardent.

During the period when the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle was waged in an ultra-Leftist way in eastern Manchuria, Choe Hyon could preserve his political integrity thanks to the devoted effort of Kim Il Sung to maintain the Juche-oriented attitude of the Korean revolution.

Kim Il Sung’s trust in Choe Hyon was boundless. Under his guidance he was promoted from a company commander to the commander of the 1st Regiment of the newly-organized 1st Division of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army and, after the country’s liberation, to the commander of an army corps of the Korean People’s Army and then the Minister of National Defence of the DPRK. As a career soldier he performed great exploits for increasing the country’s military capabilities in his life.

Throughout his life filled with extraordinary events and challenges, he treasured the amber cigarette-holder which Kim Il Sung had given him as a souvenir of their first meeting.

There were many heavy smokers around Choe Hyon, who kept a covetous eye on the cigarette-holder. They all tried to get it by various methods, ranging from force, sweet words and

barter to snatching it greedily from the owner's pocket when he had a bit too much to drink. But they all failed.

The cigarette-holder is now exhibited in the Korean Revolution Museum.

At first the museum's officials thought that they could obtain it easily from him by a little persuasion. But that was a miscalculation.

When he learned that they wanted the cigarette-holder, which he had held dearer than jewellery or gold for decades, Choe Hyon blazed with fury and turned them away, saying, "What? You're going to display this cigarette-holder in a museum, eh? It isn't public property; it's my private property. Our General gave it to me for my own use, not to make it common property for everyone to see and touch. If you ever want anything from me, pull off my moustache and take that."

The officials were dumbfounded, but they did not give up hope. They visited him persistently.

They only managed to persuade the stubborn veteran on their fifth visit.

The veteran, who had been roaring like a tiger just a few days before, was a changed man; he treated his guests with hospitality.

"From today on this cigarette-holder is not mine. It's the property of the entire people. I'll give it to you after smoking one last cigarette, so please wait."

He stuck a cigarette into the holder, lit it and drew in a mouthful of smoke, one after another with relish before exhaling.

The veteran's half-shut eyes were gazing blankly at a distant sky in the north.

The sky covered Macun, the historical site of his first meeting with Kim Il Sung, and the theatres of war reeking of powder fumes he had trekked, with a Mauser at his side, until he had almost reached forty in the days of the guerrilla struggle.

From a “Bride” to a Brave General

“Please prolong my life for five more minutes. ...”

This was what Choe Chun Guk, a division commander of the Korean People’s Army during the Fatherland Liberation War, said when he was fatally wounded during a battle, so as to ask his men to fulfil the order of Supreme Commander Kim Il Sung without fail.

In his memoirs *With the Century*, Kim Il Sung wrote:

“A gentle, yet strong-willed man—this was the courageous general of the anti-Japanese war, Choe Chun Guk.”

His life started with humiliations and insults as a member of a ruined nation.

Having lost his mother when he was two years old, he became a farmhand in his childhood.

Then he toiled and moiled at various construction sites. He was worth no more than a pebble on the roadside until September 1930, when there was a remarkable turn in his life.

Kim Il Sung, who was in the Onsong area those days guiding the underground revolutionary organizations in the homeland, visited a railway project site in the then Mipho Sub-county.

After greeting the workers, he worked with them, exerting

revolutionary influence upon them and awakening their class awareness.

When he was talking with the workers during a break, a young worker, who was standing shyly at a corner, made a bow to him.

The young worker was Choe Chun Guk, who had joined the Young Communist League not long ago. Other workers nicknamed him *bride* as he was much too shy like a newly-married woman.

While he worked under his guidance, Choe Chun Guk was attracted to Kim Il Sung and entertained a hope to remain close to him. Thanks to his trust he was admitted to the Party organization in the Onsong area.

Then in the spring of 1932 he joined the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army, and was promoted to a company political instructor in less than a year.

When he was appointed as a company political instructor, he said to Kim Il Sung, pulling a long face, “How can I be a political instructor and teach others when I am still ill-prepared in every way, General? I am not confident of myself. What I am sure I can do is to kill the Japs and their stooges, so let me remain a rank-and-file soldier.”

Kim Il Sung understood his feelings. Standing up slowly and approaching him, Kim Il Sung said to him that the most important mission of the political officer was educating all soldiers to fight against the Japanese imperialists and landlords

to the end, and that the guerrilla army was not an army of intellectuals but an army of workers and peasants with the people, who suffered the harshest exploitation and oppression, as its core. Then he continued:

“We appointed you as a political officer because you had grown up under the harsher exploitation and oppression by the Japanese imperialists and landlords than anybody else. Such people as you have a stronger sense of revolution than anybody else and will fight undauntedly to the end.”

Kim Il Sung told Choe Chun Guk that he should implant his love for the country and hate for the Japanese imperialists in the mind of the soldiers and that this would mean he fulfilled his mission as a political instructor. Then Kim Il Sung gave a red-covered handbook to him and wrote on its first page: **“You should study even by writing on the soil.”**

From that time on Choe Chun Guk showed extraordinary zeal in study and training. While learning Korean letters, he also studied Chinese characters by himself. There is a good story of how he came to study Chinese characters.

One day he came to see Kim Il Sung, asking for the meaning of the Chinese word “Yi Zheng Hua Ling.” Kim Il Sung pronounced it for him and interpreted it into Korean. Choe mumbled, “I see! The Chinese characters are very strange. It’s a pity I wasn’t able to attend a village school.” Since then he always carried a dictionary of Chinese characters in his pack and seldom stopped studying Chinese characters.

He tried hard to learn anything which he deemed important for improving his quality as a company political instructor. One day Kim Il Sung visited Chun Guk’s company and told him that a company political instructor should know how to dance and sing so as to imbue his company with a lively and optimistic spirit.

After that he went outside every night and practised dancing, out of sight of the others. He was so absorbed in the practice that a company cook, who happened to see him one night, ran to the company commander and told him in a shocked whisper that the company political instructor seemed to have gone out of his mind. The commander held his sides with laughter at her warning.

Kim Il Sung paid close attention to training Choe Chun Guk as a genuine commanding officer with noble moral traits, sometimes reproaching him severely. Every time he was reproached, he accepted his fault honestly and tried hard to rectify it.

Choe was so faithful and diligent that Kim Il Sung would always entrust his company with the most challenging tasks, which he fulfilled without fail.

Because of this trust, Kim Il Sung would leave him to take his place when he had to move elsewhere, or send him to important places where he could not go himself.

One day, while passing by an enemy’s strategic base, Choe, who was in command of the unit as the political commissar

of a guards regiment in southern Manchuria, was informed through his scouts that hundreds of soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army and policemen were stationed there. He wrote to the commander of the Manchukuo troops, to this effect:

“We don’t regard the Chinese people as our enemy, nor do we want to make them so. We have no desire to fight against you, so don’t provoke us. We now need some time to relax.... We are going to take a rest in your walled town. I warn you not to stop us.”

The Manchukuo army unit sent a messenger to him with a letter promising that they would comply with his request if the revolutionary army waited for 30 minutes. During the 30 minutes the unit evacuated the town and escaped to the mountain at the back of the town for they would get into trouble with the Japanese at a later date if they allowed the guerrillas into the town while they themselves were still there.

Choe’s regiment went into the town, took a rest and conducted political work among the people.

At dusk the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers on the mountain grew anxious and started a continuous whistling. This was a signal that they were uneasy because the Japanese soldiers might appear any time. And they were not brave enough to actually demand that the guerrillas leave.

Choe ordered his unit to resume the march and left a short letter of thanks to the commander of the puppet Manchukuo army unit, which read, “Thank you for allowing us to take a

good rest. I wish you to regard us as your friends and help us in future, too. Japanese imperialism, the common enemy of the Korean and Chinese peoples, will be defeated without fail and the Koreans and Chinese will surely emerge victorious.”

By using this method, he had held a great number of puppet Manchukuo soldiers under his thumb and turned many of them against the Japanese.

What is surprising is that most of the letters in Chinese he sent to the commanders of the puppet Manchukuo army units were written by himself.

Throughout the latter half of the 1930s he rendered a positive help to the activities of the Chinese units in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, operating continually in the vast areas of northern and southern Manchuria. This earned him the title of internationalist fighter from the Chinese people and from his revolutionary comrades. His Chinese friends everywhere praised him with deep affection and respect for the exploits he had performed for the sake of proletarian internationalism and friendship between Korea and China.

As he devoted his all to the revolution and trained himself in the flames of the anti-Japanese struggle under the tender care of Kim Il Sung, he could grow into a military commander well versed in the guerrilla warfare, a flawless political official and an anti-Japanese warrior renowned both in the northern and southern Manchuria.

However, he handled all matters quietly and consistently

with his noble and graceful character. Here is an anecdote that shows his humanity.

Shortly after he started married life after liberation, one of his comrades-in-arms visited his house.

He asked Choe's wife, as a joke, whether she liked her husband.

Smiling bashfully, she inquired of him whether her husband had really been a guerrilla.

Then she told him of an episode of a few days before at an athletic meet at Choe's unit.

That day the families of the servicemen were invited to watch the athletic meet. Choe's wife, too, went to enjoy it in holiday attire. Returning home in the evening, Choe asked her in apparently ill humour.

"Don't you have any better clothes? You were wearing hempen clothes in front of the whole unit."

At the words *hempen clothes* she burst out laughing, for he had mistaken ramie cloth for hemp.

"They are made of ramie cloth, not hemp. There is no better summerwear than this cloth."

"There isn't?"

Bewildered, he flushed and apologized to her.

She said she wondered with what sort of courage Choe, a gentle character, had fought against the Japanese.

Hearing her story, his friend laughed for a good while, then became serious and said:

“Madam, you have seen him right. Comrade Choe Chun Guk is a good-natured, unstained man. And yet, he is a very strong man.

“If you look at his left leg carefully, you will find a scar. The leg bone was broken by a bullet. I performed an operation without any anesthetic and stitched up the wound. He endured the excruciating pain without as much as a groan. As gentle-hearted as a lamb towards the people and comrades, as fierce as a tiger with the enemy, and as hard as steel in the face of difficulties—this is your husband. Living with him long will teach you what a strong man he is.”

Contrary to his words, their promising married life did not last long.

In spite of his short left leg because of the bone broken during the anti-Japanese war, he devoted himself to strengthening the military capability of the country, walking with that uncomfortable leg, and fought during the Fatherland Liberation War as a division commander.

On July 30, 1950, over a month after the start of the war, his 12th Infantry Division fought a battle to liberate Andong. During the battle the commander, while commanding the battle near the city, was fatally wounded. When the chief of staff of the division rushed to him, he was lying in a jeep parked by the roadside.

He was already breathing his last. Opening his eyes with much effort as the chief of staff repeatedly called his name, he

requested the army surgeon to prolong his life for five more minutes.

In those last five minutes, he struggled against his pain to explain in detail his tactical plan for encircling and annihilating the enemy in Andong.

“I ask you to carry out the orders of the Supreme Commander in my stead.”

These were his last words to the chief of staff as he gripped the latter’s hands.

Later, he was awarded the title of Hero of the DPRK on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK. On a street of Onsong, his home town on the Tuman River, which he had often frequented in his youth to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy, stands a bronze statue of him in the military uniform worn in the days of the anti-Japanese revolution.

When portraying the sculpture, the sculptors visited his wife to get an idea of his correct image and personality.

The first thing they asked her was, “What is your most impressive memory of Comrade Choe Chun Guk?”

“There is nothing specially impressive. If there is, can I say that he was very reticent? During a few years of our married life, he said less than 100 words in all. If he had been rough and slapped me across the face, it would have remained in my memory.”

She was quite regretful that there were no particulars

worthy of remembering in their married life. Then, she said significantly, “Please meet my second son. He is the perfect image of his father, very gentle. To resemble his father more, there should be something steadfast in his character, but I am not sure yet. But I’ll bring him up to be strong-willed without fail.”

Unlike the first days of her married life, she was now well aware of what an excellent man her husband had been.

A Man Who Cast a Large Shadow Though He Was Not an Extrovert

In his memoirs *With the Century*, Kim Il Sung wrote,

“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.”

O Jung Hup was unusually quiet and modest for a military officer, and though not boisterous socially, performed great deeds as a fighter.

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.

O Jung Hup 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 was born of a poor peasant family, as its first son, in Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province. He moved to Wangqing County, China, with his parents and studied at a private school.

Having a strong sense of justice, he threw himself in the

revolution in his youth by acquiring class consciousness thanks to his family that attached great importance to education to its children, and O Jung Hwa, his elder cousin, who advocated communism.

He met Kim Il Sung for the first time in O Jung Hwa's house in September 1930, grew up into a communist and head of a local Party organization, and in summer 1933 joined the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army founded by Kim Il Sung.

He grew up ideologically and militarily day by day while learning various manuals and battle methods necessary for guerrilla warfare created by Kim Il Sung and even the methods of setting up a makeshift stage, drawing up programmes for artistic performances and writing introductory speeches for the performances.

During this process he was promoted to squad leader, platoon leader, company commander and then regimental commander, and he developed his audacity and courage of a revolutionary in the flames of the struggle. One might call him a model officer of a revolutionary army.

In December 1938 he was appointed commander of the 7th Regiment of the main-force unit of the KPRA.

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 any enemy, however strong, by using appropriate tactics.

He was assiduous in managing his unit with strong organization and discipline. In his 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.

During the raid on a gold mine near Sandaogou, Helong County, fought in autumn 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. It was quite incredible that the thin skull of a man could resist a bullet, but it was true.

Kim Il Sung saw the wound dressed by O's 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 and fell just beside the feet of the guerrillas. It was a hair-raising moment. O calmly picked it up and tossed it back over the enemy.

As their own grenade flew back at them, the enemy soldiers scattered in terror in all directions.

He lost no time and ordered his men to charge after them.

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 took the risk without turning a hair. He was an audacious and courageous commander.

The most valuable exploit he achieved in the anti-Japanese war was that he defended the safety of the Headquarters reliably.

For Kim Il Sung's personal safety, he plunged himself into any battle no matter how hard-fought it was. His exceptional loyalty to his Commander manifested itself most intensely in the period of the arduous march (December 1938-March 1939).

The aim was to make a breakthrough in the wholesale arrest by the Japanese imperialists and their false propaganda that the people's revolutionary army perished, and ring out gun shots in the homeland.

The course of the march could be covered in some days on

foot, but it took 110-odd days.

The march had to be made amid fierce battles with the chasing enemy from its first day.

The enemy employed the “violent attack and tenacious pursuit tactic,” by hurling the troops of the Kwantung Army, the “elite frontline troops” that had been committed to the Chinese mainland, puppet Manchukuo army and police force. They mainly employed “tick tactic” of placing a “punitive” force at every single vantage point, and as soon as guerrillas appeared, attacking them immediately, and after the attack, tailing after them tenaciously in an attempt to annihilate them.

The KPRA had to fight over 20 times a day, overcoming a bitter cold of 40 degrees below zero, shortage of food, fatigue and illness. There had never been a deserter among them, no matter how terrible the conditions on a march were, but during the arduous march four men ran away from the ranks.

In the course of the march, the KPRA judged that a large-unit movement was disadvantageous, so it switched over to dispersed actions.

O, taking leave of headquarters 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 7th Regiment went through a lot of trouble, but thanks to this ploy, the Headquarters was less harassed by the enemy for quite some time.

When parting with the Headquarters, his regiment did not

have as much as a grain of rice. 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.

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 the 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 was still worried, saying, “We are eating here on the mountain, even though it’s only this kind of food, but I wonder what kind of food the Headquarters has managed to find?”

About the time when the arduous march ended, the 7th Regiment held a touching reunion with the Headquarters. O Jung Hup had an emotional reunion with Kim Il Sung.

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

The battle at Liukesong, Dunhua County, which was an occasion for winning victory in the first stage of the large-unit circling operations in 1939 during the anti-Japanese armed struggle, is recorded on a page of the history of the Korean revolution with the death of O Jung Hup and the fighting achievements of the 7th Regiment that defended the Headquarters of the Korean revolution at the risk of their lives.

Situated in a dense forest, the Liukesong Lumber Station was one of important bases of the Japanese imperialists for supplying strategic materials. The enemy employed 600 workers and deployed 70 forest policemen. They also built six batteries and positioned four heavy machine guns around the lumber station, and hanged empty cans on threefold wire entanglements in the wooden fence.

In order to disperse and weaken the enemy concentrated in the area northeast of Mt Paektu and along the Tuman River and create a situation favourable for the KPRA's advance into the homeland, Kim Il Sung organized the raid on the lumber

station. When O Jung Hup volunteered that his regiment would attack the enemy barracks and occupy the central battery, he assigned the mission to the regiment.

The penetration party, composed of agile soldiers, dug a hole under the fence, crawled through it and began to cut the wire entanglements. The regiment charged forward through the passage the penetration party had opened. Then an unexpected situation was created; when they were cutting the last fold of the wire entanglements, a can shook, making a sound, and the heavy machine gun on the enemy battery began to spit fire.

The regiment occupied the battery and barracks at a 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 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.

An unexpected misfortune happened when the victory of the guerrillas was certain.

The remaining enemy soldiers put up a desperate resistance, and a few highly efficient officers of the 7th Regiment lost their lives. O, fatally wounded, also died.

In his memoirs *With the Century*, Kim Il Sung wrote:

“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."

About 20 of the Os, beside O Jung Hup, were killed while fighting for national liberation.

The Os were a patriotic and revolutionary family, to be counted first in the whole region of Jiandao.

Growing Up as a Commander with the Qualities of a Regular Army

“Bragging without self-confidence is a false show of courage.”

This was the mental spirit and lifetime creed of Choe Yong Jin, who grew up into a famous fighter in the embrace of Kim Il Sung in the days of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

In his memoirs *With the Century*, Kim Il Sung wrote that Choe Yong Jin was a famous fighter, bold man and big joker.

In his early days Choe Yong Jin suffered a lot because of his father. His father had organized an Independence Army unit in Manchuria in his youth and fought against the Japanese invaders to save the nation. When his unit became renowned in Manchuria after winning repeated victory in the fight against them, the Japanese tried to arrest him by putting a large price on his head. Failed, the enemy burnt to death Choe's mother and eldest brother in the house. To Choe and his brothers, who were calling their mother and eldest brother dying in the fierce flames, the enemy said that if they did not want to die like them, they should find their father and bring him back.

At that time Choe Yong Jin was only 5 years old, but the faces of the Japs, who were laughing while killing his mother and brother, were inscribed in his mind.

His father, cherishing the aim of national salvation only as a desire with the collapse of the Independence Army, abandoned his rifle.

Choe joined the guerrillas and fought in northern Manchuria to avenge his mother's and brother's death and fulfil the aim of national salvation his father had failed to achieve.

One day in mid-December 1940, Choe, the then commander of a unit active in Liaohe County, northern Manchuria, China, met a messenger dispatched by Kim Il Sung. The messenger brought a message from the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army that his unit should participate in the military and political training organized to make preparations for taking the initiative in greeting the great event of national liberation.

Choe was so happy to receive the message that he took the messenger by the hand.

Over the previous ten years of fighting in support of the line of the anti-Japanese armed struggle put forward by Kim Il Sung, he had longed to fight near him.

He immediately led his unit to a march of more than four hundred kilometers in the biting cold, and arrived at the training base.

The moment he met Kim Il Sung, he just said, "General!"

Kim Il Sung shook hands with him, saying, **“I’m glad to meet you.”**

Then he offered him a seat, and said, **“This is our first meeting, but I have heard much about you through those fighting in northern Manchuria.”**

He asked him how old he was, and was surprised to hear that he was only 25 years old.

“I thought you were rather an old man when Comrade Choe Hyon told me that you were called Choe Xiaowu. You are actually a young man.”

In Chinese Xiaowu means a man with a moustache.

Choe murmured that all his brothers wore a moustache probably like their father, who had been a commander of an Independent Army unit.

Kim Il Sung laughed heartily.

Choe told Kim Il Sung the story of his family which he had not told anyone yet, and that his father had been killed by the Japanese while obtaining and sending foods and weapons to the guerillas even after the Independence Army had been disbanded.

Kim Il Sung did not say anything for a moment, and then said that his father was a patriot.

Kim Il Sung’s words were so informal and moving that Choe said, “Though not so smart, I will be your loyal soldier, General. Please do not send me away.”

The self-respecting veteran was moved by the simple,

informal, lively and sensible character of Kim Il Sung in a common uniform like the other commanding officers and in his mixing with the rank and file.

Choe became to be well-known after he displayed bravery in a fight.

One day his unit got an urgent message from a local organization that the chief of staff of the Kwantung Army would go for inspection on a motor boat. The Japanese was so evil and brutal that people hated him.

Choe immediately organized an assault team of 16 men and left at 3 am.

The storming team ran 32 kilometres and arrived at the riverside at about 7 am.

Choe and his team fastened an iron rope under the river and lay in ambush on a small hill near the river.

The motor boat showed up as expected; there were six machine-guns on the deck, and 200 bodyguards were following it by the riverbanks.

No sooner had the boat been stopped by the iron-rope than the storming team opened fire and finished the battle within several minutes.

Twenty senior officers including the chief of staff of the Kwantung Army and 50 bodyguards were killed.

The storming team withdrew from the riverside with the machine-guns and other weapons on the boat and again lay in ambush on the riverbanks.

When the enemy moved inside the range of fire, the storming team opened fire while shouting at the enemy to surrender.

The enemy soldiers surrendered at once.

Choe became famous after that battle and earned fame again after occupying with 23 of his men a town, which the Japanese had been boasting as an “impregnable fortress.”

Kim Il Sung told him that the current military and political training would be a stage for getting the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army prepared politically and militarily so as to be ready for the operation of liberating the homeland and laying the foundations for building regular armed forces in the future.

And he expressed his expectation that Choe, an able commander experienced in guerilla warfare, would play a great role in the training.

Determined to do his best to live up to Kim Il Sung’s trust and expectation, he zealously participated in the military and political training. The veteran of northern Manchuria was very excited as he knew that he would learn under the care of Kim Il Sung how to fight modern warfare.

One day a little over a month after the start of the training, Kim Il Sung called Choe Yong Jin and other commanding officers after the day’s training.

Noting that the success of the training entirely depended on the commanding officers who were giving training,

Kim Il Sung said: When individual soldiers fail to keep up with the demands of instructors, some officers try to solve these problems by rebuking them or think that it could not be helped; they are mistaken; if we are to correct these mistakes and raise the level of training onto a new high, we need to have a methodology; in my opinion it would be a good idea to create a model unit and generalize its experience.

When the officers agreed, he said the 1st Company commanded by Choe should be the model unit, asking Choe if he was ready for the job.

Always competitive, Choe answered without hesitation that he would make a try.

After hearing what the other commanding officers had to say, Kim Il Sung told Choe: It would not be easy to make your unit a model one, but don't think it too hard; it depends on how you make up your mind; first make sure that all aspects, ranging from daily routine, maintenance of the barracks and discipline observance are regularized; your unit can acquire a regularized appearance and be successful in studying and training only when it conducts the military life according to the regulations and manuals and everything is done in an orderly way; as everyone finds it difficult to get used to regular training and military life, you should explore a methodology while making exacting demands and pressing on with the training from the beginning; you should be mobilized first; we will support you in your work; make a try with confidence.

Choe did his best to make his company a model unit; he worked day and night, making exacting demands on his men to replenish the barrack's facilities and regularize the daily routine and leading them to study and train as Kim Il Sung had taught.

Kim Il Sung gave assistance to Choe. One day he came to the tactical training range of his company, teaching them tactical secrets for successfully carrying out their assignment while decreasing the loss of manpower, and having them hold political sessions with the focus put on learning the lines, strategy and tactics of the Korean revolution.

In the course of it, Choe prepared himself to be an able commanding officer with regular military knowledge and insight.

One day Kim Il Sung called Choe and asked how he ran the hour for cultural life.

Choe answered: At the beginning we organized the life as a routine for a while, but as only one or two soldiers always sang and danced everyday, it became boring and we stopped it; at that time I send individually or by squad to the training range the soldiers who have not finished their training assignment in the daytime.

Kim Il Sung asked whether he participated in the cultural life himself.

Choe could not answer as he had not been interested in it and never participated in it.

Without waiting for his answer, Kim Il Sung said: You are making a serious mistake now; the cultural life is not the one you may cancel at your disposal; it is part of the discipline of our revolutionary army and an important issue of political significance related to the morale of the soldiers; revolutionary soldiers should always live optimistically; there should be songs and dances wherever the revolutionary army exists; a revolutionary and optimistic life leads them to an ennobling spiritual world and cultivates unexcelled bravery and self-sacrificing spirit.

Choe, who had thought that a soldier should be good at fighting in the battle alone, regretted his wrong thought.

Kim Il Sung continued: Cultural life makes the soldiers feel free from the feeling of loneliness, live optimistically and be more active in their training; let's make the secret camp resound with songs and dances; we sang and danced even in the spare time of the guerrilla struggle; there is no reason why we should not live without songs and dance in the situation like this.

He then took detailed measures for arranging the cultural life and artistic activities positively and ensured that the political workers active in the enemy area obtained strings of musical instruments, animal hides for making drums and harmonicas.

Since then the atmosphere of the company got further spruced up, and the soldiers became more engrossed in the

training with confidence in the liberation of their country.

Even after several decades Choe Yong Jin recalled with pleasure the nights at the secret camp under the moonlight, when the soldiers would sing and dance in the presence of Kim Il Sung.

Choe Yong Jin, who had become more seasoned politically and militarily under the care of Kim Il Sung, displayed his mettle as a veteran of northern Manchuria in the final offensive operation for the liberation of the country, and carried out his tasks faithfully.

Regained Love

Those who fought in the anti-Japanese armed struggle shoulder to shoulder with Kang Wi Ryong called him Kang the Bear.

Kang was a man of strong build to match the nickname.

Born into a very poor family, he joined the guerrillas with a determination to take revenge on his third elder brother who had fallen in a battle for defending a guerilla base in May 1933. But he suffered a lot in the vortex of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle.

The “Minsaengdan” was a spy organization created by the Japanese imperialists in February 1932 for the purpose of dividing the revolutionary ranks. Though its true colour was revealed soon and it was dissolved, the “Leftist” opportunists and national chauvinists took the “purge” for an opportunity to realize their political ambitions, and led the purge of “Minsaengdan” in an ultra-Leftist way; they killed or expelled patriots, revolutionaries and even innocent people by labeling them as members of the “Minsaengdan.”

Those who had been working hard for the revolution left the guerilla base they had built and defended at the cost of their blood, and disappeared in all directions, hurling curses upon the authors of the murderous scheme and its executors.

Kang Wi Ryong was also forced to take leave of his wife, Kim Hwak Sil, as he had been suspected of being a “Minsaengdan” member.

One day in September 1936 his regiment, which had been on its way of expedition to Jiaohe was called by Kim Il Sung.

It arrived at the Heixiazigou secret camp where the Headquarters of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army was situated.

After inquiring into the situation of the regiment, Kim Il Sung met Kang Wi Ryong.

He listened to what Kang had to say about his past, and said: I know you have suffered a lot without any guilt; it is really heartbreaking to think that there are so many people who have suffered like you.

Kang Wi Ryong burst into tears.

Kim Il Sung firmly held his hand, told him not to worry about his past, and explained to him about the results of the Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou meetings. Then abruptly, he asked him if it was true that Kim Hwak Sil was his sweetheart.

Kang was surprised. He did not expect to hear the name of his wife from Kim Il Sung.

Kim Il Sung told Kang that Kim Hwak Sil was in the sewing unit in a service camp ten kilometres away, and that he would have someone take him to the camp.

Embarrassed, Kang said he would go there later.

With a beaming smile on his face, Kim Il Sung said: If a messenger was sent to her, it would take you twice as much time to meet each other; you had better go there; you may think you can see her later, but I can't see her remaining anxious to see you.

Then he continued in a tone of an order that he must leave as soon as possible.

Kang said with tears in his eyes that he could not go to see his wife as the new division was to be formed.

Reading his mind, Kim Il Sung said: I'll give you an order; take the women in your 2nd Regiment to the sewing unit and make winter uniforms; I'll punish you if you return before the order is accomplished.

This is how he met his wife.

Kim Il Sung gave Kang another task to build a log cabin for the Headquarters.

Kang built the log cabin within two days and reported to Kim Il Sung about it; he was a real talent who could build a house overnight with just an axe.

Kim Il Sung appreciated his talent while looking round the log cabin, and said, **“From today this house is your and Kim Hwak Sil's house.”**

Kang was shocked to hear that.

But Kim Il Sung insisted that he had had the house built for the couple who suffered a lot.

In spring 1937 Kim Il Sung appointed Kang as a machine-

gunner of the Bodyguard Company under the Headquarters of the KPRA.

This happened when the KPRA was engaged in small-unit actions.

When a small unit of the Machine-gun Platoon under the Headquarters arrived at a place in the middle of march, Kim Il Sung ordered a break and left the camp and walked quite a long way to send off a woman soldier who was to leave as a messenger. He gave her the details of precautions to be taken while walking alone in the woods and even the rendezvous and the method of communications while accompanying her to a long distance.

On the way back to the camp with Kim Il Sung, Kang heard a rustle of movement behind him. He realized that the Japanese soldiers were following them.

He said to Kim Il Sung in a low voice: The enemy. I will cover you. When you hear a gun sound, please leave as quickly as possible.

He started to walk slowly, and when he was away a little distance from Kim Il Sung, he suddenly fired the machine gun.

When a number of Japanese soldiers fell down, he moved to another place firing his machine gun once in a while and ran to the different direction from Kim Il Sung.

He heard sudden gun shots from the direction where Kim Il Sung went. He stopped and went back to the place

only to find that Kim Il Sung was exchanging fires with the enemy between the trees. He fired the machine gun at the enemy and slipped away with Kim Il Sung.

The enemy, realizing that the guerrillas were not many, continued to give chase.

Kang was following Kim Il Sung and found that there was a cliff in front of them.

When he was hesitating, Kim Il Sung jumped off the cliff, shouting at him to follow himself.

Kang also jumped off.

It was a depression with a heap of fallen leaves.

He checked the safety of Kim Il Sung, and then lifted a flat rock to cover Kim Il Sung.

The enemy soldiers on the cliff tried to find them, but failed. They fired at random below the cliff and went away.

Kang, who was watching the movement of the enemy for a good while without moving, tried to remove the rock when he thought the enemy had gone away, but he could not as his body became stiff.

Kim Il Sung helped him remove the rock.

Kang sank down.

Kim Il Sung massaged Kang's arms and legs and said, **"Let's have a break. I was wondering what your nick name Kang the Bear really meant, but today I saw a true Hercules."**

Kim Il Sung laughed heartily.

The other guerrillas rushed there as they had heard gun

shots. When they saw that Kim Il Sung was all right, they heaved a sigh of relief.

Kim Il Sung asked them: How many of you can lift that rock together?

He added that he became safe and sound as Kang had covered him with the rock.

Kang Wi Ryong fought for the noble mission to defend Kim Il Sung and the revolution with his life, regarding him as the sun of the Korean nation.

Conviction about National Liberation

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

This is what Choe Hui Suk shouted with conviction in front of the Japanese.

The world history of anti-imperialist, national liberation movement has recorded many incidents of brutal oppression of the resistance fighters by the colonialists, but not a woman like her, who shouted a slogan of conviction even after her eyes had been taken away by the Japanese hangmen.

Choe Hui Suk was a proud daughter of the Korean nation and a heroine born of the anti-Japanese struggle. How could the tender woman shout the slogan of conviction, striking the enemy with terror?

Born in Myongchon, Kangwon Province, she moved to Yanji County, China, following her parents.

But her parents could not protect the young girl.

She was bereaved of her mother when she was three years old, and she grew up in poverty and hunger under the care of her father, who was working as a servant for others.

After she got married and influenced by her husband, who was engaged in a revolutionary organization, she committed herself to the struggle to gain back the country.

She set out on the road of revolution with her husband in

spring 1931; first she engaged in the work of the Young Communist League and the Women's Association in her living place, Yanji County, and then worked with a Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist unit, contributing to achieving the anti-Japanese allied front with it.

Energetic in all work, she was a woman of extraordinary willpower.

But, in the course of the struggle, she suffered unbearable misfortunes and pain; her parents-in-law were killed during the Japanese imperialists' "punitive" operations, and her husband was captured by the Japanese imperialists and incarcerated.

Her daughter was her one and only child. She could not commit her to another's care, so she conducted the underground struggle with her on her back, sometimes failing to feed her properly and to send her to sleep. Later she was bereft of the daughter.

She changed all these misfortunes and pain into the thought of revenge on the enemy and hope for the victory in the revolution, and rose up.

In 1932 when anti-Japanese armed units were born in different counties in east Manchuria, she joined the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army in Yanji County in 1932, and, while working as a cook and sewing-unit member, she practiced shooting in her spare time, becoming a crack shot.

In 1936 her unit was assigned to the main-force unit of the

Korean People's Revolutionary Army under the command of Kim Il Sung.

Thinking highly of her sense of responsibility in carrying out her tasks and her affection for the others, Kim Il Sung tasked her to lead the sewing team of the main-force unit.

She did her utmost to live up to the Commander's expectations.

In 1938, during the arduous march, Kim Il Sung saw her mending the torn uniforms of her comrades by the campfire, warming her frozen fingers now and again, in the dead of night, and marvelled at her ennobling sense of obligation and personality.

Even when she was marching with a sewing machine on her back, she would carry the recruits' knapsacks.

Once Kim Il Sung said in recollection: By age, she was an elder sister to most of us. She was several years older than I. She was called "elder sister," not just because she was older, but also because she was always exemplary in her everyday life and in carrying out her duties. And she took good care of her comrades-in-arms.

Though she had never been to school, she had a high level of political qualifications and commanding abilities, and Kim Il Sung would entrust her with difficult tasks.

In autumn 1939 Kim Il Sung mapped out a plan of large-unit circling operations and made preparations for the forthcoming operations.

The first thing in these preparations was to make winter uniforms.

Kim Il Sung gave this task to the anti-Japanese war heroine Kim Jong Suk, Choe Hui Suk and other members of the sewing team. After explaining to them the importance of the operations, he asked them to make hundreds of uniforms in a month.

Choe answered that they would do it at any cost.

From that day the team members launched a campaign.

One day Kim Il Sung called at the secret camp where they were working, and saw them working until their fingers bled. Very sorry for it, he later sent them chars, salmons and millet.

Experienced in sewing, Choe shouldered herself the work of tailoring various sizes of uniforms. As she had to tailor them with only a pair of scissors, the fingers blistered, but together with Kim Jong Suk and other women guerrillas, she worked day and night, implementing the task ten days ahead of schedule.

In congratulation of her feat, Kim Il Sung gave a gold ring and pocket watch to her.

So embarrassed, she stammered out, “Many others worked hard to make the uniforms. I don’t deserve them.”

That day she made a determination to remain unchanged like gold in defending Kim Il Sung and in following the road of revolution till the last moment of her life under his leadership.

In February 1941 her small unit was marching to urgently convey some important information to the Headquarters. But they could not walk fast as they had marched in the mountain without food for a long time, and worse still, they encountered the enemy “punitive” troops.

At that time the Japanese imperialists were dead set on making preparations for the Pacific War, consolidating the rear as part of the effort; embarrassed by brisk activities by the anti-Japanese guerrillas, they were searching the mountains as they would do with a fine-tooth comb.

Her unit found the enemy only after they were surrounded.

The enemy soldiers pursued them tenaciously.

Choe got a bullet through her leg. Her comrades began to run, carrying her on their back. When she saw the unit slowing down, she requested them to put her down.

However, they could not put her down as the guerrillas had never left their comrades among the enemy. The more she tried to fall down, the more firmly they grasped her.

The enemy closed in upon them, and their bullets grazed the guerillas’ ears.

The guerrillas changed the direction but saw the enemy on the flank. So they put her down under the rock, and charged to the enemy.

At that time the enemy discovered Choe and captured her.

The enemy took her to a village and made their stooges fetch the people, chattering that they should see a woman “commie.”

She managed to stand up, and harangued the people that their country would be liberated before long and they would regain their motherland.

Desperate, the enemy attempted to force her to close her mouth, but her fervent speech did not stop even though she was pierced by enemy bayonet.

The enemy dispersed the crowd, and took her to a prison under the Japanese consulate.

They tortured her brutally to get her to tell them the activities of her small unit and the secrets of the guerrilla army. But as this proved futile, they said they would spare her life if she confided the secret, bragging that the guerrillas were “a drop in the ocean” and asking how they could match the great empire of Japan.

She glared at the enemy, saying, “Do you think you are so strong? You are going towards ruin. We, communists, are clearly seeing it.”

The Japanese took her to a Japanese army hospital.

As no torture or temptation could make the woman guerrilla yield, they gouged out her eyes at the hospital in revenge for it.

Even though she lost her eyes, she shouted: “I have no eyes, but I can still see victory in the revolution!”

Appalled, the enemy fell upon her and this time cut her heart out, saying that they wanted to see what kind of heart it was that could make the communist so stubborn.

Upon hearing the news of her death, Kim Il Sung was filled with sorrow.

Many years have passed since then.

She left no photos behind, but Kim Il Sung had a picture of her exhibited at the Korean Revolution Museum and her bust set up at the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery.

Later he said: 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. 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.

Letters Left before Death

In the DPRK, even a young child knows that Ma Tong Hui was a martyr, who bit off his tongue to keep the secrets of the revolutionary organization.

In autumn 1936 many young people joined the main-force unit of the KPRA. Among them was Ma Tong Hui, a man from the homeland.

Kim Il Sung wrote as follows in his reminiscences, *With the Century*: **“Ma Tong Hui was with me for about one and half years. He was a faithful guerrilla loved by all, but he did not leave many anecdotes or affairs special enough to be engraved in the memory of the people during his life in the guerrilla army.”**

Ma was calm and not distinctive, but he never compromised with anything unfair, shameless and unconscionable from the days of his childhood.

The following is an anecdote in his days at primary school.

His teacher, Jo, was a man without an iota of conscience as an educator; he kept the pupils' school records in a thoroughly dishonest way, basing the records on his relationship with a pupil rather than according to the pupil's real abilities, giving high marks to those whose families had offered him bribe and who hailed from rich and influential families; he did

not hesitate to lower the marks of excellent pupils in order to favour those pupils.

When Ma was in the graduating class, Jo continued to practise the habit; in order to give the first place to the son of an influential man, he gave Ma the second place in the history examination even though the boy was excellent in all subjects.

The furious Ma demanded that he be seen his examination paper.

In stead of showing him the paper, the teacher slapped him across the face, saying that he was ill-mannered.

Declaring that he was leaving the school for good, the furious Ma tore his academic record book in front of the teacher and went home.

His father, Ma Ho Ryong, could not see his only son leave the school in mid-course and plunge into the struggle to earn a living at such a tender age. Showing the boy the school cap he had bought at the market that day, he said: I was so sorry to see you going to school bareheaded that I bought this for you. What do you mean that you will leave the school and till the land? It is an everyday occurrence that a teacher favours a child from a well-to-do family and reads the minds of an influential man. What is the point of your challenging your teacher? Go back immediately and apologize to your teacher.

But Ma refused to compromise, even preventing his father from going to see the teacher himself.

Later, Ma and his teacher, Jo, followed opposite roads in

life; while Ma devoted himself to the patriotic front as a man of resistance, born of the times, Jo took the road of betrayal after abandoning teaching. As a policeman, and later a detective, Jo obsessed about ferreting out patriots. Ma was the first one he watched with a sharp eye. He followed Ma's every footstep, trying to lead him to the scaffold even if it meant fabricating some incident out of thin air.

Jo started to shadow Ma in real earnest when the latter came under the influence of the guerrillas while frequenting the Changbai area in China. One day Ma went to Changbai, met a representative of the guerrilla army, and received the permission to join the guerrillas; on his way back, he met the detective Jo, who had been waiting at a bridge across the Amnok River. Jo was goggling at him.

Ma realized in an instant the tense atmosphere. He went to his house calmly, and made preparations for leaving home.

That day his mother cooked a farewell meal for her son, but he could not take it for Jo suddenly appeared in the yard of his house with policemen to arrest him. Ma escaped through the back door and crossed the Amnok.

He joined the main-force unit of the KPRA.

At the battle on Mt Kouyushui in Changbai in June 1937, Jo saw Ma at the battlefield; though escaping in the failed "punitive" operation, Jo opened fire at him.

Ma shot him to death on the spot. It was a fitting end to a brazen, pro-Japanese reactionary who took no thought of his

native land, his nation and his former pupil.

The following happened after he joined the KPRA.

His unit was obtaining food grains for military and political training in the secret camp in Donggang after the expedition to Fusong. The 3rd Company of the 7th Regiment Ma belonged to was assigned to the task every day. One night his company commander, before leaving, assigned to frostbitten Ma and the recruits the task of grinding maize with a millstone in the camp for the next day's breakfast.

Ma ground the maize though he felt unbearable fatigue after a day-long march in the snow, followed by the languor of eating supper. But he shook off his sleepiness by rubbing his face with snow.

The recruits said that they would forgo the breakfast as they were tired and lay down. When Ma finished the work, they worried about how to repay him for his painstaking work. Ma was so fed up, he criticized them severely. And in fact the recruits did later become truly courageous soldiers.

Being such a man, he could become an excellent fighter in a short period of time after joining the KPRA.

1937 was a landmark year in the anti-Japanese revolution. With the advance of the main-force unit of the KPRA into the area of Mt Paektu, both the struggle for national liberation and the communist movement of Korea were experiencing an upsurge of unprecedented breadth and depth.

But just as everything was progressing smoothly, the

revolution was suddenly faced with serious challenges.

In the days when the main-force unit of the KPRA was operating in the region of Fusong and Mengjiang counties after leaving the area of Mt Paektu, the enemy fabricated the “Hyesan incident,” raising a whirlwind of large-scale repression of the revolutionary forces. They destroyed the secret organizations the KPRA had built up in the year following its advance into the area of Mt Paektu, arresting en masse and executing the revolutionaries. In several roundups, they arrested thousands of patriotic people. Many were tortured to death in prison.

This incident dealt a serious blow to the Korean revolution.

Kim Il Sung convened an emergency meeting of the Party Committee of the KPRA, and discussed the measures for preserving the revolutionary organizations in the immediate crisis and for building the party and Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland organizations in a more resolute manner.

After their first roundup of the core leaders in the Changbai area, the enemy were wildly elated, boasting of their exploits and claiming to have cut off the lifeline of the Korean revolution, but many, who had escaped the enemy’s crackdown, went to other places or hid themselves in mountains. And the leadership of the Korean National Liberation Union centring on some of its core members remained active.

Kim Il Sung dispatched Ma, who had grown up into an

excellent combatant in a short period after he joined the guerrillas and had the experience of working in the homeland on several occasions, to the homeland to find the leaders who had taken refuge, find out from them the extent of the damage done to the organizations, and take measures to reconstruct the destroyed organizations.

One night in December 1937, Ma broke through the tightly-guarded cordon of the enemy, advanced into the homeland and travelled through the mountain villages in Kapsan County in search of the members of the Korean National Liberation Union.

On the third day in the homeland, he went to Kim Thae Son's house, who was his friend from his home village, to stay, but he was captured by the enemy there. Kim Thae Son had in the meantime changed into a faithful servant of the enemy. He provided him with warm foods and bed, and then reported to the enemy that Kim Il Sung's man was staying in his house.

Kim Thae Son and Ma Tong Hui had spent their youth in an extraordinary friendship. When Kim Thae Son had to discontinue his studies in Changbai for lack of money, Ma Tong Hui supported him with an advance of 5 *won* from the safe of his village school so that Kim could continue to study. Later he continued this support by earning money through weeding fields for others, selling firewood and writing letters for the illiterate.

When Kim Thae Son accepted the job of clerk to the highland agriculture guidance section after finishing his course, he called on Ma Tong Hui's mother, and said, "It is thanks to Tong Hui's sincere help that I have become literate and am able to earn my daily bread. I won't forget his friendship as long as I live."

Ma Tong Hui took shelter in Kim Thae Son's house because he trusted the friendship.

But the ill-natured Kim Thae Son, betraying his friendship with and sense of obligation to Ma, reported about this to the enemy.

Captured by the enemy, Ma, bound and barefooted, walked 12 kilometres through snow.

The enemy at the police station in Kapsan tortured him brutally to find something secret, asking him what his mission was and where the guerrillas were.

After a week, he was transferred to the Hyesan police station where he was put to mediaeval torture—dipping the body into the frozen water of the Amnok River, contracting the body with a leather vest, hanging the body in mid-air head over heels, pouring chilli powder in the mouth or nose, and pulling out the finger nails and toe nails.

Even in such brutal torture, he did not open his mouth.

Once the enemy showed him a warrant of release, saying that he could be released if he wrote a pledge not to fight with arms against the Empire of Japan.

Ma tore it into pieces.

The enemy resorted to brutal torture again. This time they did not let him sleep and dipped him into an ice hole on the Amnok River after fastening him tight. By doing so, they intended to make him rave in a dying condition.

Not surprisingly, Ma often lost consciousness since then. One day he abruptly sat up as he heard his own voice while he was in unconsciousness.

At his side, police inspector Choe was looking down at him.

When he saw Choe, Ma was afraid that he might reveal the location of the Headquarters unconsciously. He managed to stand up and approached Choe. Then he bit his tongue and spat the bloody tongue on Choe's face.

The enemy took him to the infirmary and left him alone.

The enemy permitted Ma's father, who had been held in hostage in another prison cell, to see his son only when Ma was in the jaws of death.

The father hugged his son, who could not speak even a word, and cried.

Ma motioned to a policeman, who was guarding him, to give him a pencil and a sheet of paper. He then wrote on it *Long live General Kim Il Sung!*

On January 9, 1938, the enemy executed him in a prison cell, saying that such an "evil" communist did not need a trial.

The day after he died, Ma's father went to Hyesan with

a coffin. While passing the police station carrying his son's corpse on a cart, he came across inspector Choe.

Choe asked, "Hey, how do you feel as you carry your dead son?"

The father wiped away his tears, and answered, "My son died while fighting for the liberation of Korea. So did my daughter and daughter-in-law. They never died while stealing goods from the Japanese. I feel proud to be their father."

For these words, he was arrested later. To his last moments in the Hamhung prison, he fought without losing his principles as a patriot and father of a revolutionary fighter.

Kim Il Sung wrote in his reminiscences, *With the Century*:

"In the wake of this incident I thought deeply about the faith and will of a revolutionary. The incident can be called a great trial in which every man's loyalty to the revolution, the intensity of his faith and the strength of his will were tested. In other words, it was a severe test that separated real revolutionaries from sham revolutionaries.

"Those with strong faith and will stuck to their revolutionary principles and emerged victorious in the showdown with the enemy; those with weak faith and will abandoned their revolutionary dignity and chose the road of betrayal and submission."

The busts of Ma Tong Hui and his mother, Jang Kil Bu, stand side by side at the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt Taesong, thanks to the ennobling sense of obligation of

Kim Il Sung, who praised of Jang Kil Bu's feats of dedicating her husband and children to the struggle for the cause of national liberation.

Ma Tong Hui and his mother still remain alive, enjoying the respect of the Korean people.

* * *

The anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters are the first generation of the Korean revolution, who grew into heroes in Kim Il Sung's embrace, holding him in high respect as the sun of the nation.

There is a saying that there is no weak soldier under the command of a brilliant general.

Kim Il Sung trusted those fighters as his comrades and trained them with affection and trust into stout fighters and warriors in the anti-Japanese war. The sacred history of the Korean revolution, pioneered by him, still continues.

IN THE EMBRACE OF KIM IL SUNG

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