

The background of the cover is a photograph of a vast, deep blue lake, likely Lake Louise, surrounded by steep, rocky mountains. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The text is overlaid on this scene.

KIM IL SUNG

REMINISCENCES

With the Century

4



Part I
THE ANTI-JAPANESE
REVOLUTION

4

언제나 인민을 밀고
어떤 조건에서도 혁명적
신념을 버리지 않으며
자주 투쟁을 일관하게
결지하면서 광범한 반일
투쟁을 하나로 묶어 세운
것은 항일혁명의 승리를
담보한 주되는 요인이었다.

김일성

Translation from the preceding page:

Belief in the people at all times, maintenance of revolutionary convictions in all conditions and the unification of broad anti-Japanese forces, with a consistent adherence to the line of independence: these constituted major factors behind the victory of the anti-Japanese revolution.

Kim Il Sung



In the arduous latter half of the 1930s



The soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army

Our soldiers grew into reliable revolutionary fighters as they overcame all hardships and trials during the holy anti-Japanese war for the liberation of the fatherland.



The hinterland of Yaoyinggou. Returning from the first expedition to north Manchuria in early 1935, I stayed here for a while.

A disgraceful page in the annals of anti-Japanese revolution in east Manchuria

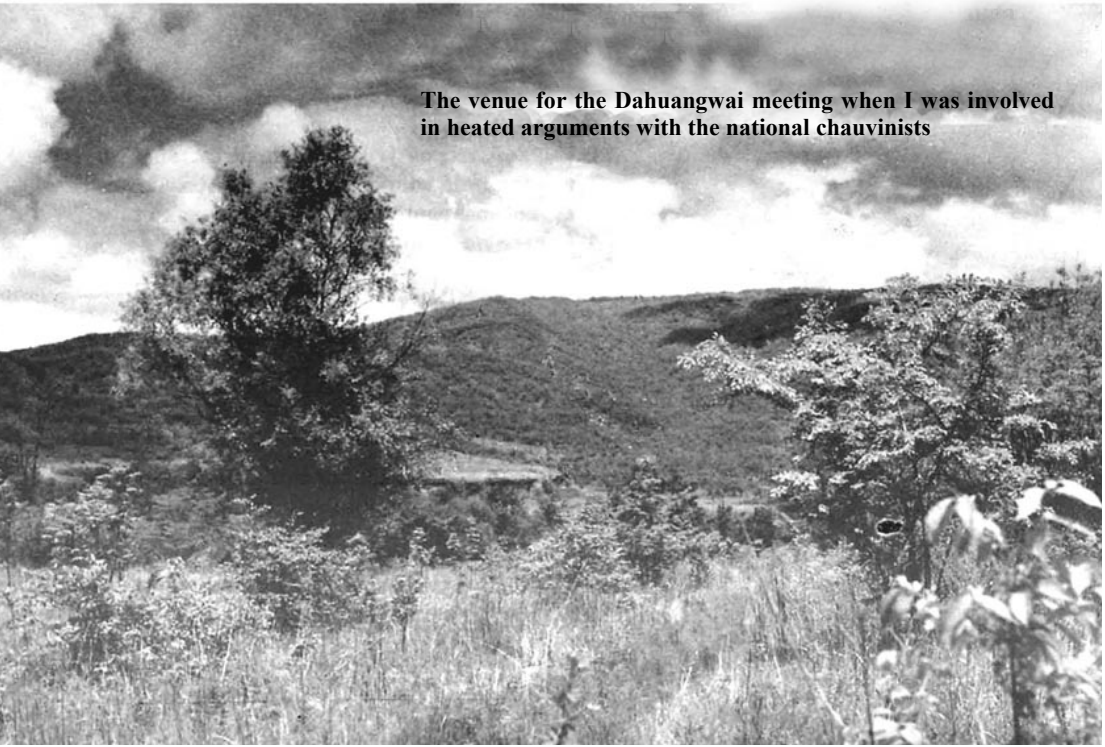


**Kim Il Hwan, secretary
of the Helong County
Party Committee**

"Minsaengdan" is a spectre!

This represents the painful scream shouted by many Korean communists before dying unjust deaths on the false charges of being "Minsaengdan" members. The ultra-Leftist struggle against "Minsaengdan" caused great damage to our revolution.

**The venue for the Dahuangwai meeting when I was involved
in heated arguments with the national chauvinists**

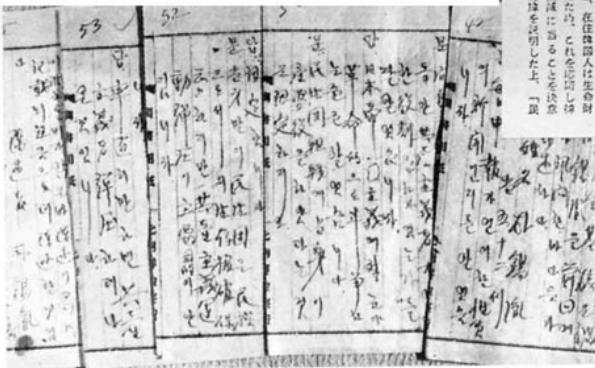




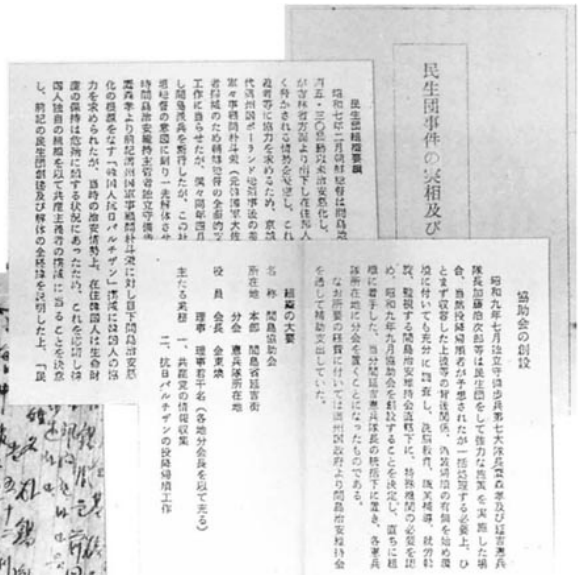
Ri Ung Gol, head of the organizational department of Party committee of district No. 1 in Yaoyinggou



Kim Rak Chon, a regimental political commissar



Materials on the interrogation (in 1947) by our judiciary organ of Pak Sok Yun, who helped the birth of the "Minsaengdan"



The secret documents written by the Japanese imperialists on the organization of "Minsaengdan" and "Jiandao Cooperative Association"



Venue for Yaoyinggou meeting

The headquarters in Yaoyinggou was frequently attacked by the enemy.

유격구를 해산하고 광활한 시대어로 진출할데 대하여

요영구에서 진행된 조선인민혁명군
관동군구위원회 1차 전담
1955년 8월 27일

동우들!

우리는 이미 남여 결의 반(반)공공에서 나타난 과정적으로 주요한 국공합의 대한 문제와 유격구를 해산하고 광활한 시대어로 진출할데 대한 문제를 논의하였습니다.

이런 회의에서 논의된 문제들은 혁명대열의 통일과 단결을 강화하여 항일투쟁투쟁을 가일층 확대발전시키는데서 매우 큰 의의는 가졌니다.

그러므로 이 문제들이 대한 나의 의견을 말하려고 합니다.

1. 반(반)공공에서 나타난 좌경적 오류를 극복할데 대하여

우리는 이미 나후회의를 비롯한 여러 회의에서 반(반)공공에서 나타난 좌경적으로우들이 대하여 비판하였으므로 그것을 시정하기 위하여 나는는 원칙적인 분석을 해쳐서도 지적하였습니다.

The text of my
speech delivered
at Yaoyingou
meeting

우리는 반(반)공공에서 발표된 좌경적책임을 바로잡기 위한 투쟁을 반공투쟁과 밀접히 결부시켜 진행하여야 하였습니다. 우리는 앞으로 공작분자들과 투쟁도 타협없이 끝이 투쟁해나감으로써 혁명대오에게 이백한 공작분자나 적대자상도 발붙일 틈을 주지 않아야 합니다.

우리는 반(반)공공에서 나타난 좌경적책임을 바로잡고 혁명대오의 통일과 단결을 강화하여 고은 단결책임을 하여서도록하여 일제후 반대의는 투쟁투쟁을 더욱 힘있게 밀어 나가야 하였습니다.

2. 유격구를 해산하고 광활한 시대어로 진출할데 대하여

오늘 우리의 혁명투쟁은 새로운 발전단계에 들어섰습니다.

1952년에 반일인민유격대를 결성할 당시 우리의 전략적 과업은 유격근거지를 건설하고 그에 의거하여 혁명적투쟁을 계속하는 한편 투쟁투쟁을 더욱 확대발전시킬수 있는 준비를 철저히 갖추는것이었습니다. 이것은 우리의 투쟁대오가 단결하고 혁명투쟁에 대한 일체적합한 확고한행위 규범이었던 당시의 조건에서 필수적으로 제기되는 과업이었습니다.

우리는 지금까지 이 전략적과업을 수행하기 위하여 무한정단결하여 해당근거지의 유격근거지를 건설하고 그에 의거하여 <5년동안의 혁명 투쟁투쟁을 조직진행하였습니다. 반일인민유격대는 강고한 투쟁의 불길속에서 정치사상적으로 더욱 단결되고 큰 규모의 근거지당시전투들과 정치적

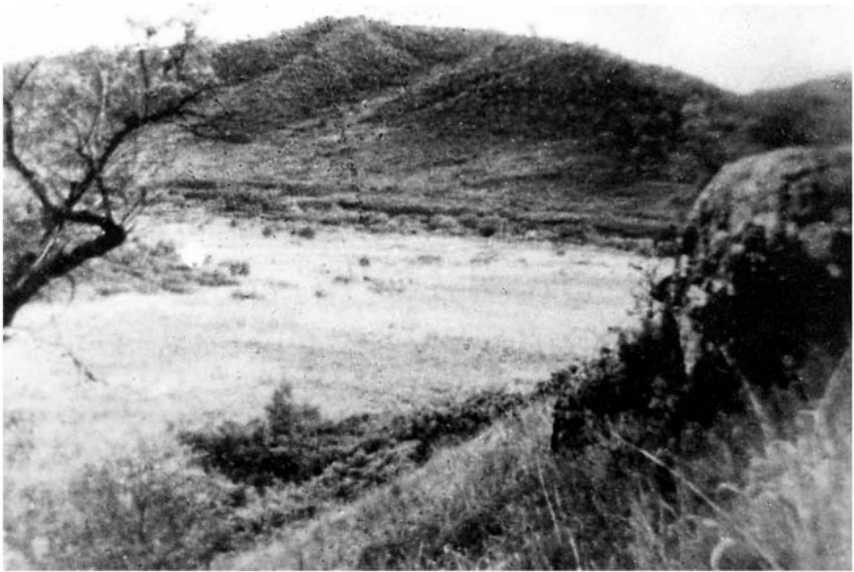
적화면까지 밀릴수 있는 위험한 투쟁투쟁으로 발전하였으며 유무한 전투정형을 맞게 되었습니다. 그리고 일제투쟁에서 청년공산주의자들이 수없이 목숨희생하여 유격근거지 좌우경거지투쟁을 단결하는 투쟁을 통하여 혁명대오의 통일단결이 일층 강화되었습니다. 국제사상의 광범한 관심을 혁명의 전역 북이서적으로 투쟁투쟁과 단결을 위한 대중적의반도 유무한 주어져있습니다. 또한 우리는 일제의 민족파괴정세를 강부시고 중국인민들의 반일공동투쟁을 강화적으로 실현하였으며 세계적반일인민들의 연대성도 무리히 약되었습니다. 앞으로 해당근거지의 유격근거지는 그동안 투쟁투쟁의 전략적근거지의 사명을 훌륭히 수행하였습니다.

오늘 우리의제는 이미 더욱한 고귀한 성과와 경험유여 거요하여 혁명투쟁을 가일층 확대발전시키야 할 절박한 임무가 나서고있습니다. 이 임무는 우리들이 한 절박한 임무의 유격구를 떠나 보아 광활한 시대어로 진출하여 대규모적인 유격투쟁을 조직진행할것을 요구하고있습니다. 우리의 투쟁을 보다 적극적인 단계로 발전시키어만 광범한 대중적인 의의적정원에 의거하여 적을적지 버리는 정치군사투쟁을 할수 있도록 단결투쟁과 통일전선사상을 줄기적 밀고 나갈수 있을것입니다.

유격구를 해산하고 광활한 시대어로 진출하는것은 조일정세적 요구이기도 합니다.

지금 일본제국주의자들은 유격근거지에 대한 공격을 그 어느때보다도 강화하고있습니다. 암색은 수만의 정예부대를 동원하여 유격근거지를 점령이 도취하고 날마다 《혁명》을 강행하고있으며 집단투쟁을 실시하고 중대적(중대적)을 실시하고있습니다. 또한 일제는 유격대의 공산주의적

The seeds of the revolution sown over a wide area

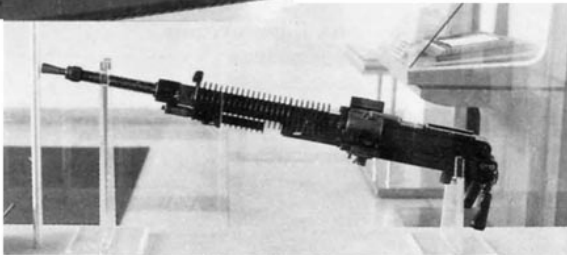


The valley in Laoheishan where a battle was fought

Here the wicked Jingan army were
mercilessly annihilated in June 1935.



Kim Ryo Jung



The mortar and machine-gun captured from the enemy



O Jin U

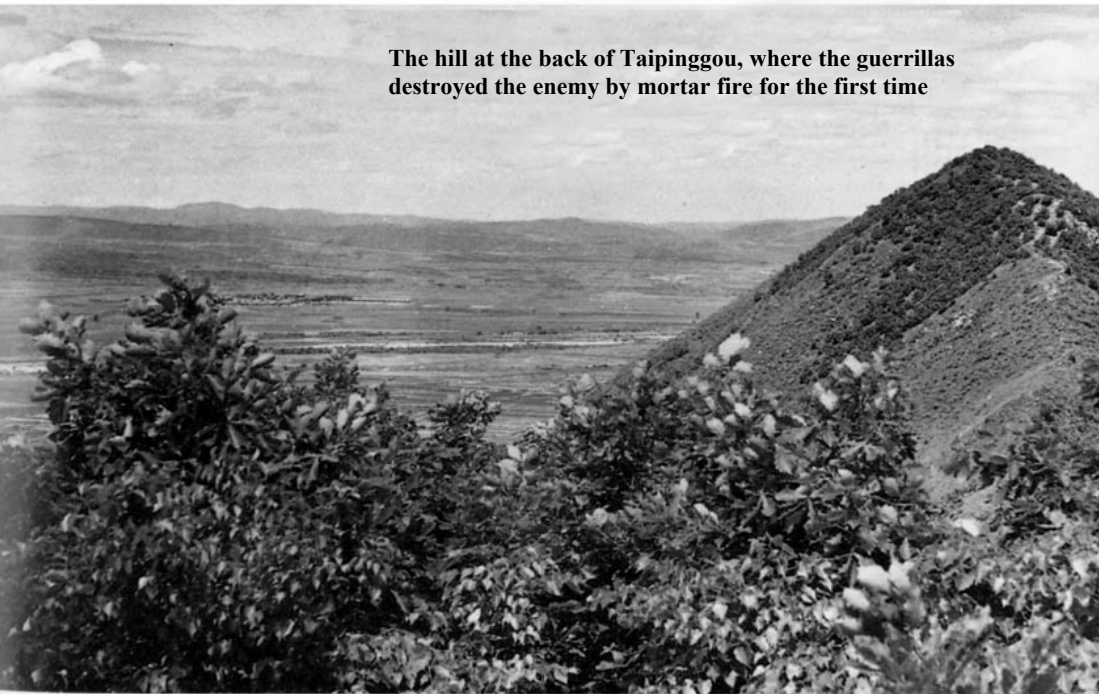


Jon Chol San



O Jun Ok

The hill at the back of Taipinggou, where the guerrillas destroyed the enemy by mortar fire for the first time



When the enemy boats reached the middle of the River Dahuoshaopu we hit targets with mortar.

The second expedition to north Manchuria

The glow over the primeval forest in the deep of Laoyeling Mountains

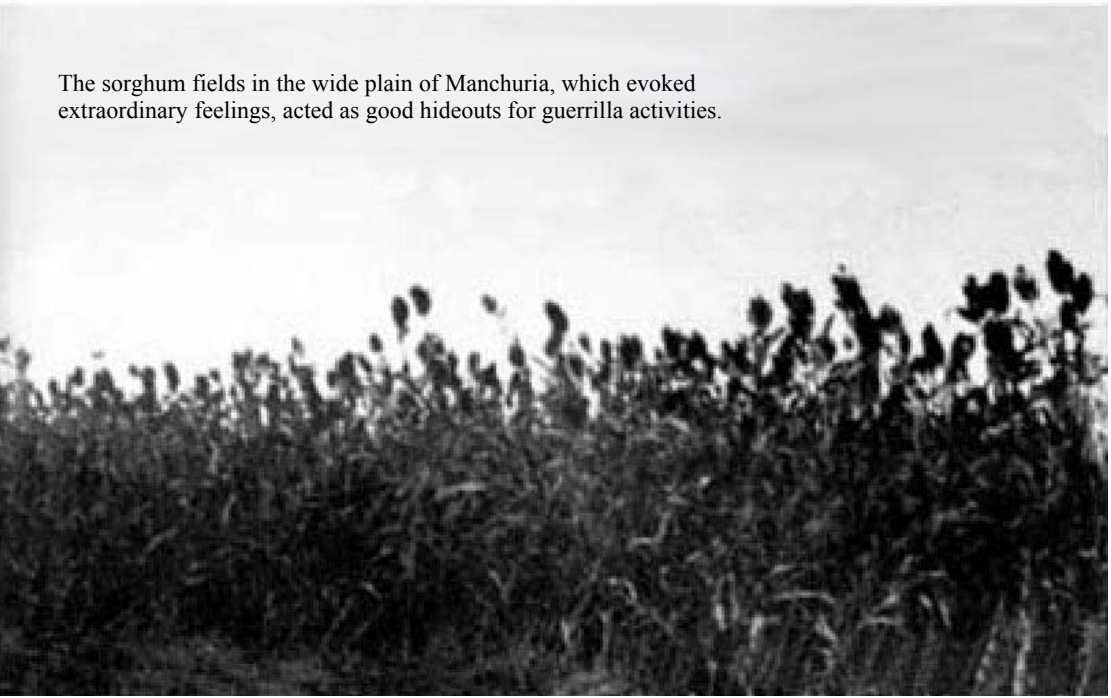
River Mudan meandering over a wide plain

During fierce battles, I often crossed this river with my unit.



The secret camp of Zhou Bao-zhong's unit

The sorghum fields in the wide plain of Manchuria, which evoked extraordinary feelings, acted as good hideouts for guerrilla activities.



Commanding officers in north Manchuria



Kim Chaek



Choe Yong Gon



Kang Kon



Ho Hyong Sik



Ri Hak Man

**Old man Chai He who
helped the expeditionary
force cross Lake Jingbo**



Lake Jingbo, a mysterious scene of
northeast China. We used to cross this
lake either by boat or walking on ice.



The situation on the eve of the Nanhutou meeting

"A bombshell declaration" of Nazism

The annulment of the provisions for military affairs under the Treaty of Versailles, declaration on the rearmament of Germany

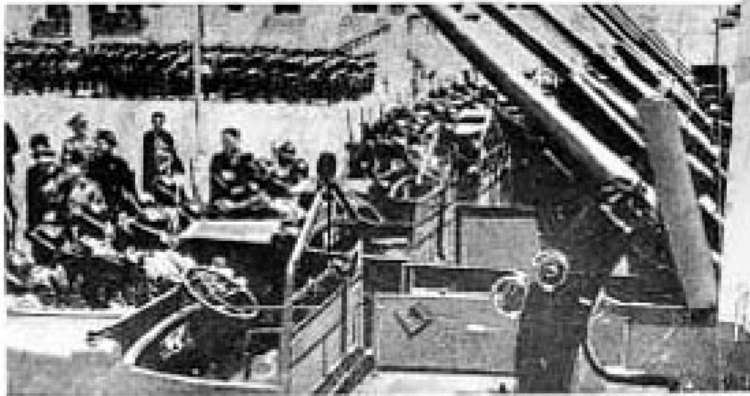
The newspapers of the time report the annulment of the provisions for military affairs in the Treaty of Versailles



Hitler and Göring, head of the Luftwaffe, inspecting the newly formed air force (Luftwaffe)



Italian invasion of Ethiopia

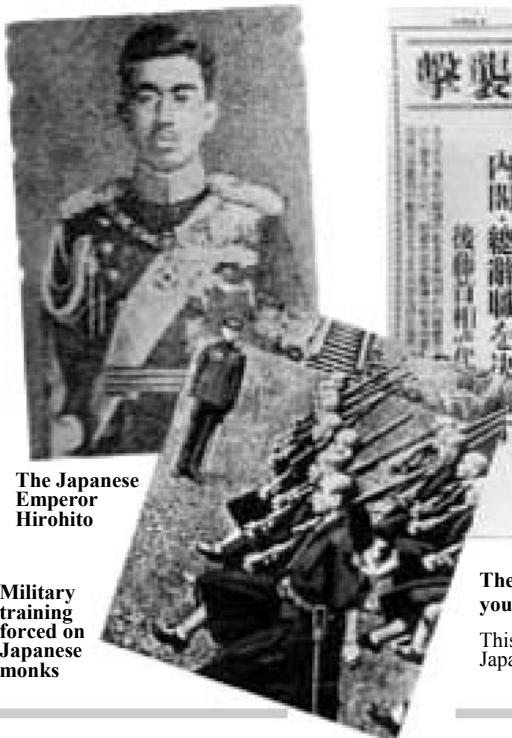


Mussolini inspecting mechanized units on the expedition to Ethiopia



The Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I inspecting the front

The militarization of Japan and the "February 26 Incident"



The Japanese Emperor Hirohito

Military training forced on Japanese monks



The newspapers of the time report on the coup d'etat of young officers on February 26, 1936

This shocking incident accelerated the militarization of Japan and paved a new way for aggressive war.

Japanese establishment of Manchukuo, its colony

Rigging up Manchukuo headed by Pu-yi, the Japanese imperialists stepped up its colonization of Manchuria on the disguise of a "paradise of righteous government" and "concord of five nations".



Headquarters of Kwantung Army (in Changchun) in the hold of real power of Manchukuo



Japanese visit by Pu-yi, the Emperor of Manchukuo, fabricated to silence world public criticism of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria

The 7th Congress of the Comintern



Dimitroff, the general secretary of the executive committee of the Comintern



The building where the 7th Congress of the Comintern was held in summer 1935 (Moscow)

Korea transformed into military bases



The Japanese imperialist Government-General in Korea



The Kyomiphong Iron Works and Hungnam Nitrogenous Fertilizer Factory, which were transformed into military industries



The Governor-General in Korea inspecting the northern area of Korea



The Korean revolution moves onto a new, higher stage



Venue for the Nanhutou meeting

Report delivered at the meeting
on February 27, 1936

김 일 성
반일민족해방투쟁의 강령집전출
위한 공산주의자同盟의 임무



**The soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in
the Mihunzhen secret camp**

At the Mihunzhen secret camp



Kim Chol Ho



Choe Hyon



Kim Myong Hwa



Ri Tong Baek (He was called the old man "tobacco pipe" in the guerrilla army.)

Towards Mt. Paektu

Consolidation of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army

A great number of hot-blooded young people in the area of east Manchuria and the interior of Korea, joined the army. About 100 people, who had been distrusted as "Minsaengdan" suspects, became members of the main force.



Kim ThaeK Hwan



Ri Tong Hak



Kim Jong Phil

**Former
Children's
Corps
members in
Maanshan**
who inherited the
lifeblood of our
revolution



Kim San Ho, a regimental political commissar, who acquired a great quantity of cloth for the Children's Corps members in Maanshan



Ri O Song



Kim Thaeck Man

Many of the Children's Corps members in Maanshan became stalwart fighters



Kim Jong Suk and her birth place in Hoeryong



The women soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army
(Kim Jong Suk, third from the left)



Zhang Wei-hua's father and mother



Zhang Wei-hua's wife



A monument to the martyr Zhang Wei-hua set up in Fusong on the 55th anniversary of his death (October 27, 1992)



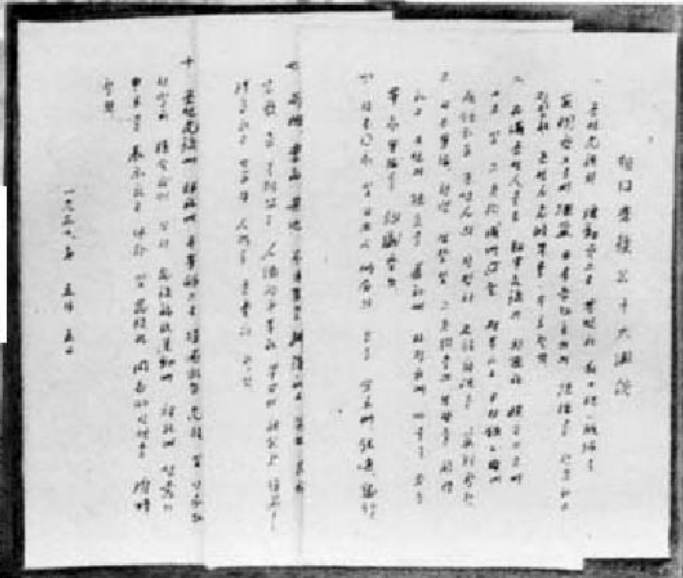
With the children of Zhang Wei-hua
(son Zhang Jin-quan, daughter Zhang Jin-lu)

The historic founding of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland May 5, 1936

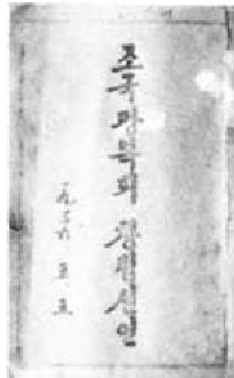


Venue for the Donggang meeting in Fusong County, where I declared the founding of the ARF

Ten-point Programme of the ARF



The revolutionary slogans reflecting the founding of the ARF



The Inaugural Declaration and Rules of the ARF

The banner of the united front all over the world

Xian Incident



The newspapers of the time (an issue dated December 1936) reporting on the "Xian Incident" which opened up a vista for putting an end to civil war in China and cooperation between Kuomintang and Communist Party



Volunteers from various countries arriving in Spain

The Popular Front of Spain

In 1936, the Spanish people, united behind the Popular Front Government, engaged in a harsh war against the fascist rebel forces headed by Franco. The war against the fascist rebel forces, backed by international fascist forces such as Germany and Italy, gained great support from the international working classes and broad progressive mankind and rendered a remarkable contribution to the anti-fascist popular front and anti-imperialist united front movement.

Madrid under air-attack of Franco rebel forces



Spanish women volunteers

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CHAPTER 11. THE WATERSHED OF THE REVOLUTION

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CHAPTER 10

**With the Conviction of
Independence**

A Raging Whirlwind

A Polemic at Dahuangwai

**Revolutionaries Born of the Young
Communist League**

An Answer to the Atrocities at Sidaogou

**The Seeds of the Revolution Sown
over a Wide Area**

February - June 1935

1. A Raging Whirlwind

The days of trial passed as in a dream. The ranges of snow-covered mountains that had obstructed our way were now far behind, and the expedition to north Manchuria, marked by bloody battles and tormenting experiences, had ended in victory. The Korean communists now had fresh hopes of developing the revolution by following up their success. Though exhausted by illness, I stood on the top of a peak of the Laoyeling Mountains with my men, shouting triumphantly and gazing down at the hills of Wangqing. The fatigue that had accumulated for months in the smoke of battle and severe cold seemed to vanish in an instant, and I felt my heart swelling with joy as if I were already standing on the hill behind my hometown. On my return to Wangqing, however, I was bedridden for several days; I had a high fever that had attacked me again in the wake of the fit of cold I had suffered from on the last leg of the expedition. On top of that, the ominous news that a whirlwind of “purge” had made havoc of the guerrilla zone reached my sickbed. The men nursing me were indignant at the crimes committed by the Leftist elements who had disrupted the guerrilla zone.

Party members, Young Communist League and Women’s Association members, who just a few months before were working in the Wangqing valley in the cause of the revolution, had scattered, abandoning the guerrilla base that had been built and defended at the

cost of their blood, hurling curses upon the authors of the murderous scheme and its executors.

I shuddered, my heart chilled. A crushing despair, frustration took over my senses: the Universe seemed to have come to a standstill in one instant, and everything in the world to be crushed under the weight of a glacier.

This tragic event dwarfed the trial we had experienced on the heights of Luozigou. Crossing the Tianqiaoling Mountains while suffering from a severe cold, with only 16 men under my command, was not a trifling matter, but it was nothing compared to what I had to deal with in connection with the issue of the “Minsaengdan”. The obstacles that had stood in the way of the expeditionary force were distinct. They were the pursuing enemy and the cold that was attacking me.

We had broken through the enemy siege with the help of a kind old man, Kim, and, thanks to the old man Jo ThaeK Ju, my benefactor, we had escaped death of hunger, cold and disease. The people had opened the way out of our crisis.

The revolution was demolishing itself through the tragic events taking place at the guerrilla bases in Jiandao. There should not have been any contradiction or antagonism between those who were demolishing people and those who were being demolished. Nevertheless, the former defined the latter as their enemy and removed them mercilessly from the revolutionary ranks. The overwhelming majority of those who were being tried for the “purge” were tested fighters, ready unhesitatingly to lay down their lives for the revolution.

By what criterion were we to distinguish between friend and foe in the monstrous “sweeping campaign” in which the revolution was demolishing the revolution? Who was our enemy and who our friend?

The “purge” headquarters labelled the hundreds and thousands they had executed as their enemy. Was this judgement to be regarded a sound one? Or then, how were the people directing the “purge” to be defined? Whom were we to support and whom to oppose?

These were questions put to all communists by the events in east Manchuria which was tottering, shocked by the bloodshed of thousands of revolutionaries.

I was tormented both in mind and body.

But there was neither a renowned doctor nor any effective medicine to cure my illness in Yaoyingou. Only several of my men, who had a meagre knowledge of folk remedies, sat at my bedside by turns, solicitously applying cold clothes on my forehead.

The people of the Xiaobeigou village sent me honey and roe-deer blood, trying to help cure my illness. Old Chinese men brought tea and brewed it, inquiring about me. They bade the guerrillas to take good care of me, saying that my health was essential for the defence of the guerrilla zone and for the anti-Japanese struggle.

Honey, tea and roe-deer blood were all good remedies, but I sent them on to my comrades-in-arms who were ailing on their return from the expedition. Some of them were suffering from a bad cold, some from frostbite, and some from colitis or bronchitis.

One day, though ill myself, with Song Kap Ryong’s help, I went to visit my sick comrades. The sight of their ragged clothes pained me.

They were still in their battle dress that had been stained with the smoke of powder and were ripped by bullets.

The desire to provide them with abundant food and clothing took firm hold of me, those comrades-in-arms who had endured the severe winter cold with me in the shadow of death.

I sent my orderly to the sewing unit. At the time of our leaving for north Manchuria on the expedition the previous autumn, I had given Jon Mun Jin the assignment to prepare summer clothing for the unit for the following year. I told the orderly to bring the first batch of approximately 20 uniforms for the men who were back from the expedition if the assignment had been carried out.

In those days the sewing unit was located in a forest at Solbatgol, far from Dahuangwai; it consisted of only several people including Jon Mun Jin and Han Song Hui. Jon was a veteran who had joined the guerrillas after some training in dressmaking in Dongning County, while Han was a recruit who had become a guerrilla after working for the Children's Corps in Yaoyinggou.

It was not Jon Mun Jin but Han Song Hui who arrived with the orderly, bringing the uniforms to Yaoyinggou. Han had been taking care of Jon, who was pregnant, in the forest of Solbatgol which was as good as a desert island, and had been waiting for months for the return of the expeditionary force from north Manchuria. On seeing me sick in bed, Han burst into tears.

After seeing that the men had changed into the new uniforms, I sent Han Song Hui back to the sewing unit.

But the next morning Han, whom I had thought to be back at Solbatgol, appeared before me as if that was how it should be, holding a tray with some pine-nut porridge on it.

"Comrade Ok Bong, how come you're here again? Has something happened?" I asked in perplexity.

Ok Bong was her childhood name. She had another nickname, too, Yong Suk. She bowed her head, as if guilty of some crime.

"General, forgive me... I didn't go back to Solbatgol yesterday."

I just couldn't believe her, for both in her Children's Corps days and since her enlistment in the army she had never disobeyed orders. She was a very loyal, innocent and obedient woman. The fact that she had disobeyed me could be a serious matter.

"My feet refused to take me back. Even if I had gone back leaving you, General, bedridden, would sister Mun Jin have been glad to see me?"

I was, of course, grateful to her for such profound concern.

While stuffing packets of foxtail millet and oarweed into her knapsack, I tried to convince her, "Many comrades here can take care of me, so don't worry about me. You must return quickly to Solbatgol today. What would happen to Jon Mun Jin if you weren't with her? I've heard that she's expecting this month, and she can't take care of herself."

"General, I'll obey all your instructions but not this one... Sister Mun Jin said she would never forgive me if I returned without having nursed you," the girl argued earnestly. "Please understand me, General. Is it right that no woman guerrilla takes care of you when you're in such a bad state?"

"Comrade Song Hui, go back and take care of Comrade Mun Jin, for mercy's sake."

At this moment, the company commander Ri Hyo Sok got her out of her predicament.

"Comrade Commander, Han Song Hui is not a midwife. How can a girl who has never given birth help a woman in childbirth?"

They persuaded me. The company commander promised to find an experienced woman to send to Solbatgol.

From that day on, Han Song Hui solicitously nursed me day and night. She brought me pine-nut porridge on a tray at every meal.

Probably on her order, men of the 4th Company had gathered pine-nut cones, digging them out of the snow in the forest near Yaoyinggou. The company commander himself went out with a pole every morning to pick the cones.

Han Song Hui took excellent care of me, sometimes sitting up the whole night through. She said she would not be worthy of being called a Korean if she failed to bring me back to health through her nursing. One day she cut off her hair and made pads and soles for my shoes. Just this one single deed was enough to convince me that she was a woman of great sympathy, that she would rejoice over her friends' happiness or cry over their misfortunes, or even would offer pieces of her own flesh to the needy without flinching.

Blood is thicker than water. The whole of her family were revolutionaries of strong sympathy and humanity. Her father Han Chang Sop was one of the forerunners, like Ri Kwang, Kim Chol and Kim Un Sik, who had worked for the anti-Japanese revolution at Beihamatang and in the surrounding area from the outset of the struggle. In charge of an organization of the Anti-Japanese Association in Dafangzi, he had worked hard to obtain provisions for Ri Kwang's special detachment, and in the spring of 1932 he fell, stabbed to death by a soldier of the Japanese "punitive" troops. Her elder sister, Han Ok Son, was burned at the stake. Her elder brother, Han Song U, perished in battle.

My comrade-in-arms Han Hung Gwon, who mostly operated with us in the enemy-held areas from Wangqing until the guerrilla base was dissolved and later distinguished himself as the commander of a detachment of the allied anti-Japanese forces in north Manchuria, was Han Song Hui's cousin. Han Hung Gwon and his four brothers had all died heroically on the battlefield.

Han Song Hui and her elder sister had resolved to join the guerrilla army in order to be revenged on the enemy who had killed their father.

When about to leave their home, the question arose as to who would remain to take care of their mother and the house. The sisters discussed the matter heatedly. Han Song Hui was as yet too young to join the army, so she was on the defensive the whole time during the argument.

“Don’t look down at me because I’m younger,” she retorted. “I do all the work you do and I’m as tall as you are, sister.”

“You’re tall enough, but you still smell of your mother’s milk,” the elder sister calmly counterattacked. “You mustn’t look up at a tree you can’t climb, as the saying goes. Be a good Children’s Corps member and take care of Mother at home.”

Neither of them would give up the honour of joining the army.

While her daughters were arguing about their future lying in bed, their mother had heard scraps of their conversation. She sewed two knapsacks all night long of exactly the same size and shape out of the one cotton skirt she had. The next day she filled the knapsacks with parched rice flour. Only then did the daughters realize that the two knapsacks had been prepared for them just like a dowry that a mother would offer to her daughters who were to take leave of their mother.

That day the mother summoned her daughters and said:

“Your mother does not want to be looked after by you, my daughters. We have not yet won our country back, so you need not think of taking care of me as your filial duty. I can get along without your support. You may join the guerrilla army right now.”

“Mother!” The daughters exclaimed, throwing themselves into her arms. From the bottom of their hearts they pledged loyalty and left their

mother in tears. In the spring of 1934 we recalled Han Song Hui to the sewing unit which was directly under headquarters supervision.

We expected a great deal from her.

If there was any weakness in her character, it lay in her cheerful attitude towards everything. She was too soft a woman and surprisingly good-natured, but she lacked the alertness needed by a soldier. This lack was the cause of her being captured by the enemy and ended in her giving up the revolution half-way.

One day, having received my instruction to come to the main body from a detachment, she, with other soldiers, was moving north, and in the forest of Erdaohezi, Ningan County, was surrounded by the enemy. Not knowing that dozens of soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army were approaching her with rifles at the ready, she was humming while washing her hair at a brook. While we were organizing a new division after advancing to the Fusong area, she was undergoing trying days as a prisoner, being interrogated by the enemy, in Luozigou.

There was a conscientious Korean among the guards keeping watch over the prisoners, who secretly sympathized with her. He had been working for the revolution before his capture. He had signed a letter of surrender and was now living in disgrace. When he knew that the hangmen were going to execute Han Song Hui, he advised her to escape. He said he would discard his rifle and run away with her to Korea or deep into a mountain where they could live in a hut. She agreed and succeeded in fleeing with his help. Later the man became her husband.

We all lamented at the news of her capture. Some women guerrillas felt so bad that they lost their appetite. That was natural because they had lost a comrade-in-arms whom they had loved as if she were their own

younger sister. The veterans who fought in Wangqing and knew her worth still recollect her lovingly.

It is said that Han Song Hui's children regretted their mother's past immensely, saying that it would have been good if their mother had stayed with the guerrillas until the country was liberated as other women fighters had.

Of course, it would have been much better if she had not been captured by the enemy and had continued to fight.

But a revolution is not travelling on a highway, still less a 100-metre race in which the athletes make off at the starting signal and rush on without meeting any obstacle on the way until they reach their goal.

A revolution can be said to be an endless journey of people who forge ahead towards victory through success and failure, through advance and retreat, upsurge and setback, which one may repeat or which come in the wake of the other, whatever the turns and twists that can take place in the course of these long endeavours.

It is said that whenever her sons and daughters blamed her, Han Song Hui would reply:

“You needn't worry about the stains in the records of your parents. The Workers' Party of Korea does not lay the blame for the parents' mistakes on their children. Our leader does not consider the children responsible for the crimes committed by their parents. That is his policy. Everything depends on you yourselves. Therefore, don't worry, only be loyal to the leader.”

I believe she was right. She was honest and pure and preserved her firm faith in the Party until the last moment of her life.

Thanks to the pine-nut porridge, the venison and foxtail millet gruel cooked by Han Song Hui I managed to leave my sickbed in three days' time.

Company commander Ri Hyo Sok informed me in detail then of the whirlwind of the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign in the guerrilla zone.

He enumerated which cadres had been murdered in which counties, and which commanding officers had been executed in which counties on charges of involvement in the “Minsaengdan” case. If his account was accurate, it could be easily assumed that most of the senior cadres of the counties and districts and most of the company and higher rating commanding officers of the guerrilla army had been purged. The Koreans who could write and make speeches had all been eliminated. All the hard-core elite of men and officers of my unit, who had remained in Wangqing when I went on the expedition to north Manchuria, had been executed. Those who had not yet been executed had been ousted from their posts of secretary, association chairman and district Party committee member.

The “Minsaengdan” was the product of the intellectual development of the Japanese imperialists' colonial rule of Korea. They had set up the “Minsaengdan” to undermine the Korean revolution through stratagem and trickery. Failing in their attempt to rule over Korea with guns and swords and in the guise of a “civil government”, fussing about “Japan and Korea being one” and being of “the same ancestry and the same stock”, the Japanese imperialists aimed at brewing fratricide among the Koreans to destroy the revolutionary forces and to resolve their worries in the maintenance of peace.

Greatly alarmed by the rapid development of the revolutionary situation in Manchuria after the September 18 incident (in 1931—Tr.),

Governor-General Saito saw to it that the “Minsaengdan” was formed in Yanji in February 1932 by instigating pro-Japanese nationalists, such as Pak Sok Yun, who had been sent to east Manchuria as a member of the Jiandao inspection team, Jon Song Ho, an influential man in the Yanbian Autonomy Promotion Association, Pak Tu Yong, advisor to the Manchukuo army in Yanji, and Kim Tong Han, a first-rate anti-communist agent.

The “Minsaengdan” clamoured ostensibly for the “right to national survival”, the “building of a paradise of freedom” and for the “Koreans’ autonomy in Jiandao” as if it were its highest aim to solve the problem of the Koreans’ livelihood. But, in effect, it was a spy organization for stratagem manufactured by the Japanese imperialists to paralyse the anti-Japanese spirit of the Korean people, isolating Korean communists by harming them through trickery and disrupting the revolutionary ranks from within by driving a wedge between the Korean and Chinese peoples.

The reactionary nature of the “Minsaengdan” was clear from its “organizational policy” or its “programme” and other documents preaching the “industrialization of life” under Japanese imperialist colonial rule, that it was the “only way for the Korean nation to survive”. The enemy described the period of his colonial rule over Korea and Manchuria as the optimum, “absolute period” for “securing the right to survival and its expansion”; he depicted Korea and Manchuria, which had been turned into a land of gloom under his colonial rule, as a “land” of “freedom” and “autonomy”, while clamouring for a “paradise of freedom to be built” in Jiandao by the Koreans. The Japanese imperialists tried to break the good-neighbourly relations between the Korean and Chinese peoples and communists and their revolutionary ties

by creating the impression that the Koreans had welcomed imperialist Japan's occupation of Manchuria and her colonial rule, that they had territorial ambitions for the Jiandao area.

The real nature of the "Minsaengdan" as an organization of dyed-in-the-wool anti-communist stooges can be easily seen from the records of its projectors and those who became the head, deputy head and director of the organization after its formation.

Jo Pyong Sang, director of the Kyongsong Kapja Club, Pak Sok Yun, vice-president of the *Maeil Sinbo* (Daily News —Tr.), Jon Song Ho of the Yanbian Autonomy Promotion Association and Kim Tong Han projected the scheme of the organization and exerted all their efforts for its formation. They advocated patriotism and love of the people, professing themselves nationalists and revolutionaries, but they were, without exception, traitors who had long been converted by the Japanese imperialists.

Pak Sok Yun, for instance, at the age of sixteen, took the first step towards his pro-Japanese career when he went to Japan to study, and then continued his studies in comfortable circumstances at first-rate universities, such as the faculty of law and the postgraduate course of the Tokyo Imperial University, and University of Cambridge in England. He is said to have annually received approximately 3,000 *won* for educational expenses, a colossal sum, from the bureau of education of the Government-General while he was studying in England.

After his studies abroad he was installed in prominent posts. He worked as a journalist of the *Tong-A Ilbo*, the vice-president of the *Maeil Sinbo*, part-time councillor of the Foreign Ministry of Manchukuo commissioned by the Japanese Foreign Ministry, and then as Consul General of Manchukuo to Poland. Later, he was a member of the

Japanese delegation, led by Matsuoka Yosuke, the Japanese Foreign Minister, who afterwards signed the neutrality treaty between the Soviet Union and Japan, attending a General Assembly session of the League of Nations held in Geneva in 1932. These uncommon records are sufficient to show how well he was trusted by the Japanese ruling circles. In order to allow him to build up his reputation as a nationalist, the Japanese imperialists permitted him to write editorials denouncing their colonial rule and to stand up in a frontal confrontation with the governor-general against his scheme of changing the Koreans' surnames into a Japanese manner, and to involve himself towards the end of the war in the Pacific (Second World War—Tr.) in the Nation-Building Union headed by Ryo Un Hyong¹. However, the Korean people in the Jiandao area did not accept him favourably because of their bitter feelings against the “Minsaengdan” in which he was involved.

Immediately after liberation, while living in hiding in Yangdok under the assumed name of Pak Tae U, he was arrested and tried severely as a traitor to the nation. At the court of justice he confessed that his political idea had been to effect the Koreans' “national autonomy” under the Japanese imperialist rule, that he had believed that Korea should take a course of political development like Canada had or the Union of South Africa, the British colonies, and that he had been on intimate terms with Governor-General Saito and had worshipped Ishihara Kanji, a Japanese renowned for his theory of a world conquest and one of the inspirers of the idea of an East Asia Union, precisely because of this political idea.

He doggedly denied that the aim of the formation of the “Minsaengdan” was to destroy the Communist Party and the guerrilla army. He stated that the initial purpose of the “Minsaengdan” was only to “secure the right to survival”, that the organization had become a spy

organization of stooges directed by imperialist Japan after he had left Jiandao, that he had been surprised at the news of the havoc caused during the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle, and that he had been a mere puppet controlled by the Japanese.

History will be the only judge of the degree of authenticity of Pak Sok Yun’s confession. However, the fact that he was a faithful dog and stooge of Japanese imperialism can never be protested, regardless of his confession.

While Pak Sok Yun, who played the role of midwife in the birth of the “Minsaengdan”, was influenced mostly by the Japanese, the Russians had the greatest effect on Kim Tong Han, a minion who carried out the “Minsaengdan” scheme in the field. He began his career with the communist movement. He was admitted to the Communist Party in Russia immediately after the October Revolution. As a member of the military department of the Koryo Communist Party and then as commander of the officers’ corps, he displayed his mettle to the full as a man trained in a military academy. In the early 1920s, however, he was arrested by the Japanese imperialists in the Maritime Province and quickly turned coat to become a pro-Japanese agent working on the anti-communist front.

After the “Minsaengdan” was dissolved, he, with the permission of the Kwantung Army, organized the “Jiandao Cooperative Association” as its successor and with a hundred reactionaries even formed what he called righteous home guards. As the commander he resorted to every conceivable action to “mop up” the revolutionary army. He assimilated himself to the Japanese to such an extent that he was taken for a Japanese who had been born in Korea. He was a dyed-in-the-wool traitor who went so far as to clamour for the Korean nation to regard Japan as their

motherland and to serve it devotedly. According to a report of the *Manson Ilbo*, he succeeded in forcing as many as 3,800 communists to surrender.

After his death, the Japanese imperialists erected a bronze statue to him and a monument to the “Jiandao Cooperative Association” in the park in the west of Yanji.

It is necessary to delve briefly here into the “Minsaengdan strategy” which was advertised as a “successful” ideological trickery campaign derived from the Japanese imperialists’ “strategy of peace maintenance in Jiandao”, as a success “in exposing the entire number of revolutionary organizations in Jiandao Province, in arresting 4,000 people involved in them and in undermining the social footholds that supported the organizations”.

Although it was clear from the outset that the aim of the “Minsaengdan” was not for the nationalists to solve the problem of the people’s livelihood in Jiandao, the Japanese imperialist aggressors made every effort in those days to present it under the mask of nationalism.

The Japanese spared no effort in advertising the “Minsaengdan” as an organization designed to save the people from poverty; however, the revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria soon discovered that its masterminds frequently visited the Japanese consulate through its back door. The enemy was unable to hide for long the true colour of the “Minsaengdan” from the vigilant people. We promptly laid bare its real nature through revolutionary publications and public lectures, on the one hand, and organized a mass campaign to combat the “Minsaengdan”, on the other. The people who had been deceived into joining the “Minsaengdan” by its specious signboard immediately withdrew from it,

and those who had been inveigled into subversive activities as enemy agents were exposed and executed by the masses.

The “Minsaengdan” was dissolved soon after its inauguration. The Japanese imperialists had hardly managed to implant anything of its organization into our ranks.

But if that were so, how was it possible that the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle continued when there was no “Minsaengdan”, and that the massacre of innocent people on the false charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan” case continued for three years in the guerrilla zones of Jiandao where there was the Party and a government of people?

The Japanese imperialists’ stratagem was fundamentally responsible for that.

The “Minsaengdan” which had sprung up under Governor-General Saito’s full support and with the active backing of the Japanese consulate in Longjing was dissolved in accordance with the will of the newly-appointed Governor-General Ugaki at the time of a troop dispatch in April 1932 to Jiandao of the Japanese army in Korea. But this was a mere formal disappearance. The movement to revive it was promoted secretly and briskly by Kim Tong Han, Pak Tu Yong and others.

In the spring of 1934 Kato Hakujiro, the provost-marshal of Yanji (the commander of special security forces in north China at the time of Japan’s defeat), and Takamori Yoshi, commanding officer of the Independent 7th Infantry Garrison Battalion, discussed the matter of peace maintenance in Jiandao again with Pak Tu Yong and other pro-Japanese elements and agreed to revive the “Minsaengdan”. That was the second stage of the “Minsaengdan” stratagem.

They made it clear that the operations of the “Minsaengdan” were an ideological stratagem directed against the East Manchuria Special

District Committee under the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee and defined the basic direction of its activities to be to pursue—firstly, a “policy of undermining and disrupting the Korean guerrilla army by strong actions”; secondly, a “policy of blocking the supply of provisions to the Korean guerrilla army”; thirdly, a “policy of instigating Korean guerrillas to surrender or to defect”; fourthly, a “policy of protection, settlement and surveillance of those who have surrendered or defected”; and, fifthly, the “vocational training of those who have surrendered or defected and the arrangement of their jobs”. All the operations for the stratagem were to be supervised by the gendarmerie in Yanji.

The “Jiandao Cooperative Association” was set up in September 1934. This was a special organization which was to “deal with all the people who would become renegades” as the activities of the “Minsaengdan” were stepped up, to “confirm their backgrounds and assumed surrender, and undertake their brainwashing”. The “Minsaengdan” was merged at the time into this organization.

The “Jiandao Cooperative Association”, headed by Kim Tong Han, took sly advantage of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle conducted by the East Manchuria Special District Committee and resorted to all manner of deceit.

Japan’s master hands of stratagem grasped the special feature of the organizational structure and command system of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army in east Manchuria as a major political advantage for their deceptive ideological campaign against the Communist Party and the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. They considered the fact that the people’s revolutionary army consisted of both Korean and Chinese communists to be a fatal weakness of the armed forces. They were sure that the Chinese cadres did not trust the Korean communists and were constantly

observing them, and that, therefore, there was antagonism between the Chinese and Korean communists. Using this special feature profitably, they tried to drive a wedge between the communists of the two countries. They adopted a propaganda policy for the ideological campaign of the “Minsaengdan”, whose major content was to spread the idea that “the Koreans are shedding blood in Manchuria for a cause that has nothing to do with Korea’s independence and the liberation of their nation. What are they fighting for? Why are the Koreans, the majority, fighting under the command of the Chinese, shedding blood in a meaningless battle? Come to your senses quickly! The road to surrender or to defect is open...”

After the dissolution of the “Minsaengdan”, the Japanese imperialists inspired their special agents and stooges to spread the rumours that a large number of “Minsaengdan” members had wormed their way into the guerrilla zones. They intrigued against stalwart cadres and revolutionaries to make them suspect each other and to guard one against the other. The enemy himself said in his “experiences of undermining the Communist Party in Jiandao”, a secret letter, that although they had first sent groups, each consisting of ten “Minsaengdan” members, into the guerrilla army, they had all been captured and executed so that it was impossible to infiltrate into it; therefore, they had employed tactics of brewing distrust between the Koreans and Chinese, workers and peasants, superiors and subordinates in order that the communists would begin to fight among themselves.

The Japanese schemers were surprisingly skilful in their machinations to disrupt the revolutionary ranks from within. Take one of the methods they employed for an example. When a cadre of the East Manchuria Special District Committee was on a local inspection tour, they dropped

a letter along the inspector's route, a letter addressed to a cadre of county or district level who had been to the place on a guidance mission.

What would the inspector, therefore, think of the addressee?

The ultra-Leftist development of the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" can also be explained by the vile political ambitions of some Left opportunists and factional flunkeyists of all description at the helm of the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, the East Manchuria Special District Committee and the county and district Party organizations of different levels.

While the Left opportunists, who had a monopoly of the leadership among the communists, attempted to subordinate the advancing revolutionary struggle of the Korean communists to the scheme of realizing their political ambition, the factionalist sycophants who were still in the habit of factional strife, tried, with the support and connivance of the Left opportunists, to mercilessly dispose of all those who obstructed the achievement of their factional aim in order to expand their forces by taking advantage of the struggle against the "Minsaengdan".

It was the "Minsaengdan" that supplied the pretext for snatching the post somebody else was already occupying. The opportunists and factionalist sycophants declared, "You belong to the 'Minsaengdan', therefore you have to resign your post or die". There could be no appeal against such a sentence, nor would it have had any effect even if it had been made.

The rumour about the "Minsaengdan" infiltration spread by the Japanese imperialists added fuel to the flames of greed for hegemony and promotion of those who wanted to replace all the senior cadres of the Party, mass organizations and army with people of their own faction. The soaring number of the results of the "purge" that had been

undertaken in the name of the “Minsaengdan” were of enormous benefit to the schemers who were working to destroy all the revolutionary forces in the guerrilla zones.

In the final run, the enemy and friends joined in with the crushing of the guerrilla zones. Such a monstrous alliance had never taken place in the history of revolutionary war in any part of the world.

The brutal, absurd and crude way of combatting the “Minsaengdan”, which dwarfed the martial laws of fascist states and religious punishments in the Middle Ages, was attributable to the vicious Japanese imperialists’ stratagem and the political imbecility and despicable aim of some of the cadres of the East Manchuria Special District Committee.

The indications for identifying “Minsaengdan” members in those days were almost limitless and could be classified into hundreds of categories.

If a cook of the guerrilla army had failed to boil rice well enough, that was a reason for charging her with involvement in the “Minsaengdan”. If a grain of sand was found in the cooked rice, or if a man ate rice with water, the cook who had prepared the meal or the man who ate it with water was condemned as “evidence of having attempted to cause diseases to the people in the guerrilla zone” and as an “action of the ‘Minsaengdan’”.

A person with loose bowels was charged with an act of the “Minsaengdan” because it would weaken combat power; an instance of moaning was considered to be an indication of “Minsaengdan” because it would paralyse the revolutionary spirit; an accidental shot was condemned as an act of the “Minsaengdan” because it would let the enemy know the location of the guerrillas; a verbal expression of homesickness was called an act of “Minsaengdan” because it would

encourage nationalism; a hard-working attitude was denounced as a sign of “Minsaengdan” to hide its identity, and so on. Everything was used to incriminate people no matter how an excuse was made. By this criterion no one could be free from a charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”.

The man at the head of the Helong County Committee of the Anti-Imperialist Union, nicknamed Kodo, was arrested by self-defence corps men while conducting political work among the people at Changrenjiang. He was dragged to an execution site with over 30 other patriots.

The self-defence corps men stood them in single file and cut their throats one by one. Naturally, Kodo’s also. But, strangely, his head did not fall off. The skin and flesh of his nape slipped onto his back, with his whole body drenched in blood. It was a fatal wound, more painful than death. The executioners left while Kodo lay unconscious. Coming to at night, Kodo pulled the skin and flesh back to his nape, enduring the terrible pain, and bandaged it with a strip torn off his clothes. He then crawled fifteen miles on all fours through steep mountains and reached the Yulangcun guerrilla zone.

However, the Leftists took him to a tribunal of the masses when he was still suffering from the wound. They said that he was an enemy agent who had injured his neck on purpose and had come to the guerrilla zone to worm his way deep into the revolutionary ranks. The Leftists read out a lengthy accusation, but none of the masses approved it. The men who had arranged the trial decided to refrain from passing the death sentence on him until he was identified through a period of examination, but they assassinated him anyway.

The ultra-Leftist wave of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle was the roughest of all the counties in the Helong County. That was because those at the helm of the Party organization in this county dealt unjustly with the people’s fates to fit in with their ulterior political purpose.

The spearhead of the “purge” was directed at stalwart people who were exemplary in revolutionary practice, who enjoyed a high reputation among the masses, who did not flatter or compromise with injustice.

Kim Song Do, of all the Korean cadres, combatted the “Minsaengdan” in an extremely ultra-Leftist manner. While the East Manchuria Special District Committee was located in Wangqing, he led a loose life there. Taking his wife along, he organized drinking bouts and played cards frequently with cadres of the special district committee and county Party committee. As his wife gave herself the airs of a modern woman, neglecting the house, the Children’s Corps members had to do all the household chores for her. Kim Song Do, declaring the opium poppy flower to be beautiful, got the people to plant poppies, to collect the juice from their fruits and to deliver it to him. For all this he continuously chanted “clean politics”.

It was preposterous that Kim Song Do, who led such a scandalous life, “purged” true revolutionaries by charging them with involvement in the “Minsaengdan” case. He even went to the length of forcing Children’s Corps members to write confessions that they had joined the “Minsaengdan”.

Kim Kun Su, as the head of an agitation station at Dongxingcun, Longjing, had rendered distinguished services by his political work, was caught in the meshes of the political intrigue hatched by the Leftists and was dragged to an execution site.

At the last moment of his life, he announced at the execution site, “I am not a ‘Minsaengdan’ member. If I am really under suspicion, cut off my ankles instead of killing me. If my ankles are cut off, I won’t be able to run away. If you only cut off my ankles instead of killing me, I’ll be able to weave mats with my hands and thus contribute to the revolution. I lament dying without working any further for the revolution.”

“Look, that fellow is acting like a ‘Minsaengdan’ member even when he’s going to be executed,” the men who directed the “purge” said and beat him to death with heavy sticks.

The iron hammer of the “purge” fell also on the heads of guerrillas beyond the bounds of the Party and mass organizations.

Yang Thae Ok, with the peasant-like nickname of “Scraping Hoe”, was an exemplary guerrilla. He, too, was labelled as a “Minsaengdan” member and was tried by a mass tribunal on the charge of having deliberately damaged the lock of his rifle.

He had received the nickname when, in company with the head of his organization, he had captured a weapon from a member of the anti-contraband squad at a restaurant in Sanpudong. At that time two men of the squad had been smoking opium in the restaurant, and another stood guard at the entrance. Yang Thae Ok grappled with the guard, now one, now the other on top, but the guard was stronger. Yang Thae Ok, therefore, pulled his hoe out of his waistband and scraped the guard’s face with it. While the guard held his face in his hands in agony, Yang snatched the rifle from the enemy and ran up to the mountain near Sanpudong. As he ran up the mountain, he was tempted to try shooting it. He pulled the trigger softly, but there was no sound. The rifle was on its safety catch. He unlocked it with a blow of his hoe. The damage he had done to the lock of the rifle with his hoe became the cause of his

discharge from the guerrilla army and his deportation from the guerrilla zone in later days.

Most of the people stigmatized as “Minsaengdan” members and subjected to capital punishment or deported from the guerrilla zone by the Leftists and factionalist sycophants were brave, stalwart fighters like “Scraping Hoe”. Could it be possible that these fighters had captured weapons from armed policemen in broad daylight by threatening them with sham pistols or scraping their faces with hoes at the risk of their own lives in order to work for the “Minsaengdan”? Were the organizers of the tribunal and judges who declared them guilty such idiots that they could not discern that these fearless fighters had no reason or need to involve themselves in the “Minsaengdan” or in counterrevolution?

No, they were no idiots. This was not a question of the power of reason. Could there be such idiots among the revolutionaries who lacked the power of judging even such cases?

According to the testimony of fighters from Antu, hundreds of Koreans in Chechangzi alone had been murdered on false charges of involvement in the “Minsaengdan” case.

Zhou Bao-zhong, who was deeply involved with the east Manchuria Party organization and was well-informed of the state of affairs in Jiandao, testified in his reminiscences that 2,000 people had been killed, labelled as “Minsaengdan” members.

In order to exaggerate the results of the “purge” the masterminds of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle tormented the “Minsaengdan” suspects beyond endurance—members of Party organizations, mass organizations and even activists in the Children’s Corps—with cruelties inconceivable to communists.

Kim Song Do, Song Il and Kim Kwon Il, who had led the “purge”, ended up in being given the verdict of involvement in the “Minsaengdan” and were shot.

Song Il and Kim Kwon Il were fine people, but they flattered their superiors instead of establishing Juche, and made inadvertent mistakes. I was surprised to learn that they had shouted “Long Live General Kim Il Sung!” when they were executed. They would often argue with me about major political lines. No doubt they had come to their senses at least at their execution and had soberly reflected their actions.

Pak Hyon Suk was one of five excellent modern women in Wangqing. She had sparkling eyes, so that the people of Xiaowangqing called her the “woman with morning-star eyes”. Well-informed in art, she worked as the head of the children’s department in Wangqing for some time. She was still young, but was relatively well experienced in underground work. Her father-in-law Choe Chang Won (Choe Laotour) was in charge of the Anti-Imperialist Union in his county.

When Pak Hyon Suk was still Choe Hyong Jun’s fiancée, Children’s Corps members in Mudanchuan, who were under her guidance, frequently delivered messages between her and her fiancé. When she gave them money the children would buy things to be sent to the guerrilla army. She would send the gifts to underground guerrillas and to the fighters who were hurrying with organizational preparations of a special detachment.

The enemy, who was secretly keeping watch over Pak Hyon Suk, ordered her arrest. One day the “woman with morning-star eyes” had gone to her colleague’s house to congratulate her friend at her wedding ceremony. The policemen had followed her there. They molested the master of the house, demanding that she be handed over. The “woman

with morning-star eyes”, who was hiding in the garret, appeared, announcing her presence to the policemen, lest the master of the house should get into trouble. She was imprisoned and brutally tortured, but did not yield to the enemy. When villagers had come to see her, she had written revolutionary songs and sent them on to her comrades, hiding them in a rice cake container, in order to encourage the villagers and her comrades. The police released her later.

On the day Pak Hyon Suk married Choe Hyong Jun, three policemen from Baicaogou had come to her house to spy on her. They said they wanted to see how a communist girl was going to be married. They watched the wedding ceremony, drinking and eating, and even asked the bride to sing. She sang a revolutionary song. Listening to her singing, the drunken policemen, not knowing that the song was intended to agitate people to rise in revolution, said that she was an excellent singer and even demanded that she sing some more.

Her husband, Choe Hyong Jun, was also loyal to the revolution. He was a good husband at home and a good revolutionary fighter, but unfortunately a bullet pierced his leg and he became lame. From then on, he was not as successful in his work among the local people as he had been before. He had no horse to ride, still less a vehicle. Nevertheless, he limped many miles to perform his duties. It was obvious, therefore, that he was unable to do as much as the others did. The “purge” headquarters labelled him as a “lethargic element”, suspected him to be involved in the “Minsaengdan”, persecuted him and kept watch over him. Pak Hyon Suk was dismissed from the office of the leadership on the excuse that she was the wife of a “Minsaengdan” member.

I heard the rumour in this context that she was going to divorce him.

I persuaded her not to. I said that the issue of the “Minsaengdan” was a passing one, that it would be settled sooner or later, and that Choe Hyong Jun had been excellent at underground work from the outset, had been a good fighter ever since he came to the guerrilla zone, a revolutionary with considerable theoretical knowledge. I asked her why she was going to divorce him, and even criticized her.

Later we sent her to the Soviet Union. If she is still alive, I wonder how she will recollect her days in Wangqing where even the trees and the grass were trembling in the hot wind of the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign.

Everyone in the guerrilla zone, men and women, young and old, vacillated. The bitter thought prevailed: “A revolution is a puzzling thing. They kill each other for no special reason, even inventing crimes against each other. That’s what they do. The Koreans have reclaimed the barren land in Jiandao and have pioneered the revolution. But now these pioneers are being murdered and ousted. What’s the real intention of those who do these things? What is this, if not a purge to snatch hegemony? If a revolution is a way to seize power through killing one’s friends without hesitation against moral obligations and breaking the ties of friendship, what’s the use of working for such a revolution? I’d rather take my family back to my hometown and follow the plough, or go to a temple in a mountain to become a monk and travel around, tapping a wood block than play the fool.” The mad wind of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle rusted the people’s outlook on life and the revolution.

The people who had not been awakened to political awareness, naturally, abandoned the revolution and ran away to the enemy-held area or to uninhabited lands. Since they were maltreated by the revolution for

which they had come to work, and since they were displaced from their homes, where else could they find a place to settle down? A revolution is an undertaking for survival, not for death. It is a cause for living a life worthy of human beings; it is a just cause for which one would lay down one's life gladly and honourably, if necessary, on the battlefield in order to remain immortal.

But how could one expect immortality here? Revolutionaries were being slaughtered indiscriminately by the people with whom they had shared bread and board only yesterday.

That was why, after liberation, I declared that the people, who had been forced to flee to the enemy-held area and to “surrender” because of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle, were innocent. How could they be guilty when they had left the guerrilla zone because, though wanting to work for the revolution, they were forced to flee from dishonourable death by those who prevented them from fighting for the revolution?

The water of the rivers in Wangqing and the River Gudong became thick with blood because of the indiscriminate manslaughter, and the people's wailing continued incessantly in every valley of Jiandao.

Disillusioned by this state of affairs, Shi Zhong-heng, too, left Jiandao. On leaving for north Manchuria he had said: “I have to go. I cannot live here any longer with its bad smell of blood. How can such atrocities be perpetrated in a land governed by the Communist Party? Those at the helm of the Party in east Manchuria are disgracing the Communist Party.”

Sensing the gravity of the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign, I met many people to obtain details of the true state of affairs.

The people of Yaoyinggou lived in dugouts in the forests because of the enemy's intensive “punitive” attacks in those days, while soldiers of

the revolutionary army lived in barracks built along the edges of the guerrilla zone and protected the people. The barracks of the guerrillas were approximately at a distance of four miles from the village. Accompanied by my orderly I went to the village and, while talking with the elders, Hong Hye Song had arrived to see me. After chatting with the old people, I met her.

“The people at headquarters are too harsh,” she told me. “I cannot bear the wrongs any longer. I’ve endured all the hardships here in Wangqing gritting my teeth, but I cannot endure mental torments. I’d rather go to the homeland and fight underground there than work for the revolution in Jiandao, being maltreated in this way. Let’s go there. We won’t be able to set up a guerrilla zone as we did here, but we’ll be able to fight underground, won’t we? Let’s go to Korea. We can obtain the money needed for our work from my father, even if it would cost the whole of his drugstore.”

She bit her lip, looking at me with tear-filled eyes.

With a wave of my hand I warned her to lower her voice.

“Comrade Hye Song, how can you say a thing like that at such a time?”

“I said it because I believe in you, General.”

“Walls have ears. So please don’t say things like that.”

I was very sorry to have heard her confession. If even Hong Hye Song had made up her mind to leave the guerrilla zone, how many people would remain in Wangqing to carry out the revolution? The thought made me gloomy. She loved the guerrilla zone more ardently than anybody else. And the people in the guerrilla zone, too, were so fond of her. She was a daring underground operative, a vivacious,

enthusiastic children's teacher, and also a part-time doctor who, though not licensed, was efficient in both diagnosis and treatment.

Some cadres of the east Manchuria Party organization and the Wangqing county Party organization had cured three-year-old scabies thanks to her treatment. The people she had cured of this ailment were grateful to her and never failed to greet her. The cadres praised her, saying she was a gifted woman.

Hong Hye Song regarded herself as a necessary and even as an indispensable person to the guerrilla zone. And here she was suggesting that I desert. This single fact was enough to incriminate her as a "Minsaengdan" member and to subject her to capital punishment. I was grateful for her trust in me, to have confessed what lay hidden in her heart. What horrible atmosphere had enveloped the guerrilla zone to make this girl, who was so full of ardour and fighting spirit, consider running away! Jiandao, now strewn with her dead comrades, was no longer a land of promise or the sweet home she had loved with unstinted devotion.

Because of all this, I refused to comply with her suggestion.

"Comrade Hye Song, we cannot. It's not only one life that is at stake. If we're unable to endure the sufferings and choose to take an easy way out at a time when the revolution is at stake, how can we consider ourselves true communists? Though it is painful and disgusting, we have to stay here to settle the issue of the 'Minsaengdan' and continue the struggle. This is the only way for revolutionaries to take to save the revolution."

She gazed at me while I spoke, wiping away her tears.

“Please forgive me. I said it all because the prospects are so bleak. I’ve been waiting anxiously for your return from north Manchuria in order to tell you all this, General. But I’m not alone in this.

“People in the ‘Minsaengdan’ gaol have been waiting for you, Comrade Commander. ‘When will Commander Kim return? Is there no news from Commander Kim? Is there no way to let Commander Kim know the situation in east Manchuria?’ they say, while waiting impatiently for your return. And we had only the rumour that the entire north Manchuria expedition party had died. The Japanese said the same thing in their newspapers.”

Hong Hye Song pressed her hands to her breast, trying to curb her bitter feelings.

Remorse rent my heart at the sight of the tear-drops forming in her eyes, just as if they were drops of blood.

Her words made me ponder over my responsibility of a man fighting for the Korean revolution. If I could not stop the reckless, blind manslaughter being perpetrated in the name of a “purge”, threatening thousands and thousands of lives at a juncture when the revolution was about to be crushed in this way, or it might revive and rise again, then I was not entitled to call myself a son of Korea, and there was no need for me to remain alive.

I proposed to the leadership of the east Manchuria Party organization to convene a meeting to rectify the mistake in the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign. An inspector from the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, almost at the same time, also suggested the convocation of such a meeting.

A few days later, I received a letter informing me of a joint meeting of the military and political cadres of east Manchuria that was to be held at Dahuangwai.

Prior to my departure I called in at the barracks of the cooks. I went there to see Hong In Suk, a woman who they said had been depressed for several months because of being suspected as a “Minsaengdan” member. I had obtained some fabric in north Manchuria and was going to give it to her as a present. My comrades-in-arms had warned me, saying that, if I gave a gift to a person suspected of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”, I would be handing the “purge” headquarters material against myself. But I ignored their warning. Could kindness ever be a crime?

2. A Polemic at Dahuangwai

It would be incorrect if someone were to think that I had started a polemic about the “Minsaengdan” issue at the Dahuangwai meeting with the people at the helm of the east Manchuria Party organization. The argument had begun already as early as October 1932. My unit, which had started moving towards north Manchuria, had stopped over at Wangqing for some time.

During my first days in Wangqing, I guided the Party work in district No. 1 (Yaoyinggou). There I saw that the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign was being conducted haphazardly, in an ultra-Leftist manner, by officials of the county and district Party organizations, contrary to revolutionary principles.

One morning I was looking around the village, accompanied by Ri Ung Gol, head of the organizational department of the district Party committee. Someone screamed in the office of the district Party committee. I stopped.

“Who’s that?” I asked.

For some reason Ri Ung Gol looked embarrassed.

“People from the county Party committee are questioning a man named Ri Jong Jin.”

“Why? Is he a ‘Minsaengdan’ suspect?”

“It seems so. The man has denied it for three days, but they keep on torturing him to squeeze a confession from him. I’m so distressed at the sound that I can’t work properly all day long. Let’s go by quickly.”

“Why is he suspected?”

“He worked in the enemy-held area and returned a few days later than expected. That must be the reason.”

“Can that be a reason?”

“Comrade Commander, be careful of what you say. One word like that can be the cause of being labelled a ‘Minsaengdan’ member. The whirlwind of the ‘Minsaengdan’ has made it very hard to live here.”

I walked into the office in spite of Ri Ung Gol’s advice.

A man from the county Party committee and some Red Guards of the district were brutally questioning Ri Jong Jin. As I entered the room the cadre from the county Party committee thrashed the victim furiously as if to show off to a stranger how splendidly the Wangqing people were conducting the class struggle.

Ri Jong Jin had been a servant of a Chinese landowner for more than ten years. His wife had been killed during the enemy’s “punitive” atrocities, and he had left his two children in the care of other people to join the revolution. After he came to the guerrilla zone he had worked as Party secretary of a branch of the district. The masses had held him in high esteem. There could be no reason for such a man to involve himself in the hostile organization and counterrevolution. How could his delayed return from work, an inadvertent mistake in work, be the cause of suspecting him for involvement in the “Minsaengdan”?

I gave the cadres from the county and district Party committees some needed advice and made them stop the questioning.

“Comrades, as far as I understand there’s no reason for dealing with Ri Jong Jin as a ‘Minsaengdan’ member. It isn’t right to whip him without exact evidence simply because he made a mistake in his work. The ‘Minsaengdan’ should be combatted prudently on the basis of scientific evidence,” I said.

The questioning was suspended, but after I left Yaoyinggou and went to Macun, Ri Jong Jin was murdered.

The incident occasioned the spreading of the news that Commander Kim Il Sung from Antu had stopped the county Party cadres from questioning a “Minsaengdan” suspect and had denounced them. The news reached the ears of the cadres of the Wangqing County Party Committee and the East Manchuria Special District Committee. The news spread throughout Yanji, Helong and Hunchun beyond the bounds of Wangqing. Some people commented apprehensively: “What disaster did he wish on himself by interfering in the matter? He seems to be blind to fire and water.” Others said: “Commander Kim did that because he hasn’t experienced Wangqing. He’s a man from Antu, isn’t he?” Still others praised me cautiously, saying: “Anyway, he’s a man with plenty of guts.”

What I said and did in the office of the district Party committee was, in effect, the beginning of my arguments with the Leftist elements on the issue of the “Minsaengdan”.

The polemic intensified from the beginning of the year 1933 when the purge in connection with the “Minsaengdan” issue was most scandalous in the guerrilla zones of east Manchuria. That year many Korean military and political cadres and revolutionaries, who had been stigmatized as “Minsaengdan” members, were either killed or ran away.

I also was nearly caught in the “Minsaengdan” intrigue. The chauvinists and factionalist sycophants, who were swaying the “purge” to an ultra-Leftist mess, tenaciously attempted to connect me with the “Minsaengdan”.

The evidence they advanced was ridiculous, including what they called the case of a kidnapped landowner from Tumen.

A Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army unit of over a hundred soldiers, stationed in Liushuhezi in those days, had requested me to help them obtain clothing. We had persuaded a landowner to help us in this matter, a landowner whom the nationalist army had captured for obtaining economic aid, but failed. With the help of the escaping landowner we had procured cloth and cotton enough for 500 uniforms. The event was called the “case of the kidnapped landowner” from Tumen. We had provided all the nationalist army soldiers in the Wangqing area with clothing from the aid goods.

Judging from the situation at the time, it was quite probable that, if they were not properly clothed in the severe winter cold, the soldiers of the nationalist army would defect or surrender to the enemy. By itself, without cooperation of a friendly army like the national salvation army, the revolutionary army would have found it difficult to maintain the guerrilla zone.

Kim Kwon Il, who was promoted to the office of Wangqing county Party secretary as a successor to Ri Yong Guk, denounced, in league with some cadres of the East Manchuria Special District Committee, the guerrilla army’s procurement of winter clothing for the national salvation army with the help of a landowner as an act of Rightist capitulation; he said that Kim Il Sung, who was in command of the army and connived at

and encouraged the work of the “Minsaengdan”, must be held responsible.

The fact that they fussed about responsibility even by mentioning my name showed that they had, in fact, schemed to do away to the last man with the Korean cadres with any authority to speak in east Manchuria. They went so far as to make the ridiculous allegation that a large number of “Minsaengdan” members had wormed their way into the Wangqing guerrilla army because Kim Il Sung had neglected the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign. They tried to bring me to the “purge” tribunal by hook or by crook.

Their intrigues led to a frontal clash between them and me.

I refuted them with a strong argument that the procurement of clothing for the national salvation army with the help of the landowner could never be a Rightist act, still less the work of the “Minsaengdan”, and then I unhesitatingly expressed my opinion about the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign:

“Since combatting the ‘Minsaengdan’ means combatting spies, nobody has the right to be indifferent to it. I do not wish to see the ‘Minsaengdan’ infiltrate into our ranks, either. But I cannot remain an onlooker at the murder of innocent people perpetrated on the excuse of purging the ‘Minsaengdan’. Such an act of murder undermines the revolution and benefits the enemy. Can we remain silent? Take a look—what kind of people are they, whom you’ve labelled ‘Minsaengdan’ members? Aren’t they indomitable fighters who have shared all our hardships in the guerrilla zone with death hovering? Why would fighters like that join the ‘Minsaengdan’ which is against the revolution? Your arguments are untenable.”

The Leftist elements became angry at my statement and shouted, “Do you object then to the line of the anti-‘Minsaengdan’ struggle?”

“If your line of anti-‘Minsaengdan’ struggle is for killing your friends who are loyal to the revolution, I cannot support it. If you’re selecting ‘Minsaengdan’ members, you have to truly identify them on the basis of scientific evidence. Why are you disposing of people one by one who are working for the revolution, enduring hunger and hardships in this mountain? Isn’t this strange?” I refuted.

I criticized them incisively and brought the matter to a critical point. The Leftist elements on the East Manchuria Special District Committee said that I lacked knowledge of the “Minsaengdan”.

“Well, if you say so, I myself will see the people you’ve defined as ‘Minsaengdan’ members”, I said. “If you want to hear what the prisoners say, you may be present at the hearing.”

A company commander nicknamed Hunter Jang (his real name was Jang Ryong San) was among the “Minsaengdan” prisoners kept in the gaol at Lishugou. His father was a renowned hunter in the Wangqing area.

Jang Ryong San had learned marksmanship by frequently accompanying his father when hunting. He was such a crack shot that once he had prepared dough and then hunted eight roe deers to cook dough-flake soup. During the battle to defend Xiaowangqing he had sniped at least 100 of the enemy. He was one of my dearest commanding officers.

This man had suddenly been labelled as a “Minsaengdan” member and was locked up in a gaol no better than an animal shed. What did I feel on seeing him there?

“Hunter Jang, speak up clearly! Are you really a ‘Minsaengdan’ member?” I asked him point-blank.

“Yes, I am,” he admitted dully.

“If that is so, why did you shoot so many Japanese?”

The Leftists who had followed me to the gaol to listen were looking at me triumphantly.

I calmed down and reasoned with Jang Ryong San.

“Look here, Hunter Jang. The ‘Minsaengdan’ is a reactionary organization formed by the Japanese and serves them. And you’ve killed more than a hundred of them. Isn’t that strange? Speak the truth even though you’re threatened with a sword at your neck. Speak frankly.”

Only then did he burst out sobbing, grasping my hand. He spoke appealingly, in a hoarse voice:

“Comrade Commander, why would I join the ‘Minsaengdan’? I’ve denied it, but they wouldn’t believe me, only flogged me. I had no alternative but to say I’m a ‘Minsaengdan’. I’m sorry to have thrown mud at you.”

“It isn’t important whether you throw mud or black ink at me. The point is that you’re a dishonest man—you say you’re a ‘Minsaengdan’ to the tyrants who torture you, and deny it in front of me. I don’t need a coward who says two things with one mouth.”

I was so infuriated when I left the gaol that the Leftists did not dare to speak to me.

That day I met Tong Chang-rong and lodged a strong protest against him.

“I see that your work is questionable. The ‘Minsaengdan’ must not be combatted in this way. How come you arrest and lock up innocent people on a charge of involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’? The

‘Minsaengdan’ must be combatted in a democratic way, not by a few high-ranking authorities, but through mass discussion to identify friend from foe. A ‘Minsaengdan’ must not be produced through torture and intimidation. Nobody in Wangqing but you regards Hunter Jang a ‘Minsaengdan’ member. I stand surety for him on my life. You must release him at once.”

I told the Leftists that the so-called “Minsaengdan” suspects in the guerrilla army must not be touched without the political department’s permission. On my return to the unit, I punished the commanding officer who had turned over Jang Ryong San to the “purge” headquarters at his discretion.

That day the East Manchuria Special District Committee released Jang Ryong San as I had demanded.

Later Jang was sent to Zhoujiatun, Ningan County, to procure provisions. He fought well there until the last moment of his life.

The Pak Chang Gil incident, widely known to the public, was also a sort of trial. It occurred while we were stationed at Gayahe.

One day we brought a cow of the “People’s Association” from a village near Tumen and had it slaughtered for the soldiers and the local people. Many of the people, who had eaten the beef, suffered a bowel complaint.

My comrades-in-arms crowded into my lodgings, saying that all the comrades were ailing after drinking the water from a well poisoned by the “Minsaengdan”, and that they were afraid many may die. If that had been true, the whole company would have perished.

I ordered the company to climb the hill at the back of the village and alerted them against a possible enemy attack.

Strange as it may be, I myself did not feel any stomach-ache until a long time had passed, nor was there any sign of the enemy attack I had anticipated.

I summoned the company commander, the political instructor, the Young Communist League secretary, the youth worker and other officers of the company and asked them if they, too, believed that the well had really been poisoned.

“Yes, probably,” the officers answered unanimously, without considering the matter.

“But I have no stomach-ache although I ate the beef late in the evening and early this morning,” I said. “If other people suffer from stomach-ache, the company commander and I should also suffer, but we don’t. How can this be explained?”

“The commanders may not suffer probably because they were served with clean soup,” the company commander hazarded.

“That’s not true. The commanders and the men ate the soup from the same pot, and there’s no law that the poison doesn’t foul up the portion for the officers.”

Meanwhile, a platoon leader who was patrolling the village brought a boy as tall as a rifle to me, saying that the boy was a “Minsaengdan” member and that he had poisoned the well. The boy was Pak Chang Gil now under suspicion. The platoon leader said that the boy had frankly admitted his crime before the villagers.

Hearing the news that the culprit had been arrested, the village was astir. Some people cursed him as a good-for-nothing, and some hurled abuse at his mother, that she deserved to be flogged to death.

Chang Gil had grown up in hardship, herding pigs for a Chinese landowner. One of his brothers was serving as a company supply officer

of the guerrilla army, and another was working in a branch Party organization. I could hardly believe that the boy with such a family background could do such a harmful thing that might destroy a company of the guerrilla army.

I talked with the boy for hours. At first he admitted his “crime” to me. But in the end he denied it, crying. His admission of the “crime” in front of the villagers had been motivated by his repulsion towards the village women who had shifted the blame for the accident upon him even though he had denied it.

I immediately brought the company down from the hill and declared the boy innocent at a mass meeting:

“This boy did not poison the well. Then, who has poisoned it? None of you, villagers, has poisoned it. No one has been poisoned. There are, of course, the people who suffered from a stomach complaint for a day or two. But that was because they had eaten too much beef for the first time in many months. So there is no question of the ‘Minsaengdan’ here, and there cannot be such a question. I declare here and now that the boy, whom you accused of being a ‘Minsaengdan’ member, is enlisted in the guerrilla army.”

The village women listening to me began to sob, even those who had accused the boy.

The Leftists took issue with me about the Pak Chang Gil incident, saying that I had settled it from a Rightist point of view.

After his enlistment in the guerrilla army, Pak Chang Gil fought courageously in the battle to defend Xiaowangqing.

Thus, I ran a few big risks against the Leftists around me. The rescue of Hunter Jang and Ryang Song Ryong from the “Minsaengdan” gaol

was one risk, and the declaration of Pak Chang Gil's innocence and his enlistment in the guerrilla army was another.

To be candid, it was very dangerous to implement the politics of trust and benevolence, which means seeing people as they are, treating comrades as comrades, and serving the people as such, at a time when shallow-minded, bigoted people, mad for power, were judging everyone from their prejudiced opinion and behaving like prosecutors, judges or executioners. But it was imperative for me to combat them at the risk of my own life.

The best self-protection under the surveillance of distrust, which suspected everything as the work of the "Minsaengdan", was to refrain from meddling and shutting one's eyes to everything. But I raised the banner of revolt against everything that I considered unjust with courage and my belief that if a man lacked the resoluteness to condemn injustice as he saw it, he was as good as dead and had no need to live. If one cared for only one's own comfort, how could one be a revolutionary? I was convinced that, no matter how violent the whirlwind of "purge" was, it was a passing phenomenon, that if we dedicated ourselves to the struggle against it we could ward it off.

The Left chauvinists and factionalist sycophants who had become addicted to an abuse of power through the purge of what they called the "Minsaengdan", had even cooked up and published a "Minsaengdan" structure of the east Manchuria Party organization and a "Minsaengdan" structure of the people's revolutionary army—exact copies of the organizational systems of the Party and the guerrilla army in the east Manchurian guerrilla zones.

The Leftists schemed to give us the impression that the "Minsaengdan" had sent many of its agents into the guerrilla army and to

drive a wedge between my men and me to prevent me from stopping their campaign against the “Minsaengdan”.

One day a cadre came to my unit with a letter from the head of the organizational department of the east Manchuria Party committee. I was amazed after reading it. It did not mention the source of information, but it said that one of my men, named Han Pong Son, was plotting a “Minsaengdan” action in a big way and was going to kill me, and that in view of the seriousness of his crime he must be arrested without delay.

Han Pong Son’s “crime” was awful, but somehow it was difficult for me to believe the letter. In the first place, the attempt for a big “Minsaengdan” action seemed unfounded. Han Pong Son had been fighting courageously, at the risk of his life, and what devil could have caught him and made him a “Minsaengdan” member?

Judging from his character, he was not violent or wicked, and was incapable of harming or killing his commander. He was so good-natured, handsome and well-mannered that he was jealously envied by others. He was very close to me in everyday life. It was hardly probable that such a man would harm his commander who heartily loved him.

But it was impossible to brush off the letter. Was the head of the organizational department able to tell such a lie? I was very displeased.

I told the messenger to return without worry, saying that I myself would test the man and then deal with him.

“An undesirable situation may break out any minute... You’re really a strange man,” the messenger said and left reluctantly.

Thoughts crowded in on me: Has Han Pong Son really attempted to take my life? Why is he trying to kill me? I can’t see any reason for him to do so. It’s good that I haven’t turned him over to the special district committee. But what if he sows seeds of trouble?

A few days after, I called Han Pong Son to headquarters.

Beaming, as usual, he asked me, "Comrade Commander, what do you want me for? Are you going to send me to the enemy area on a mission?"

"You've guessed it. Go to Sanchakou and capture a secret agent and bring him to me today. You have a good sense of smell."

"Is that so? Last night in my dream I went sight-seeing to Tumen, and my comrades in the company read that as an omen of a mission to the enemy area. They interpreted the dream excellently."

"I'll give you a pistol to protect yourself. Take it with you."

"No, I won't; it's cumbersome. I'll lure him by words. Don't worry, please."

"All right, hide the pistol in the ground and retrieve it on your way back."

Han Pong Son buried the Mauser on the way as he was told, and walked on to the town of Sanchakou. He found the named secret agent, and said, "Wouldn't you like to go and see the communist zone? I'll guarantee your safety." That is how he coaxed the agent and brought him to the guerrilla zone.

I questioned the secret agent myself.

"I know that you're a dog of the Japanese. But I won't kill you. In return you must do something for us. Since you've taken an oath of allegiance at the gendarmerie, you may continue to do as you're told by the Japanese. Only inform us in advance of coming 'punitive' attacks on us. I won't give you any other mission. If you acquit yourself well, you'll be recognized as a revolutionary. Can you do that?"

The spy said that he would do whatever I told him to, and begged for assurance that the members of the revolutionary organizations would not kill him.

I saw to it that Han Pong Son escorted the spy back to Sanchakou. Needless to say, he performed the mission with credit.

After this assignment was fulfilled, I said to the cadres of the East Manchuria Special District Committee:

“I gave Han Pong Son a pistol to test him, but he didn’t run away. I told him to capture a dog of the Japanese and he did. As I gave him both a pistol and cartridges, he could have harmed me easily if he had wanted to. But he didn’t. Can such a man join the ‘Minsaengdan’?”

They retorted:

“A ‘Minsaengdan’ member can imitate this sort of an act. He didn’t run away or harm you to win the confidence of the cadres, to worm his way deeper into our ranks, and launch a big ‘Minsaengdan’ venture. So we cannot trust him.”

I gave Han Pong Son a second assignment. It was to bury an explosive in the Tumen-Jiamusi railway line.

He again smiled and left for his destination without delay. When I had mentioned that he was too adventurous and warned him to be careful lest he should be captured, he answered, “I’m not afraid of being captured. Trust me. I wouldn’t turn coat even if I were. The worst thing that might happen to me would be being shot.”

A third assignment I gave him was to lead a storm troop. A fierce battle was being fought during our raid on a concentration village near Wangqing. While leading the storm troop in the attack of a fort, he lost a hand unfortunately. But, in return for the sacrifice, this peerless

courageous optimist was completely rid of any charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”.

I proved his innocence through these three test missions. If I had sent him to the head of the organizational department without testing him, he would no doubt have been executed as a reactionary. My suspension of the execution of the Leftists’ orders to save Han Pong Son through testing was, in effect, a hair-raising adventure on which I had to stake my own life. If he had killed a cadre with the pistol or had run away to the enemy area, there would have been no escape from my being held responsible for trusting him.

That was my third adventure, so to speak. This type of adventure was repeated in subsequent days.

In the whirlpool of a monstrous “class struggle” in which the fates of tens and hundreds of people were decided by the shout of an order or a single gesture of individuals, I had to meet the challenges of blockheads every minute who lacked every human feeling, and still less sober revolutionary reasoning and discretion. But I was able to fight openly and squarely with my conviction, without yielding to any pressure, on the strength of my unsullied reputation, my successes in battle as a man in command of the guerrilla army, and my theoretical support.

Besides, many of the Chinese cadres in the leadership of Jiandao had been greatly influenced by me during my days in Jilin, and they did not dare attempt to connect me with the “Minsaengdan” and dispose of me.

When the raging wind of the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign was sweeping the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria, I rose from my sickbed and prepared for my trip to Dahuangwai.

I was not strong enough to attend the meeting after weeks of illness, but I had to participate in it in spite of everything as I had proposed

holding it. Nevertheless, the 4th Company commander, its political instructor and many other comrades in the army objected to my departure for Dahuangwai.

“Comrade Commander, it’s said that representatives from both the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee and the Manchurian Provincial Committee of the Young Communist League have arrived. That isn’t a good sign. No matter how well justice is behind you, Comrade Commander, you’re alone and they have the majority,” the political instructor of the 4th Company tried to convince me.

Even my orderly O Tae Song was apprehensive about my trip to Dahuangwai. There was not a single optimist to encourage me with smiling prospects and blessings that one would like to expect from the meeting at Dahuangwai.

It was not without reason that they were worried about my trip.

It was February 1935. By that time the Party headquarters at all levels and Party members in east Manchuria had been secretly alerted by the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee to step up the purge operations and the campaign on two fronts against the Left and Right trends to remove all the counterrevolutionaries lurking in the Party and wipe out factional strife, nationalism and social reformism, in order to make the entire Party Bolshevik. After receipt of these instructions, all the Party organizations in east Manchuria were mercilessly conducting the anti-“Minsaengdan” campaign in a more ultra-Leftist manner.

Before that my arguments with the Leftists about the “Minsaengdan” had been made spontaneously at informal places. By contrast, at Dahuangwai where all the important people from the Party, the army and the Young Communist League were to meet, a formal, heated polemic was expected. While I was alone in opposition to the Leftist tendency,

ten or twenty or more people might rise against me, as it had become a practice for most people to keep as silent as dumb animals when it came to the issue of “Minsaengdan” although they had something to say about it. That meant I had to fight against heavy odds, surrounded by people of the Leftist trend. Their arguments might condemn me as a “criminal” or the meeting hall might become a tribunal that would ostracize me. If the worse came to the worst, they might attempt to label me a “Minsaengdan” and bury me politically and physically.

This was precisely the reason for the great apprehension of my comrades-in-arms. They were well aware how cold-hearted the manipulators of the “purge” were.

That was why they were worried, begging me not to go to Dahuangwai.

And yet, I did go, saying:

“Comrades, I must tread this path, whatever the future may hold for me, life or death. If I do not go to Dahuangwai, I shall only invite self-destruction. A critical moment has arrived for us to save the destiny of the Korean communists, and the Korean revolution from crisis. A confrontation cannot be avoided, and black and white has to be cleared.”

With the help of O Tae Song and another orderly, I walked to Dahuangwai and arrived there when the meeting was in its second day of session.

In the office of the peasant committee of district No. 8, which was guarded strictly by men of the people’s revolutionary army, I was received by Wei Zheng-min, the representative from the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, Wang Run-cheng, Zhou Shu-dong, Cao Ya-fan, Wang De-tai, Wang Zhong-shan and other cadres of the East Manchuria Party and League Special District Committees. In this

spacious office building the meeting, which the Chinese termed the joint meeting of the East Manchuria Party and League Special District Committees, was in session. In Korea the meeting is called the Dahuangwai meeting. At one time some historians called it the meeting of military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. This cannot be considered accurate.

The meeting went on for about ten days. Attendance was irregular as some people kept coming in and leaving. Most of those present were Chinese, and I remember, there were only several Korean cadres including Song Il, Rim Su San, Jo Tong Uk and me. Jo Tong Uk was a translator throughout the meeting for the Korean cadres who did not know Chinese well. I attended the meeting in the capacity of a member of the East Manchuria Special District Party Committee.

The Dahuangwai meeting was convened because Zhong Zi-yun (alias Little Zhong), in the capacity of an inspector from the Manchurian Provincial Committee of the Young Communist League, while visiting Jiandao to become acquainted with the work there, had made the absurd report to the provincial Party committee that 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria were "Minsaengdan" members. If his report had been true, what would have happened to the revolution in east Manchuria? It was natural that the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee dispatched its representative to east Manchuria to take measures in dealing with the situation. Arguments continued day and night.

The argument began to grow heated when Zhong Zi-yun repeated his view expressed in that report that 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria and 80 to 90 per cent of the Korean revolutionaries were "Minsaengdan" members or suspects, and that the guerrilla zones were "Minsaengdan" training centres.

The atmosphere of the meeting was swayed towards supporting his report. Some people said that the purge committee should be strengthened, others uttered high-sounding phrases, insisting that the purge of the “Minsaengdan” was a special revolutionary measure to surround and destroy the counterrevolutionaries lurking in the ranks, and still others clamoured for the seeds sown by the “Minsaengdan” to be rooted up mercilessly and more thoroughly.

I put a few questions to them:

“If most of the Korean revolutionaries active in east Manchuria are ‘Minsaengdan’ members, it means that I and other Korean comrades present here are members of it. If so, are you holding this meeting with the ‘Minsaengdan’? If we belong to the ‘Minsaengdan’, why have you called us here to discuss politics with us, instead of locking us up in a gaol or killing us?

“Do the statistics you have compiled include the revolutionaries who laid down their lives on the battlefield? If the statistics include them, how can their death in the war against the Japanese be explained? It follows that the Japanese have killed a large number of their own people. Was it necessary for the Japanese to kill these ‘Minsaengdan’ members whom they had tried so hard to train?

“Do you consider 80 to 90 per cent of the 1st Company, now guarding the conference hall, as ‘Minsaengdan’ members?”

As I posed these questions, an icy silence fell suddenly over the conference hall which had been in a state of excitement. The silence seemed strange even to me. The audience simply stared at Wei Zheng-min’s face on the platform who made no reply.

I continued:

“As you know, if heterogeneous elements occupy 80 to 90 per cent of something, that thing changes into something else. That is science.

“The allegation that 70 per cent of the Koreans in east Manchuria belong to the ‘Minsaengdan’ implies that all the Koreans except aged people, children and women are ‘Minsaengdan’ members. If so, is the ‘Minsaengdan’ fighting for the revolution in east Manchuria, in a bloody war against their masters?

“Some people openly say that most of the Korean communists active in east Manchuria are ‘Minsaengdan’ members. This is also illogical. If they were, what have they been fighting a hard battle for in the guerrilla zones which have been in a state of constant blockade over the past three years, without housing, clothing and being fed properly even in the severe winter cold?

“If 8 to 9 per cent of the Korean revolutionaries, let alone 80 to 90 per cent, were ‘Minsaengdan’ members, it would be impossible for us to safely hold this meeting, because this conference hall is guarded by the 1st Company of fully armed Koreans. All the renowned revolutionaries and cadres from east Manchuria, whom the enemy has been trying to destroy for years, are present here. If your statements were true, most of the 1st Company must belong to the ‘Minsaengdan’. So, isn’t it strange that they don’t attack us with their efficient weapons and make a clean sweep of us?”

The people who had declared that we were all “Minsaengdan” members were likewise unable to answer this question.

“The 1st Company was miserable when you declared it to be a ‘Minsaengdan’ company. According to the investigation which I myself conducted in the company for about 20 days, there was no evidence that proved any of the company belonging to the ‘Minsaengdan’. On the

contrary, it has become a model company during my guidance and inspection, and has given birth to another company, the 7th Company. The results of testing people in the practical struggle have also eloquently proved your statement to be unfounded, the statement that most of the Koreans and Korean revolutionaries in the guerrilla zones in east Manchuria were ‘Minsaengdan’ members.

“The report says that the guerrilla zone is a ‘Minsaengdan’ training centre, that the Party and the League are also ‘Minsaengdan’ organizations, and that Ri Yong Guk is the head of the Wangqing county Party ‘Minsaengdan’, that Kim Myong Gyun is in charge of organizational and military affairs of the ‘Minsaengdan’ in Wangqing County, that Ri Sang Muk is in charge of organizational affairs of the east Manchuria Party ‘Minsaengdan’, that Ju Jin is in charge of the ‘Minsaengdan’ in the 1st Division of the people’s revolutionary army, and that Pak Chun is the chief of staff of the ‘Minsaengdan’ in the people’s revolutionary army. If so, can the east Manchuria Party organization, the Wangqing county Party organization and the 1st Division of the people’s revolutionary army be considered to belong to the ‘Minsaengdan’? Am I to regard the cadres of the east Manchuria Party organization as the controllers and leaders of the ‘Minsaengdan’?”

The audience still kept silent.

Only Wei Zheng-min, the representative from the provincial Party committee, who was on a mission to analyze, sum up and evaluate the developments of the struggle correctly and objectively, eased the tension slightly by expressing his view that it was a mistake to identify the Party and League organizations themselves as the “Minsaengdan”, and that the whole and a part should be distinguished.

I emphatically declared that the labelling of most of the east Manchurian people as “Minsaengdan” members was an insult to the Korean people, and that such a view must be rectified immediately at this meeting.

My assertion met with an instant rebuff from Cao Ya-fan. He said:

“You’re flatly denying the existence of the ‘Minsaengdan’; however, that is your subjective view. There are now hundreds of ‘Minsaengdan’ suspects in gaols. They have confessed with their own mouths that they have joined the ‘Minsaengdan’ and have written confessions with their own hands. What do their oral and written confessions mean? Does it mean that you don’t recognize material proof?”

“I don’t recognize what you call oral and written confessions because most of your material evidence has been squeezed out through torture. I have been to your gaols and interviewed dozens of your suspects, and none of them admitted to his confession. I trust their loyalty more that has been displayed in their life and work than your material evidence. Tell me frankly, how did you wrest those confessions... Most of your ‘Minsaengdan’ suspects have made false confessions, unable to endure the painful tortures by the ‘purgers’.

“You are now manufacturing a ‘Minsaengdan’ which is not a ‘Minsaengdan’.”

At that moment, Cao Ya-fan shouted, “Budui!” (No!)

The word “budui” grated on me to the point of anger. Cao Ya-fan, of all people, dared to say “No!”?

My fist banged on the floor as I retorted, “What do you mean by ‘no’? The Koreans in Jiandao are now watching you, because you have hunted people at random by abusing your authority.

“Who killed Kim Jong Ryong, political commissar of the Antu guerrilla unit? Who killed Kim Il Hwan, secretary of the Helong County Party Committee? Answer me frankly here and now! Cao Ya-fan in the days of Jilin was neither brutal nor covetous of position. I cried in indignance at the news of Kim Il Hwan’s death. He was your senior in the revolution. How could you murder him, you who should have saved him?”

As Kim Il Hwan’s comrade-in-arms, I had bitterly moaned over his death. I criticized them scathingly.

Kim Il Hwan was one of those whom we had won over to the revolution when we were initially raising the revolution in east Manchuria. He and O Jung Hwa were the two prominent figures of those days. I don’t remember clearly now whether it was at Cao Ya-fan’s or at Ri Chong San’s that I first met Kim Il Hwan. But I still have a vivid memory of the heart-to-heart talk I had with him through the night at the time of the Mingyuegou meeting. It was a very impressive talk. He was my senior by many years, but he treated me modestly, on an equal footing, without putting on airs or behaving haughtily. Kim Jun and Chae Su Hang, who moved about together like twins in the streets of Jilin and Longjing, introduced Kim Il Hwan to me just as they had O Jung Hwa.

“The man who has won an ox at a football game,” was always an introductory remark Chae Su Hang used to explain Kim Il Hwan to me. This epithet was also used when he introduced him to those attending the Mingyuegou meeting. Chae Su Hang, a noted sportsman, was in the habit of judging a man by his skill in a football game. In a way it was an interesting criterion.

Thanks to Chae Su Hang's introductory epithet, Kim Il Hwan was widely known as an able sportsman to many of the revolutionaries in east Manchuria.

Kim Il Hwan was a seasoned, experienced political worker. Like O Jung Hwa, he was one of those who set the first example for the rest of the communists in the Jiandao area to follow in revolutionizing his family. His whole family were remarkable revolutionaries and ardent patriots, who laid down their lives for the revolution.

His mother, O Ok Kyong, was a veteran Communist, who dedicated her life to the care of revolutionaries. His wife, Ri Kye Sun, was a laudable daughter of the Korean nation who fought bravely and preserved her honour as a revolutionary until the last moment of her life. His younger brother, Kim Tong San, was an underground operative and was killed by the enemy in a "punitive" action. Kim Jong Sik, of the Helong guerrilla unit, was a cousin of Kim Il Hwan's. His relations on his wife's side, too, dedicated their lives to the revolution. His wife's brother, Ri Ji Chun, was one of those who paid a visit to us in Jilin and received directions for struggle from us.

In short, Kim Il Hwan was a ripe seed. He was well-informed. Kim Il and Pak Yong Sun, who had done underground work with Kim Il Hwan in Helong for many years, often recollected that his method and style of work was seasoned and that he was popular among the masses. Kim Il and Pak Yong Sun developed as Party workers under his influence. I think it was because of these merits that Kim Il Hwan was sent now and then on missions to work among the men of the national salvation army. In those days, the soldiers of this army in Helong all respected him and treated him cordially.

Once Ri To Son's unit from Antu suddenly crowded into Chechangzi in order to "mop up" the national salvation army. The soldiers of the Jingan army searched the village for the national salvation army. They thus discovered a bundle of leaflets at Kim Il Hwan's house, a bundle of important leaflets which his mother was to deliver to another local organization.

Saying that he had discovered the Communist Party, Ri To Son began questioning the whole of Kim Il Hwan's family. Kim's mother said that a stranger had left the bundle, but the interrogator did not believe her. Ri To Son's eyes glared maliciously. While Kim's family was being threatened, their neighbour, a landowner, begged the interrogator to be merciful, saying that they were not Communist Party members, but innocent peasants, and that he was standing surety for them on his honour. Thus the crisis was warded off. This was because Kim Il Hwan had had such a good influence on the landowner in everyday life.

What was most characteristic of Kim Il Hwan was his uncompromising attitude towards injustice and unshakable revolutionary principle. Because of these qualities Kim Il Hwan was stigmatized as a "Minsaengdan" member later and persecuted and finally murdered by the Leftists. The Left chauvinists and factionalist sycophants hated those most who lived to their own convictions, guided by principles, without kowtowing to power or dancing to the tune of others, because injustice could not hold sway and there was no room for the devil to set foot or act freely where there were principles.

There was a man in Kim Il Hwan's village named Ri Ok Man, who was in charge of the local Party organization. The man had accidentally found a place in the revolutionary ranks. He was an opium addict and was leading a dissipated life. He flirted with many women by abusing his

official authority. Kim Il Hwan advised him comradely to refrain from such behaviour and to give up opium smoking. If Ri Ok Man had been a reasonable man, he would have accepted the criticism with thanks. But, by way of retaliation, he instigated his Leftist superiors to stigmatize Kim Il Hwan as a “Minsaengdan” member and to oust him from the office of county Party secretary.

Even after his dismissal, Kim Il Hwan worked loyally. In order to test him the Leftists sent him to a coal-mine owned by a capitalist with an assignment to work among the miners.

Kim Il Hwan and his family could have fled to the enemy area during his test period in order not to be persecuted by the Leftists. But he did not want to be disgraced as a defector from the revolutionary ranks, even if he were to be killed in the presence of the people in the guerrilla zone on the false charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”.

“I shall be arrested and killed.

“It cannot be that I am a member of the ‘Minsaengdan’, an organization of Japanese stooges, nor have I ever thought of being one. However, it would be appropriate for me to uphold the honour of a revolutionary even if it means being killed here on a false charge of involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’, for if I surrendered to the enemy and turned coat to save my life, it would mean a greater loss to the revolution.

“Then the crime of betraying the revolution would not be atoned for ever.

“My last wish is that my whole family should fight staunchly until our country is liberated and becomes independent.”

That was what he had said to his mother and wife when he had had a premonition that his days were numbered.

One day in November 1934 the Leftists brought him to trial. Ri Ok Man's malicious charge against him was absolutely false:

"This man is the worst of reactionaries. He has not confessed a single word in spite of long questionings. There is no knowing whether a serpent or a viper is coiling inside him. If this fellow were kept alive, our revolution could be shattered to shreds in less than ten years. Should he be allowed to live or should he be killed?"

None of the audience answered the question.

Some people whispered: how could a communist revolution be carried out if such people were all killed? But nobody spoke out openly against the charge.

The people of Chechangzi knew that the charge was unfounded, but could not speak against those in power, for if they had they, too, would have been accused of being "Minsaengdan" members.

The Leftists sentenced him, one of the founders of the Helong guerrilla unit, to death.

"Wait and see who is a real 'Minsaengdan' member and who is a true communist... History will make black and white clear," Kim Il Hwan shouted, glaring at them, on his being sentenced to death.

Hearing this, the men of the national salvation army unit under the command of Sun Zhang-xiang shouted angrily, wielding their rifles:

"Why are you killing Kim Il Hwan? He is our teacher and benefactor. If such a revolutionary is a 'Minsaengdan' member, is there anyone who is not a 'Minsaengdan' member? We stand surety for him. If you do not repeal the death sentence, we'll molest you."

Under the pressure of the men of the national salvation army, the Leftists withdrew the sentence and released him; however, they murdered him that night.

“I ask you,” I shouted hoarsely, glaring at Cao Ya-fan, “did you really believe that Kim Il Hwan was a ‘Minsaengdan’ member? Didn’t you shoot him with an ulterior purpose because you knew that he was not a ‘Minsaengdan’ member? If he was a ‘Minsaengdan’ member, who on earth is not a ‘Minsaengdan’ member in this land of Jiandao?”

I continued in a calmer voice: “Comrades, stop gambling on people’s destinies. Treat human beings as humans, treat comrades as comrades, and treat the people as people. Aren’t we fighting to change and transform the world with the weapon of human love, love for our comrades, love for the people? If we lack this love, how do we differ from the bourgeoisie or the bandits? If we mock at people in the name of ‘purge’ any further, the people will turn against us for ever, and our posterity will not forgive us. The only way to redress the murder of thousands of martyrs on a false charge of involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’ is to stop this pointless murder and concentrate all our efforts on the struggle against the Japanese on the strength of the politics of love and trust and unity. Spit out the bait of the ‘Minsaengdan’ thrown by the enemy and don’t yield to factionalism, chauvinism and adventurism having any room in our ranks. This alone will pave the way to healing the wounds caused by the ‘Minsaengdan’ for years, will save the people, save the revolution and strengthen the internationalist ties between the Korean and Chinese communists on a new higher level. The real harmony of the revolutionaries of our two countries must be based on mutual respect, mutual understanding, class confidence and fraternity. We must guard against the pursuit of hegemony more vigilantly than anything else in our joint struggle. If one side pursues a selfish purpose or sacrifices the other for this purpose, such cooperation will not be a

durable one. In short, our harmony will last only if it is motivated by trust and love.”

At the Dahuangwai meeting, there was a heated argument on the matter of personnel. The argument started when some of those at the helm of the special district committee made the assertion that only the people of the majority nation, not the minority nation, could be cadres, that it was inappropriate and irrational that the minority nation should guide the majority nation. They pointed out that the Koreans of the minority nation were not in a position to lead the majority nation, and that, worse still, the Korean revolutionaries could not become cadres for they were given to factional strife, were vacillating and liable to turn reactionary.

It was a known fact that the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee had issued a secret directive that the policy of selecting and appointing mainly Koreans as cadres of the east Manchuria Party leadership should be switched over to the policy of centring on the Chinese. The import of this directive was that in the light of the Koreans’ failure in both the nationalist and communist movements in the past, their being liable to vacillate or to turn reactionary, the difference in language and customs, the “revolutionary basis of the minority nation” was not durable, “success in independence and the communist movements under the leadership of the minority nation was impossible” and that, therefore, the “Korean basis in east Manchuria should be replaced by the Chinese basis”.

The directive demanded that the secretary of the East Manchuria Special District Committee and other major cadres should be appointed by the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee, and that Koreans should

not be promoted, except in special cases, to company commanders and higher ranks.

I did not believe at that time and still do not believe that the directive was motivated by the will of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. When the directive was issued, the leadership of the Chinese Party was on a long march of 25,000 *li*, breaking out of the Jiang Jie-shi's army encirclement. In the vortex of civil war, the Central Committee of the Chinese Party, treading a thorny path and shouldering the heavy burdens of revolutionary war, was in no state to give attention to developments in the northeastern frontier of the country.

Many of the measures taken by the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee were copies of the directives issued by the Comintern's oriental department which was under the direction of Wang Ming and Kang Sheng or were adopted in line with its directives. The distance from Harbin, where the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee was situated, to Irkutsk, Vladivostok or to Khabarovsk, where the offices of Comintern's oriental department were, was much shorter than to Jinggang Mountains or Yanan.

The contention that a minority nation was not in a position to lead a majority nation seriously affected our dignity. It was a fallacy that contradicted the communist principle of selection and appointment of cadres and ignored the composition of the cadres in east Manchuria.

I again started on new arguments:

“The Korean and Chinese communists have the noble task of fighting the Japanese imperialists, their common enemy, until the day of victory. The matter of personnel must, therefore, be settled in a way to strengthen the militant solidarity of the Korean and Chinese peoples and their common struggle against the Japanese, and the principle of selecting and

appointing cadres loyal to the revolution and competent from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism must be maintained.

“As you know the Koreans pioneered the communist movement in east Manchuria. The Korean people make up the overwhelming majority of the cadres and Party members in east Manchuria. Why do you shut your eyes to this fact and claim the guidance of the minority nation by the majority nation or the replacement of cadres from the minority nation by those from the majority nation now after several years of joint struggle?”

“We’re not advocating the theory of the Korean nation’s superiority or of the inferiority of any other nation from a nationalist point of view. But the tendency must be rectified of promoting incompetent and unqualified people indiscriminately simply because they come from the majority nation.

“The nationality or political affiliation or the magnitude of the population should not be the criterion for a selection of cadres. Whether a person belongs to a minority or to a majority nation, he can be a cadre if he is qualified, and cannot be one if he is not.”

Then somebody spoke up, saying that most of the Korean revolutionaries had been involved in the nationalist movement or in factions and, therefore, they were not qualified to be cadres.

I refuted him then and there:

“The overwhelming majority of the Korean revolutionaries working in east Manchuria are from the unsullied new generation who have never been involved in any factions. You well know that the young communists from the main class, whom we have trained stinting no efforts, make up the main force of the people’s revolutionary army. These young people are also working as cadres of the Party, government

and mass organizations. There are also people who had participated in the nationalist movement or who were involved in factions in the past, but they have all been transformed on revolutionary lines.”

Scarcely had I finished when another man counterattacked me on another subject. He said that the “Minsaengdan” was the son of factionalism, that factionalism was the son of nationalism and that nationalism was the son of Japanese imperialism. This absurd allegation stunned everyone. To put it in a reverse order, he meant that Japanese imperialism had supported the people who participated in the nationalist movement and those who were involved in factions in the past. It was an absurd allegation which had no theoretical justification; it was a display of distrust in the ranks of the Korean communist movement which embraced the former nationalists and factionalists who had been re-educated.

I felt the need to attack the sophistry.

“People’s ideologies are not immutable. Those who had a nationalist ideology in the past can become communists through their firm efforts to make themselves over. It would be preposterous to regard people who participated in the nationalist movement in the past as the fathers of factionalism or as the sons of Japanese imperialism.

“Fundamentally speaking, nationalism has its ideological basis in the love for one’s country and nation. To regard it as reactionary, therefore, is tantamount to regarding patriotism as reactionary. Don’t indiscriminately consider nationalism to be heretical. So long as nationalism is not used as an ideological instrument of the bourgeoisie, there is no need to casually reject it. Nationalism can only be reactionary to history when it represents the interests of the bourgeoisie alone, and not the interests of the whole nation.

“If anybody said that Sun Yat-sen, who authored the Three Principles of the People, namely, nationalism, rights of the people, and people’s livelihood, was the son of imperialism, how would you accept such nonsense? Opposition to nationalism itself is an expression of extreme nationalist prejudice.

“Some of the Korean factionalists and nationalists did go over to the enemy camp, but you must remember that they were few in number.

“Some people believe that factional strife is an innate quality of the Korean nation, and perceive the Korean communists with prejudice as though they had connections with a faction. That is absolutely ridiculous.

“To be candid, factions existed not only in the ranks of the Korean communist movement, they also existed in Germany and in the Soviet Union, they also exist in China and Japan and were also in the International. Why, then, should the Korean people alone be considered to have an ingrained factional habit, and why should the name of a Korean communist be synonymous for factionalist?

“Some people argue that Koreans are not entitled to be cadres, saying that they, as a minority nation who were unsuccessful in the past independence and communist movements, will not be successful in these movements, or that they are very unsteady in the revolutionary struggle and are liable to turn reactionary. All this is but an excuse aimed at ejecting the Korean cadres.

“You have disposed of dozens and even hundreds of Korean communists in east Manchuria by this chauvinistic point of view or murdered them on the false charge of involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’, of military and political cadres who had loyally fought side by side with you in the same trench for several years.

“So many hard-core elements of the leadership have been removed from their office simply because they came from the minority nation. And are you still hankering for removing more Koreans?”

“If you persist in your chauvinistic attitude towards the Koreans further and maltreat them, we will not share the same room with you any longer.”

As I made this bombshell declaration, the entire audience raised their heads, staring at me.

The conference hall was tensed to such an extent that the gurgling of throats was audible.

If somebody had refuted me or had uttered a single word to wound my dignity to the slightest degree, the argument would have leapt out of control. Fortunately, the discussion on the personnel stirred no further vehemence.

As the meeting proceeded, the battle of words between the Leftists and me grew fiercer. Several other Korean cadres were present, but they kept silent the whole time.

Nevertheless, I sensed their mental support. Even Song Il, who had been an agent of the Leftists and who had left many scars in my heart, came to see me and encouraged me, saying that I had single-handed done what nobody else could have done. Wei Zheng-min and Wang Run-cheng, too, showed understanding of my idea, although they did not express their opinions officially. Wei Zheng-min’s sober judgement and fair attitude in particular were of considerable help to me.

I continued the battle of words day and night, eating three meals of bean gruel a day. Only skin and bone remained of me. I had to argue against them all day until late at night, and was sick when I got into bed, and when morning came I had to go back again to the argument. As I had

to fight alone against many of them, it was inconceivable for me to stay away from the meeting or to abstain from the exercise of my rights. I had to involve myself in the polemic, whether I liked it or not, for the destiny of the thousands and even tens of thousands of Korean communists and Korean people in Jiandao.

Another point of argument at the meeting was how to appreciate the slogan of national liberation which had been raised by the Korean communists. In other words, the argument was whether the struggle of the Korean communists in China under the slogan of national liberation agreed with the Comintern's principle of one Party for one country or not, and whether the slogan was essentially identical with the reactionary slogan of "Koreans' autonomy in Jiandao" professed by the "Minsaengdan" or not.

Certain individuals said that the Korean communists' slogan of national liberation was identical with the slogan of "Koreans' autonomy in Jiandao" rigged up by the "Minsaengdan", that it contradicted the Comintern's principle of one Party for one country.

This view was shared by a considerable number of cadres. This was a dangerous point of view diametrically opposed to ours. According to their opinion, we would have to serve them for the revolution in a foreign country or play the role of a small unit of the international force, instead of fighting for the Korean revolution.

I could not agree with their opinion in considering the Korean revolution to be an appendage of the revolution in a large country.

"The Japanese imperialists have granted the slogan of 'Koreans' autonomy in Jiandao' to the 'Minsaengdan' for driving a wedge between the Korean and Chinese peoples and for disrupting the communist ranks from within in order to create favourable conditions for their colonial

rule. There's no need for an argument to prove that it has nothing in common with the slogan of national liberation raised by the Korean communists in Jiandao.

“Our national liberation slogan is aimed at liberating our country by overthrowing Japanese imperialist rule and at providing our people with an opportunity to enjoy genuine freedom and to exercise their rights in an independent new society without any exploitation and oppression.

“Should the Korean communists relinquish their sacred right to liberate their country and to provide their people with freedom and happiness just because they are sharing the same room with you in a foreign country? If we were to carry out only the revolution of a foreign country, and not the Korean revolution, why have we organized and trained the Korean people, without feeding and clothing ourselves properly in this land of Manchuria for several years? Some people say that if the Chinese revolution emerges victorious, the Korean revolution will triumph automatically. That's nonsense. A revolution in a country has its own path and its own timetable. If the forces of one's own country are not prepared, one's revolution will not win of its own accord, no matter how the revolution in a neighbouring country may triumph. The communists of all countries must, therefore, struggle to effect revolutions in their own countries through their own efforts, instead of waiting for somebody else to help them. This is precisely the attitude one should maintain towards revolution, an attitude worthy of masters.

“Certain persons allege that the Korean communists should not raise the national liberation slogan, using the Comintern's principle of one Party for one country as an excuse. This is, in effect, an attempt to make the Korean communists take their hands off the revolution in their own country. I cannot say otherwise.

“If the French communists had asked the Chinese communists, who were working in France, not to raise the slogan for the Chinese revolution, would the Chinese communists have agreed to the demand?”

“No matter where they’re working, the communists must fight under the slogan for the revolution in their own country, and through the struggle, they must help the revolution in the country where they are working and also contribute to the world revolution. It is a right to independence as well as a sacred duty for Korean communists to fight for the liberation of their country, a right which nobody can ever prevent from being fulfilled or perform in place of the masters.”

The polemic that started at the Dahuangwai meeting was resumed at the Yaoyinggou meeting, held in March the same year. Many of those attending supported our contention and admitted their mistakes. But the difference was not resolved completely at that meeting, either.

We decided to present a number of key points of the argument to the Comintern. We sent Wei Zheng-min and Yun Pyong Do, a cadre of the East Manchuria Special District Committee of the Young Communist League, to Moscow to receive the Comintern’s answer to them.

The disorder in the Jiandao area was a nightmare, coming as a side effect of the “Minsaengdan” issue.

The Leftists’ blind “purge” campaign had demolished nearly all the foundations for the revolution which the Korean communists had built up through their arduous struggle. Were all those who had been “purged” “Minsaengdan” members? No. There is a record in an enemy document stating there were only seven or eight “Minsaengdan” members. In order to ferret out those seven or eight, the “purge” campaign had massacred more than two thousand friends on the false charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”. This was a tragedy unprecedented in the history of the

world communist movement. It was an abyss of stupidity, ignorance and tomfoolery.

All the strong, solid people, who had come to Jiandao with a noble aim from Korea and from many other parts of the world, fell victim to the “purge” in two to three years. There were a variety of talents among the unfortunate victims, to whom nothing seemed impossible. The icy wind of “purge” swept away laudable sons and daughters of Korea, produced by our revolution against the Japanese.

If I say that the number of the people killed in the aftermath of the “Minsaengdan” hullabaloo exceeded the number of the people who fell on the battlefield, our posterity will not believe me. But it is the truth. The history of the war against the Japanese keeps records of innumerable battles, but it does not give data of 20 to 30 deaths in a single battle. By contrast, it was frequent in the guerrilla zones of east Manchuria that 20 to 30 revolutionaries were massacred in a single day on a false charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”. We could not even erect tombstones at their graves. What would be the use of moaning over and praying for the souls of the departed? They will curse the murderers even in their graves.

Was the “Minsaengdan” really in Jiandao where it had been dissolved?

I do not even feel the need to answer this question.

There were no “Minsaengdan” members even among the people who, afraid of the “purge”, had fled from the guerrilla zones.

Was Ju Jin a “Minsaengdan” member? No.

Was Pak Kil a “Minsaengdan” member? No. He had worked in the Independence Army movement and then plunged into the sacred anti-Japanese war of national salvation. He had been to the Maritime

Province, where he had imbibed the communist ideology, and then arrived in Jiandao where the sacred war of national liberation was raging most fiercely, and engaged in underground political work and took part in the armed struggle. By the time we were organizing a small guerrilla unit, which went by the name of a secret guerrilla army, he had already won a high reputation as a political instructor; after the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was formally founded, he worked as the political commissar of the Yanji Battalion.

Pak Kil had pioneered the revolution in the Yanji area. He was an able political worker and agitator, who knew how to move the hearts of the masses, as well as a prominent military commander.

His was a patriotic family that had produced five or six anti-Japanese revolutionary martyrs. His father, Pak Jung Won (alias Tiger), was a loyal peasant who set a remarkable example of support to the revolutionary army. Originally, as a sharecropper, he had dedicated himself to the independence movement. He had raised a calf received for his hired labour, and when the calf grew up into a cow, he contributed it to the guerrilla army. He was a very enthusiastic supporter of the revolutionary army.

It was literally unreasonable to charge him with involvement in the "Minsaengdan" with such a family background. Nevertheless, the Leftists took issue with him about his service in the Independence Army in former days and about his sister, who had been forced to become a policeman's concubine and had run away from him. In the end, they murdered him.

Was Kim Myong Gyun a "Minsaengdan" member? No. He was one of the founders of the Wangqing guerrilla unit. He was the head of the military department of the county Party committee. Why would a man

like him join the “Minsaengdan”? The Japanese record of his public trial stated that by the time he was imprisoned in the “Minsaengdan” gaol he had shot Japanese on more than 20 occasions, had raided Japanese and Manchurian authorities over 20 times, and had captured weapons from the enemy on eight occasions. If he were a “Minsaengdan” member, how could he have performed such exploits? How could he, after his escape from the guerrilla zone, teach children to inspire them with a national spirit? How could he have been shot to death by the enemy?

What about Ri Ung Gol? He was not a “Minsaengdan” member, either. I knew him well. He was the head of the organizational department of the district No. 1 Party committee. He was the first to come to Xiaobeigou with two war-horses to meet me in October 1932 when we first marched into Wangqing. He narrowly escaped from being executed on a charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”. That day I gained an unforgettable impression from the hearty, courteous welcome accorded me, a young guerrilla commander, by this large man who had brought me two war-horses.

Ri Ung Gol was a revolutionary with an alert political responsiveness and a rich experience of struggle. He was the secretary of a Young Communist League organization in Helong County and served his terms of imprisonment at Longjing and Seoul; he also worked as political commissar of the special detachment under the command of Ri Kwang. I used to give guidance to district Party work through Ri Ung Gol, and by generalizing this example I delved deep into Party work in the Wangqing area.

In the summer of 1933 Ri Ung Gol was arrested by the Leftists on a charge of involvement in the “Minsaengdan”; then he fled from the guerrilla zone to the homeland, leaving a letter behind him which said,

“The charge of my involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’ is unfounded.” He established the base of his activity in the Puryong area, formed a communist union by rallying young and middle-aged patriots in North and South Hamgyong Provinces, and organized the struggle against the Japanese, against their construction of military roads, against forced rice delivery, and forced labour drafting. In the course of this struggle, he was arrested by the Japanese police and was imprisoned at Seoul. He was sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment. The Japanese court knew who he was.

Should such a man have been executed as a “Minsaengdan” member?

The polemic at the Dahuangwai meeting was significant in that it removed the stigma of the “Minsaengdan” from people like Ri Ung Gol. The polemic at the meeting and the subsequent conclusion given by the Comintern absolved the executed people from disgrace. Their physical lives could not be revived, but their political integrity was rehabilitated. Another significant point of the meeting was that it exposed the wicked and brutal Japanese imperialists’ scheme and the political absurdness of those who had been deceived by their scheme, and also that, by so doing, it arrested the political coup by the Leftists, binding them hand and foot. Indeed, the Leftist deviation of the “purge” was a political violence and a coup against the lower echelons, a coup that was staged overtly by those in power in order to physically destroy their subordinates.

Our activities were widely known to the Koreans living in east Manchuria after the Dahuangwai meeting. In this written effort, I have given a tedious account of the “Minsaengdan” incident as I recollect it. However, this is not aimed at particularly accusing the authors of the tragic event to the whole world or at settling my account with the criminals. These reminiscences are intended to give the younger

generation a clear picture of the enemy's scheme and stratagem to divide and disrupt the revolutionary ranks from within, to show that they were made not only yesterday, but are still being made today, and will continue tomorrow, and that chauvinism and the political clumsiness of Leftist elements is still hovering like a spectre around us, and to give the younger generation a lesson about the establishment of Juche of the Korean revolution and about the national spirit of independence.

I keenly sensed in my heart, through the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle and the Dahuangwai meeting, the summary of the struggle, that independence is the lifeblood of the nation, and that in order to uphold and maintain this independence every member of the nation, pioneer elements in particular, must fight with self-sacrifice.

Just as independence is the primary quality of the man, so it is the primary source of vitality that guarantees the nation's survival. It can be said that independence is the basic factor that affects the lives of individuals as well as a nation, a large community. We describe the anti-Japanese revolution as a sacred war for winning back national sovereignty, because the first and foremost desire of the Korean people for decades had been to win back their sovereignty, which had held the highest place in the programme of the Korean communists. In short, it was the final aim of the national liberation struggle.

All the activities of the Korean communists, therefore, had to be subordinated to this goal. We had to regard the defence of independence as vital in our way of thinking and in practice. We became ferocious tigers and thunderbolts in all battles for independence.

No one will present us with independence, nor will it come about of its own accord with the lapse of time. We must win it by our own struggle. Only those who fight in an indefatigable, self-sacrificing spirit

can win independence and maintain it for ever, because there are too many thieves on this earth who trample upon the sovereignty of other nations. There are also many people who regard their independence to be natural for them, but other people's efforts to live in independence get on their nerves, and they interfere with these efforts. Considering independence to be one's own monopoly is an expression of anachronistic, imperialistic and dominationist arrogance.

The fact that in the ranks of the struggle for a common goal there was a force trampling on independence was a historical whim going beyond common sense. The Korean revolution suffered severe pain and frustration because of this whim. In order to assume the offensive from the setback, we fought self-sacrificingly like ferocious tigers against those who were trampling upon the Korean nation's and communists' right to independence. The Dahuangwai meeting was a great ideological battle which the Korean communists fought, under the banner of independence, in order to maintain the Juche line of the Korean revolution and to defend their right to independence.

If we had been frightened by the ruthless iron fists of the brutal Leftists or had even been slightly afraid of sacrifice, we would have been unable to save the revolution from being crushed under the caterpillars of the madly-rushing Leftist vehicle. It was the staunch, self-sacrificing spirit of the Korean communists who jump into fire and water in defence of justice, their communist principles and their immutable faith in the validity of their cause that saved the revolution from crisis.

Today when the imperialists are clamouring about the collapse of socialism and are enhancing the political war of nerves in an attempt to sidetrack our Republic from the Juche orbit, it is vital to our nation and our Republic that we continue to champion and uphold independence.

The Korean communists will emerge victorious also in their confrontation with the imperialists, in defence of our own style of people-centred socialism and independence.

I felt to the marrow of my bones during the struggle against the “Minsaengdan” the destructive intrigues and underhand dealings both in everyday life and in the revolutionary struggle. I learned the serious lesson of how impossible it was to work together with factionalists for the revolution. Suffice it to say that one should read the 500-year history of the Ri dynasty to fully understand the harm and reactionary nature of intrigues, underhand dealings and factional strife. A rattling of sabres between parents and children, between brothers to satisfy their greed for power, is the nature of reactionary people, and the bad habit of factionalists.

After liberation, our enemy used the Japanese imperialists’ method of the “Minsaengdan” in an attempt to disrupt our ranks. They once sent forged letters to Paek Nam Un², Kang Yong Chang³ and Choe Ung Sok, cadres from south Korea who were loyal to the Party, to harm them surreptitiously. We were not fooled by the enemy because we had had the experience of combatting the “Minsaengdan” in the guerrilla zones. Had it not been for this experience, we might have committed a Leftist error in dealing with the people who were involved in the “peace maintenance corps”⁴ and their associates. We dealt with their political destiny leniently in a way to promote the interests of the revolution.

Whenever I appoint a new Minister of Public Security, I warn him not to commit a Leftist error, to say nothing of a Rightist mistake, and not to forget the lesson of the “Minsaengdan” incident.

The Leftist tendency is a hotbed where political impostors and schemers can brew a new type of “Minsaengdan” hullabaloo. The

owners of this hotbed talk about the Party, the revolution and loyalty in a voice that is ten times and even twenty times louder than that of other people. What difference is there between such ultra-revolutionary utterances and the behaviour of the Leftists who played with the people's political integrity with such impunity in the guerrilla zones?

The Leftist deviation is a covert counterrevolution, whereas the Rightist deviation is an overt counterrevolution; the Leftist deviation is a poisonous mushroom as harmful as the Rightist deviation which is a malignant tumour. The Rightists and Leftists seem to be dreaming different dreams while living on the same giant tree of revolution, but, in effect, they are linked with the same vein. Bear in mind that an individual's Leftist mistake would harm a collective, but a government party's Leftist error would lose the people and bring the revolution to ruin. If we forget that, we shall be unable to preserve socialism. This is the lesson we learned from the history of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle; it is an appeal to the communists of the whole world from the countries which have gone through the painful experience of enormous bloodshed caused by a Leftist error.

To oppose and guard against the Leftist tendency, which poses under the mask of super-party words and acts, and to protect the people's political destiny from Leftist encroachment—this is the eternal principle which the communists of government parties must adhere to, without neglecting it even for a moment.

3. Revolutionaries Born of the Young Communist League

Youth work is an important activity to which I have been devoting painstaking efforts throughout my life. My days in Jilin are an illustration of the fact that my revolutionary activities began with the youth and student movement. Before my imprisonment in the Jilin prison I worked among young people and students, and after my release, too, I continued to do so, but now in the form of underground work. In the summer of 1930 when I contacted workers of the Comintern liaison office for the first time, I was appointed chief secretary of the Young Communist League in the eastern region of Jilin Province and from then on I worked in the YCL.

Needless to say, youth work was part and parcel of my military and political activities while in Wangqing. To direct the work of the YCL in the guerrilla army was a natural part of my duty as the commander responsible for political affairs in the army. In addition, at the request of the leadership of the east Manchuria Party organization and the workers of the Wangqing County Party Committee, I devoted much time to YCL work outside the army.

In those days the Party, the Young Communist League and the Children's Corps were called the Alliance of Three Generations. In this

alliance the YCL occupied an important place next to the Party. People called the YCL the relief of the Party, the reserve of the Party or the reservoir of the Party; and in order to emphasize the importance of its mission and role, they named it the second Party.

The Party meetings discussing strategic and tactical questions that were important in the development of the revolution and the measures to implement them were always attended by the YCL secretaries together with the Party members. The east Manchuria Party organization called a meeting like this a joint Party-League meeting. At the joint meetings the YCL secretaries and the Party members had equal rights to speak and to vote. In places where there were no Party members or the Party was weak, the YCL activists had the major role of guiding the mass movement.

On my arrival in Jiandao from my expeditions in north and south Manchuria, I became fully acquainted with the real state of YCL work in east Manchuria through Jo Tong Uk, YCL secretary of the special detachment under the command of Ri Kwang, Han Jae Chun, Wangqing county YCL secretary, Kim Jung Gwon, head of the organizational department of the YCL in Wangqing County, and others.

In those days serious Leftist and Rightist deviations were being exposed in YCL work in east Manchuria, deviations which hindered the building of the YCL organizations and the revolutionary development.

The greatest difficulty in YCL work in the Wangqing area was the shortage of capable leaders. YCL cadres were badly needed for skilfully organizing and dealing with work to meet the requirements of the situation in those days when the Korean revolution as a whole was rapidly advancing in an upward spiral, centring on the armed struggle. Most of the Young Communist Leaguers were illiterate or could scarcely

read and write the Korean alphabet, and only a few attained the intellectual level of middle-school leavers.

The factionalists confined the youth movement to the narrow guerrilla zones and conducted youth work mostly among the young workers and peasants, claiming that only a few special well-informed people of good family background could do the YCL work. This tendency resulted in neglecting to recruit new members for the YCL. Under the pretext of ensuring the purity of the composition and secret of the YCL organizations, the factionalists closed the doors of these organizations and indiscriminately rejected the applicants for various reasons. They refused to admit students on the pretext that they were too young and that their family backgrounds were undesirable; they also rejected simple young workers and peasants on the grounds that they were ignorant.

The applicants were required to master at least *The Fundamentals of Socialism* and read and interpret *The Communist Manifesto*, *Wage Labour and Capital* and some other classics. If some applicants were found not to have read *The Communist Manifesto* during the deliberation of their admission, the examiners used to find fault with them saying, “How could you lead YCL life without a knowledge of *The Communist Manifesto*?”

A young applicant in Dawangqing was rejected because his cow had been confiscated by the Soviet government. He was told that if his draught animal was confiscated, then his family must belong to the propertied class, and therefore, he, whose property had been confiscated by the Soviets, was not qualified for YCL membership.

The Leftists who shut the YCL’s door to applicants were reluctant to admit even the young people who had loyally worked in the Peasants’ Association, the Anti-Imperialist Union, the Revolutionary Mutual Aid

Society and the Children's Vanguard. In the district where the Leftists barred the way for recruiting new members, a mass organization with a hundred members contained only three to four YCL members. There were many similar instances. The recruiting of new YCL members in the Wangqing area was strictly restricted, probably because the headquarters of the east Manchuria Party organization was located in that area. No matter how loyal they had been in the organizational life in other counties, the young people who came to Wangqing from other areas were not permitted to join the YCL unless they had certificates of transfer or references from the organizations they had belonged to.

Jon Mun Jin was engaged in underground revolutionary activities in the Dongning county town and arrived in Wangqing, having escaped from wholesale arrest by the warlord authorities. However, she was not registered as a YCL member because she did not have a certificate of transfer, although she was a loyal worker in the sewing unit of the guerrilla army.

One day I went to the sewing unit to express my thanks to them for my uniform, and found her despondent for some reason. I went there on several occasions in subsequent months, but she was just as depressed as before. I talked to her. She was a timid woman, but she spoke frankly about her troubles. Although she had joined the guerrilla army as she had wished to do in the new place, she had not been admitted to the Young Communist League. That was why she was in as low spirits as a solitary wild goose. Having learned why she was troubled, I discussed it with the workers concerned and saw to it that she resumed her life in the YCL.

Some YCL organizations allowed heterogeneous, faithless, chance and unsteady elements to find their way into their ranks with the help of their fellow townsmen, schoolmates, relations, friends, acquaintances

and through other unprincipled channels. Other YCL workers, who regarded family backgrounds as absolute, accepted even spies, who had wormed their way into the guerrilla zone, fooled by their statements of having been servants for landowners. Some YCL members, who lacked revolutionary training, defected to the enemy area in these circumstances, unable to endure the hardships.

The deviations disclosed in the work of the Young Communist League gave rise to distrust in communism among a considerable number of young people and resulted in their not taking any part in the revolutionary movement led by the communists. As a consequence, these deviations badly affected the work of the YCL in the guerrilla army and the united front movement that rallied young people, students and patriotic people from all walks of life under the banner of the anti-Japanese struggle.

These Leftist and Rightist deviations in YCL work in the guerrilla zones were due to the fact that the leaders of the YCL did not have a proper organizational line suited to the real state and interests of the Korean revolution, and either dogmatically applied the propositions of the classics or copied foreign experience.

In March 1933 when the leaders of the guerrilla zones were intent on finding ways and means to correct the mistakes in YCL work and to renovate youth work, a meeting of YCL workers was held at Macun, Xiaowangqing. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 people involved in youth work, including YCL committee members and heads of children's departments in the Wangqing area, delegates of young people from Yanji, and student delegates (underground workers) from Longjing. Comrades there whose names I still remember were Kim Jung

Gwon, Pak Hyon Suk, Jo Tong Uk, Pak Kil Song, Ri Song Il, Kim Pom Su, and Choe Pong Song.

Whenever I look back on the meeting I, for some reason, vividly remember Pak Kil Song's unusually sparkling eyes which were fixed on me all through the meeting. I probably recollect his eyes especially because he lost one eye later in an encounter with a Kwantung Army unit. He laid down his life as a remarkable guerrilla commander in north Manchuria at the young age of 26. But in 1933 he attended the meeting merely as an exemplary YCL member, with no special office in the YCL.

On the closing day of the meeting, the county YCL workers and the delegates requested me to speak. They seemed to have discussed the fact that Kim Il Sung had done a great deal of YCL work in Jilin, and in the capacity of chief secretary of the Young Communist League in the eastern region of Jilin Province had worked among many young people in Jiandao, he, therefore, must have valuable experience to offer, so that they wanted to hear my opinion. In compliance with their request I made a long speech about the tasks facing the YCL organizations. The major part of my speech was recollected in detail by Jo Tong Uk a few decades ago.

Historically, philosophers, statesmen, and educationists in the East and the West had expressed valuable opinions about the place and mission of the younger generation in the struggle for social changes and transformation. Classic Marxists unanimously regarded young people as a bridgeway to the revolution or as the reserve force of the revolution. Even Aristotle, that ancient philosopher, said that the future of a country depended on how its younger generation was brought up and educated. Both materialist and idealist philosophers and both Eastern and Western

scholars had expressed much the same views about the importance of the younger generation, who would shoulder the destiny of the future.

My opinion did not differ from theirs in appreciating the younger generation as the pillar of the future. But I did not rest content with limiting the young people's position to a bridgeway to the revolution or to a reserve force of the revolution. I did not agree with the authors of the classics and theoreticians in the previous age defining the younger generation as an auxiliary stratum in the revolution, relying upon the older generation and receiving the latter's guidance and education. Considering the process and events of the Korean revolution, I did not think the view of the young people being no more than an auxiliary force a correct one.

I have always regarded the young people as the vanguard of the revolution. They were the vanguard, the main force, the backbone force which took the brunt of the revolutionary struggle and the social movement and shouldered the destiny of the future. This was fully verified in reality. Even today, in my eighties, I do not change this view about the position and role of young people as the vanguard of the revolution. Had we not pioneered the revolutionary movement independently, relying on the older generation and spending time doing just what they told us to do and following them passively, it would have been impossible for us to break with the trend of outmoded way of thinking in the darkest period of Japanese imperialist colonial rule, to blaze the trail for the Korean revolution, in the van of the nation united under the banner of the Juche idea, to found the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, and develop the anti-Japanese revolution on all fronts, centring on the armed struggle, in order to meet the requirements of the new age.

The history of the national liberation struggle in our country clearly shows that young people were always in the forefront of the struggle. They fought courageously, fearing neither prisons, death nor the gallows. The young people of Korea were in the van of the March First Popular Uprising (1919—Tr.) risking their lives, and shouted patriotic slogans as the main force of the June Tenth Independence Movement (1926—Tr.) that swept the streets of Seoul. The young people and students were also the motive force of the student incident in Kwangju in November 1929: though not directed by anybody, they rose in revolt, closed ranks and swept through the streets to the open square of struggle like angry waves at the point of a bayonet. The young communists of the new generation had emerged as the motive force of the national liberation struggle from the middle of the 1920s and marked a new chapter in the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

The fact that my youth had begun with Young Communist League activities was written in detail in the previous volumes. The whole period of the revolutionary struggle against the Japanese coincided with my youth. At that age I commanded regiments, divisions and corps. At one time some of our people had imagined me to be a grey-haired general. But I was scarcely 34 years of age when I made a speech at the Pyongyang Public Stadium on my triumphal return home.

Guerrilla warfare was not like wars of old where generals of the opposing forces had single combats on horseback, wielding spears, while their men beat drums in encampments fortified with palisades, or in which soldiers shot arrows from high walls, nor was it like a modern war in which sophisticated weapons are employed and commands are given by telephone or radio. Generals in their fifties and even in their seventies

can give commands in such battles. In guerrilla war, by contrast, both men and their commanders must fight in the biting cold and icy snow.

Commanders, too, had to shoot machine-guns at times and charge into a bayonet attack when the situation demanded it. A man without the physical health and strength, possessing a sound mental power could not withstand a burden like that.

Most of the fighters were in their twenties who fought in the anti-Japanese revolution. Yang Jing-yu became the commander of the 1st Route Corps of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army at the age of 32, and Chen Han-zhang commanded the 3rd Directional Corps from the age of 27. O Jung Hup died at the flowery age of 29 while discharging his strenuous duty of a regimental commander.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the anti-Japanese armed struggle was conducted by the young people on their full responsibility. How can we regard the younger generation in this context as a mere bridge to the revolution or as a reserve force of the revolution?

This standpoint of mine was reflected in my speech and talks that day:

“Young people are the backbone of the main force that propels our revolution. The history of any country in the world shows that young people were always in the forefront of the struggle for social transformation. They have the strength to level mountains and to wall off the sea. It is precisely work with the youth that will awaken them to political consciousness, organize and encourage them to stand in the front line of the revolution.

“How deplorable it is, however, that the Young Communist League is shutting out the masses of the young people! Some YCL organizations are not recruiting fine young people on the pretext that they are too

young. That's a typical example of closed-doorism, so to speak. Is Ryu Kwan Sun remembered as a heroine, a product of the March First Movement, in the history of our nation because she was old at the time?

“General Nam I said, ‘Should a man at twenty fail to subdue the land, who will in later years call him a man of calibre?’

“If we reject or ignore young enthusiasts in their teens, on the excuse of their being too young, the Young Communist League will become a middle-aged people's organization, not that of young people. If the YCL admits sages and wise men, who have had ten or twenty years of training, how can it then be an organization of young people?”

The next subject that interested the delegates was on the method and style of work.

I spoke lengthily on this subject, also:

“The YCL workers must acquire a proper method and style of work in order to organize broad sections of young people. Supposing a YCL member failed to kill an enemy soldier though shooting five rounds of ammunition. The guerrilla army has a motto that a single shot must kill an enemy. Therefore, if all five shots missed the target, something was obviously wrong.

“If the YCL member who made that mistake was criticized and disciplinary measures were taken against him by his organization, are such dealings to be considered appropriate? You, comrades, must not deal with such a matter in any old way. You must first study the nature of the mistake from various angles, from the sides and from behind, whether the weapon worked properly or not, whether the front and rear sights were at a good level, whether the rifleman had the butt against his shoulder securely and pulled the trigger softly, whether he breathed properly while pulling the trigger or not. You must closely examine

everything. And you must also find out whether he has any physiological weakness or not, whether he is short-sighted or far-sighted, or astigmatic, and whether he is a coward or not.

“Such a case should be discussed after studying it from various angles, instead of being attributed to an unsound ideology and subjected to an ideological struggle without discrimination.

“Criticism must always be made to save comrades. Shortcomings must not be connived at, but be criticized in a scientific manner, so that the criticism would be acceptable to the man concerned. Criticism must not be made in a way to expose his mistakes, to abuse or insult him.”

I talked about all the aspects of YCL work at the meeting that day, ranging from the matter of strengthening the YCL’s organizational and ideological basis, improving propaganda, agitation, and education, about criticizing oneself and each other honestly, training the Children’s Corps into the reserve of the YCL, and up to the work of assimilating the good points of the young patriots’ struggle in the previous age.

In the subsequent days, too, I took every opportunity to emphasize that YCL workers must become the standard-bearers in work, mixing with the masses at all times, and that they must behave like their own mothers in dealing with them.

After the meeting, an innovation occurred in the work attitude of the YCL officials. The YCL organizations broke the outmoded pattern of bureaucracy, closed-doorism and formalism, became vivacious, living organizations mixing closely with the young masses.

One day I went to the county YCL committee to see Kim Jung Gwon. But the county committee was empty except for a messenger. I asked him where everyone else was, and he answered that they had all gone to

visit district and branch organizations. I was unable to hide my satisfaction on learning this.

Previously, the officials of the county YCL committee had worked in a leisurely manner, cooped up in the office, summoning district and branch secretaries to them, giving assignments or receiving reports of the fulfilment of their assignments from them, instead of going to visit the YCL members. The county YCL committee had been so ignorant of situations at its subordinate organizations that it would have believed it if anybody had told them that a stallion had given birth to a foal. And yet, it had been in the habit of holding meetings for an ideological struggle and shouting hurrah as if everything had been settled. The YCL organizations had considered meetings and criticisms to be solutions to all problems.

But this conventional method of work began to disappear from the attitude of the YCL officials. YCL workers now started to visit branch organizations in the guerrilla army and local areas and to help them in their work in a responsible manner. The people who had been spending time on empty talk and paper work in the office of the county YCL committee were now going out to their subordinate organizations, were mixing in with YCL members, attending meetings of groups and branch organizations and helping their secretaries in drafting work plans. Cadres of the YCL gathered in the office of the county YCL committee only on the day designated for a meeting.

Many able workers emerged from the ranks of YCL activists capable of skilfully dealing with every situation and condition as well as many seasoned leaders who gained a good method and style of work.

Kim Pom Su, head of the YCL's organizational department of district No. 8 of Yanji County, was a man who had participated in the meeting at

Mingyuegou; his parents, however, did not even know that their son was an able YCL worker who was loved by the young people.

When Kim Pom Su was a primary schoolboy, his mother was so proud of her only son that she used to carry him to school on her back. He grew up, thus basking in his parents' love, and when he reached adolescence he was already married, much earlier than usual.

Even after his marriage, his parents controlled his outings strictly in order to keep their son from participating in the social movement.

Nevertheless, Kim Pom Su made the back-room of his house a meeting hall and secretly made a doghole in his fence, a hole large enough for a man to pass through, and then would summon young people to the meeting hall. His parents were glad that their son, staying away from outings, was making a "good" husband of himself. Their son, however, was inviting young people to the back-room to do YCL work every night, with no time to even glance at his wife. He trained dozens of YCL activists in this back-room.

The secretary of the county YCL committee worked mainly with the young people of the YCL organizations in the guerrilla army, and the heads of organizational and propaganda departments directed the youth movement through contact with the YCL organizations in the guerrilla zones and in the enemy area. When necessary, the secretary of the county YCL committee joined the guerrillas in battle, guiding the masses.

One day during Operation Macun, a company branch of the YCL, which was manned on a hill in front of Macun, held an extraordinary meeting, attended by the secretary of the county YCL committee. Anticipating a decisive battle, each of the YCL members made an oath, speaking vehemently:

“Let the hearts of the Young Communist Leaguers defend the land which has been won at the cost of our blood!”

The YCL members opened a barrage of fire and destroyed the attacking enemy and revenged him. The enemy suffered hundreds of casualties in that battle alone.

When attacking the Dongning county town and Luozigou, in cooperation with the national salvation army, the secretary was in the forefront of the guerrilla formation.

In the months subsequent to the YCL workers’ meeting, I frequently met YCL officials, discussing matters relating to YCL activity. In connection with YCL work in those days I stressed above all the need to strengthen education in patriotism, revolutionary and class education, anti-imperialist and communist education and also education in optimism among the young men and women, to intensify military training, to establish a correct outlook on the masses among the YCL officials and members and for them to attain a communist method and style of work.

We directed the YCL organizations to pay preferential attention to political, military and economic questions on hand and to exert all their efforts to finding solutions to those problems. The Young Communist League was not an academic or enlightenment organization, nor was it a club. It was an organization to educate and to unite the masses of young people for the victory of the revolution. Therefore, all its activities were always subordinated to the political, military and economic practice at the time. That was the way to make each of the YCL organizations a living, working organization and a source of strong motive power.

In those days the people, including the youth, in the guerrilla zones were neglecting economic problems, namely, the problems of food, clothing and housing. The food needed by the people in the guerrilla

zones was met mostly with provisions captured from the enemy. The arid land in the guerrilla zones could not yield enough food for the people for the year. Whenever they ran out of food, the people turned to the army. In this way the tendency to depend on the guerrilla army developed among many officials and inhabitants of the guerrilla zones. Some people even neglected preparations for farming in the hope that, when their food ran out, the army would naturally attack the enemy and capture provisions for them.

In the spring of 1934 I celebrated May Day with comrades of the 3rd Company at Dahuangwai. In addition to giving guidance to the company, I asked about the farming preparations and found them deplorable. Even though it was the ploughing season, the people in that place were idling the time away leisurely, without making any preparations for spring sowing. What were they going to do then? I was not alone in my surprise. The secretary of the county YCL committee, who was there, did not hide his dissatisfaction either, saying, “How is it these people are so lazy?”

A few days later, we held an enlarged meeting of the county YCL committee at a secret meeting place in Yaoyinggou and discussed the young people’s task in spring sowing. Just as harvesting teams were formed to ensure the reaping of crops in the no-man’s land in the autumn of 1932, young people’s production shock brigades were organized throughout Jiandao. They launched a campaign for spring sowing in the guerrilla zones. These shock brigades comprised YCL activists and all other hard-core young men and women in the guerrilla zones. They took upon themselves not only the ploughing, but also obtaining the seeds and putting the farm implements into order. Broken-down tools were repaired at smithies through the joint efforts of the young people. In

places where there was a shortage of work cattle, the fields were ploughed with picks and shovels and sowing was done properly. In the spring of 1934 the sowing was finished successfully.

Thanks to the efforts of the shock brigades, the Young Communist League in the guerrilla zones was held in high prestige, and the social position of the young people rose immensely. The Party organizations supported whatever the YCL wanted to do and planned, and encouraged its officials to boldly push ahead with youth work. The people's revolutionary government, the peasants' association, the women's association and other mass organizations also backed YCL work in every possible way.

The anniversary functions of the September Youth Day in 1934 could well illustrate the importance the people in the guerrilla zones attached to YCL work. The September Youth Day is the International Young Proletarians' Day.

The world's young proletarians had marked their day for the first time in 1915. Since then they have observed the day every year. The anniversary functions were held in China also and in our country.

The Wangqing people prepared for the celebration of the September Youth Day of 1934 on a large scale. Anticipating the function, we sent operatives to the enemy area and invited groups of visitors from different villages on the one hand, and, on the other, we obtained rice, flour, meat and other supplies needed to treat the visitors on the anniversary day. Some supply officers even brought tea with them. The guerrilla army attacked the enemy, capturing the essential products needed for the festival.

An arch decorated with pine needles was set up in the square of Yaoyingou, and an array of pictures describing the battle results of the

guerrilla army were on display around the square. Propaganda slogans were also put up in the spaces between the pictures. There was an excellent painter in the 5th Company in those days. He had come from the Soviet Union and was also surprisingly good at calligraphy. He even drew a sketch-map showing the achievements of the people's revolutionary army and exhibited it on the outskirts of the square. The pictures he had drawn were so vivid that they seemed to be alive and moving.

We emptied the government building to arrange lodgings for the guests and also set up posters to show to the visitors.

Prior to the September Youth Day, Jiguanlazi, Yingbilazi, Tianqiaoling, Zhuanjiaolou and other villages in the guerrilla zones and in their vicinities had selected delegates and sent them to Yaoyingou. Because the enemy had set up concentration villages and strictly controlled people passing through the wall gates, the delegates from the enemy area were unable to arrive in groups; they came singly, in work clothes with sickles in their hands or baskets on top of their heads, as if they had been coming to do field work.

On the day of the function the young men and women and other people in the guerrilla zone, dressed up in new silk and serge suits made from trophies captured at Beisanchakou, gathered in the square. The county YCL officials, too, came to the square in new suits and supervised the start of the celebrations. The sturdy appearances of the guerrillas marching into the square in new uniforms won the admiration of the delegates from the enemy area.

The opening of the gathering was marked by the sound of a Yongil bomb. The visitors became wide-eyed at the sight of the fluttering of dozens of red flags in the square, shouting of slogans, hand clapping and

beating of drums, sounds which reverberated up into the sky over the square.

A report was made about September Youth Day, which was followed by militant speeches by delegates of different sections praising the achievements of the Young Communist League and calling on the people to fight against the Japanese. In those days speeches of this type were termed expressions of feelings. At the end of the function, a grand welcoming party was given in honour of the visitors from the enemy area. At the request of the officials of the county Party committee and the county YCL committee, I made a speech during the welcoming gathering, appealing to them to give active support to political and military activities of the people's revolutionary army. A delegate from the enemy area asked that he be allowed to speak in reply to my speech; however, his strong emotions prevented him from uttering a single word; he only bowed to all sides of the audience.

Hearing my speech, the delegates to the anniversary function from the enemy area volunteered to join the guerrilla army. We had to dissuade many as they all volunteered. Taking into consideration their family and work, we accepted only some to the revolutionary army.

The programme staged by the 5th Company was the most spectacular of the welcome performance of that day. A Russian dance, performed by a guerrilla who had been an underground worker in Laoheishan before joining the army and had learnt it when he had been in the Maritime Province, was really splendid.

When the visitors were leaving the guerrilla zone, we gave them the share of the trophies which we had kept for the people from the enemy area.

I have gone into great details here about the September Youth Day function of 1934 because it was the largest and most impressive of the young people's festivals in the guerrilla zones.

In those days we considered international anniversaries very important and attached great significance to the Comintern, the Communist Youth International, the International Labour Union, the International Peasant Union and other international organizations. Just as the Comintern was the international centre of the Communist Parties throughout the world, the KIM was the international centre of the Young Communist Leagues of all countries. KIM is the Russian abbreviation of the Communist Youth International. The organization which we were in touch with while working in Harbin was an organization under the KIM, and the organization which recommended us to study in Moscow was a KIM organization which was functioning as the youth department of the Comintern.

The practical struggle to implement the programme of the Young Communist League produced a large number of excellent young revolutionaries who adorned a record of the history of the national liberation struggle. The young man nicknamed "13 bullets"⁵, "Steel Spade" (Kim Pong Uk), Pak Kil Song, Hwang Jong Hae, Kim Thack Man, Kim Chung Jin, Ju Chun Il, Ri Sin Sun, Kim Pom Su, Ri Tong Hwa, Ri Sun Hui, Pak Ho Jun and other innumerable anti-Japanese heroes and heroines were trained and educated through life in YCL organizations. Among these renowned heroes and heroines were guerrilla commanders, underground workers and educationists.

The meeting of the Young Communist League held in the secret hall at Yaoyingou also discussed the matter of extending and intensifying activities in the enemy area, along with other items on the agenda.

There were few hard-core politically and practically qualified YCL leaders in the enemy area. Because of the erroneous policy of the Leftist elements, holding leading positions in Party and YCL organizations at different levels, the YCL's activities in the enemy-ruled area were neglected. Taking the state of affairs into full consideration, the YCL meeting raised the militant slogan, "Let Us Build a Battery in the Enemy's Heart!" This was similar to the slogan, "Let Us Build a Revolutionary Battery among the Enemy Soldiers!" The slogan, "Let Us Build a Battery in the Enemy's Heart!" meant strengthening our organizations in the very heart of the enemy.

According to the decision of the meeting, a large number of YCL cadres undertook the difficult task of working in the enemy area and began to infiltrate into a vast area, including east Manchuria and Korea. Pak Kil Song, who was at the head of the children's department of the East Manchuria Special District Committee, was sent to Luozigou. Along with competent YCL activists, he enlarged organizations and trained young people through practical struggle. The line of his operatives stretched deep into the Luozigou Distillery, one of the largest of its kind in Jiandao, employing a great number of seasonal child labourers.

Choe Kwang, the head of the Luozigou children's department, also went to work in the distillery by instruction of the YCL organization.

The distillery owned by a Yu annually employed only child labour between February and May, and between September and October, because child labour was cheap and children worked longer hours. The owner paid a child 30 *fen* a day, less than half the pay for an adult labourer. Worse still, he paid them not in cash, but in liquor. Thirty *fen* could only buy a bottle of liquor. And to earn a bottle of this liquor the

children had to toil from early morning till late at night. After work they had to peddle the streets all night to sell the liquor they had received as their wages.

Under the guidance of the YCL organization, Choe Kwang stirred up the child labourers to the struggle for higher wages. Mustering a dozen colleagues whom he had admitted into the Children's Corps organization after being employed in the distillery, he agitated them to go on strike. Posting guards at each entrance of the barrack-type dining-hall, he himself made speeches. He found it hard to rouse the children, who were not accustomed to organized life, to strike. He patiently persuaded them, repeating, "A bottle of liquor isn't adequate to provide you with enough to live. Let's unite and get paid as much as we have worked. If we join our efforts we can bring the owner of the distillery to his knees!"

In response to his call, the children refused to go to work for three days. Even the children who were going to work, afraid of losing their jobs, were persuaded to resolutely join the ranks of the strikers. Through two strikes, they defeated their employer and raised their daily wages from 30 *fen* to 40 *fen*.

Pak Ho Jun, a member of the Luozigou YCL committee, was very successful in his work in the enemy area, thanks to his great organizational ability and skilful work among the masses. He was the man behind the scenes who guided the work of rallying the child labourers of the distillery behind the anti-Japanese organization and led the strike to victory. But he was arrested in the course of his work.

The enemy rejoiced immensely over his arrest, just as if they had found all the secret organizations in the Luozigou area. But they were mistaken. They did not succeed in bringing Pak Ho Jun to his knees.

In an attempt to placate him although half dead, the enemy said, “You’re still young and have the world before you. You’re too young to die. Have you no pity for your mother living alone with all her hopes pinned on you? If you tell us about the YCL organization and the names of its cadres, you’ll receive a big premium and live in luxury. How about abandoning your fantastic dream about an impossible revolution, and finding the way to survival?”

With a bitter grin, Pak Ho Jun replied:

“I’ll tell you about the YCL organization and the names of its cadres. Write them down. The name of the cadre who directs me is ‘Communist’ and his surname is ‘Party’.”

Seeing the surprise on the enemy’s face writing down the name “Communist Party”, Pak Ho Jun rose, leaning his hand against the wall, and mocked at the enemy, “What’s the use of jotting down the name of the great cadre who has trained me into your notebook? Now the Communist Party will take revenge on the enemy for me.”

That is how Pak Ho Jun chose death. Just imagine the indomitable image of this Young Communist Leaguer who was striding, with the skirts of his coat flying open, towards the execution site. He looked so imposing that even the enemy soldiers were struck with terror, whispering, “Communists are really great men.”

One man, a heavy smoker, slipped some cigarettes into his hand as he was striding to his execution. Girls threw bunches of flowers in his path.

Thus the first generation of the Young Communist League, who had been trained through the anti-Japanese revolution, fought loyally, and knew how to die honourably.

The YCL members who had been trained in its ranks subordinated all their interests to the interests of their organization and the revolution.

YCL member Rim Chun Ik was this type of fighter, too.

He was the secretary of the Nanxian special branch of the YCL, district No. 8, Yanji County. He was an able political worker who had already formed an underground YCL organization. While guiding the organization he was arrested.

He was also brutally tortured often, but he kept the secret of the organization intact to the end.

Rim Chun Ik stated that the secret operations conducted by other comrades were all his doing. Thanks to his statement, the other comrades who had been arrested were all released. He died heroically at the fine age of eighteen.

It is said that even the enemy bowed their heads before the noble character of the eighteen-year-old YCL member who stood alone on the execution site, after having saved his organization and his comrades by displaying such a beautiful, noble spirit of self-sacrifice.

YCL member Ri Sun Hui was also an indomitable fighter born of the anti-Japanese revolution. I think I met her for the first time in the winter of early 1934. I met her while visiting the Children's Corps school to see the children who had lost their parents in the enemy's "punitive" atrocities. This was shortly after she had come to Wangqing County as the head of the county children's department, having been transferred there from the office of the head of the Yanji county children's department.

As I stood in the playground of the Children's Corps school surrounded by the children, Ri Sun Hui hurried over to me, greeting me. Her large, bright eyes sparkled, she was full of youthful vigour and reminded you of a forget-me-not growing by a riverside.

A dreary, cold wind was blowing there. Among the children clinging joyfully to me were many who were dressed in thin unlined clothes or wearing short tattered skirts and straw sandals on their bare feet. Some had burns on their faces, they probably had escaped from the fire at the time of the enemy's "punitive" action. Most of the Children's Corps members, who had been orphaned in the enemy area before they came to the guerrilla zone, were in rags.

Caressing the hand of a child who had a burn on it, I scrutinized each of the Children's Corps members.

The sparkling, dark eyes of the children seemed to eagerly expect something from me.

The feeling of pain I felt at that time shocked me. I vowed in my mind to destroy all the Japanese who had made them orphans.

I calmed down and, from the bottom of my heart, said, "You are the flower-buds of our country and the pillars of its future. When you're cheerful, we're also cheerful. When you grow up well, we feel strong... Grow up quickly and sturdily and become fine pillars of the country."

"Yes, we will," the children chorused vigorously and murmured something joyfully. But tears were trickling down like raindrops from the eyes of the head of the children's department, Sun Hui.

"Forgive me, General," she said, "the YCL organization appointed me the head of the children's department, but the children are in such rags..."

She was embarrassed to see me, just as if she herself were guilty of that. Her face, wet with tears, revealed the remorse she felt.

How could she be held responsible for the ragged children? She had had to work through nights, mending their worn-out clothes and shoes and making notebooks for them.

Her revolutionary, self-critical attitude towards all the shortcomings and mishaps that occurred in the range of her work made a strong impression on me from our first encounter.

A few days after, I attacked the enemy for the sake of the Children's Corps members. All the goods we captured were sent to the Children's Corps school to provide the children with cotton quilts, new clothes and shoes and notebooks.

I still remember Ri Sun Hui shedding grateful tears and burying her face in the children's new clothes that had cost the blood of guerrillas.

Out of gratitude for the gifts, she arranged a performance of the children's art group she had set up and came to see us.

"General, the children have brought an art group to express their humble thanks to you for the cotton quilts and the new clothes you've sent them."

Her words touched me to the heart.

That day I assembled all the soldiers and the people of the guerrilla base to enjoy the children's performance and had a very pleasant time with them.

A narrative was one of the numbers on the programme; it moved our hearts deeply.

A little girl in a new dress, with a red scarf around her neck, appeared on the stage and began her narrative:

"My father and mother were killed by the Japanese, but I am growing up sturdily, wearing new clothes and a red scarf. The new clothes I am wearing have cost the blood of our sisters and brothers in the guerrilla army." And then, she opened her little hand which had a burn on it.

She went on: “Caressing this hand wounded in the Japanese ‘punitive’ atrocities, the General said that when we were cheerful he was also cheerful, and that when we grew up well he, too, felt strong.

“Brothers and sisters of the guerrilla army, we are growing well cheerfully. Please be happy with us and be strong. True to the General’s words, I will grow up quickly and sturdily and take up arms to fight the Japanese just as you, brothers and sisters of the Young Communist League, do....”

The entire audience were in tears, listening to her.

We found implications of Ri Sun Hui’s unremitting efforts on the stage devoted to the children just as one could see large drops of a diligent farmer’s sweat in the well-ripe ears of his crops.

One day Ri Sun Hui came to see me and unexpectedly asked me to send her to work in the enemy area.

I was surprised at her request, for she had been working with such warmth for the Children’s Corps, sensing life’s greatest worth in this task.

Afterwards, she suggested it again to her YCL organization. Finally she was sent to Luozigou with Pak Kil Song.

The numerous ranges of blue mountains surrounding the Luozigou area on three sides and the fertile land were marked with traces of bloody battles against the Japanese invaders and with the revolutionary spirit of the courageous YCL members who had worked behind enemy lines.

I do not wish to go into details here about her work in the enemy-ruled area. The point of emphasis here is the source of the moral power that enabled her unhesitatingly to risk her life at such a young age.

At that time she was working from her base at a grass hut not far from Luozigou. She spent the spring, and then the summer and now greeted

the autumn in that grass hut which could hardly keep off the cold wind and rain. In the meantime, the YCL organization was extended, and the Children's Corps organization grew up in Luozigou. A strong revolutionary battery was built in the enemy's citadel.

In order to build this battery she had walked day and night in disguise along dangerous lanes in the enemy-held area, braving the bayonets of the army and the police and the surveillance of the secret agents, who incessantly spied on her.

But she was finally arrested, tracked down by a wicked enemy agent named Ri Pong Mun.

In order to ferret out the underground organization in Luozigou, the enemy locked her up in a dismal gaol and tortured her brutally. The fate of the underground organization depended on her. If she had disclosed the secret, the organizational network in the Luozigou area would have been discovered and the revolutionary battery which had cost her so much effort would have crumbled overnight.

The enemy tried to coax Ri Sun Hui with false promises and sugary words. But they could not squeeze any secret out of her except the fact that she was a member of the Young Communist League. Probably she felt the meaning of belonging to the YCL more strongly while in prison.

The Luozigou provost-marshal directing her torture grew angry and ordered her to be shot.

But an incident occurred on the eve of her execution.

After giving his order to shoot her, the provost-marshal went to see her in the company of his men in an attempt to coax her for the last time.

Sun Hui was mending her clothes just then. Although her clothes were stained with sweat and streaked with blood and torn to shreds, she probably wanted to appear neat at her execution.

Ri Pong Mun, the running dog of the provost-marshal, came close up to her and said that this was her last opportunity to save herself, that, out of pity for her flowery youth, he advised her to tell at least the name of one member of the underground organization in Luozigou in order to save herself. The girl remained silent. She simply combed her blood-clotted hair with her fingers, and then slipped her hand inside the breast of her torn jacket and produced a grey pouch.

Ri Pong Mun turned pale at this and leapt out of the gaol. The other butchers followed him, screaming. Ri Pong Mun took the pouch for some explosive, like a grenade. It was not an explosive, however. It was a pouch that contained some soil. The pretty pouch had been bequeathed to her by her father when he fell in battle in the guerrilla base.

“Don’t be frightened,” she told them. “This is a pouch that contains the soil of my country. Are your dirty lives so precious that you run away to save them?”

Some people compared the personalities of the YCL member Ri Sun Hui who, cherishing the soil of the country in her bosom, was picturing the day of national liberation, and the turncoat Ri Pong Mun to the Ponghwang (a beautiful legendary bird—Tr.) and to a crow. I think the comparison was not an unreasonable one. Could the traitor Ri Pong Mun ever appreciate the value of that pouch of soil?

The next day when she was shot, Ri Sun Hui shouted, “Long live the revolution!” Here is the *Song of the Young Communist League* she sang during the last moments of her life:

*March on towards dawn and morning,
Our Comrades-in-arms!
We'll use bayonets and bullets*

*To clear the way!
Brace up and be courageous
Under the banner of youth!
We are the young guards
Of workers and peasants.*

Ri Sun Hui and I had once sung this song, playing the organ at the Children's Corps school. The song was sung widely not only by Young Communist League members but also by members of the Communist Party, the Children's Corps and Women's Association, because it expressed the unanimous desire of the working masses for a new society, their ardent love for the future, and the young people's unshakable will to hasten the advent of the new world. Many YCL members sang it on the gallows just as Ri Sun Hui had done.

That song did not originate with us. It had been sung by Russian young men and women. The thoughts and feelings that run through the words and melody gripped the hearts of the young people of the whole world who loved freedom and justice. Just as Eugene Pottier's *Internationale* became the Party song in many countries, so the *Song of the Young Communist League* became the international song of young people.

The emergence of a loyal woman like Ri Sun Hui can no doubt be said to be attributable to the efforts of the YCL organization which lent her political integrity light and wings. But for the organization and the process of her development through organizational training, could it have been conceivable for such a young girl as Ri Sun Hui to be so courageous in the face of her executioners and to meet the last moment of her life with such staunch pride and honour?

That is why I still say that the organization is a house and a university which gives birth to heroes and heroines. One member of the Young Communist League or of the League of Socialist Working Youth, who has been trained through organizational life, has the strength to defeat a hundred and even a thousand of the enemy. Each one of our people is a match for a hundred foes because every one of them has been hardened through organizational life; each soldier of our People's Army is a match for a hundred and even a thousand foes because every one of the army has been fully tempered politically and ideologically, militarily and technically in the furnace that is called an organizational life.

Nowadays, young people grow up into fighters, heroes and heroines and revolutionaries through the organization of the League of Socialist Working Youth. It can be said that the Young Communist League in the years of the anti-Japanese war was a school that trained professional revolutionaries, whereas the League of Socialist Working Youth today is the base which trains the vanguard of socialist construction. The young people are still fighting in the main direction of attack on all the fronts of building socialism just as they did in the revolution against the Japanese. The LSWY is a reliable main force which our Party holds very dear and takes loving care of. Wherever this main force advances, great exploits are performed and miracles achieved. The West Sea Barrage, the northern railway, Kwangbok Street, the May Day Stadium, the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace, the Taekwon-Do Palace and other monumental structures, the lasting wealth of our country, are full of the precious efforts and sweat of young men and women of the age of the Workers' Party. That is why our people love the Young Speed Campaign Shock Brigades.

The members of the LSWY and other young people in our age display innumerable communist, commendable deeds winning everyone's admiration. No man can be born twice, but young people in our country lay down their lives without hesitation to save their fellow countrymen. There are innumerable girls who have determined to become the hands and feet for the rest of their lives of honourably disabled soldiers by marrying them. A single woman member of the LSWY in our country has brought up orphans as their own mother would do. At a time when young people in some other countries are exerting themselves to obtain the citizenship of their capital cities, the young people in our country willingly leave their beloved capital and volunteer for work at farms, coal-mines, and reclaimed land. To be candid, I would like to seat these young people on cushions of gold.

Whenever I hear news of the communistic, laudable deeds of the young people of our age, I recollect the efforts of the Korean communists devoted to the youth movement, and think of the LSWY which is excellently continuing the traditions of that movement. The ceaseless, commendable deeds of these young people, which are winning world admiration, can be attributed to the work of the LSWY. A large army of young people trained through organizational life is, in effect, mightier than atomic bombs.

No work in the world is more worthwhile and honourable than work among young men and women. If I were fortunate enough to begin my life anew and if I were given the right to choose a job, I would devote myself to youth work as I readily did when in Jilin.

When the guerrilla zones were dissolved, we sent many political workers to the enemy-ruled area. At that time we decided to send people to Antu, Dunhua, Fusong, Changbai, Linjiang and other places to form a

central county YCL committee around Liaoning, Jilin and Jiandao and step up underground youth work in the enemy area. We also made a far-reaching plan to form underground youth organizations in Musan, Kapsan, Phungsan, Hoeryong and other parts of the northern border area of Korea first, and then in Pyongyang, Seoul, Pusan and other parts of central and southern Korea.

In order to put this plan into practice, Jo Tong Uk, secretary of the Wangqing County YCL Committee, was reappointed secretary of the Central County YCL Committee and left for the enemy area.

Jo Tong Uk was an experienced YCL worker. Because of his participation in the May 30 Uprising (1930—Tr.), he had served more than a one-year term in the Harbin prison which was called the third prison in Jilin Province. While in prison, he had studied Chinese and joined the Young Communist League. He was well-informed for a middle-school leaver and was eager for knowledge. He had been sent to a unit of the national salvation army with an assignment from the Ningnan County YCL Committee. In that unit he had done YCL work and came to Wangqing in September 1932, in command of more than 40 armed men.

I think I met him for the first time in the autumn of that year. We appointed him the secretary of the YCL committee in Ri Kwang's special detachment and attached the armed men from Ningnan to the special detachment. We sent some of our men to north Manchuria to bring over his family. His stepfather, Chang Ki Sop, was a loyal Party member who was nicknamed "Communist Uncle".

Jo Tong Uk witnessed my negotiations with Wu Yi-cheng on the spot, and, along with Wang Run-cheng, assisted me in every way in the negotiations. After they had ended, I sent him and Wang Run-cheng to

work in the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission in Luozigou.

They swore to be very close friends with the liaison officers who came from various anti-Japanese nationalist army units and formed Communist Party branches and Young Communist League branches among the field- and company-grade officers and men.

Through his work in the Joint Anti-Japanese Army Coordination Commission, Jo Tong Uk's political activities became still further seasoned. The place in the enemy area he went to for the first time was Liangjiangkou, Antu County. He opened a small shop and, through his skilful dealings with soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army, swore to be very close friends with 15 field- and company-grade officers and men and won over a company completely. According to Jo Tong Uk's plan, the company rose in mutiny and then escaped into a mountain.

Jo Tong Uk went to Chechangzi to establish contact between the mutineers assembled in the mountain and the guerrilla army. But the Leftists suspected him as a "Minsaengdan" member and tried to arrest him.

Later he said, recalling the event:

"At that time, the Leftists on the East Manchuria Special District Committee questioned me as follows: Song Il was a 'Minsaengdan' member and was executed. When he was the secretary of the Wangqing County Party Committee, you worked under him as the county YCL secretary. Since Song Il was a 'Minsaengdan' member, you, too, must be a 'Minsaengdan' member. You had better speak the truth before we produce evidence. That is how they tried to intimidate me.

"I made up my mind to run away. Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who was serving me meals, supported my decision. She even gave me my

travelling expenses. With that money I returned to Liangjiangkou, and then crossed to Korea with my mother.”

He continued to do youth work in subsequent years in many parts of Korea.

Just as Kim Jin’s⁶ soul was inherited by Ri Su Bok⁷, Ri Su Bok’s soul by Kim Kwang Chol⁸ and Han Yong Chol⁹, the lifeblood of the Young Communist League was carried forward by the Democratic Youth League, and the latter’s lifeblood has been inherited by the League of Socialist Working Youth. At a time when young people and students in some countries have become the cause of social trouble and minions of counterrevolutionaries and are pulling down the towers which their grandfathers’ generation had built, our young men and women are reliably carrying on the revolutionary cause as a bulwark and shield pioneered by their revolutionary forerunners.

Millions of young men and women, who are unfailingly loyal to the leadership of Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il, are now affiliated with the League of Socialist Working Youth. Our country in the twenty-first century will become a paradise through their efforts and a still better to live in.

4. An Answer to the Atrocities at Sidaogou

While we spent busy days guiding the evacuation of the guerrilla zones, the underground organization in Luozigou had sent a messenger to me in Yaoyinggou with details of the atrocities at Sidaogou. He brought the shattering news that Wen's battalion had incited a Jingan army unit in the Laoheishan area to burn down the village of Sidaogou and to kill all its people.

The news was authentic, but it mixed me up. I could hardly believe that battalion commander Wen had broken his promise to us, that he had incited the Jingan army unit to a massacre. An alliance, similar to the offensive and defensive alliance of today, had been formed between Wen's battalion and my unit. It was immediately after the battle at Luozigou that we had joined up with Wen.

We had received a letter from an organization in the enemy-ruled area one day, saying that a cart convoy of the puppet Manchukuo army had left Baicaogou for Luozigou. We attacked the convoy from ambush near Jiguanlazi. The escorts did not offer any serious resistance and were captured. Among the prisoners was a man whose surname was Tie, a company commander of Wen's battalion. He did not seem to feel uneasy on being taken prisoner by the revolutionary army; he was just as carefree and grinning as if this was nothing unusual.

“You’re an officer,” I said to that strange man, “but why did you surrender instead of resisting?”

“This is an area controlled by the ‘Koryo red army’. So what’s the use of resisting? The best thing to do is to surrender when there’s no chance of winning.” He called the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army the “Koryo red army”, just as the Ningnan people had. He went on, “And then, the whole of Manchuria knows that the ‘Koryo red army’ does not kill prisoners.”

Company commander Tie, the son of a poor peasant, had joined the Manchukuo army in order to earn some money for his wedding; he had heard that the army paid considerable salaries. Some of our comrades remarked that “he was too ignorant for the world”, but I thought that, although he was an officer of the puppet Manchukuo army, he could live conscientiously if we taught him befittingly. When we were about to free the POWs after talking to them, Tie said:

“Please, sir, take anything you want from these carts, but be kind enough to return the money and rifles to us. If we go back empty-handed, the soldiers won’t get their salaries. And probably, the battalion commander Wen will shoot us.”

I permitted them to return to Luozigou with their full cart-loads. Our comrades saw them off, commenting jokingly, “Hey, we’ve only lost time for sleep and wasted ammunition.”

Tie asked, handing a whole cartridge box to our company commander, Ri Hyo Sok, “Friend, fire a few shots at the sacks of dried slices of radish, please.” He seemed to be moved by our generous treatment. But since Ri put the ammunition box back onto the cart, the escorts themselves fired a few shots at the sacks, unloaded their rifles,

wrapping the cartridges up in a handkerchief and throwing it away into the grass, and only then they left.

This event won Tie battalion commander Wen's special confidence. Whenever he had a supply convoy to send, Wen ordered Tie's company to escort it, for Tie would return safely each time without being waylaid, whereas the other companies would lose all their supplies.

We would attack other convoys, but no Tie's. Whenever he was on a conveying mission, Tie would send his men to let us know the date, hour and route of his convoy as well as ways of identifying it. Thus, the battalion commander came to realize that Tie was under the protection and concern of the people's revolutionary army.

One day Tie, on meeting the battalion commander, said casually, "My company in Luozigou is under the protection of the people's revolutionary army. How about forming an offensive and defensive alliance between our battalion and Commander Kim's unit and living in safety?" Wen pretended to be startled at first as if something serious had taken place, but true to his original intention, he readily agreed, saying that it was a wonderful way of self-protection. Tie conveyed this message to us. Our answer to Wen was that we agreed to his idea of the alliance on the condition that the puppet Manchukuo army unit would not harm the people's lives and property. It was an unusual "gentlemen's agreement" reached without any negotiations or signatures.

The terms of our alliance implied maintaining friendly relations, each side refraining from attacking the other, rather than the original meaning of the offensive and defensive alliance—that the two sides cooperate in both offensive and defensive actions. This alliance had worked well in respecting each other's interests and developing mutual cooperation. As we were faithful to the principle of nonaggression, Wen had sent large

amounts of ammunition, food grains and clothing to the revolutionary army on several occasions. He had even delivered important military information to us on the movements of the Japanese army.

Considering the above-mentioned peaceful relations of the alliance, I could not believe that Wen had incited the Jingan army to a “punitive” action at Sidaogou. I sent a messenger to company commander Tie to find out. The messenger confirmed that the atrocities at Sidaogou and Wen’s betrayal were true. Tie sent me word that Wen, under pressure of his Japanese masters, was breaking the alliance.

We had to give an appropriate answer to Wen’s betrayal and the atrocities at Sidaogou in which he had played the role of guide. The headquarters daily resounded with my men’s demands for revenge. The commanders also stirred the men on to make the enemy pay for the blood shed by the people of Sidaogou. A mad dog should be controlled by the stick—this was a motto of the revolutionary army.

I considered their demands to be just. If we left the Jingan army unit in Laoheishan and the puppet Manchukuo army unit in Luozigou as they were, we would be unable to guarantee the safety of the people living in these areas or to support the work of the underground organizations in every village through military means, nor could we then ensure the smooth advance of the people’s revolutionary army to north Manchuria. Worse still, we could expect confusion in the work of dissolving the guerrilla zones. We had also planned to evacuate the inhabitants of Wangqing and Hunchun to Luozigou as the guerrilla zones were being dissolved.

We decided to attack the Jingan army unit and Wen’s battalion simultaneously. We summoned the Yanji 1st Regiment and the Independent Regiment in Chechangzi to Wangqing to reinforce our unit.

After about five days of forced march, eating only one bun at every meal, the Independent Regiment reached the sprawling village of Tangshuihezi where we were billeted. Most of the regimental officers, including its commander Yun Chang Bom, had been executed on the false charge of being members of the “Minsaengdan”. Its chief of staff led the companies; the men who had lost their commanders were in the lowest of spirits.

That is when we organized a battle at Zhuanjiaolou, involving detachments from the Independent Regiment, Yanji 1st Regiment and Wangqing 3rd Regiment. It was necessary to clear our way to Luozigou by destroying the puppet Manchukuo army unit and self-defence corps entrenched behind the earthen walls, who were committing horrible atrocities.

After the battle at Zhuanjiaolou the revolutionary army forces drew up a plan of operation for attacking Luozigou and made a daylight march towards Sidaogou, Sandaogou and Taipinggou, intended as attacking positions. The soldiers marched 50 miles, eating only gruel, but their morale was very high.

Sidaogou had been originally developed as an “ideal village” by veterans of the Independence Army, including Ri Thae Gyong, and pioneers from the Righteous Volunteers’ Army. This village, which was also known as Sidaohezi or Shangfangzi, had been later transformed into a revolutionary village by Ri Kwang and myself. We had helped old man Ri Thae Gyong to organize the Anti-Japanese Association, the Peasants’ Association and the Revolutionary Mutual Aid Society in this village. In those days we frequented the village, and the people in Luozigou and its vicinity used to call it the “headquarters of the Communist Party”. The hospitality and affection the villagers had shown to the people’s

revolutionary army were admirable. I was often moved by the enthusiasm of the village people who, on hearing of the arrival of the revolutionary army, would come running to greet us, without even stopping to put on their shoes.

Sandaohenzi, situated near Sidaogou, was also a well-known revolutionary village under our influence. There was a distillery run by Chinese people at the foot of the hill in the west of the village. I, accompanied by Zhou Bao-zhong, used to meet cadres of the underground revolutionary organizations and others in this distillery.

Our old friendly feelings for the people of Sidaogou remained as unchanged as the River Suifen flowing along this village, but it had been burnt down and the people had been buried in the earth. The eight-*kan* house (a *kan* is equivalent to 36 square feet—Tr.) of Ri Thae Gyong beyond a hill had also been burnt and only the foundation stones were left standing. We had held a meeting with Zhou Bao-zhong and other commanders of the NSA units in that house the previous year to discuss operations for attacking Luozigou.

The old man built a school near the site of the house and became absorbed in educating children. He had initiated education with a stout heart even when the shootings and shrieks of the outrages were still ringing in his ears. He had hidden a son of his friend in his house in the days of the Independence Army. The young man fortunately survived the atrocities; he said that he had witnessed the Jingan army soldiers committing the atrocities that day from a hill where he had had a bird's-eye view of Sidaogou on his way back from a visit.

The brutalities were the result of the unjust interrogation of a Young Communist League member, So Il Nam, who was working as an operative in the town of Luozigou. He had been suspected of being a

member of the “Minsaengdan” on a charge of stealing some article in a shop, had been arrested and interrogated by the head of the revolutionary organization in Sidaogou. As no evidence of guilt was found in spite of continuous investigations, he had been released and put under strict surveillance.

On his return home, he had complained that they had arrested the wrong man and yet had tortured him on the false charge of being a member of the “Minsaengdan”. His superiors, on learning this, attempted to arrest him again and to execute him as a “Minsaengdan” member. So Il Nam, realizing this, ran away and surrendered to the enemy. Worse still, wanting to revenge those who had maltreated and tortured him, he exposed the secrets of the underground revolutionary organization in Sidaogou.

These secrets excited the bloodthirsty soldiers of the Jingan army unit who were preparing for the New Year celebrations in Luozigou at the moment. A “punitive” force of 100 stealthily encircled the village of Sidaogou at dawn of 15 January of the lunar calendar, 1935, and mowed down the villagers indiscriminately by a fusillade of heavy and light machine-guns. They went wild, setting fire to every house and bayoneting those running out of the flames, whether man or woman, young or old, and throwing them back into the flames. They reduced the village to ashes in less than an hour.

When the head of the one hundred households of Sandaohezi arrived at the scene of the tragedy, he found eight Korean children who had survived by a miracle, crying in the heaps of corpses. The head discussed the question of raising the children with some of his fellow villagers. They decided that each would rear one child, with the headman also taking a child to his home.

Three young men who had escaped death at Sidaogou joined our unit.

After hearing the details of the outrages, we gnashed our teeth in wrathful indignation. The motive had obviously been the imprudent Leftist conduct of those who had falsely charged So Il Nam as a member of the “Minsaengdan” and molested him, but for all that, first and foremost, we cursed the butchers of the Jingan army who had dipped Sidaogou in a bloodbath.

The massacre at Sidaogou was the pinnacle of savagery, heinousness and brutality that could only be committed under the manipulation and at the instigation of the Japanese imperialists. These offspring of savage marauders were capable of committing any crime, who had intruded into the royal palace of a foreign country, had unhesitatingly murdered the Queen of that country, and burnt her dead body to remove all traces of their crime.

I heard about this Ulmi incident (1895) from my father when I was young, and could not repress my anger. The murdered Queen, whose corpse could not be retrieved, was none other than Queen Min (alias Empress Myongsong) who gave birth to Sunjong, the last King of our country. Queen Min who had seized Korea’s state power in her hands and become the chief of the pro-Russian faction, stood firm against Japan. The Japanese rulers were thrown into consternation; they made Miura, their minister resident in Korea, form a group of murderers by enlisting the Japanese garrison and police forces, and even those of gangsters and hooligans, to storm the Kyongbok Palace. Miura’s henchmen stabbed the Queen wildly with Japanese swords, burnt her dead body and threw her remains into a pond in order to remove all traces of their crime.

The Korean people had not had much respect for Queen Min. They had believed her to be a mastermind who had ruined the country through an open-door policy. Some people did not have a good opinion of her because she, as a daughter-in-law of the royal family, had removed Taewongun, her father-in-law, from Regency in collaboration with foreign forces. Some innocent people even had the idea that our country would not have been reduced to a colony, if Taewongun's policy of national isolation had been maintained for another 20 or 30 years. This being the case, it would not be difficult to understand the grievous feelings the people had entertained for Queen Min. However, no matter how discredited she had been by the people, politics was one thing and her Queenhood another. She had been a member of our nation, the mistress of the royal family and representative of state power who had ruled the country on behalf of King Kojong. The barbarous act of the Japanese rulers who had provoked the Ulmi incident was, therefore, a piratical encroachment on the sovereignty of our people and on the traditional dignity of the royal family. The Korean people did not tolerate it, having a strong feeling for nationality; they respected their monarch and cherished an exceptionally strong sense of national dignity.

Worse still, the ordinance of keeping one's hair bobbed was enforced.

National anger burst out into volcanic eruption. Our people's reply to the Ulmi incident and the bobbed hair ordinance emerged in the resistance of the righteous volunteers.

In the year of Kyongsin (1920—Tr.), which is known as the year of large-scale “mop-up” atrocities in Jiandao, the Japanese army massacred Korean people in Manchuria. It was an explosion of an unprecedented murder-mania of the Japanese who tried to retrieve the great defeat they had suffered at Fengwudong and Qingshanli¹⁰ through massacring the

unarmed Korean nationals living in Manchuria. A Japanese army force returning southward after giving up the plan for an expedition to Siberia, and another advancing northward to Manchuria from Ranam, turned all the villages en route where Koreans were living to ashes, and shot the young and middle-aged people en masse. By applying the same method used when murdering Queen Min, they sprinkled petroleum on the corpses and burnt them to remove all traces of their crimes.

The great Kanto earthquake in 1923 recorded, along with the natural disaster caused by the crustal movement, the man-made calamity imposed on the Korean nation by the Japanese ultra-nationalists. The gangsters saw the earthquake as a good opportunity for suppressing the Korean nationals and killed them mercilessly throughout Japan with swords and bamboo spears. In order to distinguish the Korean nationals from many other people, they made every man and woman who looked like them in outer appearance pronounce “*ju-go-en go-ji-sen*”, which means “fifteen *yen* fifty *sen*” in Japanese.

The people who did not pronounce it fluently were regarded as Korean nationals without exception and murdered. During the first 18 days of the earthquake our nation lost 6,000 of its compatriots. This is only a tip of the iceberg of the crimes the Japanese militarists committed against the Korean people and a bit of Japan’s modern history discoloured with massacre and plunder. The atrocities in the village of Sidaogou were only a repetition of that history.

“There was an underground organization in the village—why was vigilance lacking to such an extent?”

That was what I asked old man Ri Thae Gyong out of my wrathful indignation and bitter resentment. And yet, it was a foolish question. Even if they had been watchful, what could they have done? They could

not have kept a sentry at the village as there was no standing army. Even if they had kept guard, they could not have done anything against the great number of armed soldiers pouncing stealthily on them at dawn under cover of darkness.

“General, we were too easygoing. We, the old ones, are to blame. Living in comfort under the protection of the revolutionary army, we seemed to have forgotten that we are a ruined nation and a people at war for independence. There was an old man who worshipped Gandhi among the inhabitants of Sidaogou,” the old man said with an awkward smile as if he had said something wrong.

I was surprised to hear that there had been a worshipper of Gandhi in this mountain village. “How come that old man worshipped Gandhi?” I asked.

“I think a gentleman from Korea had told him about Gandhi. He had even shown him Gandhi’s letter published in a newspaper of our country. Since then, that old man had preached the theory of bloodless independence, mentioning something about violence and nonviolence, whenever he came to visit with his neighbours.”

In my days in Jilin I had criticized the doctrine of nonviolence with Pak So Sim after reading the letter from Gandhi carried in *Joson Ilbo*. The letter read:

Sabarmati

26 November, 1926

Dear friend:

I have your letter. The message I can send is to hope that Korea will come to her own through ways absolutely truthful and nonviolent.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

As can be seen from the letter, Gandhi preached that the Korean people achieve independence through nonviolent resistance. Apparently an advocate of nonviolence who had been charmed by Gandhi's way of thinking had sent a letter to Gandhi.

No young Koreans in Jilin accepted Gandhi's theory. No one was foolish enough to imagine that the outrageous and rapacious Japanese imperialists would hand independence to people on a silver plate, to those who advocated nonviolent disobedience. But Gandhi's way of thinking won some degree of sympathy and support from a few of the nationalist fighters who had abandoned armed resistance or had withdrawn from the independence movement.

Gandhi's idea that, although he cursed British rule he had no intention of harming any of the British and that organized nonviolence alone was capable of prevailing over organized violence of the British government, won the sympathy of broad sections of India's people, the humanitarian spirit running through his idea influencing them. I cannot imagine how far that idea conformed with the realities of India.

Even if it was a reasonable idea, the methods of achieving independence could not be alike for Korea and India, the two colonies whose suzerains were different, one an Asian power and the other a European power. India was India and Korea was Korea.

I could not understand why the theory of bloodless independence had had such a lingering effect on a man in Luozigou where the military and political activities of the people's revolutionary army were most intensive.

“That man must have realized at the moment of his death that the theory of bloodless independence was illusory. How pathetic it would be if he had died without realizing it! The Japanese are running wild to allay their thirst for blood, and yet he absurdly preached bloodlessness...” Ri Thae Gyong, unable to say anything more, shook his fist.

“You’re right, old man. Blood will flow in the fight with brigands. A mad dog must be controlled with the stick!”

“General, the lives of Koreans are much too cheap. How long must the Korean nation live like this? Please let the enemy pay for the blood shed in Sidaogou. If you revenge the enemy, then I can die in peace.”

When seeing me off, he repeatedly requested that I revenge the enemy. “I will bear your words in mind,” I replied. “If we return without avenging the people of Sidaogou, then don’t permit us to enter the yard of your house.”

We left for Luozigou with the firm determination to take revenge on the cutthroats.

I have fought all my life for the dignity of the nation. I am able to say that I have been fighting all my life to defend the dignity and independence of the nation. I have never shown mercy towards those who harmed our nation and infringed upon the sovereignty of our country, nor have I compromised with those who looked down upon our people or mocked at them. I have maintained friendly relations with those who have been friendly towards us, and broken with those who have been unfriendly or discriminated us. If they struck us, we gave them tit for tat; if they smiled at us, we smiled at them. A cake for a cake, and a stone for a stone—this is the principle of reciprocity I have adhered to all through my life.

In the past the powerless feudal government of Korea applied extraterritoriality to the Japanese residing in Korea. Just as the south Korean rulers today are conniving at the illegal acts of the US army soldiers, without having the law on them, the feudal government did not punish offenders with the law of Korea even though the Japanese outrageously harmed the lives and property of our people. The Japanese people were to be punished only by Japanese law. However, such an extraterritoriality had no place in the areas of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army activities. We had our own law which did not tolerate any form of offence against the Korean nation and the territory of Korea. The murderers who had committed the outrages in Sidaogou could not pass with impunity under that law.

We planned to occupy the fortress on the west hill and storm into Luozigou on the day of the *Tano* festival. The Hunchun Regiment had arrived to reinforce us.

As the columns of the revolutionary army were advancing towards Luozigou, men of the Wangqing Regiment who had been to the town on a reconnoitring mission, approached me with company commander Tie. He had suddenly come to tell me about Wen.

Tie said, "The battalion commander is trembling with fear on hearing that the people's revolutionary army is surrounding Luozigou to attack it. He said that he had only let his man tell the Jingan army unit where Sidaogou was as they had asked, and had had no inkling that such atrocities would take place. He's sorry that he had made the mistake of guiding the Jingan army unit to Sidaogou under Japanese pressure and letting his soldiers rob the people of their properties. He said further that he had not intentionally broken the promise he had made with Commander Kim and begs for your mercy."

I thought deeply over Tie's words. It was obvious that Wen had broken his promise by failing to prevent his men from robbing the people of their property and by letting his man show the Jingan army unit the way to Sidaogou. But this treachery could be dealt with leniently because an officer of the puppet army had to be at the beck and call of his Japanese superiors.

If we destroyed Wen's battalion, what would be the consequence? The offensive and defensive alliance between us would be ruptured and another unit much more wicked than Wen's battalion would be sent to Luozigou. The enemy was sure to do that whether we wanted it or not. This would invite further outrages like those perpetrated at Sidaogou. Our planned effort to evacuate the people from the guerrilla zones in Wangqing and Hunchun to the Luozigou area would have difficulties and our intention to maintain this area as a strategic stronghold for the KPRA would meet with a great challenge.

Then, what was I to do?

I made up my mind to draw the battalion commander closer to our side instead of punishing him, and to strike at the Jingan army unit based in Laoheishan to demonstrate how those who had harmed the people would be sent to their doom. According to reports of those who had been to the area of Dongning County on reconnoitring missions, a reinforced company of the Jingan army was stationed in Wangbaowan, Laoheishan, and it consisted of the cutthroats who had made havoc of Sidaogou. The scouts even learned that it was a task force detached from the notorious Yoshizaki unit.

I conveyed my decision to Tie:

“The people's revolutionary army will suspend its plan of attacking Luozigou. It is true that Wen broke faith with us, but we still place our

hopes on him. How can Wen guarantee his re-expressed faithfulness to the offensive and defensive alliance? If his promise holds true, he must guarantee the safety of both army and people during the people's revolutionary army's joint athletic meet in the town of Luozigou during the *Tano* festival. Convey our opinion to the battalion commander. We will wait here for his reply."

Tie notified us on returning that the battalion commander, Wen, had accepted all our demands.

Our regiments quickly changed their combat formation into a festival one. The officers, who had planned the attack on Luozigou, were now busy drawing up lists of sports events that would be enjoyed by both soldiers and people, and forming teams that would demonstrate the might of the unity between the army and the people. Thus, we organized a grandiose joint athletic meet of the army and the people in the heart of the walled-in town of Luozigou occupied by the enemy, under the protection of his forces, whose mission it was to "clean up" the revolutionary army, an athletic meet unprecedented in the history of war.

Even our underground operatives came out on that day to enjoy the meet. The soldiers of Wen's battalion were delighted by the unique festival. The people who had been so depressed by the atrocities in Sidaogou were again in high spirits, thanks to the *Tano* festival. The joint athletic meet clearly demonstrated our consistent stand and will, at home and abroad, that we were always ready to establish friendly relations with an army that did not harm the people, irrespective of the army's name and affiliation.

In Taipinggou we held a meeting of military and political cadres who were higher than the company political instructor and mapped out a detailed plan of the battle at Laoheishan. Then we held a ceremonial

memorial service for those killed in Sidaogou. The service became an excellent forum for inciting the officers and men of the revolutionary army to revenge the enemy.

I think it was mid-June 1935 when we finished off the *Hongxiutour* at Laoheishan. *Hongxiutour* is a nickname that the people in Manchuria had given to the Jingan army soldiers, apparently because of their rakishly wearing red arm-bands on their sleeves.

Our soldiers had lured the enemy out of Wangbaowan then in a very clever way. The Jingan army unit, stationed in Wangbaowan, Laoheishan, was the same unit that had dogged our steps, during our first expedition to north Manchuria and the group of savages who had committed the atrocities at Sidaogou.

At first we provoked a fight with them by dispatching a small unit, but they were keen enough to notice that our unit had come. They could not be provoked readily. The villagers told me that the Jingan army soldiers would be going out to “mop up” the guerrilla army only in winter and would avoid engagements with the revolutionary army in summer if possible, striking out only at mountain rebels and bandits.

We had to draw them out of their den in order to attack them. Therefore, we decided to use the alluring tactic. We withdrew our forces to Luozigou in broad daylight so that the enemy could see the movement and believe that we had withdrawn somewhere else. That night we moved the unit back secretly and lay in ambush in the forest near Wangbaowan where the Jingan army unit was stationed. Then we disguised 10 soldiers who spoke Chinese as mountain rebels and sent them to Wangbaowan. They made a great fuss, grabbing donkeys from the villagers, trampling on their furniture and ripping off the fences of their vegetable gardens, before returning to the unit.

But the Jingan army soldiers did not fall into the trap on the first day for some unknown reason. Though uncomfortable, we had a simple dinner of some dry rations at our position and spent a tedious night, irritated by the mosquitoes. I had heard Ri Kwan Rin saying that when she had tilled the land at the foot of Mt. Paektu with Jang Chol Ho, she had weeded the potato fields with a bunch of moxa on her head because of the irritating mosquitoes, but the gnats in Laoheishan were just as bad. The soldiers slapped at their cheeks and napes, complaining that the gnats in Laoheishan took after the *Hongxiutour* and were stinging them poisonously.

On the next day the decoying group went down to the village in Wangbaowan and behaved like mountain rebels. They caught a few chickens in a somewhat well-to-do house and pretended to take flight. Only then did the Jingan army soldiers begin to chase them en masse. Apparently the villagers had raised a big fuss that day that the mountain rebels had again been in the village.

The Jingan army soldiers were quite well-versed in the tactics of the guerrilla army; they even knew how guerrillas waylaid convoys and attacked walled towns. To deceive them was as difficult as belling the cat. Surely, our decoy had acted out the hooliganism of the mountain rebels to a tee.

What I still cannot forget among the episodes related with this battle is that Kim ThaeKun's wife shook me awake as I was dozing from fatigue while in ambush on the second day. She and her husband had taken great care to nurse me in the Shiliping valley during some painful days of fever. She had played the role of my aide-de-camp, so to speak. At that time she had picked a broad-leaved grass and asked me what it was called, saying that it looked tasty. It was aster. I had told her to call

it “bear aster” since it grew in a place where there were many bears. After liberation, on my visit to Taehongdan, I ate that same bear aster.

The enemy, who had come within the area where the revolutionary army was lying in ambush, gazed anxiously from side to side, saying, “It’d be terrible to be surrounded in this place.” When the enemy were all in the mountain valley, I fired a shot signalling the start of battle. I aimed at a Japanese instructor, and he fell at the first shot. They did not put up any resistance worth mentioning before being subdued. The agitators of the guerrilla army shouted to the enemy in Chinese to surrender before they offered any resistance, relying on the natural conditions. “Down with Japanese Imperialism!” and “Lay down Your Guns, and You’ll Be Saved!” The enemy soldiers gave up and laid down their arms. The battle at Laoheishan was the first typical allurement and ambush battle we had fought. Since that time the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo armies had begun to call this tactic of ours “netting-the-fish”.

We killed about 100 soldiers of the Jingan army in this battle, an arrogant army who had boasted of its “invincibility”. We captured a large amount of the booty that included heavy and light machine-guns, rifles, hand grenades and even mortars and war-horses. The enemy merrily carried the mortars on horses, but lost them before firing a single shell. The white horse I gave to old man Jo ThaeK Ju was one of the ten thoroughbreds we had captured in this battle.

We also captured several war dogs. The officers advised me to keep some of the dogs for protection. But I saw to it that all the shepherd dogs were sent to the people in Taipinggou and Shitouhezi. I thought the captured dogs would be of no use to us.

At the time of the Dahuangwai meeting my comrades had brought me a dog captured from the Japanese army to keep as my guard. They probably thought it would be of help to me as it was a shrewd, clever dog. I was grateful for their concern but I did not take it, saying that the dog was tamed by the Japanese and would not feel attached to the commander of the guerrilla army. It ran away, as I had said, to the enemy's position at the smell of the Japanese when we were fighting the enemy "punitive" forces in later days. I had benefited a great deal from the white war-horse but not from any captured war dog.

The whole course of the battle at Laoheishan, to which we had attached importance as a model of allurement and ambush in the history of the anti-Japanese war, proved that this type of battle was one of the most efficient forms and conformed with the characteristics of guerrilla warfare.

We defeated the Jingan army in succession in subsequent battles by destroying Kuto's unit in Mengjiang, annihilating the crack unit led by Yoshizaki himself in the Changbai and Linjiang areas, and in the days of the final offensive, by disintegrating and crushing the 1st Division, the successor of the Jingan army.

For the Laoheishan battle the KPRA, which had been directing its main efforts to the defence of the guerrilla zones in fixed areas, advanced to wider areas from the narrow liberated ones and for the first time demonstrated the might of large-unit operations. The gunshots that rumbled in the valley of Laoheishan lauded the correctness of the policy set out at the Yaoyinggou meeting, the policy of relinquishing the guerrilla zones and launching into wider large-scale operation areas, and it was a harbinger of victory in our second expedition to north Manchuria. Thanks to the victory we had won at Laoheishan the KPRA

was able to make more satisfactory preparations for a successful second expedition to north Manchuria.

The news of the KPRA's victory spread quickly like lightning in Manchuria, inspiring confidence in the masses of workers and peasants of Korea and China, who had been groaning under the tyranny of the Jingan army, and arousing them to struggle. As we were returning to Taipinggou with the trophies on the saddles of the captured horses, the people there formed long lines on both sides of the road and greeted us enthusiastically. Ri Thae Gyong, too, arrived all the way from Sandaogou to Xintunzi where we were resting. People came from Jinchang and Huoshaopu to visit the people's revolutionary army bringing small contributions to us.

On the eve of the second expedition to north Manchuria I planned an operation to win over a company of the puppet Manchukuo army stationed in Dahuanggou, by drawing on some information I had received from the Hunchun guerrilla unit. The man who had brought me the information was Hwang Jong Hae, serving as an orderly of the Hunchun guerrilla unit. His father, Hwang Pyong Gil, was a renowned patriotic martyr who had taken an active part in planning the shooting of Ito Hirobumi by An Jung Gun.

Hwang told me that there was a sergeant in the company who sympathized with communism, who had a good influence on his fellow soldiers, but that he did not dare to persuade the whole company, only thinking about coming over to the guerrilla army with some of his fellows. He further asked for my advice as he thought it probable that the whole company could be won over if things went well.

My attention had already been drawn to this company in Dahuanggou. It hindered the activities of the guerrilla army in one way

or another as it was located along our route. We knew that the company commander was a Chinese man and that the Korean serving in the company as an interpreter was a very wicked fellow.

The sergeant played the main part in the operation for the mutiny. He was masterminded by Hwang Jong Hae and our other operatives. The sergeant was neither an operative we had planted nor a member of the Communist Party. He was just an ordinary young man who had been recruited while working in Dalian. His “punitive” force had originally been in Jehol. As his unit moved to Jiandao, he automatically came to Hunchun. The sergeant had heard in Jehol that there were many communists in Jiandao, and paid serious attention to the activities of the communists around him in Hunchun. He even had had the bold idea of joining up with them in order to reshape his destiny.

One day while talking to his fellow soldiers in a restaurant, he complained, “Damn it! What’s the use of fighting the communists? I’d do better to shoot someone on our side and desert.” Hwang had witnessed this and reported it to his superiors. The sergeant soon became a man we had to win over to our side.

At about this time an incident took place, in which one of our comrades, who had gone to Hunchun for a small-unit operation, was arrested by the police. He was a Korean, but he spoke fluent Chinese. When the police had tied him up, then kicked, hit and abused him, the sergeant, who was passing by, saw what was happening and interfered, saying, “Hey! He’s in the same state of being oppressed as you are, though he’s a communist. How on earth can you beat him so cruelly?” He hit the policeman and sent him away. He then took our operative to his barracks. On the way the sergeant said to him, “I can set you free here now. But you’ve got to go with me to our barracks. If you’re

courageous, then please tell about the communist army to my company commander and to others, spending the night in our unit. We're eager to know. There are a Japanese instructor and a Korean interpreter in our company, both wicked men. I'll make an excuse to send them to the town, so you may rest easy."

Our operative did not know why the sergeant was making such a suggestion, but he followed him to the barracks, thinking to die an honourable death if need be.

At the barracks, he took our man to the company commander who was his friend. As the three were talking at a tea table behind closed doors, the Japanese instructor entered the company headquarters and looked curiously at our man. In order not to incur the instructor's suspicion, the sergeant said to the company commander, "This is a friend of mine. He came to collect the money for the wine I drank, but I haven't any. Would you kindly lend me some, sir?" The company commander was also a wily man. He replied, "I'll pay for the wine, so don't worry about it. Your friend is my friend so we must treat him well. You may talk here at ease over tea, before parting."

After the Japanese instructor had left for the town, the three men continued their talk. At the sergeant's request, our man conducted some communist propaganda, saying, "The guerrilla army is an allied army of Koreans and Chinese. I'm a Korean. The Korean people, too, are against the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. There are patriots in the Manchukuo army and we're ready to join hands with them." He further explained our policy on the puppet Manchukuo army and sang some songs in Chinese for them about that army.

Moved by his talk, the company commander told our man to inform his superiors on his return the next day that he had no intention of

fighting the guerrilla army and, even though his company had to go on a “punitive” mission, they would fire a few shots in the direction of the forest as a signal so that the guerrillas could escape.

Seeing our man off, the sergeant said that he wanted to keep in touch with our man in the future, and that it would be good for our man to be in contact with him. He requested that he report to his political commissar what they had discussed that day.

In this way we could keep in touch with the company; we increased our activities still further to encourage them to revolt. I gave Hwang Jong Hae a detailed assignment and sent him back to Dahuanggou. Hwang got in touch with the sergeant again and worked to help the whole company to revolt. The sergeant made the following earnest request to Hwang, “We do what we are doing against our will. There’s nothing more shameful for a man than playing the role of a puppet of others. We envy you. The whole company’s ready to revolt, so please raid my company.”

We dispatched a force of two or three companies to the vicinity of their barracks. The companies surrounded the barracks and, at the time the soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army were doing their morning exercise, they fired warning shots and shouted at them. The puppet Manchukuo army company sent a representative for negotiations; he was none other than the sergeant from Dalian whom we had influenced. The sergeant demanded ceasefire and told our man about their intention to revolt. True to their determination, about 150 officers and men of the puppet Manchukuo army killed the Japanese instructor and Korean interpreter, loaded all the enemy’s belongings in the town onto horse carts and arrived in our guerrilla zone, blowing their trumpets.

The commanding officers of the Hunchun Regiment had a long discussion on how this company should be admitted into the people's revolutionary army. Some suggested dissolving the company and appointing them to the new companies of the people's revolutionary army while others proposed enrolling the company whole, instead of dissolving it. The former was predominant among the two proposals.

Regimental headquarters repeated the talks on this issue with the officers of the company that had revolted. However, the officers would not agree to the dissolution of their company. Choe Pong Ho, political commissar of the Hunchun Regiment, brought the matter to me for my decision.

In order to acquire a clear understanding of the wishes of the soldiers of the company, I went over to converse with them. They were strongly against dissolving their company and were disturbed by the rumour about it. Frankly speaking, it was against all morals to dissolve it and to scatter its men over different companies against their will, men who had come over of their own accord, not having been taken prisoner. The most reasonable solution was to respect their wishes as far as possible.

I made a compromise proposal that the company would not be dissolved but enrolled as three new companies to suit the organizational structure of the people's revolutionary army, and that the commanding officers of the companies would be elected by a democratic method at the meeting of the soldiers who had come over. I advanced the idea for discussion. The company accepted the compromise proposal with satisfaction. Regimental commander Hou Guo-zhong and political commissar Choe Pong Ho also supported the idea.

The sergeant who had played the major role in the mutiny was elected company commander. It was decided to send the former company commander to the Soviet Union for studies.

Some of the men who wanted to go to China proper were sent there via the Soviet Union, and others who wanted to remain and fight on our side joined the Hunchun guerrilla unit. Later, when we were in north Manchuria, they were transferred to the unit of Li Yan-lu.

The enemy mobilized enormous forces of the Kwantung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army, police, home guards and railway guards in order to encircle and annihilate the large forces of the people's revolutionary army who were fighting and doing political work in and around Luozigou and Taipinggou. The main force of the "punitive" troops pressed on Taipinggou from the direction of Luozigou and some were deployed between Yaoyinggou and Baicaoogou with the plan of encircling and annihilating the people's revolutionary army in this narrow area if it retreated to the southwest.

On June 20, 1935, the enemy began its attack at last on Taipinggou. We deployed our units on the mountain behind Taipinggou and set up the command post near the mortar battery. There was a natural cave below the C.P.

The enemy began crossing the River Dahuoshaopu on boats. Our mortar battery opened fire. One of the mortars blew up an enemy boat in the middle of the river. The enemy gave up the crossing and fled in terror to their positions. The marksmanship of the mortar gunners was really amazing. The mortar battery, which had been formed with part of the defectors from the puppet Manchukuo army, proved its worth. Those who had been sceptical and unhappy with the defectors' participation in the battle only now realized how they had erred.

I embraced the commander of the battery and congratulated him on the victory. Some of the commanding officers of the revolutionary army, who had been sceptical of those who had come over to our side, were so pleased that they came running to the mortar emplacement. The rumbling of the mortars on the River Dahuoshaopu was a historical cry, heralding the birth of our artillery. The enemy trembled with fear at the boom and the people danced with joy. We now celebrate that day as the day of the artillery.

Battalion commander Wen, who had fled to Luozigou in terror at our mortar fire after attempting to cross the River Dahuoshaopu said, “The people’s revolutionary army is really something mysterious. It captured mortars only yesterday and today has the skill of hitting a target with only the second shell. Who can rival such an army? It’s a fool’s job to do that. I will never fight Kim Il Sung’s army even if it means a Japanese sword on my neck.” Needless to say, this information was delivered to us by company commander Tie.

As the people’s revolutionary army displayed its might by defeating the enemy in succession at Laoheishan and Taipinggou, our revolutionary organizations worked energetically in many places. The head of the Anti-Japanese Association in Luozigou said proudly that after the people’s revolutionary army had crushed the Jingan army unit at Laoheishan, the people living in the town had come to him, not to the village government, to register marriages and to report childbirths.

We do not forgive anybody who harms the people! We demonstrated this will of the Korean communists once again powerfully in practice at Laoheishan and Taipinggou. But those who harmed the people were extremely wicked. “We will exist only when we stamp out

communism!”—this was the belief of the people’s enemy. We still had to fight many a battle against those with this belief.

The blood shed by the enemy in the battle at Taipinggou stained the River Dahuoshaopu for over a week. It was said that an unprecedented number of daces swam up this river in shoals that year, probably because of the blood.

5. The Seeds of the Revolution Sown over a Wide Area

When the whole of east Manchuria was groping for a way out, shedding tears of grief over the catastrophic consequences of the whirlwind of the “purge”, we advanced a new line of dissolving the narrow guerrilla bases in the form of liberated areas and launching into wider areas for active large-scale operations; we brought this line up for discussion at the Yaoyinggou meeting in March 1935. The overwhelming majority of the military and political cadres attending the meeting supported it fully.

Nevertheless, not all expressed an understanding of and sympathy with it; some of the cadres of the Party and Young Communist League were against dissolving the guerrilla zones. They attacked us, arguing: “What’s all this silly talk about dissolving the guerrilla bases? Why did we build them in the first place if we’re to abandon them? Why did we shed our blood for three to four years defending them and starving in rags? This is a Rightist deviation, capitulationism and defeatism.” The academic circles now call their idea the theory of defending the guerrilla zones to the last man.

The strongest proponent of this theory at the Yaoyinggou meeting was Ri Kwang Rim, one of the founders of the Ningnan guerrilla unit. Ri

had conducted work mostly among the youth at the Ningan County YCL Committee and at the eastern area bureau of Jilin Province of the YCL. He was later sent to the Wangqing area to make preparations for the formation of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army with Chai Shi-rong, Fu Xian-ming and other commanders of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units. I think he attended the Yaoyinggou meeting as an acting secretary of the East Manchuria Special District Committee of the YCL.

He attacked those who insisted on evacuating the guerrilla zones, arguing: “If we quit the guerrilla zones and move over vast areas, what will become of the people? You say that the people will be evacuated to the enemy area from the guerrilla zones, but doesn’t this mean throwing the people right into the jaws of death, the people who had shared life in the shadow of death, forming an integral whole with the army? Can the revolutionary army conduct guerrilla warfare without relying on the military and political stronghold called the guerrilla zones? If the revolutionary people tempered in the guerrilla zones go to enemy-held areas, doesn’t it mean that we’d be losing tens of thousands of revolutionary masses whom we have trained with so much effort? Won’t the dissolving of the guerrilla zones result, finally, in the revolution retreating to the point where it started in 1932?”

The discussion which seemed to come to a conclusion without a hitch gradually assumed complicated aspects with Ri Kwang Rim’s long harangue. Even some of the supporters of the line began to nod their heads at his argument. The participants of the meeting were divided into two groups, one for dissolving the guerrilla zones and the other against it, and bickered with each other. When the argument reached a climax, some badly-trained people tried to forcibly overpower their opponents,

resorting to personalities. One man disproved Ri's insistence while finding faults with his private life.

He said that Ri had carried a torch for a girl when he had been working as the head of a district YCL committee in Ningan County. He had been earnest in his love, but the girl did not accept it. What he had received though, were the love-letters he had sent to her but which had come back without replies, and the girl's heartless, cold response, turning away each time she had seen him. Love could not be won by the subjective desire and zeal of one side alone. Ri had expelled the girl who had broken his heart to Muling County and had had a love affair with another woman before coming to Wangqing. That was the inside story of Ri's life the people narrated to refute his argument, so that it was impossible to draw a hasty conclusion about its authenticity.

They attacked Ri by resorting to such a low-down method of referring to his personal life just to prove that he would do anything to beat his opponents in argument, as he was a man with such a retaliatory spirit as expelling the woman he had loved to a strange land.

Another man reminded the meeting of the fact that Ri was a "remnant of the Tuesday group" who had zealously followed certain officials of the Manchurian general bureau of the Communist Party of Korea. He even disparaged Ri by saying that it would not be unreasonable to view his opposition to closing the guerrilla zones as a relapse of the disease of factionalism.

It was mean in all respects to pick holes in one's opponent's argument by telling a love story that had ended in failure or by labelling him as a remnant of factionalism. But Ri Kwang Rim was also to blame, for while describing himself as the most faithful defender of the people and the most thoroughgoing spokesman of the people's opinions and

interests, he did not hesitate to label others preposterously as Right opportunists, betrayers of people and as those inviting unpardonable suicides.

We could understand why Ri Kwang Rim was dead set against the evacuation of the guerrilla zones. Dissolving them was painful also for us. Where on earth could such people be found who would be cold-hearted enough to abandon without regret and affection the home bases which they had built with their own hands, tended with their hearts and defended like an impregnable fortress, regarding them as “heaven”? We had anguished over this with boundless reluctance and attachment before coming to the tearful decision to evacuate them.

Needless to say, Ri Kwang Rim must have felt no less attachment to the guerrilla zones than we. Nevertheless, in view of the prevailing situation at the time the long frontal confrontation with a powerful enemy having enormous military potentials while confining ourselves in fixed guerrilla zones—the liberated areas—could be called pure adventurism by the measure of all fair yardsticks. It would lead to self-destruction.

In 1933 or in 1934, when the vitality of the guerrilla zones was at its height, we did not dare mention it. At that time we had regarded them as an oasis or an earthly paradise.

Why, then, did we decide to relinquish them now, in 1935? Was it a whim? No, it was not. It was neither a whim, nor a vacillation nor a retreat. It was a bold, strategic measure which could be called “one step forward”.

We were determined in 1935 to close down the guerrilla zones because it was a requirement of the objective and subjective circumstances prevailing in those days.

We could say that the guerrilla zones set up along the Tuman River had fulfilled their mission and tasks. The greatest task of the guerrilla zones had been to protect and train the revolutionary forces and, at the same time, to lay firm political, military, material and technical foundations for further expansion and development of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. But, at that time we had not defined the period of the fulfilment of the task as three or four years. We had only thought that the shorter the period, the better it would be.

In the heat of the armed struggle the army and people had become unconquerable fighters. The guerrilla army which had had several dozens of soldiers at the outset had now developed into a people's revolutionary army with enormous strength that was capable of large-scale battles to defend the guerrilla bases and of attacking cities. The people's revolutionary army accumulated a wealth of political and military experience, the experience of fresh, original guerrilla warfare.

The guerrilla war was a blast furnace and a political and military academy that produced fighters. And this blast furnace produced only pure steel. Those who had tilled stony fields or raised cattle and horses in the landlords' stables had become competent fighters after having been tempered in this blast furnace. The anti-Japanese political and military academy made fighters of even those rustic dunces and casual labourers who had thought that wealth and poverty depended on the lines of their palms, or on what the fortune tellers and sorceresses had to say.

I once had been convulsed with laughter by Kim Ja Rin's story about the days when he was a manservant, for that story had been tinted with such comedy that no one could listen to it without laughing.

One day Kim Ja Rin had driven an ox of the landlord, his master, to the field at dawn as usual. While he was cutting the grass edible for the

ox with a sickle, a train had suddenly appeared at a mountain bend, running at full speed. He had stopped working and had sat down on the ridge of the field to gaze for a while at the train. By chance his eyes had caught a glimpse of a smart gentleman smoking at the entrance of one carriage. For no reason he had thought the man's smart appearance detestable, so he had shaken his fist at the gentleman, which had been a sort of provocation at those who ate their fill and were well-clad. The gentleman, too, had shouted back and shaken his fist, glaring fiercely at him. His straw hat had blown away during his tirade. He had waved his hands a few times in the air in dismay trying to catch it, but after a short while he had disappeared with the speeding train. And his hat had fallen to a swamp along the railway.

Kim had run to the marsh to pick up the hat. He put it on his head and climbed up the railway dike, thinking that now he had become a rich man. As luck would have it, he had found a five-*fen* silver coin wrapped in a handkerchief on the dike. The handkerchief had flown along with the straw hat from the head of the gentleman.

Kim in his teens had pondered for a whole day on what to buy with that five *fen* ; he had gone to a casino that night with the hat of that gentleman on his head, a casino where the young folk of well-to-do families gathered at night to enjoy themselves. With that five *fen* as capital, he had fortunately won a great sum of money from them in one night.

Kim had cleared off his debts to the landlord with the money and given some of it to a poor old neighbour who had lived his whole life in poverty and tears. Though the remainder was small, this young servant had reckoned that the money was still enough for him to live fairly well for some years.

However, in less than a year he had again begun to suffer from debts. He had worked like a horse to earn as much money as possible. He had had the idea that if he worked hard he could become well-off, improve his lot and even rise in the world. But labour had not given him wealth nor improved his standard of living. The harder he had worked, the more wretched he had become and the more ill-treated. He was a clever man with great strength, however, he had not been treated as a human being, but as a beast, because he was poor.

Kim Ja Rin resisted point-blank those who ill-treated and molested him. If he was in a bad temper, he would grab those who had annoyed him by their throats and give them a good punch. But he was unable to eke out a livelihood. Later he had come to the guerrilla zone in Wangyugou and had joined the guerrilla army; he became one of the five best machine-gunners in Jiandao.

Ri Tu Su, the hero of the battle at Hongtoushan, widely known among our people as an undying man, was once a beggar.

The guerrilla zone was a cradle that nurtured tens of thousands of anti-Japanese heroes, heroines and martyrs. Even toothless old women became agitators who cried for an anti-Japanese struggle once they came to a guerrilla zone. Every person was a hard worker there, a guard, a combatant, an efficient organizer, propagandist or man of action. Jo Tong Uk, Jon Mun Jin, O Jin U, Pak Kil Song and Kim Thaek Kun were all prominent revolutionaries who were trained in the Wangqing guerrilla zone. The anti-Japanese heroes and heroines shed sweat and blood to forge an unprecedented history of resistance that won the world's admiration.

The revolutionary ranks became united into a great family that no force could ever break through arduous struggle against factionalism and

Left and Right opportunism. A firm mass basis for the armed struggle and Party building was laid and the anti-Japanese allied front with the Chinese people became unbreakable—all these successes were won in the three to four years after the guerrilla zones were established. Would it have been possible for the Korean and Chinese communists to register all of them without a strategic base, without the guerrilla zones? Would it have been possible for them to carry out in such a thoroughgoing, wonderful way the strategic tasks facing the first stage of the anti-Japanese revolution without the launching base, supply base and rear base of the guerrilla zone?

Kim Myong Hwa had been a woman in the lowest rung of society who had eked out her living by making hats out of horsehair. She now lived a life worthy of a human being in the guerrilla zone and grew to be a soldier of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the heat of the anti-Japanese war. She could not have trodden this amazing path of development if she had not been in the guerrilla zone. She would not have been able to exist, not to speak of developing.

Among the revolutionary fighters born of the anti-Japanese war were former hunters, butchers, schoolteachers, raftsmen, smiths, a drugstore keeper like Rim Chun Chu, and a physician like So Chol. There were young men and women who came from the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria, the General Federation of Korean Youth in South Manchuria and the General Federation of Korean Youth in China or fresh from schooling in urban communities as well as simple young men from the countryside. The guerrilla zones reared people with different family backgrounds and from all walks of life into faithful soldiers who acted strictly to command, into beloved men and women of

the time who fought for their fatherland and nation at the risk of their lives in the forefront of the anti-Japanese, national salvation struggle.

Our decision to set up guerrilla zones in the form of liberated areas in the mountainous sites in Jiandao was proved right and timely through practice. But, at the time when the vitality of the guerrilla zones was still being demonstrated, we emphasized in Yaoyinggou the urgency of the dissolution of the guerrilla zones. Why? Because there was no need to defend the guerrilla zones any longer as they had fulfilled their mission and tasks.

The revolutionary situation in the Jiandao area in the mid-1930s required the Korean and Chinese communists to change their line to cope with the developments in the new age.

To defend the guerrilla zones in the same way as we had done while shouting for a do-or-die battle while entrenched in them, was, strictly speaking, tantamount to maintaining the status quo without any will to develop the revolution any further. If the revolution could be likened to flooding water, their contention was nothing but arguing for it to stay in a lake or in a reservoir, instead of flowing out to the sea.

Revolution can be likened to a large, long river, which, breaking against steep rocks and roaring, whirling and eddying through gorges, meanders towards the sea, taking billions of tiny drops of spray with it. Have you ever seen a long river flowing back towards mountains, instead of flowing into the sea? A backward flow or standing still is not for rivers. The river flows forward all the time. It runs ceaselessly to the distant sea, its destination, while overcoming obstacles and embracing its tributaries. The river does not become stale because it moves without stopping or rest. If it stops its flow even for a moment, decay will set in

some corner and all sorts of plankton will reproduce in it to build their kingdoms.

If the revolution excludes innovation and regards existing policies as absolute, it will be like a river that has stopped flowing. The revolution must renovate its tactics steadily as required by new circumstances and conditions to attain the strategic goals it has set. Without such renovation, the revolution cannot escape stagnation and standstill. If there is a man who thinks that a method will be valid 50 years later and will keep its value absolute even after 100 years, then where on earth could an illusory man more foolish than he be found? We cannot call it otherwise than a stand that neglects the independence, creativity and consciousness of the human being.

Tactics are always of relative significance. They can represent a moment, a day, a month, a quarter or a period. In the process of leading a strategy to success, there can be ten or a hundred tactics. Emphasizing one prescription of tactics for a strategy is not a creative attitude towards the revolution; this is a dogma. A dogma means a foolish suicide of binding oneself hand and foot. Where dogmatism prevails, one can expect neither fresh, vital politics nor a vigorous revolution.

Creativity and innovation are the sources of power that make revolution as dynamic as a long river because they really represent the essential demands of the popular masses who desire indefinite progress and prosperity in order to live a life of independence. In this sense, creativity and innovation can be called an engine propelling the revolution. It will not be exaggerating to say that the speed of the development of a nation depends on the horsepower of this engine.

The Korean revolution has reached the threshold of the 21st century, driven by this engine.

What is the most important political subject our Party is discussing today when we are within a stone's throw of the 21st century? This is the methods by which we should defend and develop the socialism of our own style centred on the masses still further, confronted with the strong blockade imposed by allied imperialism.

Even a century ago the Korean peninsula was surrounded by the Great Powers. Their warships were always on the sea off Inchon. Whenever the feudal government took a stand of rejecting Westerners and the Japanese, sticking to the policy of national isolation, they would fire several shells and demand open-door policy. The Japanese imperialists fabricated a pro-Japanese cabinet and manipulated it to enforce the reform of the nation's politics. The Japanese advisers, ministers and emissaries they had sent hovered around the King and Queen. This was also a form of encirclement.

Encirclement and blockade have been trials imposed upon the Korean nation historically by foreign aggressors and imperialists. I, along with my nation, have lived my whole life in this encirclement and blockade. Is this a fate brought about by the country's geopolitical characteristics? Needless to say, these could be the reason. If the Korean peninsula was situated at a corner of a glacier in Alaska or in the Arctic, the predilection of the Great Powers for our country might possibly be changed, isn't that so? But such an "if" does not exist. It does not matter where a country is situated. The nations following an independent road without kowtowing to the Great Powers must always be prepared to become targets of the Green Berets or victims of many Torricelli Bills wherever they are situated on Earth. Therefore, those who are determined to live independently must always be ready throughout their lives to break the siege imposed by the imperialists.

The anti-Japanese guerrilla bases in Jiandao were in a tight siege in 1935, too. That year the enemy's siege reached its apex. While we had decided to come to a finale in the revolution by changing our lines, the enemy attempted to achieve a decisive victory in their purge of "communist bandits" by tightening the siege to the maximum. The Japanese imperialists mobilized hundreds of thousands of their crack troops, encircled the guerrilla zones in double and triple rings and launched a "punitive" attack every day to stamp all the living creatures there off the face of the earth.

The enemy's main scheme to break the relations between the revolutionary army and the people lay in its policy of the concentration village. In accordance with this policy the people living in all the administrative districts outside the jurisdiction of the people's revolutionary government were driven into the concentration villages surrounded by earthen walls and forts whether they liked it or not to lead a mole's life under such immoral laws as the five-household joint surveillance system and the ten-household joint responsibility system, subject to the medieval order.

The enemy set fire to tens of thousands of houses and villages that were scattered all over Manchuria, issued ultimatum-like orders for people to evacuate; they mercilessly moved them to earthen-walled villages in the flat areas in order to easily rule them by relying on the "peaceful villages" guarded by their army, police and armed self-defence corps. But the main purpose was to break the blood-sealed ties of unity between the army and the people once and for all, that great obstacle in their "purge of communist bandits", by means of such man-made barriers as earthen walls, forts, moats, fences, searchlights and wire entanglements. The enemy knew that the guerrilla army was the

protector of the people and that the latter was a rear base and an important information source of the former.

Once they had confined the people within the earthen walls, they could mobilize them en masse for various kinds of compulsory labour such as the construction of road and other military facilities, keep such projects in strict secret, and easily requisition manpower, funds and materials whenever necessary.

The enemy intensified anti-communist propaganda with the building of the concentration villages. They said that it was because of the Communist Party and the revolutionary army that the people were forced to leave their beloved homes and go to live in concentration villages and that because the Communist Party and the revolutionary army, in collusion with the people, were disturbing the peace, the authorities had been compelled to do away with all the scattered villages and build “peaceful villages” in which the people could live free from the troubles the “communist bandits” and mounted rebels caused.

The enemy built square earthen walls and drove 100 or 200 households into each of the walled villages. Houses were built in rows like the residential quarters in a modern industrial centre in order to facilitate police surveillance. The people from one village, once they were in the concentration villages, were separated in a way that they could not become neighbours; even the people who were relatives or intimate friends could not be neighbours as they had been dispersed in different directions. This measure was for preventing like-minded people from conspiring for a disturbance of the peace and from an attempt to form secret societies.

How they schemed to sow the seeds of dissension and estrangement between the residents of the concentration villages can be seen from the

five-household joint surveillance system alone. They formed a group of five households and, if one of them was found to be communicating with the guerrilla army, they punished all the households in that group; in the worst cases, they killed all the people of the five households. This was the notorious five-household joint surveillance system.

The administrative officials, armed police and army strictly controlled food grains to prevent even a pound of rice from getting out to the people's revolutionary army. When the people went to work beyond the earthen walls, the police searched their lunchboxes to see if they had extra rice for the "communist bandits", and indiscriminately deprived them of their lunchboxes if they had more than their share. The peasants living in the concentration villages were not allowed to go beyond the walls before dawn even though they wanted to begin work earlier to deal with the arrears of field work, and they had to be back before dusk. It was almost impossible for the revolutionary army to expect any food supplies from the people in the concentration villages.

The farm products from the guerrilla zones could not satisfy the food demands of the soldiers and the inhabitants. Worse still, the enemy incessantly hampered their farm work. The crops as well as the people became objects of their scorched-earth operations. They trampled sprouting crops, burnt growing crops, harvested and carried away ripe crops by mobilizing armed men. This was a mean hunger operation and strangling siege for starving the army and people to death in the guerrilla zones whom they were unable to annihilate through arms.

The "Minsaengdan" had been dissolved, but the enemy's scheme to divide and disintegrate the revolutionary ranks from within and without was more vicious than ever. The leaflets enticing our men to surrender carried pictures of pretty nude girls and pornographic pictures of

intimate relations. Beautiful women, bribed by money, wormed their way into our ranks under the guise of a Rosa Luxemburg or Joan of Arc and became absorbed in corrosive schemes to benumb the military and political cadres and to hand them over to the police or the gendarmerie.

All this was a great murderous farce used to reduce the guerrilla zones in Jiandao into a solitary island totally isolated from the world of humanity, to raze them to the ground and strangle them.

If we had failed to comprehend the developments and become engrossed in defending the exposed guerrilla zones, the revolutionary army would have ended up in a loss of military initiative and in being drawn into an endless war of attrition. Then, the revolutionary forces trained for several years would have broken up. To have become preoccupied with the defence of the narrow guerrilla zones would have resulted in playing into the hands of the enemy frenziedly trying to crush all the soldiers and people in the Red territory through three-dimensional warfare.

It was justifiable that the majority of those attending the meeting criticized the argument of defending the guerrilla zones to the last man as adventurism. What I still think strange is that most of those who insisted on the defence of the guerrilla zones at the Yaoyinggou meeting were self-important men extremely dogmatic and Leftish in their everyday life. Strangely enough, they gave wide berth to people who had a creative and innovative attitude and belittled those with dreams and imagination.

Nevertheless, we managed to persuade these radical, self-opinionated people at long last at the Yaoyinggou meeting. The issue on relinquishing the guerrilla zones, unlike the issue on the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle which had been decided to be submitted to the

Comintern, was settled by the meeting's decision. This was yet another success achieved in our fight against Leftist adventurism.

The Yaoyinggou meeting marked a turning-point for the people's revolutionary army to switch over from strategic defence of the guerrilla zones to a new stage of strategic offensive. Thanks to the decision of the meeting, we were able to leave the narrow guerrilla zones to greet a new age in which we could energetically conduct active guerrilla warfare with large units in the vast area of northeast China and Korea. The arena of the people's revolutionary army activities, which had been confined to the five counties in Jiandao, would expand dozens of times. Needless to say, the wider the scope of our activities became, the deeper the quandary the enemy, blockading the narrow area, would find itself in. It would be comparatively easy for them to surround the five counties, but it was quite a different matter with the several provinces in northeast China. So far they had had an easy time of it, cooped up in fixed areas after encircling the guerrilla zones, but from that time on they were forced to fight battles which had been unprecedented and had not been dealt with in military manuals, treading on the heels of the people's revolutionary army.

The enemy described our evacuation of the guerrilla zones as "signifying the decline of the communist bandits in Jiandao" as a "result of the thoroughgoing punitive operation of the Imperial Army through dispersed disposition", but they had to recognize it as a voluntary act based on new tactics for switching over to large-scale guerrilla actions and as an offensive measure. This new strategic measure made the enemy uneasy, striking terror into them.

Knowing that we were evacuating the guerrilla zones, the enemy interfered with our efforts in every possible way. They further tightened

the military blockade, on the one hand, to prevent the army and people from slipping out of the guerrilla zones and, on the other, conducted an ideological offensive in every way to confuse the minds of the people by misleading public opinion. They said that the abandoning of Red territories meant the end of the armed struggle and that the communists' quitting of guerrilla zones signified abandoning the guerrilla movement. These manoeuvres of the enemy were the major obstacle to our efforts to evacuate the guerrilla zones.

In addition, the people did not welcome the evacuation and this more than anything else troubled us. It was no wonder that they did not accept the new line without mental agony which even a political and military cadre like Ri Kwang Rim had not readily agreed to. Some people entreated us not to do away with the guerrilla zones, asking, "Why are you so eager to suddenly abandon the guerrilla zones today, zones which you publicized as 'heaven' until yesterday? What is it all about?" The old man, O Thae Hui, submitted a petition to us on behalf of the people in Shiliping entreating us not to relinquish these zones.

Various conjectures and judgements were made by the people in the guerrilla zones. Each day one or two ominous rumours of doubtful origin spread, confusing the people. Rumour had it that the revolutionary army was evacuating the Red territories to lighten its burden of protecting the people or that the guerrilla army was leaving Jiandao to fight in the homeland by basing itself on the Rangrim Mountains in Korea. Some people said that the revolutionary army might be going deep into the Soviet Union or China proper to recover from its state of exhaustion and to expand its forces on a large scale before coming back to Jiandao. On top of these conjectures, misleading rumours set afloat by the enemy's

appeasement squads were rife, plunging the public opinion of the guerrilla zones into chaos.

We held a joint meeting of the army and the people in Yaoyinggou and patiently explained the urgency and correctness of dissolving the guerrilla zones. The delegates dispatched to various counties and revolutionary organizational districts in east Manchuria convened meetings of like nature and enlightened the army and people. The people understood very well that not to dissolve the guerrilla zones meant death, and accepted the policy as a justifiable strategic measure.

However, the majority of the people backed out at the practical stage of dissolution, refusing to go to the enemy-controlled area. They pleaded, saying, "It's alright if we have to live on grass and water boiled with animal hides in the guerrilla zone. We'd rather die of hunger here than go to the enemy-ruled area. How can we live there under the harassment of the Japs? We'll die here if we have to, but don't send us there."

Under the slogan, "Let us persuade the people repeatedly!" we called at their houses every day. We held meetings of districts and organizations to persuade them, but quite a few of the people stuck to their opinion that they would not move to the enemy area.

I am one of those who well know what great strength the propaganda and agitation of the communists produce. Some comrades say that it is an infinite strength. But you can't say that it works in all circumstances. This can be proved by the fact that many people did not move to the enemy area, but went deep into the mountain valleys instead.

Some people volunteered to join the army to escape from having to live under enemy rule. Even the Children's Corps and Children's Vanguard members who were not old enough to join the army irritated

us with their requests to follow the revolutionary army. At that time Hwang Sun Hui clung to the sleeves of the guerrillas and insisted that if they would not take her with them, they had to shoot her. So the Yanji guerrilla unit accepted her into the guerrilla army. It probably was due to her persistence that she, as a small and fragile woman, surmounted the difficulties of armed struggle, risking her life thousands of times, and is still adding glory to herself as a revolutionary fighter today. Thae Pyong Ryol and Choe Sun San are also veterans who joined the revolutionary army when the guerrilla zones were being evacuated.

At that time we recruited many young men and women and even children into the guerrilla army. Officials of the Party, the YCL and the people's revolutionary government, who had braved all sorts of hardships with the people for years in the guerrilla zones, took up arms and joined our ranks. Some people volunteered to work in the sewing units, arsenals and hospitals of the revolutionary army. In the course of evacuating the guerrilla zones, the ranks of the people's revolutionary army expanded rapidly in this manner.

The units of the people's revolutionary army, with the people's warm support and encouragement, tried their best to make preparations, obtain supplies and improve the arms needed for guerrilla warfare in extensive areas. In those days the Women's Association members worked with full devotion, emptying the drawers of chests to make uniforms, knapsacks, handkerchiefs, puttees and tobacco pouches for the soldiers of the revolutionary army who were leaving the guerrilla zones.

We, in turn, gave of our best for their evacuation. The main thing was to expedite the preparations for the people's evacuation, to meet their demands and the actual situation. How detailed and substantial the preparations for moving them were at that time can be seen from the

census, taken in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao shortly before the evacuation of the people. The census contained the names of the people who were to leave the guerrilla zones for other places, their ages, occupations, the names and addresses of their relatives and friends, their official duties, their levels of education, technical skills, destinations, the amount of food grain they had, and so on.

In accordance with this list, the officials of the guerrilla zones classified the people to be sent to the enemy area, to the homeland, and to deep mountains where they would be able to farm. They also grouped separately the people who could go to their relatives and those who could not, children without any support and patients, and evacuated them in a trustworthy manner with an armed escort.

Each of the families evacuated to the enemy area, homeland or to mountainous areas was granted about 30 to 50 *yuan* of aid money, and was also supplied with fabrics, footwear, vessels, and a variety of other necessities and kitchen utensils. We fought several battles to obtain the money and materials to be distributed among the people. Of these battles I still vividly remember the dramatic raid on the concentration village in Dawangqing, an unusual battle in which O Paek Ryong taught his uncle a lesson. It was also a kind of tragi-comedy in the history of the suffering of our nation that O Paek Ryong slapped his uncle's face.

We had captured a large amount of weapons and supplies in the battle of the village—20 Model 38 rifles, 40 cattle and horses, dozens of sacks of rice and wheat flour, tens of thousands of *yuan* of money and so on and so forth. These trophies were too much for the soldiers to carry themselves. The officers fetched people from the village 500 to 600 metres away from the battle site. An important tactical principle of guerrilla warfare was swiftness in the attack and withdrawal; unless the

trophies were disposed of quickly, the withdrawal of our unit would be delayed and it would give the enemy a chance to counterattack.

At this urgent moment a moustached peasant would not carry a load and only grumbled. He even prevented others from carrying loads, saying, “Hey, you’ll get into trouble for carrying loads for the guerrilla army. Don’t be rash for the sake of the future!”

Unable to bear with him, O Paek Ryong said, “If you don’t feel like carrying loads, sir, then go home.”

But the man, instead of going home, continued fussing about their meeting with disaster if they carried the loads.

O Paek Ryong lost his self-control and slapped his face. Then, he asked a distant relative, “Isn’t that fellow a reactionary?”

“Why? That’s O Chun Sam, your uncle.”

O Paek Ryong was very surprised. It surprised him that his uncle was behaving like a fool, not as a Korean would do, and what was even more surprising, he had not seen his uncle until he was over 20 years old. When he was still a baby, his uncle had left his family and wandered from place to place. So he did not know his uncle and vice versa. While he had grown up to be a revolutionary, his uncle had turned into a weak man who feared the revolution, and was so feeble-minded and cowardly that he not only shunned the revolutionary struggle himself but also hated to see his children take part in it.

O Paek Ryong was sorry that he had slapped his uncle’s face, but did not know how to apologize. Instead, he sent him a letter through a distant relative, which read:

Dear Uncle:

I behaved badly to you because I didn't know you, so please forgive me.

If you don't want to be treated badly by the young people, join the revolution.

As his nephew had advised, O Chun Sam did revolutionize his family later on. He not only became a revolutionary himself but led his wife and children to participate in the anti-Japanese struggle. His son, O Kyu Nam, sacrificed his youth on the road of struggle.

It was said that whenever he had the opportunity, O Chun Sam would say to his friends, "After all, my nephew's hand reformed me."

O Paek Ryong was, of course, severely criticized for having harmed the relations between the army and people. An uncle is the nearest relation to a man after his parents, but from the point of view of the people's revolutionary army, O Chun Sam was one of the people. Although he had played a part in the tragi-comedy, the trophies he had carried through the enlisting of the people were of great help to the evacuees in their future lives.

The correctness of the measures for dissolving the guerrilla zones was verified in life by the process of the overall development of the history of the anti-Japanese, national liberation struggle, which glorified the anti-Japanese revolution that was on the upswing in the latter half of the 1930s and which was waged dynamically for the finale of the country's liberation.

The units of the people's revolutionary army, after dissolving the guerrilla zones on their initiative, launched into wider areas, frustrating the enemy's attempt to corner our resistance forces into the narrow mountainous area in Jiandao and to stifle them. The large and small units

of the people's revolutionary army undauntedly defeated the enemy's numerical and technical superiority in the vast areas of south and north Manchuria and the northern region of Korea. The people's revolutionary army's dissolution of the guerrilla zones in the form of liberated areas and advancing into wider areas was a great event of launching out onto a vast plain from a valley.

With the armed struggle as a powerful background, the people who had left the guerrilla zones struck root in the vast plain and expanded their organizations; they began to sow seeds of the revolution in that vast land. Each of the people, except a few who had signed notes of submission, became a kindling and a match that set the continent on fire. Our political operatives churned up the enemy area.

The dissolution of the guerrilla zones started in May 1935 and ended in early November of that year when the Chechangzi guerrilla zone was evacuated.

The evacuation of the guerrilla zone in Chechangzi was finished about half a year later than in the others, primarily because of the tenacious siege by the enemy who had surrounded it in double and triple rings and waited for the people to starve to death, and also because of the irresponsible attitude and inefficiency of the officials in charge of the people's lives in this district.

When choosing the sites for the guerrilla zones at the Mingyuegou meeting, the people from Helong had strongly insisted that Chechangzi was a suitable place. Kim Jong Ryong, a delegate from Antu County, had also said that Chechangzi was ideal. This area with its fertile land, thick forests and steep mountains was an ideal natural fortress on which both we and the enemy had set eyes. It was a desolate, mountainous area, no different from any other areas in Jiandao, but it was very highly

evaluated by the modern geomancers who had acquired a knowledge of military affairs in the course of guerrilla warfare.

This place, in view of its name, had nothing mysterious in the military sense. The natives had said that Chechangzi meant a place where carts were made. In order to prove the military importance of Chechangzi for the guerrilla army the people from Helong had asserted that the unit of Hong Pom Do had allured the Japanese army to the banks of the River Gudong and annihilated it in Qingshanli probably because of the unique features of this place.

We had dispatched the Independent Regiment to the area of Antu in the spring of 1934 to give armed support to the construction of a guerrilla zone in Chechangzi. Kim Il Hwan, Kim Il and other political workers had also gone to Chechangzi. The Independent Regiment chased a company of the puppet Manchukuo army out without great difficulty, which had been stationed in the vicinity of Chechangzi, and became the new master of the place. With the backing of this regiment, the people in the Yulangcun guerrilla zone swarmed into Chechangzi and established the Helong county people's revolutionary government across the River Gudong; later the people from Wangyugou and Sandaowan arrived one after another via Shenxiandong to this place and hoisted the flag of the Yanji county people's revolutionary government at the entrance of the Dongnancha valley. In this way, the people's revolutionary governments from two different counties existed side by side for one year—a strange phenomenon.

The Chechangzi guerrilla zone had advanced in high spirits just like a vehicle with two engines, or like a carriage pulled by a pair of white horses with bluish manes. The food situation had not been so bad in the early stage.

The members of the Party leadership who had been dispatched from Antu, according to the decision of the Yaoyinggou meeting, were to guide the work of evacuating the Chechangzi guerrilla zone. But they did not even inform the army and people of the policy of dissolving the zone; worse still, they attempted to kill the special representative we had sent there, under the charge of being a “Minsaengdan” suspect. When I heard about it later, I was very surprised.

Chechangzi was the last stronghold on which the revolutionary masses in Jiandao, particularly in Yanji, Helong and Antu, relied. Probably it was because this was the last stronghold that the officials in charge of the evacuation of this zone had taken such an irresolute stand.

I must say that it was indeed admirable how the people of Chechangzi, shoulder to shoulder with the army, had defended the guerrilla zone in the suffocating blockade until November 1935. As I briefly mentioned above, the atmosphere in Chechangzi at that time was not a tranquil one. The Leftists caused anarchy in the zone on the pretext of the struggle against the “Minsaengdan”; worse still, a great number of the revolutionary people suffered severely from famine.

When we started large-unit combined operations in the area of Mt. Paektu, Kim Phyoung, Ryu Kyong Su, O Paek Ryong and Pak Yong Sun often recalled the hunger they had suffered in Chechangzi. Even after liberation, Kim Myong Hwa, Kim Jong Suk, Hwang Sun Hui, Kim Chol Ho, Jon Hui and other women veterans, whenever they sat down to a meal, would cry on remembering the days in Chechangzi. Kim Myong Hwa and Kim Jong Suk had been cooks for the corps headquarters at that time.

The situation of the guerrilla zone was reflected on the headquarters’ dining-table. The cooks climbed the mountains every morning to bark

the pine-trees for Wang De-tai and other commanders at headquarters. They had to prepare two bundles of pine-tree bark as large as the bundles of bean stalks for a day's meal of the headquarters. They boiled the bark in a water of strong ashes of oak for over three hours, scooped it out after it had become soft, rinsed it in the river before pounding it with a paddle and then washed it again in fresh water. They repeated these processes several times until suppertime and then mixed it with rice bran to make gruel or cakes. This was the best food in Chechangzi.

If one ate these cakes, one had clogged anuses. Children had a hard time of it in those days to make their bowels move. Their mothers would dig out the clogs in their anuses with sticks, with tears stinging their eyes. Even grown-ups suffered a great deal from clogged anuses. And yet, they again ate the food made of pine-tree bark the next day.

They had to eat food without salt. They could eat saltless gruel and cakes, but it was difficult to eat salad or soup made of edible herbs without salt. Sometimes the messengers who would come there gave them a few grains of salt from the small pouches they carried at their waists. Several people would touch a grain of it with their tongues lightly by turns before handing it over to others. It was indeed tantalizing.

When the pine-tree bark ran out, they would go to the rice mill and collect rice bran and make gruel. That gruel was much better for eating than the gruel made from old herbs. Herb gruel was so coarse and hard that they felt pain in their throats each time they ate it. Even such gruel was not sufficient, and many people died of hunger.

All the people waited for spring. They believed that in spring the merciful, plentiful land would deliver their pitiful lives from starvation. But even spring could not prevent death of hunger, either. What spring

gave them were weak, negligible new sprouts that had emerged from under the snow. These sprouts were not enough to sustain them.

The people began to catch snakes that had not yet awoken from their winter sleep. And then they caught rats. Rodents were extinguished in Chechangzi. Frogs and their spawn became the people's foodstuff. When Kim Chol Ho was recalling how tasty boiled frog spawn had been as they were glutinous and soft like boiled millet, I, on the contrary, shuddered as if that sticky stuff was in my throat. Even though I had partaken of a variety of food with the guerrillas, I could hardly have any reasonable imagination of the taste of boiled frog spawn.

The fur-lined shoes¹¹ which they had used while ploughing, were also put into the pots. After drinking a bowl of tasteless water boiled with these shoes, the people of the guerrilla zone sowed seeds, crawling just as the soldiers do. They dug out the seeds after two or three days of sowing to eat them. The people's revolutionary government and mass organizations kept sentries at the fields sown with seeds to prevent the seeds from being dug out. But even the guards, unable to endure the hunger, ate them stealthily.

At night children would creep into the kitchen of corps headquarters, thinking that they would find leftovers in the mess hall where important persons, like the commander of the army corps, had their meals. But that was an absurd dream. They did not know that, as they were starving, Wang De-tai, the commander of the army corps, too, was starving. Nevertheless, the children would have died of despair if they had not expected to find some scorched rice at the bottom of the pots in the kitchen of headquarters. When the cooks gave them the scorched rice, they would weep and gulp it down, saying for shame that they would not

come again. But the cooks found them prowling around the kitchen the next day, too.

In this famine the people crawled along the furrows of the crop fields to weed them. They scraped the field with their fingers before collapsing; they would rise again and scrape it until the tips of their fingernails became worn out. After a second weeding, the ears of barley came out. The people stripped off the grains of barley which were only juicy without seeds and ate them. They were so weak that they were unable to rise; they reached their hands out with great difficulty for the ears and chewed on a few grains.

The people of Chechangzi were able to remain pure human beings even though they were nearly dying of hunger, thanks to the fact that the communist ideal which had influenced their way of thinking and conduct for years and the communist ethics of sacrificing themselves for the collective had transformed all the revolutionary masses in Jiandao into saintlike, virtuous men and women. The inhumane idea of a man eating another man's limb dared not assert itself in Chechangzi.

In the famine that came before the harvesting of barley, the children, before anybody else, began to die one after another, unable to stand the hunger, followed by the men. A greater misfortune fell upon the women who had been born with the obligation to help their husbands and children until the last moment of their lives even though they, too, were starving; they had to suffer a still worst agony—of covering their husbands and children who had died of hunger with fallen leaves without coffins and not being able to shed tears for a lack of energy, even though they wanted to weep, until they became insensible in front of each corpse.

The famine in Chechangzi was the result of none other than the Japanese aggressor army which had blockaded this zone and of its repeated brutal “punitive” attacks on it.

The officials in charge of the guerrilla zone did not make every effort to provide food to the people, either. The reactionaries and wicked elements, who had wormed their way into the leadership, fooled the people with such super-revolutionary speeches as “We must endure hunger. Never give in! To die is to surrender!”

The people of Chechangzi defended the guerrilla zone to the last, refusing to go to the enemy-ruled area, even though they were murdered on a false charge of being a “Minsaengdan” suspect or died from hunger. Their fortitude and their unbreakable revolutionary spirit still move our hearts today after half a century has elapsed.

In October 1935, when the evacuation of the guerrilla zone was on the order of the day, 20 people of “Minsaengdan” suspect families, including those of Kim Il, Nam Chang Su, Ri Kye Sun and Kwon Il Su, formed a solidarity household in the deep valley of Dongnancha and continued their struggle to cast off the stigma of “Minsaengdan” even in this way until the summer of 1936. This was a unique way of living by which several families joined into one household to eke out a living and to fight in unity. They pooled their household goods into a log-cabin, and elected their head; he would give appropriate assignments to every one by the day, week and month, and review the results of their work; in this way they led an organized life. They were the last defenders of Chechangzi.

The enemy sent in thousands of their troops to effect a tight siege; they changed the previous scorched-earth tactics of “punitive” attack by the army and police into a comprehensive, great siege tactic in military,

political, economic and other fields, and repeated the “punitive” operations to crush Chechangzi once and for all, only to be defeated every time.

In October 1935 they committed thousands of their troops for a large “punitive” operation. The brave defenders of Chechangzi repulsed the enemy’s attack heroically this time, too. They even brought down an enemy plane with small arms that was bombing the guerrilla zone.

In November of that year most of the people of Chechangzi evacuated from the guerrilla zone towards Naitoushan, together with the army.

One of the defenders of Chechangzi Paek Hak Rim who also suffered hunger, fell ill and fought for a long time shoulder to shoulder with the people during the siege, still says, “If you don’t know the extreme misery the people in Chechangzi suffered in the days of the anti-Japanese war, don’t dare to utter a word about a hard life! If you don’t know how the soldiers and people of Chechangzi endured hunger and cold and survived the enemy’s ‘punitive’ atrocities even during the siege, don’t dare to pride yourself on overcoming some difficulty!”

While organizing and conducting the evacuation of the guerrilla zones we appreciated our people’s sense of organization and steel-like discipline and their faithfulness to the revolution and indefatigability, and became confident that we would emerge victorious in any difficult circumstance if we mobilized such people and guided them properly.

Once a people rise as a single unity to combat injustice at the risk of their lives, no blockade or scorched-earth operation will succeed against such a people. This is a convincing lesson demonstrated by the history of the international communist movement. The people all over the world still clearly remember how the international blockade the armed interventionists of 14 countries imposed on the new Russia ended.

Germany under Hitler's rule did not succeed in blockading Leningrad, either. Even under the rain of bombs, the defenders of Leningrad continued to bake bread, manufacture tanks and promote production. In 1943 when the world bourgeoisie was noisily claiming that Leningrad would fall, the working people of this city wrought a miracle by attaining a higher productivity than that of 1942.

The blockade and the "punitive" attacks the army of Jiang Jie-shi launched on several occasions against the anti-Japanese bases in China ended in repeated failures. The United States has been blockading Cuba for 30 years, but has not succeeded. She is spending enormous energy to blockade this small island country, but her scheme has not worked out. Recently the draft resolution proposed by Cuba, in opposition to the Torricelli Bill, was passed at the UN General Assembly. The international community cast a cold glance at the United States' anachronistic policy of blockade. Fidel Castro said, "When a man finds himself in a dangerous situation, a great amount of adrenalin is secreted in his body." Adrenalin is a hormone which strengthens the function of the heart. This adrenalin symbolizes the optimism of the Cuban communists.

The United States, Japan and other modern imperialist states are now blockading our country in the political, economic and military spheres. But the Korean communists have a sufficient amount of vitamins of the Juche type with which to frustrate that blockade. The attempt to conquer the Workers' Party of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean people by military means or to stifle them politically and economically is a wild daydream, like an attempt to break a rock with an egg.

After the evacuation of the guerrilla zones, small units and political workers actively infiltrated into the homeland. The seeds of the revolution were sown in the vast lands of Manchuria and Korea.

I never forgot Wangqing after the evacuation of the guerrilla zones nor slighted Jiandao. Even though they were evacuated, the five counties in Jiandao were a major theatre of war against the Japanese, which we regarded just as important in subsequent years. The large and small units of the people's revolutionary army, including the unit led by Choe Hyon, fought many battles in Wangqing and its vicinity—raids on the concentration village of Shangcun in Beihamatang, on Sidaohezi, on Zhongpingcun in Baicaogou, on Dalishugou, an ambush at Zhangjiadian, raids on Shangbarengou, on Taiyangcun, and on Dahuangwai, an ambush at Jiapigou, raids on Yongqiucun in Xiaobaicaogou, and on the felling station in Shiliping, the battle of Shitouhe in Chunfangcun, a raid on Shanglaomuzhuhe in Luozigou. Thus, they dealt a telling blow to the enemy.

The enemy diligently tried to check the elusive attacks of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. The military and passenger trains running along major trunk lines in Jiandao, were always escorted by a heavily equipped armoured car for their safety. Whenever a passenger train passed mountainous areas at nights, the shades at all the windows were drawn down for a total blackout, and the military police, plainclothes men and railway guards supervised and controlled the passengers of every carriage. If a man looked outside, drawing up a shade, he was abused as an associate with the bandits and his face was slapped.

The enemy tightened the guarding of the concentration villages and mobilized the people by force for guard duty. In some settlements they distributed wooden rifles and an explosive with an ignition device to the

residents in order to counter the raiding revolutionary army. How frightened they had been at the energetic activities of the people's revolutionary army can be seen from the fact that the Japanese policemen posted only Chinese and Korean guards of the self-defence corps in the concentration villages at night and they themselves moved from one bedroom to another every night.

Among the Japanese policemen and the members of the self-defence corps of Manchukuo, drug addicts appeared one after another who were weary of war and of armed service.

The "Matsumura incident", which took place in the Shixian area, illustrates what inglorious defeats the Japanese imperialists suffered in the mid-1930s. Matsumura was an intellectual who had been a teacher in Japan before taking refuge in Manchuria; he had been suspected of having become involved in a Red teachers' union. He took 2,000 *yen* as an advance payment and promised to work as a superintendent at the felling station of Mt. Paektu, a station run by a Japanese. A few months after his appointment, we attacked that felling station. Matsumura carried the trophies for the revolutionary army, and had a talk with me. He enjoyed our concert performance. Then he said that he now clearly understood how strong the revolutionary army was. He submitted his resignation to the head of the felling station on his return and went back to his native village. He was sure that Japan's defeat was just a matter of time.

The lumberjacks who had been under the influence of the guerrilla zones derailed one train after another in Wangqing and in its vicinity. Although the guerrilla zones had been evacuated, the spirit of these zones remained in Jiandao, striking terror into the hearts of the enemy.

CHAPTER 11

**The Watershed of the
Revolution**

**Meeting with My Comrades-in-Arms
in North Manchuria**

Strange Relationship

On Lake Jingbo

**My Comrades-in-Arms to the North;
I to the South**

Choe Hyon, a Veteran General

June 1935-March 1936

1. Meeting with My Comrades-in-Arms in North Manchuria

The people's revolutionary army completed preparations for the second expedition to north Manchuria at the battles on Laoheishan and at Taipinggou. The expeditionary force, which was made up of several companies from the Wangqing and Hunchun Regiments and the young volunteers' corps, left Taipinggou in late June 1935, enjoying a cordial send-off from the people. The expeditionary force reached Barengou via Shitouhezi and Sidaohezi, and then tackled the tricky task of scaling the Laoyeling Mountains. Some of the guerrillas from the Independent Regiment from Antu were in the long, marching columns. Of all the veterans still alive, O Jin U, who belonged to the Wangqing 4th Company at the time, might well have been the only one capable of recalling the second expedition to north Manchuria. Han Hung Gwon, Jon Man Song, Pak Thae Hwa, Kim Thae Jun, Kim Ryo Jung, Ji Pyong Hak, Hwang Jong Hae, Hyon Chol, Ri Tu Chan, O Jun Ok, Jon Chol San and others were also on that expedition, but they have passed away.

At the time of the first expedition, the Laoyeling Mountains were covered with deep snow, but on our second expedition the mountains were green with summer foliage. Whereas in October 1934 we ploughed through a snowstorm across these mountains, in June 1935 we had to climb them under a scorching sun, fighting off attacking swarms of

mosquitoes. Although the biting cold and heavy snow had been sheer torture, the burning sun and sweat were no less unbearable.

The horses, laden with a mortar and heavy machine-guns, struggled along the steep paths, intertwined with vines and trees. Whenever the horses balked, we would forge ahead by cutting away the thornbush with our bayonets and sawing away fallen trees.

While scaling the Laoyeling Mountains, the Chinese Worker-Peasant Red Army, under the command of Mao Ze-dong and Zhu De, was successfully stepping up the historic 25,000-*li* Long March in China proper, breaking through the surrounding rings formed by Jiang Jie-shi's army. After reaching River Dadu on May 30, 1935, the Red Army occupied an ancient chain bridge, called Luding Bridge, after a fierce battle, and opened the road for tens of thousands of soldiers on the Long March. May 30 marked the day Shi Da-kai, leader of the Taiping Rebellion, attempted to cross the river; it was also the 10th anniversary of the May 30 atrocities in Shanghai. It should be noted that a daring, death-defying corps of the Red Army had crossed the Luding Bridge on this fateful day.

We were greatly encouraged by the news that they had crossed River Dadu, which arrived at Jiandao, following information on their campaign in Guizhou. After the battle at Luding Bridge, the Red Army successfully crossed Mt. Daxue, one of the most difficult obstacles in its march, and Mt. Jiajin and entered the Gansu Plain.

In those days we were more interested in heartening news such as the international fair, held in Brussels, the opening of the underground railway in Moscow, and the Chinese Red Army's progress on its Long March and occupation of a certain place, rather than the tragic news that the Yangtze River had overflowed, leading to the deaths of hundreds of

thousands of people, and an earthquake in Taiwan had laid waste to thousands of houses.

Our crossing of the Laoyeling Mountains constituted as great an event as the Red Army's crossing of Mt. Daxue on the Long March. Whenever orders were given for a break in the march, most of the exhausted men on the expedition would drop wherever they were and rest. Snoring would break out here and there. It was no easier to endure drowsiness than hunger. But no one complained at the high speed of the march or requested a slower pace. Everyone moved exactly as their commanders ordered. As everything about the campaign had been explained beforehand, the men knew all about the purpose of the march and were ready to surmount whatever difficulties lay ahead.

The people's revolutionary army could have fought anywhere in east Manchuria, south of the Laoyeling Mountains, or in south Manchuria. Why, then did we tackle a rough march across the steep Laoyeling Mountains, for the first campaign in north Manchuria after evacuating our cradle and home base in east Manchuria? What were the political and military factors leading us to decide to go to north Manchuria, where the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo army forces were concentrated?

The principal motive was to strengthen solidarity with Korean communists active in north Manchuria and pave the way for full-scale cooperation, joint, coordinated action with them.

Just as most of the pioneers, leaders and standard-bearers of the communist movement in east Manchuria were Koreans, so the prime movers behind the communist movement in north Manchuria were Koreans. The core of the guerrilla movement in north Manchuria had also been made up of Korean communists.

Zhou Bao-zhong used every opportunity to speak highly of the Koreans' painstaking efforts and exploits for the revolution in northeast China. He said:

“In 1930 most of the secretaries of the county and district Party committees in the northeast were Koreans. In Ningan, Boli, Tangyuan, Raohe, Baoqing, Hulin, Yilan and other counties in north Manchuria, to say nothing of many counties in Yanbian, most of the secretaries and members of the county Party committees were Koreans.”

One spring day, when the anti-Japanese revolution had reached its final stage, I strolled with Zhou along a sandy track near the north secret camp in the vicinity of Khabarovsk, within a hailing distance of the Amur River. Recalling with deep emotion the joint struggle we had waged in the days of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, he said:

“One could not possibly talk about the development of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army separately from the exploits of the Korean comrades. It's a well-known fact that more than 90 per cent of the 2nd Corps are Koreans.... The protagonists of the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Corps are Koreans—Ri Hong Gwang, Ri Tong Gwang, Choe Yong Gon, Kim Chaek, Ho Hyong Sik and Ri Hak Man. Ever since Wei Zheng-min and Yang Jing-yu died, you, Commander Kim Il Sung, have been fighting the Japanese for several years, as head of the 1st and 2nd Corps. Those of us, who are responsible for the revolution in northeast China, often feel like bowing to you. We will erect a monument to the Korean martyrs in northeast China when this war is over.”

True to his words, a decision was adopted after the war by the Jilin Provincial Party Committee to build a monument in Jilin and Yanbian area to the Korean martyrs.

The Korean people were forced to lead a dog's life by the Japanese and Manchurian government authorities and landlords even in north Manchuria. The vast Song-Liao Plain and other plains connected by wasteland in north and south Manchuria constituted one of the world's largest granaries, yielding tens of millions of tons of grain annually. But the poor Korean expatriates and pioneers in this place had to suffer a shortage of food, clothing and housing the whole year round.

At a modest party held immediately after the armistice, I saw Ri Yong Ho cry as he recalled the hunger he had suffered during his childhood in north Manchuria. He said it was experienced by his family when living in Wurenban, Sanchakou or in Raohe, so it must have been around 1915. The family had existed one whole autumn on cabbage stems because they had no food grain. He said that it had been as sweet as honey at first, but that after three days it made him feel nauseous. Yong Ho, then a little boy, used to spit the tasteless stuff out under his knees, avoiding his parents' eyes, and drink only thin soup; his mother would cover her face with her skirt and weep.

A pair of trousers made out of a rice sack was all that their poverty could afford to give him. "Paekmi" (Cleaned Rice—Tr.) had been stamped in large blue letters in the middle of the sack. The sack had been cut, with little attention paid to its inside or outside, so that the letters had remained on the outside of the right trouser leg. But that didn't bother him at all, as he did not understand the meaning of those letters. He had perceived them as a mysterious symbol of maternal love and became attached to them. Although he put on his only pair of trousers with those mysterious letters every day, he did not taste rice throughout his boyhood, the rice signified by the letters inscribed on his trousers.

This is only one aspect of the poverty suffered by Korean expatriates in north Manchuria in those days.

In his *Travelogue to South Manchuria*, carried in the magazine *Kaebiyok* (Creation—Tr.), Ri Ton Hwa had said that there were mounted bandits everywhere in Manchuria and that they were extremely dangerous. But the mounted bandits in north Manchuria were more violent than the ones in east and south Manchuria. They provided another source of trouble in addition to the “punitive” atrocities ceaselessly perpetrated by the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo armies. The wild bandits regarded murder as a hobby. Every time hundreds of these bandits, armed with daggers and shotguns, would pounce on them in packs and commit murder, arson and plunder, so that our compatriots had to move from place to place from fear and anxiety. The bandits would take innocent people hostages and then claim ransoms. They would take the hostages to deep mountain valleys, cut off an ear, a finger or a toe from each one, and send them to the hostages’ parents, attaching notes, which explained that these were parts of their sons and that they would kill them, if the demanded money was not sent by the required date. The families were thus forced to sell their property to save their sons. Or else, in most cases, the hostages were returned home dead.

North Manchuria was never a “paradise of righteous government” or a world where the “concord of five nations” flourished. Social evils and the law of the jungle ruled the land. There, too, Koreans were no better than servants or work animals toiling in the interests of Japanese high-ranking officials, warlords, big business, bankers and merchants. Their cursed lot stirred the Koreans in north Manchuria in the early days to fight against the Japanese for the freedom and independence of their fatherland.

Progressive Koreans in north Manchuria, like those in east Manchuria, initiated the communist movement all on their own. Every Korean, who was knowledgeable, clever and sensitive, joined the communist movement. All wise Koreans believed in communism and were totally devoted to the revolution, shouting, “Down with Japanese imperialism!” and “Down with the landlords and capitalists!”

The pioneers of the communist movement in north Manchuria had started preparations for armed resistance in the early 1930s against the Japanese imperialists. A training course for 200 young Koreans was organized in Baoqing County led by Choe Yong Gon; this partly laid the foundations for the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. The training course, as indicated by its name, was a military academy, offering political and military training to the young, who would constitute the backbone of the future revolutionary army. As I myself had done at Hwasong Uisuk School, the trainees studied history and military tactics and practised shooting. The course comprised 10 companies and Choe Yong Gon was the commander and, concurrently, the chief of general staff, and Pak Jin U (his real name is Kim Jin U), the political commissar.

Kim Ryong Hwa, who authored the *250-mile March* and was also called “Approved Moustache”, had also worked at this course as a company commander. I think he was nicknamed “Approved Moustache” in the mid-1950s, when the anti-US war came to an end in our country. Some changes took place in our people’s life-styles following the laying of the foundations of socialism. Most notably people with moustaches, beards, long hair, shaved heads and shorts disappeared from the streets. The state did not pass any law, stipulating a rigid style of trousers, beards, moustaches or hair, but such wonderful changes happened naturally.

However, only Major-General Kim Ryong Hwa, an anti-Japanese veteran and Director of the People's Army Arsenal, sported a moustache similar to that of An Chang Ho. Some of his comrades-in-arms advised him to shave it off. His wife and children, and even his superiors, "persuaded" him tenaciously, but it all fell on deaf ears. Instead he merely trimmed his moustache in front of a mirror even more enthusiastically every morning.

One day he asked me, "Premier, what do you think of my moustache?"

"I think it's a masterpiece. How can you be Kim Ryong Hwa without it, no matter how handsome you are? I can't picture Kim Ryong Hwa without a moustache."

"Then you approve of my moustache?"

"Approve? It's true that the people gave me, the Premier, great authority, but they still haven't given me the right to rule on other people's beards and moustaches. It's up to you what to do with it. If you like it, keep it, if not, shave it off."

"Then, Premier, everything's fine. Frankly speaking, I've been harassed a great deal because of my moustache. From now on, I shall feel strong."

He was all smiles as he left my office. However, a few months later, he was stopped, by an officer guarding the Cabinet building as he came to visit me, because of that moustache. The duty officers would not let anyone enter my office if their appearance was not clean and hygienic. Hearing the bickering from the entrance, I opened a window and asked the officer what the matter was.

"I told the Major-General that he couldn't enter, until he shaves off his moustache, but he insists that it's an 'approved moustache'. Is it true

that you, Comrade Supreme Commander, approved his moustache?” the officer asked, casting a dubious glance at Kim Ryong Hwa.

“If that’s the trouble, don’t annoy the Major-General any longer. His moustache is inviolable.”

Since then, he has been called by his nickname, “Approved Moustache” in the army, instead of his real name.

He was married at nine, and followed the plough at the age of eleven, playing the role of a householder; at the age of 13, as an orderly of Hong Pom Do, he had taken part in the famous battle of Iman, where tens of thousands of enemy soldiers were killed or wounded. That is the kind of brilliant record this veteran soldier had.

The training course at Baoqing was organized with only young Koreans at the beginning owing to the prevailing opinion that Korean independence could only be achieved by an army of pure Koreans, and that chaos would reign if foreigners were in the army. However, the view that a purely Korean army would not facilitate an allied front with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units and that worse still they might be isolated from the Chinese people, gradually gained weight. Consequently the organizers of the course recruited two Chinese young men. But these two men turned coat during the training and supplied secrets of the training course to the enemy.

The training course transferred to a place 75 miles away from Baoqing to take shelter from the enemy’s whirlwind arrests and built a new building there. But it was unable to survive the enemy’s “punitive” attacks and broke up.

Choe Yong Gon moved the base of his activities to Raohe and organized with Pak Jin U, Hwang Kye Hong, Kim Ryong Hwa, Kim Ji Myong and other comrades-in-arms, another training course at a primary

school in Sanyitun, involving 70 young men, and selected the best trainees who were well prepared politically and militarily to organize a special red corps (or red terrorist group). Its main mission was to liquidate the enemy's lackeys, guard the military and political cadres and obtain arms. Using them as a backbone, Choe subsequently formed the Raohe Worker-Peasant Guerrilla Army.

Before and after the organization of the guerrilla units in Tangyuan and Raohe, armed units led by Kim Chaek, Ho Hyong Sik, Ri Hak Man, and Kim Hae San were formed successively in Ningan, Mishan, Boli, Zhuhe and Weihe. This marked the start of the protracted resistance against Japan.

Kim Hae San and Ri Kwang Rim laid the foundations of the 5th Corps with Zhou Bao-zhong, and Kim Chaek and Ho Hyong Sik, together with Zhang Shou-jian and Zhao Shang-zhi, organized the 3rd Corps; Choe Yong Gon, Ri Hak Man, Ri Yong Ho, An Yong and Choe Il, together with Li Yan-lu, rendered meritorious service as standard-bearers, by forming the 4th and 7th Corps.

The army song of the Korean communists could be heard almost everywhere in vast north Manchuria, covering hundreds of thousands of square kilometres from the Laoyeling Mountains in the south to the Amur River in the north and from the Ussuri River in the east to the Daxingan Mountains in the west.

While Kim Chaek led the guerrilla activities, centring on the Binjiang area covering the east and northeast of Harbin, Choe Yong Gon and Ri Hak Man constantly raided, from their bases on the Wanda Mountains, the enemy's concentration villages and supply bases.

In the second half of the 1930s, Ho Hyong Sik, in cooperation with Kim Chaek and Ma Tok San, organized a northwest expeditionary force

and advanced to Hailun and several other counties to establish contacts with the guerrilla units in their flank, and made energetic attempts in this area. Kang Kon, using the Laoling Mountains as a base for his activities, attacked the enemy tactfully, operating continually in mountainous and open areas on both sides of the River Mudan. Although young, he was quick-witted and tireless; he rapidly developed into a promising military commander.

The fighters from Jiandao played a great role in the development of the guerrilla movement in north Manchuria. Kim Chaek, Han Hung Gwon, Pak Kil Song, An Yong, Choe Il, Jon Chang Chol and others, who had been fully tested and tempered in the practical struggle in east Manchuria, became active organizers, propagandists and leaders in north Manchuria and achieved a breakthrough in the difficult anti-Japanese war.

The Korean communists in north Manchuria always paid serious attention to the overall development of the revolution in east Manchuria and engaged in unremitting efforts to establish contacts with Korean communists, active in east Manchuria. They regularly received news through various channels about east Manchuria.

Zhou Bao-zhong delivered most of the news to the comrades in north Manchuria. The messengers, who frequented Wangqing from the 5th Corps, led by Zhou Bao-zhong and using Ningan as its base, and the fighters who had been sent from the 2nd Corps to 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Corps, active in north Manchuria, widely publicized developments in east Manchuria.

The eastern area bureau of Jilin Province (the Eastern Area Party Committee of Jilin Province) also acted as an important propaganda centre of east Manchuria. Comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria

obtained Red publications through this bureau, published in east Manchuria and even such confidential documents as the *Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland*. In those days the bureau operated as a switchboard, connecting east and south Manchuria to north Manchuria and vice versa.

Ri Yong Ho said that while head of the propaganda department of the Raohe County Party Committee, he had been to the bureau and officially received the ten-point programme. On his return, he forwarded to his comrades all the information he had obtained at the bureau. He was extremely upset that he lost the original document during the anti-Japanese war.

More than any other comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria, Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon, widely publicized our activities. They enthusiastically explained to the soldiers of the people's revolutionary army, to the workers and peasants, the general line, strategy and tactics, and the immediate tasks I had advanced to achieve victory in the Korean revolution and always stressed that one should learn from our battle results and moral traits.

When organizing the Raohe guerrilla army, Choe Yong Gon said to the guerrillas:

“I've heard that the revolutionary struggle in east Manchuria is now progressing in accordance with the strategy of Commander Kim Il Sung. They say that Commander Kim is a young leader and a favourite of the people. This is very fortunate for the white-clad nation (Korean nation—Tr.), which had suffered from a lack of leader. I'd like to take some time off to see him, but I don't know how I can make my wish come true.”

He had written to me on four occasions. However, all the messengers, who left north Manchuria to convey the letters to me, had been killed on

the way. Only one of them, despite great difficulties, miraculously managed to get near Dunhua, the arena of our unit's activities, but he was also killed, before fulfilling his assignment. If he had not been arrested by the enemy and had resisted for one or two more days, he would have met me. Then, I could have met Choe Yong Gon in some place in Jiandao or somewhere else in north Manchuria or in south Manchuria, the places of our activities, in the mid-1930s, and not in 1941.

When I met Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon in 1941 in Khabarovsk, I was very surprised to discover that they knew my personal history and family background in detail. They even knew that the dimples on my cheeks and bucktooth were targeted as distinguishing marks by Japanese secret agents, who had been hunting me for 10 years, and that tens of thousands of *yuan* had been set as a reward for my head.

Just as they knew so much about me, I had also learnt a lot about them through various channels. Kim Chaek knew full well that I had received a great deal of assistance from the Rev. Son Jong Do, while imprisoned in Jilin. And I knew that Kim owed a lot to Ho Hon¹² when behind bars in Sodaemun prison in Seoul. Such revolutionaries had experienced all sorts of hardships; their personal histories and experiences were replete with moving, tearful stories and fantastic episodes. The stories of the hard-working and most courageous individuals were the most interesting to hear. What kind of topics can we expect from loafers who eat the bread of idleness?

On his return from north Manchuria, one messenger of our unit made his comrades-in-arms laugh, by recounting the absurd tale that Ri Hak Man, commander of the 7th Corps, had grown up on milk to the age of eleven. All of us were convulsed with laughter. The guerrillas rebuffed

the tale saying that when you turned eleven, you could get married, that it was mere invention and lie that he had taken breast milk at that age. I also considered the tale mere exaggeration.

Later on when I first met Ri Yong Ho, Ri Hak Man's nephew, at the north secret camp in Khabarovsk, I asked him whether it was true that his uncle had been reared on the milk of his elder brother's wife until the age of eleven. He replied in the affirmative.

"If your uncle had been reared on the milk of his elder brother's wife, that means that he took the breast of your mother. Didn't your uncle, a bulky man, imbibe all the milk intended for you?"

When I said this, he hastily shielded his uncle, "Not at all. I wasn't left without. My uncle sucked only one breast. The other was mine."

"You see: half of your food was therefore exploited by your uncle. That plunder was not a 2:8 or 3:7 system; and yet you speak in his favour."

Ri laughed at my joke till the tears flowed.

"Milk from one breast was enough for me. My mother had plenty of milk. After my birth, her breasts were so swollen that she squeezed out the remaining milk after I had eaten my fill. It was painful to milk by hand and she couldn't squeeze all the milk out. Consequently one day my grandmother told my uncle to suck my mother's breast. He did as he had been told. At first, he spat out what he had sucked, but he swallowed a mouthful once just for fun, and then said that her milk was as delicious as his mother's. He subsequently took her breast every day."

"Your uncle had plenty of guts."

"Yes, he was special. When my grandmother said, 'You take all of Sok Song's milk', he would reply, 'I'll take only one breast.' Sok Song was what I was called as a baby. He stopped taking the milk when I was

two or three years old. But he would sit in front of my mother with saliva in his mouth, whenever I drew on her breasts.”

That day Ri Yong Ho told some more anecdotes about his uncle.

I was totally fascinated by Ri Hak Man’s personality. But to my regret, he was then already dead. By the 1940s when I first met Ri Yong Ho, many people in the anti-Japanese forces in north Manchuria had been buried in the wilderness. An Yong, who had fought in several units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in north Manchuria, shed tears when calling out the names of his comrades-in-arms who had been buried in the wilderness of north Manchuria.

But when we scaled the Laoyeling Mountains after the battle at Taipinggou, most of them were still alive and freely roaming the plains and mountains in north Manchuria, destroying the enemy like an angry tiger. These comrades-in-arms were so keen to meet us. They had many unsolved problems and had to overcome many difficulties to ensure cooperation with us. They also had to settle problems in their relations with the Comintern, Chinese communists and people and with the Chinese nationalist armed units. We, too, had many things we wanted to tackle with them. While in east Manchuria our heads ached, owing to the problems caused by the “Minsaengdan”. In north Manchuria they had their own problems.

This state of affairs compelled us to hasten our second march to north Manchuria. We awaited from our comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria only the tender feelings of our compatriots. The anti-“Minsaengdan” hassle had transformed the guerrilla zones in Jiandao, where the ethics of love and trust prevailed, into a land devoid of all tenderness. We had felt the absence of human feelings and had longed for them for ages in that wasteland, the human feelings which resembled an oasis. No matter how

steep the Laoyeling Mountains were, they could not stop our feelings from flowing like clouds to our friends in north Manchuria.

We also effected the second expedition to north Manchuria to consolidate the militant alliance with the Chinese communists there, an alliance established during our first expedition, and wage a more efficient joint struggle with them as the new times required. In the mid-1930s, the imperialists, alarmed at the advance of progressive people and socialist forces, opposed to imperialism and war, were strengthening their international alliance against the independent forces of the world. Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy and Japan, bent on plunging humanity into the holocaust of a world war, were hastening the formation of an anti-communist, anti-peace alliance.

In this situation, consolidation of international solidarity with the communists of all countries, especially the Chinese communists, became a matter of urgency in order to develop the anti-Japanese revolution, as demanded by the new era. It was also the Comintern's consistent demand that the units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army strengthen their relations in many places of Manchuria and destroy the enemy by combined effort and thereby overcome the tendency for individual, isolated activities.

At that time the forces of several army corps organized in northeast China were not uniform. There were some differences in the fighting efficiency and preparedness of all the army corps, owing to disparities in the abilities and qualifications of their commanding officers. Every corps fought alone, unconnected to the corps in its flanks, entrenched mostly in fixed areas. This dispersed state made it impossible for the guerrilla units operating all over Manchuria to make comprehensive use of their forces to meet the changing military and political situation. This weakness

could have engendered a piecemeal defeat of the guerrilla units operating in isolation in their fixed areas.

The guerrilla units in east, north and south Manchuria consequently sought to establish mutual contacts. All the guerrilla units in Manchuria had to correct the outmoded method of operating in isolation, defending limited areas in fixed guerrilla zones in the form of liberated areas and courageously develop their military and political activities on a broader scale, in close cooperation with one another. If they had not performed these strategic tasks, it would have proved impossible to raise the guerrilla movement in Manchuria to a higher level or promote its unification.

The anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle had caused discord and mistrust, which could have impeded the common struggle of Korean and Chinese communists. If we went to north Manchuria and cooperated efficiently with the Chinese communists, we could thoroughly dispel this awkward atmosphere.

If we continued fighting in north Manchuria for some months, Wei Zheng-min and Yun Pyong Do, who had gone to Moscow to receive an answer from the Comintern, would return. The meeting with Wei Zheng-min and Yun Pyong Do was another important aim we had set for the expedition.

While crossing the Laoyeling Mountains, the soldiers of the companies, which had switched from the puppet Manchukuo army, now operating under the Hunchun Regiment, suffered many hardships. As they were not accustomed to marching in mountains, they were already exhausted after the first two hours. On my orders Jang Ryong San from the Wangqing Regiment took charge of the three companies and helped them through the march. Jang had worked mostly between Zhuanjiaolou

and Sanchakou as a raftsman and was a very strong man. Each time he wielded a bayonet, the surrounding bushes were slashed into heaps. He climbed up the steep mountain path at full speed with two or three soldiers' rifles and knapsacks on his back.

And he would jokingly encourage his fellow soldiers: "Hey, all of you who can't climb this mountain, change out of your pants into skirts and cut off your masculinity! Immediately!"

We scaled the mountains, undergoing all kinds of hardships. But it was only in July that we managed to find with much difficulty the place near Shandongtun, where Zhou Bao-zhong was staying. He had previously been the head of the military department of the Suining Central County Party Committee, but now the new post of commander of the 5th Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army weighed on his shoulders. Several months earlier he had bent over on a stick to greet us but this time he was without a stick and came out to Laoquangou 2.5 miles from his secret camp and embraced me.

Before I even asked, he excitedly told me about the situation in Ningan, "My wound has healed up completely. We've organized a new corps since the departure of the expeditionary force from east Manchuria. The Party and mass organizations in Ningan have been working energetically ever since. All thanks to your expeditionary force, Commander Kim, which helped us so much last year."

"I'm relieved to hear that your wound has healed. Apparently the previous months have acted in your favour, Zhou. You're the commander of the 5th Corps and many other actions of yours deserve congratulations."

That is how I congratulated him and asked after Ping Nan-yang. As I trudged along the land of north Manchuria, I felt the feelings of

friendship we had sealed in the flames of battle the previous year rise to the surface. It was indeed strange that the image of that coarse soldier had been so vividly engraved in my memory, as if he were a childhood friend of mine.

On our arrival at the camp of the 5th Corps, we discussed joint actions with Zhou Bao-zhong, and here there was a slight friction. For Zhou had attempted to impose a course of action for the expeditionary force from east Manchuria on Hou Guo-zhong, commander of the Hunchun Regiment, as if he was giving the orders. Consequently the conversation between the two sides ended in deadlock. At that time, Hu Ren, political commissar of the 5th Corps, was operating in the area of Muling with his corps. Zhou wanted our expeditionary force to go to Muling and help out Hu Ren in the fighting, and then advance to Wuhelin to take control of that area.

It was not difficult to comply with that request. However, Hou, a man with a strong sense of dignity, flatly refused. He apparently took it for an order, rather than a request. An Kil and Kim Ryo Jung held the same opinion. They became angry and said, "We have our own objectives on the course we have to follow. You have no right to order us to do this or that. The 5th Corps is the 5th Corps and the 2nd Corps is the 2nd Corps." They quite rightly lost their temper. As we had come to north Manchuria representing the 2nd Corps, we could not afford to act without discretion on the orders of other peoples even if it was all for the joint struggle.

Zhou called it a mere adventure saying that it did not typify guerrilla warfare for a guerrilla army to carry such heavy weapons as mortars and heavy machine-guns.

I agreed that his remark made some sense, but thought that we should wait and see if the heavy weapons were beneficial or not in guerrilla

warfare. When we embarked on the anti-Japanese war, we defined the principle that the guerrilla army should on the whole use light weapons. However, after firing mortars and recognizing their might in the battle of Taipinggou, I came to believe that we should not necessarily rule out the use of heavy weapons in guerrilla warfare, and that they would be very effective in the existing situation if used properly. In fact, the partisans of the Soviet Union had used big guns and Maxim machine-guns during their Civil War. Even though it was a partial phenomenon, some of the Chinese guerrillas were already using big guns by that time. We could see that Zhou Bao-zhong had gone a bit too far, when he had called it a mere adventure for the expeditionary force from east Manchuria to carry mortars and heavy machine-guns.

To ease the tense atmosphere, I proposed another talk, after giving deeper thought to the plans for joint action, and then the adoption of measures acceptable to both sides. Zhou Bao-zhong agreed. We would therefore have sufficient time to study the detailed plans for joint action and enable the expeditionary force, exhausted from the march, to have a rest.

Shandongtun village was home to about 100 Chinese peasant households. The name of the place originated from the settlement of people from Shandong there. To blockade this village, the enemy had kept a “punitive” force of about 200-300 soldiers almost four miles from the village. I made contacts there with the secretary of Ningnan County Party Committee and the Party organization in Shandongtun.

Around this time I met Li Yan-lu, the army corps commander, in Shandongtun village. At that time we were billeted on a landlord. Although a landowner, the host was a kind-hearted man, and this made his guests try harder to help out with the household.

One day, while helping the host harvest the wheat, we were caught outside in the rain. We carefully stacked the wheat, so that the crop would not get wet from the rain, and went back to the house. Liu Han-xing said that we had better rest after lunch as it was raining; he himself prepared a variety of dishes for our lunch. I knew that Liu Han-xing was an exceptionally good cook from the time Li Yan-lu's unit was in Wangqing. It was amazing that Liu, a middle-school leaver, was so skilled that he could have dwarfed professional cooks. As well as a skilled cook, he was also, however, a heavy drinker, drinking three cups to our one. We drank wine with his dishes and ate hand-cut wheat noodles. That day I probably drank some wine, because the side-dishes were so delicious.

While eating the noodles, there was a sudden explosion outside. We went out to find dozens of snakes killed in front of the piles of threshed wheat straw. The master of the house had looked after the snakes, believing that they brought luck, but they had been killed en masse by a grenade. The master had not touched them, even though they had crawled into the rooms and under his dining-table. It was a superstitious custom in that area to regard a snake as a kind of sacred guardian.

That day members of the young volunteers' corps, who had followed our unit to north Manchuria, stood sentry in the yard. While taking sentry in turns, it stopped raining and the sun came out. That is when the snakes, which had been in the straw piles, had poked their heads out. The guard, who did not know that people there believed snakes were sacred, had been so scared that he had picked up a hand grenade without thinking and had flung it at the snakes.

The host and hostess were very offended at the death of the snakes. They turned pale as if they were confronting an omen, which spelled

misfortune. Zhou Bao-zhong and Liu Han-xing tried to comfort them, but all to no avail. This compelled us to leave the house without even finishing our lunch.

In late July 1935, a composite cavalry unit, comprising hundreds of puppet Manchukuo army soldiers and policemen, flocked to Shandongtun, on hearing of the arrival of the “Koryo red army” from east Manchuria. They numbered several hundred at a rough estimate.

The main force of the 5th Corps was in Muling and in the northwestern area of Ningan County in those days. The force of the 4th Corps headquarters was not great, either. The enemy troops were twice as large as ours.

Should we fight or avoid them? Zhou and Liu asked me. I decided to fight. Our joint operation with the 4th and 5th Corps was agreed upon, not around a conference table, but in the face of the enemy’s cavalry, which was galloping in battle formation in rising dust, to attack us. According to the teachings of ancient sages, and the rules of guerrilla warfare, one should strike a weak enemy and avoid a strong opponent, but we could not apply these tactics indiscriminately. One demonstration of our power in north Manchuria could possibly have proved indispensable to enable us to attain our expedition aims. Moreover, the odds were then on our side, given the situation and the terrain. Consequently, after a brief consultation, we decided to fight a close battle and began manoeuvring.

We took up positions, where we could meet the attacking enemy and prevent him from pouncing on the village of Shandongtun and harming the villagers, and then gave each unit appropriate combat orders. The gunners of the mortar battery, who had distinguished themselves in the Taipinggou battle, and the crack shots of the heavy machine-gun

company calculated the firing data required to counter the enemy's potential approach and awaited my orders.

The enemy, approaching at a terrifying speed on the mountain path along the River Liangshuilingzicun, climbed the mountain to occupy the area, northwest of Shandongtun. We allowed them to close in as near as 150-200 metres from us, and then opened fire. The enemy's survivors retreated and then attempted to attack us along the southern ridge of the mountain across the River Liangshuilingzicun. But our men, who lay in ambush, checked their attack. The battle continued for some time in this way.

The enemy commanders then regrouped their forces to turn the tide of battle in their favour. When they were concentrated around their command post, our mortar battery commander ordered fire. The shells flew whistling in the air one after another and exploded among the packed enemy. The survivors mounted horses to flee in the direction of Ning'an. Our mortars fired at the fleeing enemy. Driven to a dead end, they shouted that they had never dreamt that the communist army would have mortar, and ran helter-skelter amid the gunsmoke, before taking flight in all directions under the cover of darkness.

Our mortar barrage in that battle had major repercussions. The enemy claimed that we were carrying mortars provided as aid by the Soviet Union, and trembled with fear at the mere mention of the "Koryo red army". During the battle of Shandongtun, we fired all the shells we had captured in the Laoheishan battle, and then buried the mortars in the ground.

The enemy soldiers had paid so dearly in the battle of Shandongtun that they did not dare provoke us afterwards. They closed the wall gates

tight and did not venture out. Moreover, when we sent them a letter the enemy even sent us military supplies like grain, edible oil and footwear.

The Shandongtun battle, another victory in north Manchuria, along with the fantastic episode of the snakes we had killed with a grenade, remains in my memory as one of the most impressive battles of my life.

The enemy trembled at the rumbling of the mortars, but the people bubbled over with joy. The joint operations with the Chinese communists in north Manchuria yielded good results from the very start. This served as a reliable basis for consolidating the military alliance between the communists of the two countries. From then on, Zhou Bao-zhong never again remarked on the unsuitableness of heavy weapons.

After leaving Shandongtun, we moved onto Dougouzi and debated again at the house of a Fang our joint anti-Japanese struggle with the communists in north Manchuria. At our initiative and in agreement with Zhou Bao-zhong, the expeditionary force from east Manchuria decided to split into several detachments to wage a joint struggle in areas, where the 5th Corps was active. It sent some of its force to Muling, where Hu Ren, the political commissar of the 5th Corps, was operating and to the area where Ping Nan-yang was active.

Zhou Bao-zhong attached some men from his corps to our detachments leaving for Machang, Tuanshanzi, Wolianghe and Shitouhezi. These areas were fertile lands we had cultivated with so much effort during the first expedition. We relied to a great extent on the revolutionary organizations in these areas and conducted brisk, political and military activities.

The underground organization in Wolianghe controlled village vicinities as well as places as far away as Dongjingcheng; we received a great deal of help from this organization. When I recall Wolianghe, I am

reminded of one old Chinese woman. On our first expedition to north Manchuria she had been working in the women's association. Looking at this grandmother, who was nearly sixty and yet was attending to the expeditionary force, making uniforms for them, missing her sleep at nights, we were all reminded of our own mothers and grandmothers in our native homes. If she did not see me even for one night, she would ask my orderlies, "Where is Commander Kim?" The orderlies told me that she only went to bed, when she heard that I was all right.

On hearing that the "Koryo red army" had come from Jiandao, this same grandmother came to Dougouzi, bringing a cock pheasant and noodles wrapped in a vessel. At that time we prepared to leave the place.

Handing the noodles over to our comrades, she said, "I regretted not treating Commander Kim properly last autumn, so now I brought some noodles. I'll be pleased if you accept my sincerity."

She had cajoled my orderlies and found out that I liked noodles.

That day, together with Zhou, I ate with relish the food containing the sincerity of the grandmother. The noodles with pheasant soup and pheasant-and-vegetable garnish were exceptionally tasty. After eating two bowlfuls, Zhou asked, half jokingly, half seriously, "When did you win over that Chinese granny in north Manchuria, Commander Kim? I have always been impressed by your way of winning over the masses; I want you to teach our companies, attached to your unit, what political work methods you used."

While we were operating in the Emu area in September that year, Hu Ren, the political commissar of the 5th Corps, formally proposed a joint operation. But we avoided replying for some time, as we had to work with Kim Chaek, whose unit was advancing southward to Weihe at the time. For inevitable reasons in later days, we could not accept his

proposal. However, throughout the anti-Japanese war, I recalled with gratitude the confidence he had placed in us.

Developing our struggle in north Manchuria, we regarded Emu as the most important after Ningan. We had no access to most of this area, and even the Chinese units failed to inspire it with a revolutionary influence.

Nevertheless, we had to enter that area if we were to effect a joint struggle with the 3rd Corps Kim Chaek belonged to. Emu bordered Zhuhe and Weihe on the northwest, the 3rd Corps area, and on the west it was the 1st and 2nd Corps area. This mysterious land was coveted by both friend and foe.

Several armed units in north Manchuria failed to establish themselves in Emu, because an anti-communist trend prevailed among the people there. The anti-communist wind had been strong in Ningan, but was nothing compared to the anti-communist trend in this area. The factionalists of the M-L group were in part to blame for the anti-communist contamination of the area, as they had disgraced communism through reckless Leftist ventures, such as the August 1 revolt which they had instigated. In the wake of the revolt, the people of Emu suffered enormous atrocities at the hands of the Japanese imperialists and the reactionary warlords. Subsequently the people there turned away in disgust from the communists. The Japanese imperialists dispatched the so-called appeasement squads there to drive a wedge between the people and the communists.

The account of the experience of a young man, who had joined the guerrilla army, after doing the work of a charcoal-burner in the forests of Qinggouzi, Emu County, eloquently proves the extent to which the people in this area had been poisoned by anti-communist propaganda. He had lost his parents and brothers in an epidemic in his early years and

lived alone through all hardships, begging for help. He had drifted to Emu and was forced to work at a road construction site. There he had learnt a revolutionary song from a labourer; it had been the first song he had learnt since his birth.

He subsequently worked as a seasonal labourer at a farmhouse near Renjiagou. One day a marriage ceremony was held at a house in the village. The young man followed his employer to the house, congratulated the couple, and sang the song at the request of the officiator at the wedding, the revolutionary song he had learnt at the road construction site. His song caused a disturbance in the wedding ceremony. An old man of the village, who was more or less knowledgeable, had denounced the young man as a communist for his song. Pointing his finger at the middle-class peasant, who had employed the young man, the old man said, “Hey, if you need to employ a farmhand, you should employ a sound man. That guy is a communist, who advocates common ownership of property and wife.” The disgraced peasant chased him out of his house that very day. Tragically, the young man had sung the communist revolutionary song, totally unaware that the song propagandized communism. Some listeners said that this was the consequence of ignorance, but this was not true; it was due to the anti-communist wind.

The Japanese imperialists propagandized the crimes, committed by local bandits or mounted bandits as ones committed by communists.

In this situation, it was quite adventurous, frankly speaking, that we decided to operate in Emu. As expected, we were given the cold shoulder from the inhabitants, as soon as we set foot on Emu soil across Lake Jingbo. The village could be called the eastern gate to Emu; it was a cosy village inhabited only by Chinese. When we arrived, the villagers took

their children and left the village, saying that *Honghuzi* (the Red-bearded—"Red bandits"—Tr.) had come. Only the old and weak remained in the village, but they, too, refused to come out, hiding instead in the houses.

I ordered the pitching of tents in the forest some distance from the village and told them to take a rest there; then I walked round the village. I went to a primary school only to find that the teaching staff and pupils were all hiding. It was too cold a treatment for guests, who had come all the way from east Manchuria to kindle the fire of revolution.

I brought a foot organ out into the yard of the school and began to play it, singing the *Song of Su Wu* and a song about Yang Kuei-fei together with men from the young volunteers' corps company. My comrades were all good singers of folk songs of Han nationality. Those two songs were famous ones which the Chinese working masses were especially fond of. The *Song of Su Wu* was a patriotic song I had learnt during my days in Jilin; its original title is *Su Wu Tends Sheep*.

Su Wu had lived in the 2nd century BC and was famous as a loyal subject of the Han dynasty. He went to the Xiongnu in the north as a messenger of the Emperor of Han. The Xiongnu detained him as a hostage and threatened not to release him unless he surrendered, adding that he would not be sent back until a male sheep bore a lamb. Consequently Su Wu was held in custody by the Xiongnu for 19 years, but he never yielded. In short, the song truthfully reflected the patriotic ideas and feelings of the Chinese people.

When we sang those songs to the accompaniment of the organ, the senior pupils of the primary school were the first to come out of hiding, to approach us with curiosity and wonder. They sang to the accompaniment of the organ I was playing. Then the teachers and village

elders hesitatingly came out. It probably surprised them to have the “Koryo red army” singing Chinese songs so fluently, or perhaps they had felt a vague community between the red army and themselves owing to our song. The people, who had acted coldly to the expeditionary force, began to turn kind and envious glances at us.

When all the people in hiding had gathered in the yard, I made an anti-Japanese speech in Chinese. Only then did they open their hearts to us. They praised us lavishly, saying that the “Koryo red army” was neither a gang of bandits nor a group of mounted bandits, and that it was really a patriotic, revolutionary and gentlemanly army.

I can justly say that we influenced the Chinese people in north Manchuria at that time by singing the *Song of Su Wu*. I personally experienced the great role played by literature and music in moving the people and bringing them to their senses from that day. I can also say that this experience led us to attach extreme importance to literature and art as a weapon of the revolution.

My experience at the Chinese village on Lake Jingbo was so emotional that I tried in various ways after liberation to find the text of the *Song of Su Wu*. It was only recently that I was able to obtain the text in Chinese, thanks to the aid of our officials.

I was so pleased that I sang the song, forgetting that I was in my eighties. How well could a man of eighty sing? A lump formed in my throat. Consequently I could not sing properly, but the fresh memory of my youthful days, which had vanished far beyond the clouds, welled up in my mind, together with my deep attachment to the soil of north Manchuria where we had pioneered the revolution with such difficulty.

Whenever I yearn for the days, when I was blazing the trail of the joint struggle with the Chinese communists, I often play this song on the

organ. Sometimes I whistle it, but the sound is not as fresh as when I was in my twenties and thirties.

Here is the text of the *Song of Su Wu* .

Su Wu Tends Sheep

1. *Su Wu was a prisoner in a land
Which is barbarously wild and dull,
But he did not betray his home even here.
For 19 years he has been shepherding others' sheep,
In the austere land of Xiongnu, covered with ice and snow.
He suffered year after year,
Grazing sheep at the north sea,
Eating snow when he is thirsty
And biting on his blanket when he is hungry.
But his soul was in the land of Han,
He has grown old but did not escape from his prison.
But the suffering and privations in the alien land
Have not broken his will.
In the dead of night a flute sang sadly in the outskirts,
Touching his heart and calling him back to his homeland.*

2. *Su Wu was a prisoner in a land
Which is barbarously wild and dull,
But he did not betray his home even here.
The time has come and the cold north wind blew,
The wild geese are flying to the land of Han,
Where the grey-haired mother is waiting for her son*

*And the young wife is sitting alone by the wall.
Only when they sleep do they see
The face which is better than anyone's.
The ocean will run dry
And the mountain will crumble in dust
But the son will remain loyal to his homeland,
Causing the admiration of even the heartless Xiongnus.*

I still cannot forget among the impressions of Emu the meeting at Sankesong with the old man, Kim, from Jonju. Whereas Liukesong meant six pine-trees, Sankesong meant three pine-trees. When we were in Sankesong, my headquarters was billeted on the house of a landlord, not far from the county town. A small-built old man lived about 500 metres away from the landlord's house. He was cultivating a small rice field plot. According to my orderly, he was apparently a Korean. He spoke Chinese badly, and behaved like a Chinese.

One evening I went to visit him. We introduced each other, and I discovered that he was clearly a Korean and that his surname of Kim originated from Jonju just like mine. He had taken part in the Qingshanli battle led by Hong Pom Do. He told me that when the unit had scattered after the battle, he went to Emu, got married and lived there in retirement. When I told him that my surname was Kim and that my ancestral home was Jonju, he did not hide his pleasure at meeting a man in this remote foreign land with the same surname and from the same ancestral place. He told his wife to hull rice in the treadmill and boil some rice for me. It was the first boiled rice I had eaten in north Manchuria.

“We, too, set ourselves high aims at the outset. When I fought in the battle at Fengwudong led by General Hong Pom Do, I thought that Korea would soon become independent. In those days, I dreamt of entering the walled city of Seoul through an arch of independence. How depressing it is to get old doing nothing, just like a grain of sand or stone in the wilderness! I only feel real happiness in this corner of north Manchuria, virtually the world of the Han race, when I meet Korean compatriots, even though it is like seeing a star in a rainy season. How happy I would be if your unit, Commander Kim, stayed in Emu for ever rather than returning to Jiandao!” Saying this, the old man sighed longingly.

I inevitably felt sad that the great ambition inspiring him to take up arms and win back the country, was fading just as the wrinkles on his face deepened relentlessly. I decided more resolutely than ever that we, young people, must continue fighting in any adversity to defeat the enemy once and for all to make sure that the old man’s original aim was not wasted.

The old man had only one ear. While chatting about various things after the meal, I asked him what had happened to his ear. He smiled bitterly, saying that he had lost it, while fishing via a hole he had made on the ice of the River Mudan; he had caught a big carp and clasped it in his arms, but it had shaken so violently that it had lashed off his frozen ear. I was very sorry to hear that. I called at his house every night during my week in Sankesong, and heard about Hong Pom Do from him.

Once we were on speaking terms, I found that the people of Emu were no less anti-Japanese-minded than the people of Jiandao. They had opposed communism, because they had not received any guidance from any organization. Working among the people, I made friends with Liu

Yong-sheng, a head of one hundred households in village No. 4 at Qinggouzi and, some time later on, moved my headquarters to his house.

On seeing that my unit refrained from imposing any burdens on the people, and instead gathered together, men and women, around bonfires at night to hold recreation parties, dance and study, Liu considered us an exceptional army. The soldiers he had seen before had all been hordes of men who had lorded it over and yelled at the people, regardless of the names of their armies. But when he saw the “Koryo red army” from Jiandao fetch water and sweep the yards for the people, cut the children’s hair and behave in a friendly way, without any distinctions between superiors and subordinates, the whole village whispered that it was an unusual army.

One night Liu informed me that the Japanese garrison and puppet Manchukuo army stationed in village No. 6 were preparing to assault his village. When I heard about this, I ordered the whole unit of soldiers to go to bed earlier than usual.

Liu found this strange. He thought: other armies might have taken to flight to avoid the enemy. Instead the “Koryo red army” planned to sleep in the village, rather than run away. He could not understand it. He could not sleep all night, obsessed with the fear of the enemy’s attack on the village at any minute. He kept going in and out of the house.

I made him sit down beside me and said, “Our unit is defending the village like a fortress, so don’t worry so much; please go to bed.”

But Liu was still anxious, all in a flutter. He said, “But, how can the soldiers defend the village like a fortress, when they go to sleep so early?”

“We’ve posted sentries. The ‘Koryo red army’ does not make wild claims. So you can have a sound sleep tonight. And tomorrow morning,

after we've left the village go to the enemy and report that the 'Koryo red army' has been to your village. Tell them all you have seen."

"You mean report? I've no intention of filing a complaint against such a wonderful army as yours."

"Please, sir. This is my earnest request. Do as you're told and don't refuse. This is the only way for us, you and the village to survive. Just wait and you'll understand why."

I told the head of one hundred households to report the movements of the "Koryo red army" to the police as they were, in a bid to lure the enemy out of the concentration village. Next morning we left the village and marched along the road to Emu. In the middle of the march, I commanded the force of one company to lie in ambush on the southwestern ridge of a mountain. On receiving the report from Liu, the enemy sent hundreds of "punitive" troops to chase our main unit on the march.

That is how the expeditionary force fought a battle of baiting and ambush for the first time, since it had entered the land of Emu. The Japanese garrison (also called military police), committed to this battle, was annihilated. Only one man narrowly escaped death under the barrage of the people's revolutionary army. A plane came to his rescue, but it accidentally crashed on landing and I was told the man also went to "heaven". When a group of visitors from our country went to Emu in 1959, a "monument to the loyal souls", set up by the Japanese imperialists, was still standing in village No. 6 in Qinggouzi.

In December 1935 we fought another battle near Guandi, which is also called the battle at Liucaigou. We killed nearly 200 enemy soldiers in this battle. The story of an enemy officer who in despair hid in a

coffin in the field instead of a corpse concerned this battle. It would be difficult to enumerate all the battles we fought in north Manchuria.

In autumn 1935, when we were fighting in Emu County, the Comintern informed, through Zhou Bao-zhong, that it had organized a joint headquarters for cooperation between the 2nd and 5th Corps and that it had appointed me political commissar of the joint headquarters and commander of the Weihe unit. My record as political commissar in the battalion, regiment and division no doubt prompted the Comintern to appoint me to that post. This was not what I had wanted. I was not ambitious for a high post; I was eager to meet the hard-core Korean communists active in north Manchuria. But the unexpected post of political commissar of the joint headquarters overpowered that desire. I was overweighed by the heavy responsibility of taking care of the political work of the other army corps, as well as the operations of the expeditionary force. Assuming this heavy responsibility, I was kept busy travelling about Ningan and its neighbouring counties to continue the political work of the two army corps until the meeting at Nanhutou and after it, postponing a meeting with Korean comrades-in-arms in north Manchuria.

However, we were able to put our friendship with the Chinese communists on a more solid footing. The result was far more positive than we had expected when embarking on the expedition.

I was sorry that I could not meet Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon in person, which I had set as top priority objective for the expedition; I had to leave it as a matter for the remote future. Even in the days, when we maintained contacts with the Chinese communists, we always recalled the Korean communists and patriots, who were fighting bloody battles in the wilderness of north Manchuria, braving all manner of hardships. The

more our meeting with them was delayed, the more intense and warmer became our feelings for them.

Only in early 1941 did the Korean communists in east Manchuria and south and north Manchuria meet for the first time, introducing themselves and hugging each other with deep emotion and affection. Then we all prepared for the final campaign to liberate the country, sharing bed and board in one secret camp, until we returned to the liberated homeland and embarked in nation-building. They are all faithful veterans, who fought against the Japanese and US imperialists and tirelessly carried out the arduous tasks of democratic reform and socialist construction together with me during the most dramatic decades of the 20th century.

The veterans, who had fought in north Manchuria, still share weal and woe with me to add a sparkle to the socialism of our own style. I hope that pure, beautiful memories, as well as the happiness of a bright future, lie in store for all these faithful people, who have consistently supported me and our cause for over half a century.

2. Strange Relationship

The Emu area in north Manchuria was connected to me from my days in Jilin. Up till then Jiaohe, Xinzhan and Shansong, where I formed the Ryosin Youth Association, a revolutionary organization, in touch with Kang Myong Gun and worked among its members, belonged to Emu County. Apparently this county was renamed Jiaohe County in the late 1930s.

We marched thousands of miles in the Emu area during our second expedition to north Manchuria. Qinggouzi, Pipadingzi, Nantianmen, Sandaogou, Malugou, Xinxingtun, Guandi, Liucaigou, Sankesong, Mudanjiangcun, Heishixiang, and Tuoyaozi were all developed as the theatre of our operations at that time. They constituted unforgettable battle sites, where the expeditionary force to north Manchuria performed military feats.

I experienced many interesting events and met a number of impressive people during that period. Until our second expedition, many parts of this area had been beyond revolutionary influence. It was not accidental that Zhou Bao-zhong was so worried about our campaign in Emu when we debated the matter. He said: “Commander Kim, I don’t think it necessary to worry about you, since you won over that bigoted Wu Yi-cheng in a single day, but we were shut out at every door, when we were there this spring. They abused us, calling us *Honghuzi*.”

The word *Honghuzi* that Zhou mentioned is the Chinese word for “bandits”. Wu Yi-cheng, who did not like communists, once abused Zhou Bao-zhong, calling him *Honghuzi*. From then on, this epithet was applied to the communist army in general.

True to Zhou’s warning, we were treated as *Honghuzi*, as soon as we set foot in Emu. The immediate desertion by the people of Emu of their village, at the sight of the expeditionary force, calling it the “Koryo red army”, means that they were steering clear of us as much as of the *Honghuzi*. Evidently, the word *Hong* (Red) was synonymous for them with immorality and cruelty.

Taking this situation into consideration, we devoted a great deal of time to working among the masses during the expedition. It was not a waste of time, as our efforts led the people who had shunned the people’s revolutionary army to become its close friends and supporters. When these efforts brought former enemies into an alliance and alignment with the communists, we felt the greatest delight which could not ever be compared with the joy one would feel in winning a windfall.

At a time when the faces of people, who abandoned the guerrilla zones in tears after the Yaoyinggou meeting, still flashed before our eyes, and when anxiety over the revolution weighed heavily on our minds and body, it was marvellous for us to win such a big success in Emu. The greatest pleasure for a revolutionary is to gain comrades and friends, his greatest misery to lose them.

Before entering Emu County, we had already made friends with Chai He, a naive Chinese fisherman, on Lake Jingbo at Xiaoshanzuizi, and crossed the lake with ease. Chai had shunned the revolutionary army before meeting us. A fisherman, he had lived by the lake for 30 years since the age of nineteen; he had been fooled by the Japanese

propaganda that the “Koryo red army” was a group of “bandits”. However, after seeing the stately, orderly appearance of the expeditionary force and won over by the men’s simple, open-hearted personalities, he changed his stand and treated the revolutionary army cordially.

An army finds it as hard to cross a river as to march hundreds of miles. So I shall never forget the trouble Chai took to help enthusiastically the expeditionary force cross Lake Jingbo, behind the enemy’s back. A group of Korean visitors to China returned in 1959, bringing his photograph with them. In the picture Chai was an old man, who was past seventy, with a wrinkled face. But I felt deep emotion on seeing his old figure with his great stature and long neck.

We gained many friends and won over a large number of people in Emu, including Liu Yong-sheng, the head of one hundred households, who supplied us with some necessities at the risk of his life during the battle at Qinggouzi and an old man, Liu Chun-fa, who sent his son to the guerrilla army in the vicinity of Heishixiang.

While working among people of various strata, we achieved friendly relations with a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army.

The event happened one day, when the expeditionary force was engaged on a forced march for a whole night, to attack a lumber station in Dunhua County, so it must have been the beginning of 1936. In the grey light of dawn, we stopped and billeted on a landlord’s house by a roadside. It was no ordinary house; it was surrounded by earthen walls with forts. But he had no guards, as it occurred after the formation of the puppet Manchukuo army and the Japanese did not allow anyone to keep private soldiers.

The landlord's house consisted of two wings. The rank and file occupied one wing, while the headquarters and supply officers were located in the other. We posted three men at the gate in the guise of farmhands to guard the house by turns, while the others rested.

At about 4 p.m. the sentry reported that a carriage was approaching the house we were staying at. Soon it pulled up in front of the house and a lady stepped out with the help of a soldier; she entered the yard, saying that she would like to warm herself for a while. I looked out of the window to glimpse a beautiful lady wrapped in two fox-fur overcoats standing in the snow-drifted yard. My comrades struck by the luxurious coats, had already swarmed out to the yard and surrounded the strange lady in her dazzling outfit. They were questioning her.

When I inquired as to her presence, a young guard, in high spirits, as if he had captured a top-rate secret agent, responded, "She's a suspicious woman, Comrade Commander." He maintained his sharp gaze on the lady.

The young Chinese lady turned pale, trembling in silence. I sternly rebuked the guard, who was trying to search her, and ordered, "Let her come inside so that she can warm herself."

In the room she still trembled slightly. She kept her head lowered. I spoke in Chinese to calm her, "Please, madam, don't be afraid. Make warm yourself. The young guard may have taken you for someone else and treated you impolitely. Please forgive him."

I offered her a cup of tea and pushed the brazier closer to her, so that she could keep warm.

"I don't know what you think of us, but we're the people's revolutionary army. The people here call us the 'Koryo red army'. Have you ever heard about the 'Koryo red army', madam?"

“Yes, but only a little,” she answered almost in a whisper, still with her head lowered.

“Then, we’re fortunate. The ‘Koryo red army’ is not a gang of ‘bandits’, which harms people’s lives and property, as the Japanese allege. Our revolutionary army is a people’s armed force, which aims to secure national salvation. We only fight against the Japanese imperialists and their lackeys who trample on Korea and China; we never do any harm to people’s lives and property. Consequently, please set your mind at rest, madam.”

She clasped her hands together as a token of gratitude. But her gaze still indicated mixed feelings of uneasiness, fear and uncertainty.

“We won’t blame or punish you for taking a soldier of the puppet Manchukuo army with you. Nor will I ask you why he is escorting you. Why should we humiliate and harass travellers, if they don’t harm the people and the revolutionary army? We are also travellers, enjoying a moment’s rest in this house with the host’s permission, so don’t think otherwise; please warm yourself before leaving,” I continued, until she looked more relaxed.

It was only then that she breathed a sigh of relief and raised her head cautiously. As she glanced at me, there was a hint of surprise in her eyes. She lifted her clasped hands to her breast and bit her lips.

“What’s worrying you? Do you still not believe me?”

“No, it’s not that... Frankly speaking, your face... I know that you are a kind-hearted man by nature...” she murmured incoherently and again gazed at me.

Then O Paek Ryong, who had been interrogating the escort, appeared at the door like a hunter who had just caught a tiger. He said in Korean, a language the Chinese lady could never understand, “General, the escort

told me that the woman is the wife of the commander of the 12th Regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army. A big fish has entered the mesh of its own accord.”

“Comrade O Paek Ryong, don’t talk so big. Let’s wait and see whether it is a big fish or small fry.”

To be candid, although I rebuked him, I was surprised to hear that she was the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army. A regimental commander was not small fry. In the hierarchy of the puppet Manchukuo army it was the fourth rank down from the top which could only be occupied after rising 13 rungs from the bottom. In some cases a regiment in that army had a few counties under its jurisdiction, so that there was no need to go to the length of explaining the authority of a commander, who controlled those counties. In those days the 12th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Composite Brigade of the puppet Manchukuo army based in Jiaohe was stationed in Emu.

I found it interesting to meet the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army, as we conducted a major strategic psychological warfare against the enemy armies. The knowledge of her identity made no change in my countenance at all.

“Well, madam, did you think we would inflict some severe punishment on you, because you’re the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army?”

She rubbed her palms in confusion, saying, “Not at all. Perhaps I am wrong, Mr. Commander ... excuse me, but aren’t you Kim Song Ju?”

I was indeed surprised at the unexpected question. This was something unusual. I could not disregard the fact that the wife of a regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army, whom I had met by chance in north Manchuria far away from Jiandao, knew my

childhood name. How could this lady I had never seen or met before know my name? I was astonished and, at the same time, curious to solve the puzzle.

“It’s indeed strange to hear my childhood name in this land of Emu. I am Kim Song Ju or Kim Il Sung. But how on earth do you know me, madam?”

She blushed deeply. I guessed from her looks that she wanted to say something, but was hesitating.

“When you led the student and youth movement in Jilin, I attended a girls’ middle school there. I have known you ever since then.”

“Oh, is that so? I am very glad to meet you.”

I only now realized what her sparkling eyes meant when she glanced at me before, with her head raised. But still, it was rare to see a former student of a girls’ middle school in Jilin in this strange land of Emu. The word Jilin evoked in me a tingling feeling tantamount to nostalgia. As is the case now, I cherished a strong attachment at that time for the city where I had lived for years.

When she saw that I was recalling those bygone days, she asked in a somewhat calmer voice, “Surely you haven’t forgotten autumn 1928, when the campaign against the projected railway between Jilin and Hoeryong was launched? How violently Jilin seethed that autumn! You may not believe me, but I also took part in the students’ demonstration. I still remember seeing you making a speech in the square in front of the provincial assembly building.”

A student of Jilin Girls’ Middle School who had shouted slogans among the demonstrators, was now the wife of a regimental commander travelling to her parent’s home in fox-fur coats, escorted by a guard. Tears were trickling down her cheeks. Feeling as if ages had passed

since her school days, I looked at her in a different light. This woman, who had opposed the Japanese until only yesterday, was now living the life of a pro-Japanese. I gave deep thought to the reasons beyond her transformation. Did it reflect a degeneration, caused by the hopeless destiny of her nation? Looking at the earnest gaze of the woman, now recalling her days in Jilin, however, I realized that the bygone days, when she had fought against the Japanese imperialists, still lingered in her mind. Moreover, she had repented of her folly, here in front of me, with tears in her eyes, and recalled her school days. What made her start and tremble so much on seeing me? It must have been the prick of her conscience.

“Why are you silent, Mr. Song Ju? Please forgive me, a girl, who responded to you, by shaking her fists when you made a speech... I am deeply moved to see you going through hardships in military uniform and feel so ashamed.”

Tears streamed down her cheeks again.

“Calm yourself, madam. Don’t feel too mean. The days are too grim for us to be driven to despair and self-abandon. The situation at home and abroad calls on all the sons, daughters and intellectuals of the Chinese nation, who love their motherland and fellow countrymen, to fight the Japanese and save the country. There’s no reason to think that you shouldn’t fight the Japanese imperialists, because you’re a regimental commander’s wife.”

As I said this, she wiped away her tears and raised her head.

“You mean that there’s a way for me to fight the Japanese?”

“Of course! If you influence your husband positively and make sure that he doesn’t carry out ‘punitive’ operations against the revolutionary army, then you will be contributing to the anti-Japanese struggle.

Frankly speaking, a regimental commander is an important person. But I don't think his rank is the moot point. Most importantly, he shouldn't forget that he's Chinese."

"Although a regimental commander, my husband is not doing it, because he wants to. He remains true to the national conscience. I will prevail on him as you say, Mr. Song Ju, so that he won't mobilize his men in 'punitive' action. Please believe me."

"How good it would be, if you do! If you managed to convert a regimental commander from pro-Japanese to anti-Japanese it would mean that his subordinates become patriotic. Madam, this will lead to your revival and that of your husband."

To make her feel more confident, I enumerated the instances in Jiandao of puppet Manchukuo army officers, who had converted from the pro-Japanese to the anti-Japanese struggle.

She replied that it was like a godsend to meet me that day; she had many things to think over after hearing my words. She said I had revived her days in Jilin, and had now led her and her husband along the path of renewal. She decided to remember it for the rest of her life and live like a daughter of the Chinese nation.

I showed her the propaganda materials we had made and the six-point anti-Japanese national salvation programme published by Song Qingling, Zhang Nai-qi and others in Shanghai. It was the programme Wu Ping had shown us in Zhou Bao-zhong's hut in Ningan during the first expedition.

After glancing at her watch, she fumbled in her inside pocket and produced something wrapped up in a sheet of white paper. They were Chinese banknotes. Saying that she had obtained them by selling opium, she requested that I use the money as war funds.

I was thankful, but declined.

“Keep it. Today I regained my anti-Japanese schoolmate who had been lost, and this is my great fortune.”

My words induced her tears.

Before parting, we prepared a rich dinner for her. On leaving she told me her full name, but I only remember her surname Chi. To my regret, I have forgotten her name.

Some days later we received a letter from the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army. It was a long letter, written in bold strokes, which stated that we were the noblest people in the world, and that he would help us with all his will, as we had protected his wife and saved him from a quagmire of crimes to follow the path of patriotism. His name was Zhang so-and-so, but my memory fails me in this matter.

In later days we sent our supply officer to the vicinity of Emu county town, to prepare for New Year’s Day celebrations, according to the lunar calendar. To obtain various produce, such as frozen pork used to make New Year festive dishes, he went as far as the town, but was caught by the county police before he had fulfilled his mission. This fact became known to the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army through a certain channel. He demanded that the police hand over the supply officer, as the army dealt with matters related to the people’s revolutionary army.

At first the supply officer believed that the regimental commander was going to kill him. But the commander allowed his wife to prepare a feast for our supply officer and treated him as an honoured guest. Then, he said: “I am extremely grateful to Commander Kim’s unit for the great assistance it accorded my wife; I will never carry out a ‘punitive’ mission against you whatever the circumstances; I swear on my life, so

please believe me; if we come across your unit, we'll fire three shots in the air; at these moments, remember that it is my unit and that you can pass; I'll never forget Commander Kim's kindness; please convey my heartfelt greetings to him."

He kept his promise faithfully in the subsequent years, exactly as he had told our quartermaster.

When we were billeted in the village of Sankesong, a Japanese army unit was stationed in the village of Guandi and the puppet Manchukuo army regiment was located near Emu. The two units travelled from place to place to carry out "punitive" operations, but the 12th Regiment avoided engagements with us, whenever it came upon our unit. We also attacked only Japanese soldiers. The Japanese army could be distinguished from the puppet Manchukuo army at that time by the helmets. All guerrilla units knew that soldiers with helmets were Japanese and that those without were puppet Manchukuo army soldiers. But in later days, the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers also wore helmets when they were on the battlefield. Consequently we told them we would shoot any one wearing a helmet, taking him for a Japanese, and that all those soldiers, who refused to fight against the guerrilla army, had to remove their helmets. In response to this warning, the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers indicated who they were by removing the helmets when they approached us.

When the soldiers with helmets on their heads headed their columns, the guerrilla army attacked the front ranks; when they were in the rear, we attacked only the last ranks. The Japanese shouted; "The guerrillas only strike us!" We demanded that the puppet Manchukuo army unit give a signal, by firing chance shots when they were conducting "punitive" mission, and they agreed. When they were unable to fire the

shots, they would gather in one place in hundreds or thousands and raise a clamour thereby letting us know their position.

The regimental commander, Zhang, sent us many supplies. He would often leave his barracks with pork and frozen dumplings on carts, saying that he intended to carry out a “punitive” mission, and then ordered his subordinates to bring them to the place agreed upon with our unit. He would then take his men somewhere far from the guerrilla army and wander around there for hours, before returning to the barracks.

One day when our unit was billeted on a village near Guandi, some commanding officers came to me and reported on the soldiers’ state of mind on New Year’s Eve. They then requested my permission to obtain some buckwheat flour or starch from the villagers, so that they could make noodles on New Year’s Day.

In view of the trouble we would cause the villagers, I refused and ordered the unit out of the village before long. The villagers had been pleased to know that they would be able to celebrate the New Year with Commander Kim’s unit and had been arranging a grand banquet. I feared that the villagers might spend months’ provisions on the banquet to be given in honour of my unit. Consequently my unit suddenly left the village. Although we ordered the withdrawal from the village to avoid harming the interests of the people, all the men were sulky.

The expeditionary force moved to the dead end of the valley of Huangnihezi, mended the huts abandoned by the lumberjacks and celebrated New Year’s Day there. Although it was a festive meal, a bowl of boiled foxtail millet was everything that was accorded to each of us. The men had already swallowed their shares, when the pork and dumplings sent by the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army arrived, much to our delight.

As our friendship deepened, the regimental commander even sent weapons and military information to the expeditionary force. The kindness we had accorded a woman was lavishly rewarded with tied grass—as the Chinese legend goes. Although he remained commander of a regiment appointed by Manchukuo, he bravely atoned for this before history and the people via his alliance with the communists.

Our policy of demoralizing the enemy forces, by winning over the rank and file, the overwhelming majority of the puppet Manchukuo army preferentially, and also middle- and low-ranking officers and some of the conscientious high-ranking officers, and thereby isolating and striking at a handful of evil officers, proved very effective in our work with the regimental commander. This enormous gain went beyond our expectations. The regimental commander, who never met us, was converted from a henchman of the counterrevolution to a patriot and an ally of the communists, influenced by his wife. I think his wife, a former student of Jilin Girls' Middle School, must have waged quite an active ideological campaign to transform her husband. She was a very wonderful woman.

The regimental commander was subsequently transferred to the Huadian area. I turned him over to Wei Zheng-min. Subsequently, I did not hear from him for a long time. It was only in 1941 that I heard about him from Kwak Ji San, who had been an assistant to Wei Zheng-min in Huadian. Kwak said that the 12th and 13th Regiments of the puppet Manchukuo army in Huadian would soon transfer to Jehol and that the commanders of the two regiments wished to join the anti-Japanese revolutionary army before moving. But at that time there was no unit in Huadian capable of dealing with two whole regiments at one time and no cadre could give an authoritative answer to their bold decision. He came

for my advice. As Wei Zheng-min had fallen in battle, the military and political cadres of the 2nd Corps used to come to obtain my decisions on all matters, big or small, related to the activities of the corps.

I entrusted him with the urgent task of accepting them before their move to Jehol and sent him to Huadian. To our regret, however, it was too late, and their righteous action fell through. Later on, I heard that the regimental commander had been relieved in Huadian by a new commander with the surname of Yang. When he was being relieved, he had persuaded his successor to operate against the Japanese and advised the commander of the 13th Regiment, who had been his friend and neighbour, to help the anti-Japanese revolution.

I heard nothing about the 12th and 13th Regiments, after their move to Jehol. Only recently, when researching the collapse of the puppet Manchukuo army during our final operations against Japan, I found that they had rebelled at a decisive moment against the Japanese imperialists.

One conscientious friend in the enemy forces provided us with tens of thousands of friends. Consequently, ever since the early days of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we proposed the slogan, “Let Us Build a Revolutionary Battery among the Enemy Soldiers!” which meant creating positions in the enemy forces. In other words, it meant creating our revolutionary forces within the enemy camp in order to demoralize it.

In those days enemy break-up operations were commonly referred to as political work with the enemy. Destroying the enemy by force and disintegrating them through political work constituted, so to speak, the strategic lines of the anti-Japanese struggle. Throughout history, war has always been fought by both belligerents along two lines—one, fights by

the force of arms, and the other, by psychological and ideological propaganda.

To maintain public peace and order, the Japanese imperialists established their three policies: the implementation of tentative measures, ideological and radical measures. Generally speaking, these policies had two aspects—one implied the “removal of bandits” through armed forces, and the other “ideological operations” through propaganda and appeasement. The enemy also went to desperate efforts to psychologically break our revolutionary ranks.

However, when we first proposed the idea of forming revolutionary organizations within the enemy camp for political work among enemy soldiers, a number of people were reluctant to agree.

Needless to say, none of them objected to the idea for cowardly reasons. They simply viewed it as a deviation from the class line. They would set the following objections: “We’re an army of workers and peasants and our opponent is an army of the bourgeoisie: they are poles apart. This truth is as clear as daylight, just as water and fire are incompatible. Even a child knows that. It’s ridiculous to form revolutionary organizations inside the enemy camp.”

Proponents of Marxism branded it Rightist deviation, similar to class collaboration. They argued that it implied alignment with the class enemy, who maintained an antagonistic relationship with us, and that the classic Marxist works did not mention the break-up of enemy forces. Our young people may now denounce them for being so stiff-necked, but in those days, when you could not move an inch without referring to the propositions of the classics, such a unilateral view gained the upper hand in many cases.

Few people considered such a stand a serious deviation, as an uncompromising class struggle was under way and everyone in those days maintained a bitter hatred for the class enemy. Many people started the revolution and endured all the hardships on the strength of their hatred for the class enemy, and, consequently refused to admit the slightest compromise on the matter of “class”. Worse still, the dogmatic approach of many communists to the Marxist theory of class struggle led them to feel more hatred than love, and yearn more for relentless punishment and condemnation than admit a generous quality of mind capable of forgiving and winning over the enemy. Pretentious Marxists even claimed that uncompromising behaviours typified in any circumstance revolutionaries, and transformed young people, who were ideologically and mentally immature, into narrow-minded individuals and literally cold-hearted *Honghuzi*. The Marxist revolution suffered bitterly because of this childish practice and the image of the communists was tarnished. Advocating one-sided class interests, under the slogan that they should defend their own class and not compromise with the hostile class, the Leftist elements and dogmatists led many people to reject the communist revolution and join the enemy camp. The central issue was not whether there were propositions in the classics on the disintegration of the enemy forces, but that they did not try to formulate lines and policies in the fundamental interests of the revolution.

We believed that we should begin the revolution with a feeling of love for our fellow countrymen; when studying the Marxist classics, we first sought love and unity rather than an uncompromising spirit. We believed that we could build revolutionary forces within the enemy camp, because we were convinced that their high-ranking officers, to say

nothing of the overwhelming majority, the rank and file, who were sons of workers and peasants, as well as middle- and low-ranking officers, included conscientious individuals, who sympathized with our revolution and pitied those suffering in an exploitative society. If we won them all over to the side of the revolution and made them our allies, the enemy would be broken up to major extent and our revolutionary forces would expand far more. It would constitute an enormous offensive, annihilating the class enemy without any rifle or gunfire, a great propaganda success which would convince the people of the noble ideals of the communists, devoted to the cause of humanity's happiness and harmony.

With these ideals and purposes at least, we raised the slogan "Let Us Build a Revolutionary Battery among the Enemy Soldiers!" as the main slogan in political work with the enemy.

The belief that we could build revolutionary fortresses in the enemy camp was based on the Juche-oriented view of man's essential qualities. Man is the greatest being endowed with independence, creativity and consciousness and, at the same time, a beautiful creature who champions justice. Man, by nature, aspires to virtue and ennobling qualities and detests all that is evil and dirty. These unique features constitute his human traits.

The majority, including the middle and lower strata and some of the upper stratum, apart from a handful of reactionaries, can be encouraged to support the revolution, sympathize and assist it, if we exert a positive influence to them with magnanimity. If a man retains his human nature and loves his country and nation with a humane aroma, although he is a servant of the landlord and capitalist class, then such a quality will be the basis for winning him over to our side. Our policy is derived from this stand, based on the view that we can unite all the members of the nation,

excluding a tiny handful of reactionaries and villains, under the banner of great national unity.

After liberation, our people named Kim Ku¹³ the chief terrorist and identified him with Syngman Rhee, a reactionary. Admittedly, he had been malignant and hostile towards communists nearly all his life. There was a caricature in those days of Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee, crawling into a pigsty with pumpkins on their heads. The caricature indicated how bitter the hatred was. The workers of Kangson Steel Plant wrote “Down with Kim Ku!” on the plant’s chimney. None of our people in those days thought that Kim Ku could ever be transformed. During the April North-South Joint Conference,¹⁴ however, he transformed himself from anti-communist to pro-communist and allied himself with the communists under our influence. He did so under our influence, but more importantly he did it, because his love for the country and nation he had devoted his life to had been roused to the highest degree and his humanity had been developed to the fullest extent while witnessing the realities of the northern half of the country.

If we did not consider patriotism and human nature, we would not have joined hands with Choe Tok Sin,¹⁵ who had levelled guns at us on the anti-communist front line, and we would not have held dialogues with the present south Korean rulers. We sit at the negotiation table with the south Korean authorities to reunify the country through dialogue, because we place our hopes on their national conscience and human nature, albeit limited, and we also believe that both these traits will come to full bloom one day in the grand flower garden of national harmony.

We had long discussions on which enemy forces we should win over and how. No agreement was reached on the need to do political work to win over the Japanese army in particular. Most comrades admitted that

the middle and lower strata of the puppet Manchukuo army could be won over to our side, but they argued that it was impossible to win over the Japanese soldiers who had been steeped in “Yamato-Tamashii” (Japanese spirit—Tr.) since childhood and blindly worshipped their “Emperor”, had been tamed by a coercive discipline and therefore constituted our enemy. They said it was difficult to eradicate anti-communist ideas from the minds of the Independence Army commanders, who had been trained at the Japanese military academy, let alone the Japanese soldiers and officers.

However, an unexpected incident negated this argument. One year typhus spread through some of the villages in Jiandao, and the Japanese soldiers locked the patients up in their houses and burnt them to death. The “punitive” force then came to the village, where Tong Chang-rong was bedridden. When a Japanese officer saw him lying in bed, he commanded his subordinate to lock the door and set fire to the house. As ordered, the Japanese soldier rushed to obey. Tong thought his last moment had come and, determined to die an honourable death by propagandizing for the last time, he condemned the Japanese atrocities, beating the floor of the room with his fist. As he had graduated from a university in Japan, he spoke fluent Japanese. He said, “You must be the son of a worker or a peasant: why on earth did you come here and why are you killing the poor people at random? What do you get for this murder? How can a man be so immoral? How can you kill a sick man in this way?”

The Japanese soldier was touched by his fiery speech, which pricked his conscience. He kicked the back door open and sent Tong out, unbeknownst to his officer, and then set the house on fire. Tong hid in the furrows of the field and thereby narrowly escaped death.

This incident refuted the contention of individuals who had insisted that it was impossible to win over Japanese soldiers. It instilled us with confidence: we picked out stalwart, brave, clever and resourceful men and infiltrated them in the enemy camp.

Thanks to the efforts of a large number of sung and unsung heroes who acted single-handed, engaging in efficient political work among the enemy, without abandoning their principles in hostile surroundings, mutinies occurred almost every day in the puppet Manchukuo army and self-defence corps.

We trained the guerrillas to do political work among the enemy in diverse forms both orally and by circulating publications, influencing public opinion and disseminating songs.

Thanks to our enthusiastic and impressive propaganda offensive, conducted both inside and outside the enemy forces, with both individuals and collectives, many of the puppet Manchukuo army units stopped fighting against the guerrilla army and became faithful “weapons suppliers”.

They would respond to our letters by bringing weapons, ammunition and provisions. When we shouted “*Yaoqiang buyaoming!*” (We need your guns, not your lives!) on the battlefield, they surrendered and offered their weapons.

The enemy’s “punitive” forces killed our people indiscriminately, while we treated prisoners like human beings, whether they were from the puppet Manchukuo army or from the Japanese army: we benevolently educated them and then set them free, even paying for their travelling expenses. One soldier of the puppet Manchukuo army was taken prisoner by our unit seven times. Each time he would bring a rifle with him. When our soldiers jokingly remarked, “Hey, this chap’s here

again!” he would answer with a smile, “I’ve come to give a rifle to the revolutionary army.”

During our operations in east Manchuria, we won many enemy company commanders and higher-ranking officers over to our side, including the company commanders of Wen’s battalion in Luozigou, Wangqing County. “Qian Lianzhang”, who so efficiently broke up Ma Gui-lin’s unit in Nanhamatang in 1934 had been a company commander of the puppet Manchukuo army before we influenced him to switch to the communist cause.

We had some friends assisting us among the Japanese soldiers, whom we shall never forget.

During the defence of Xiaowangqing, O Paek Ryong once brought me a note, addressed to the guerrilla army, which he had found on the body of a driver of the Japanese imperialist aggressor army while searching the battlefield. The writer of the note was of working-class origin and a member of the Japan Communist Party. He had been on the way to us, with 100,000 cartridges loaded on his lorry, but his plan had been discovered by the enemy at the foot of a mountain near the guerrilla zone; he had written the note and stuffed it in his pocket before committing suicide. The profound revolutionary spirit of this proletarian internationalist affected us all. The image of this member of the Japan Communist Party who had surpassed boundless spaces of water and steep mountains to help us, leaving behind his dear parents, wife and children in Japan, and was now buried quietly at the foot of a mountain in a foreign land moves our hearts deeply even now. I heard that the people of Xiaowangqing had named the primary school in their village after him. However, I don’t know if today the school is still called by his name.

Drawing on our experience gained while winning over the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army in Emu, we successfully undermined the enemy forces in Dapuchaihe on the border of the Antu and Dunhua Counties. A battalion of the puppet Manchukuo army, notorious for its “punitive” operations against the guerrilla army was located in that place. It was a vicious battalion with rich combat experience. It was managed very well and used a well-organized command system. Although we wanted to send our operatives, it was impossible to infiltrate them there. We studied the unit from various angles to find some weakness. We thereby learned that the battalion commander was dissatisfied with his superiors, because he was paid such a low salary, and was so hard pressed for money that he had become involved in drug-trafficking through his aide-de-camp. We profited from this fact to make a breakthrough in our break-up efforts.

One day, our operatives lay in ambush by a road and seized the aide-de-camp who was returning with large quantities of opium he had bought. He was afraid that the revolutionary army would take the battalion commander’s opium, which was as valuable as money. However, our comrades did not touch it; they merely educated him well and sent him on his way. Moved by the way he was treated, he reported to his battalion commander on his return that, although he had believed the communist army to be “bandits” as the Japanese stated, he had found them gentle and well-mannered. The battalion commander was also deeply moved.

Later I sent the commander my visiting card and a letter through his aide-de-camp. The letter stated: The guerrilla army doesn’t want to fight you; although you committed many vicious deeds while chasing our unit, we won’t settle accounts with you; we don’t want that much from you;

we only want you never to harm the people and the people's revolutionary army; if you mean to repent your past actions and want to maintain friendly relations with the revolutionary army, then send us *Tiejun* (*Invincible Army*—Tr.) and other publications now and then.

In response to my letter, the aide-de-camp brought us the magazine *Tiejun*, agreed on the secret place, where he could drop the publications and returned. Since then, they sent us on a regular basis, through a certain hollow in an old tree, a variety of papers and periodicals published in and outside the army as well as important military information. When we gave them money to buy some necessities for our unit and military supplies, they fulfilled all our requests.

Touched by our goodwill, the battalion commander voluntarily treated our wounded guerrillas. He would hide them in his barracks and take good care of them; he made sure that they received excellent treatment until their wounds healed. He regarded the people's revolutionary army as a genuine army of the people and, as our friendly relations intensified, he sent me a passionate letter, entitled "An Appeal to the Comrades-in-Arms on the Mountain".

Human conscience follows the truth and sings the praises of love. I always stressed to my comrades that, whereas the enemy were trying to demoralize our ranks through deception and fraudulence, threats and blackmail, we communists must imbibe the hearts of the enemy soldiers with truth and love.

The operatives, who took my words to heart and faithfully conducted political work among the enemy included a young girl guerrilla. Her name was Im Un Ha. The well-known play, entitled *Sunflower*, describes her actual struggle.

I met her for the first time at a secret camp in Mihunzhen in spring 1936. When we debated some important matters on the formation of a new division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the preparations to found the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, she became extremely excited as she thought that she would follow us to the area of Mt. Paektu in the future. She was a charming, pretty girl, who was not very talkative but, at the same time, very determined. She was then not quite twenty and small in build for her age. Whenever she saw me, she would try to coax me into assigning her to the main unit of the KPRA under my command, saying, "You'll surely take me with you this time, won't you, General?"

But we left her with Wei Zheng-min who was ill. As her hope of following me to the fatherland had not materialized, tears welled up immediately in her eyes.

I consoled her. "Don't feel so disappointed", I said. "When we've established ourselves in the area around Mt. Paektu, we'll take Comrade Wei there for treatment. And you'll come with him."

"I see, General. Don't worry about me."

Although she said that to comfort me, she was gazing absent-mindedly towards the southernmost sky of the fatherland in low spirits.

A few days later, we left Mihunzhen and billeted on a village near Xiaofuerhe. Unexpected misfortune hit this remote mountain village with its four or five households. The enemy from Dapuchaihe attacked it at dawn. We quickly occupied one vantage-point and fired at the enemy, but those who billeted on a house on the opposite side of the valley did not escape in time. They were Wei Zheng-min, Chairman Li, who had been sent to us on graduation from the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow, the wife of Cao Ya-fan, and Im Un Ha.

We searched the battle site after repulsing the enemy and found Wei in the attic. His wounded thigh was bleeding. I was told that Wei's condition had turned for the worse that day and could not be moved. Im Un Ha had managed to hide him in the attic. But she had been wounded in the leg while running up the mountain to escape from enemy fire and had been captured. Cao Ya-fan's wife and Li had been killed that day.

The enemy took Im Un Ha to a company of the puppet Manchukuo army stationed in the vicinity of Dapuchaihe, and made her laundress and cook. At first the Japanese instructor cruelly tortured her, in a bid to make her talk, but as this proved futile, he changed his method; he tested her by giving her odd jobs. Im, lonely in the enemy camp, thought again and again about how she could be of service to the revolution. She decided on the bold plan of trying to persuade the whole company to switch to the side of the revolutionary army.

She decided to try and stir the men's hearts by singing some beautiful songs and awaken the hearts which had become so uncouth owing to exhaustive military service. To make contact with the soldiers, she stretched out a clothesline in the yard of the barracks and sang a plaintive, nostalgic song, frequently touching the clothes. We composed a good song for political work with the enemy. We had set revolutionary words to the tune of a mournful old song, sung by a widow over the grave of her husband, killed at the construction site of the Great Wall. She sang this song for rank-and-file soldiers, and other ordinary songs for the officers. The company had previously belonged to the national salvation army, but it had been reassigned to the puppet Manchukuo army when the commander of the NSA had deserted. Consequently the soldiers had a strong anti-Japanese spirit. Her lovely singing captivated

the soldiers' hearts. When they heard her singing that plaintive song, even officers gazed at a distant sky absent-mindedly, deep in thought.

As the prisoner's good voice became common knowledge, soldiers came up and asked, "Will you sing a song for us, girl guerrilla?" She would reply, smiling, "Of course, as it's free I can sing hundreds of times." And she would sing in a sorrowful way, adjusting her voice. The plaintive song carried the grievances of the Chinese people who were bleeding and dying under Japanese oppression.

*The labour involved in the construction of the Great Wall
Built the tombs of the Chinese in the past.
Today the bayonets of the Japanese
Dig our graves.
Arise, and advance,
To take vengeance on the enemy of the Chinese.*

The uncouth soldiers, as well as the girl would shed tears when she sang. She sang songs for them and also did their needlework and left them the food they liked and later gave them extra portions.

Thereby, a friendship sprang up between Im and the soldiers. A few greenhorns followed her around as they would their own sisters. They had been orphaned in childhood and had roamed about begging, before joining the army for the food. She took loving care of these poor lonely young men. Im soon became as dear to them as their own sister and mother for the soldiers had been so hungry for human warmth.

One day three young soldiers came to her and requested that she swear brotherhood with them. They said, "You're our eldest sister, Un Ha. We'll sacrifice our lives for you, sister."

Their pledge was solemn and earnest. Needless to say, she accepted and grasped their hands warmly, saying, "I'll sacrifice my life for you, brothers."

With these three soldiers as the hard core, she expanded brotherhood still further and developed it gradually into an anti-Japanese association. Meanwhile, she decided to approach the company commander to discuss rebellion. The company commander, too, had been in the national salvation army, and had always been aggrieved by the tyranny of the Japanese instructor. Grasping his state of mind at the right moment, she went to see him one day and told him in detail how former puppet Manchukuo army soldiers, who had defected to the guerrilla army lived. Then she ventured, "Why don't you defect with your soldiers?"

At first the company commander was embarrassed by her unexpected suggestion.

"How long do you plan to carry on being maltreated like a horse? Yesterday Wang, your most cherished man, was beaten by the Japanese instructor until he lost consciousness. However, you didn't utter a word of protest."

As the company commander trembled with anger, she continued, "I'll help you defect. All of your men are my sworn brothers and members of the anti-Japanese association."

He looked at her glowing eyes in amazement. What had this young girl guerrilla been doing up to that time? The company commander was shocked to find that she had such a big heart for such a small body.

He said, "As a man, I'm ashamed."

And he left hastily.

The next day the soldiers under her influence lodged a protest, demanding their salary which was now six months overdue. That day,

too, the Japanese instructor beat the soldiers' representative to a pulp, hurling abuse at him. The girl thought this to be a critical moment and faced the soldiers boldly, appealing, "My dear brothers! Get rid of that cruel Japanese instructor! End your shameful service to the puppet Manchukuo army and follow me to the anti-Japanese guerrilla army!"

Responding to her appeal, the soldiers killed the Japanese instructor, swiftly formed ranks and set out in search of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. They took along three Czech-made machine-guns, 19 rifles, one pistol and 4,700 cartridges.

History hardly knows of a case when a girl, scarcely twenty years of age, persuaded an enemy company to mutiny. A secret document of the Japanese imperialists mentioned this incident as an unprecedented, miraculous event.

Im Un Ha was the flower of the guerrilla army, a daughter of Korea possessing a capacious heart, a girl who, as we had expected, had led the soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army along the right road with the sincerity, love and magnanimity of a communist.

Our political work among the enemy troops intensified from the latter half of the 1930s onwards and the revolutionary organizations spread their network to the vicious Jingan army units as well. Our organizations held sway in many units of the self-defence corps and puppet Manchukuo army and police. Accordingly, most of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers turned their guns on the Japanese imperialists or were about to break up during our final anti-Japanese campaign for the liberation of the country.

The inglorious defeat of the Japanese imperialist aggressor army and the puppet Manchukuo army, serving an unjust cause, was inevitable,

dictated by the laws of history. Somehow or other, man is bound in the end to take the side of justice and truth by a straight or roundabout path.

I still don't know what happened to the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army I made friends with in Emu. But I'm certain that if he, his wife and children are alive somewhere, they will devote themselves to their fatherland and the Chinese nation.

3. On Lake Jingbo

The southern shore of Lake Jingbo, an unprecedented scenic beauty-spot in Manchuria, is home to a small village called Nanhutou, which means village on the southern tip of the lake. The village Beihutou is located on its northern shore. Several miles up, River Xiaojiqi flows into Lake Jingbo: here you used to come across two old log-cabins in a deep valley at the foot of a mountain. We held a meeting in February 1936 in one of them. I was told that it is difficult now to determine the site of the cabin owing to the surrounding thick grass and trees but 50 or 60 years ago a tall ash tree and pine-nut tree stood in front of that cabin, serving as a reference point for all those who were coming to the meeting place. The developments in the latter half of the 1930s can be traced back to this cabin known by our historians as the “log-cabin on River Xiaojiqi”.

In mid-February 1936, on the eve of *Usu* (the day of the first rains in the year—Tr.) after *Ripchun* (the day when spring begins—Tr.) we made our way to this place, after the second expedition to north Manchuria. It marked the beginning of spring according to the calendar, but the biting cold of north Manchuria was still rife and the wild continental wind whipped against us. Now and then the sound of breaking ice rang out on Lake Jingbo, accompanied by the reverberations of oaks and birches cracking from the cold in the thick forests along

River Xiaojiayi. It was so cold there that even our experienced cooks could not boil rice in the open-air kitchen. Whereas the rice at the bottom of the pot burnt to a cinder, the rice in the upper layer would not boil, affected by the biting cold of 40°C below zero. North Manchuria still impinges on me as the one place in my life, where I ate half-cooked food more often than anywhere else.

Almost four years had passed, since we had launched the war against the Japanese imperialists. Our revolutionary force had grown on a large scale in its military and political aspects, and the future looked bright. The anti-Japanese revolution had experienced a thorny path, and was now clearly advancing dynamically towards a fresh turning-point.

As I hastened towards Nanhutou to meet Wei Zheng-min, without a rest from the expedition, various thoughts of our revolutionary prospects surged inside me.

I had waited eagerly throughout the expedition in north Manchuria and also during our days in Xiaojiayi after the expedition for the envoys who had been sent to Moscow half a year earlier.

The major issue Wei Zheng-min was to bring to the attention of the Comintern by the decision of the Yaoyingou meeting was apparently about the “Minsaengdan” case in which thousands of Korean communists in east Manchuria had been removed, but, in essence, it was about the independent nature of the Korean revolution. In other words, it was about whether the Korean communists’ struggle under the slogan of the Korean revolution was right or wrong, legitimate or illegitimate, or whether it contradicted the Comintern’s principle of one party for one country. From today’s stand-point, it is natural and does not leave even a shadow of a doubt about its validity, but at that time, when the Comintern existed and the principle of one party for one country was

regarded as inviolable, it was a complicated and serious issue, what defied a ready answer, but was vital to our destiny.

The tenacious argument of people, who wielded the principle of one party for one country, the contention that the Korean communists' struggle for the Korean revolution constituted a heretic act unworthy of a communist, and a factional practice alien to the Party, was terrible. They said, "A communist is an internationalist. How can he be preoccupied with the thought of his country, which lacks a Party of its own and be captivated by a narrow nationalist idea, instead of devoting himself to the revolution of the country whose Party he belongs to? This is the same attitude, expressed by the revisionists who adhered to the 'defence of the fatherland' slogan in the days of the Second International. Lenin labelled them traitors and enemies of the cause of socialism and communism and condemned them. If you Korean communists continue to insist on the Korean revolution, you could also be labelled traitors and enemies of the cause of socialism. Consequently, you would be wise not to act rashly."

Naturally enough, I was not that worried about this matter, and in a sense can say that I already had a rough estimate of the answer Wei Zheng-min would bring, because our opinion was just and Wei had understood it fully. I had no doubt that Comintern officials would approve the appeal we had submitted on the fundamental issues of the Korean revolution.

My conviction that the Comintern would treat our problems fairly was both based on the consistent belief that our appeal to Moscow through Wei conformed in all aspects with the revolution's principles and interests and related to the situation at that time, when the Comintern was seeking a new line.

Until 1919, when the Communist International was organized by Lenin, the Russian Communist Party was the only political party of the working class in power. The revolutionary left-wing broke with the revisionist Social Democratic Parties of the Second International and formed Communist Parties. However, they were very young in both ideological and organizational aspects and still not strong enough to independently carry out revolution in their own countries.

The victory of the socialist revolution in Russia sparked vigorous struggles to break the chains of capitalism and establish Soviet republics on a world-wide scale, but these efforts were frustrated. Despite the favourable objective situation, created by the emergence of the first socialist state in history, the revolutionary forces of each country were not sufficiently prepared to overcome the enemy and gain a conclusive victory.

In these circumstances, the communists all over the world were compelled to reorganize the international communist movement and unite organizationally with newly-emergent Russia and the Russian Communist Party as the axis. They had to establish the principle of democratic centralism in the form of the Comintern's organization and mode of its activities to make sure that the parties and revolutionary movements in separate countries obeyed unconditionally the directives of the international centre.

By accepting this requirement in a dogmatic way, some communists revealed a flunkeyistic tendency to blindly follow directives from Moscow, disregarding the revolutionary aims in their own countries and their own national interests; this tendency caused a considerable loss to the revolutionary movement in individual countries.

However, the revolutionary movement developed and revolutionary forces grew in separate countries under the unified guidance of the Comintern. Communists in these countries began to emerge as forces, capable of independently carrying out their revolutions.

From the early 1920s onwards, Communist Parties sprouted in the colonies and semi-colonial countries in Asia and, under their leadership, the national liberation struggles advanced rapidly. The parties of many countries could now have their say and demanded the right to independently define their own lines. It was in actual fact difficult for the Comintern, situated as it was in Moscow at the helm of the world revolution, to formulate policies in good time which would suit the actual situation in many countries of the world's continents or regulate and guide their revolutionary struggles in such a way, as to meet the ever-changing circumstances and conditions. The Comintern, composed of people from various countries, was restricted somewhat in the formulation of lines and policies and in their dissemination.

The international communist movement was beginning to understand the need for a gradual change in its organization of revolutionary force and guidance of the struggle's development. Revolution cannot be imported or exported. This fact, coupled with the pressing need to unite the revolutionary efforts of each country into one single force, aroused the communists in every country to the need to establish Juche, formulating and implementing their own line and maintain their party's independence. This change in the situation constituted an important guarantee, that the Comintern would confirm the independent nature of the Korean revolution.

When he set off for the Soviet Union via Hunchun in summer 1935, Wei Zheng-min promised to return via Harbin or Muling and meet me in

Ningan. Consequently we planned to go to Ningan after the Emu campaign.

At around the time when we hurried to Nanhutou, the fascist threat was looming ever larger on the international scene.

The Spanish Civil War was developing into a violent war and was assuming an international character, owing to the fascists' overt armed intervention.

Japan was to be the hotbed of a new war in the East. She was being precipitated towards militarism. With the formation of the Saito Cabinet in the wake of the "May 15 incident" in 1932, Japan's party politics came to an end and the country was placed under the rule of a military cabinet. Japan thereby vehemently told the world, without the slightest hesitation, that "war is the father of creation and the mother of culture".

The fascist trend in Japan culminated in the coup of February 26, 1936, at the time when we planned to convene the meeting at Nanhutou. The incident finally led to the oppressive phase, where the doctrine of overseas aggression, advocated by the junior officers' group, began to be implemented. The young officers, 1,000 non-commissioned officers and men who took part in the coup, assaulted the residences of the Prime Minister and several of the ministers, killing or seriously wounding important government officials, including the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, the Minister of Finance, the Inspector-General of Military Education and the Grand Chamberlain; they occupied the Metropolitan Police Agency, the Ministry of War, the General Staff Office and the residence of the Minister of War, thereby gaining control of the "heart of Japanese politics". The coup, staged under the slogan of "respecting the Emperor and eliminating treacherous subjects", was put down in four days. The political confusion was smoothed over by the execution of the

masterminds behind the plot. This, however, constituted a danger signal of the rampage of Japanese militarism.

The incident on February 26, a product of conflicts among Japanese military circles, between the Imperial Way and Control factions, proved the grave stage of Japan's impending fascism and marked the advent of a military dictatorship. The manoeuvres of the militarist force inside Japan itself implied the danger that they would launch a new war and larger-scale military actions.

Keeping a vigilant eye on the developments in Japan, we re-examined our fighting strategy in a bid to anticipate their consequences. Although the coup failed, it clearly demonstrated the outrageous nature of Japanese militarism in its participation in Japan's domestic politics and its aggressive intentions towards other countries. In actual fact Japan provoked the Sino-Japanese War less than a year and a half later and precipitated a still greater aggression.

The emergence of fascism in Japan weighed more heavily upon Korea, her colony. A frenzied campaign was launched on the Korean peninsula to wipe out all that was Korean and crush all forms of anti-Japanese struggle and anti-Japanese elements. To use Korean language instead of Japanese, wear white clothes instead of dyed colours and failure to hoist the *Hinomaru* (the national flag of Japan—Tr.), visit the shrines, learn the "Pledge of the Imperial Subjects", or put on *geta* (Japanese wooden sandals—Tr.)—these acts were all termed anti-Japanese, anti-state and treacherous behaviour accompanied by a fine or penalty, arrest or even imprisonment.

Some former proponents of patriotism now abandoned the last vestiges of their conscience in this violent campaign of national extinction, became turncoats and declaimed that "Japan and Korea were

one” and that “the Japanese and Koreans came from the same stock”, in order to save their skins. Patriots were murdered while traitors cut a wide swathe. The whole of Korea was being stifled.

This suppressive situation made it imperative for us to move to Mt. Paektu and demonstrate that Korea was alive, Korea was fighting and that Korea would survive.

These shocking changes occurred successively at home and abroad around the time when we met at Nanhutou.

These developments were indeed oppressive, but they did not depress us. I was convinced that we could defeat the Japanese imperialists, if we moved the armed struggle deep into the homeland.

The march was arduous and exhausting, but the men’s spirits were high, as they anticipated the advance to the Mt. Paektu area. It was probably during our march to Nanhutou that we debated the significant lessons of the legend of Zhenzhumen village, situated off Lake Jingbo. It is a very interesting legend.

A poor man and his daughter once lived in the village of Zhenzhumen on Lake Jingbo. The daughter, nearly twenty years of age, was a rare beauty, and all the young men around wanted to marry her.

Her father had been endowed with the divine gift of seeing through waters of any depth. He once told his daughter, “While angling the other day, I saw a golden mirror lying deep in the lake. To retrieve that mirror, I must first get rid of a three-headed monster living in the water. To do this, however, I need a very brave and bold assistant. I’ve been trying to work out these days how to find a suitable assistant.”

His dutiful daughter answered, “I will marry the young man who helps you bring out that mirror.”

He backed his daughter's idea. He disseminated the rumour about his daughter's decision in the neighbouring villages. Many young men came to Zhenzhumen on hearing the rumour. However, when they heard the man's plan to get the mirror, none of them expressed a readiness to become his assistant. However, one young man whose surname was Yang, volunteered. The old man and his daughter accepted his offer at once and promised him that the girl would marry the lad if they managed to bring back the mirror.

One fine day the man went to the lakeside with the young man. After rowing out onto the lake, the man gave the lad three swords—large, medium and small—and said, “When I come to the surface for the first time, you must give me the small sword, the second time—the medium one, and the third time—the large one. When you hand me the swords, you must act as quick as lightning. Don't be frightened. If you take to flight in fright, before getting the mirror out, both you and I will die.”

The boy comforted him, saying, “Please don't worry, sir.”

Soon the man jumped into the water. The lad sitting in the boat gazed into the water's depths, and the girl on the shore watched him. A few moments later the man's pale face broke surface. The boy swiftly handed him the small sword, as he had been told. The man dived into the water with the sword. The lake then began to surge in the depths. The man rose to the surface with one of the bleeding monster's heads, as large as a man's, and disappeared into the water with the second sword. In a few minutes, the lake ran high and the waves rose and seemed about to capsize the boat. The man, who was stained with blood emerged, this time holding another of the monster's heads, the size of a horse's, and plunged again into the surging water with a third sword. Thunder boomed in the sky and the waves raged. The boat rolled heavily on the

waves, as if it were sinking. At this horrible sight, the girl on the shore felt as if her heart had stopped beating. She was so tense and fretful that she held her breath.

The lad became deranged and rowed the boat with all his might towards the shore, forsaking his promise to the man and his attachment for the girl, who had been watching him. Enraged, the girl shouted at him, stamping her foot, and persuaded him to turn the boat back; she climbed in and rowed with the lad to the centre of the lake in search of her father. The wind and raging waves subsided, but the man was nowhere to be seen. The boy and girl called out for him again and again, but the man died in the water and therefore there was no reply. The girl tearfully reproached the boy for breaking his promise. Quarrelling, having no idea of the time, they both disappeared in the fog.

Although the story varies a little from village to village, or from Emu to Ningan, this is the general outline. Apparently the name of Lake Jingbo originated from the Zhenzhumen legend. On hearing the legend we thought deeply about loyalty and a self-sacrificing spirit. My comrades cursed the young man as disloyal and cowardly. The legend affected them tremendously. Whenever a coward appeared in our ranks, the guerrillas would condemn him as “the boy Yang on Lake Jingbo”.

To discuss measures and decide how to cope with the urgent historic tasks raised by the country and the nation, whose destiny was at stake, I considered it necessary to convene a meeting of military and political cadres of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army at Xiaojiaqihe, before leaving for Mt. Paektu.

One evening in mid-February, when I was putting the finishing touches to the draft report for the meeting and waiting for the envoys,

who had gone to Moscow, the door of the log-cabin was flung open and Wei Zheng-min appeared before me.

He apologized profusely for arriving later than schedule, explaining that he had been laid up in hospital for a few months. Although he arrived late, he was met with our congratulations for returning to Manchuria, after recovering from his illness. He looked much better now, probably because he had been to Moscow. I could guess just by looking at his composed air that his trip had been successful.

Wei's return journey had not been smooth. He arrived in Ningan via Harbin by rail and met the comrades of the 5th Corps of Zhou Baozhong; on his way to Nanhutou he had been stopped near Wangou village by the patrol police. After a short interrogation, the policemen had suspected him and wanted to take him to their substation. Wei was carrying important documents from the Comintern in his bundle; everything would have been ruined if he had been taken to the station. He gave the policemen 50 *yuan* , and they let him go.

Wei said jokingly that he had thought his body would be worth tens of thousands of *yuan* but it turned out that it was only worth 50 *yuan* .

For some strange reason, he said: "Let me shake your hand once more, Comrade Kim Il Sung."

"We've just shaken hands. What's it all about?" I asked, puzzled.

"I want to congratulate you on one matter. This is a significant handshake. So, be happy, Comrade Kim Il Sung. After a serious discussion on the matters you've raised, the Comintern concluded that your opinions are all correct and issued some important directives backing them. Everything was settled just as the Korean communists desired."

Feeling tears welling up in my eyes, despite myself, I grabbed Wei's two hands.

“Is that true?”

“Yes. The Comintern criticized the east Manchuria Party committee for committing such grave Leftist mistakes in its struggle with the ‘Minsaengdan’ and other activities. All the senior officials of the Comintern and its Chinese Communist Party representatives expressed the same opinion on this matter.

“But most importantly, the Comintern has recognized the inalienable and inviolable right of the Korean communists to be solely responsible for the Korean revolution and has given its support to the revolution. The Comintern gave the clear-cut answer that the responsibilities should now be divided between the Chinese and Korean communists in such a way that the former would engineer the Chinese revolution and the latter the Korean revolution.”

Wei Zheng-min stopped speaking for some minutes for some unknown reason. I soon realized that his conscience and remorse were bothering him. Were reminiscences of the heated argument, where he had tried to prove the validity of his own opinion, making him blush? What serious arguments we had exchanged at the meetings at Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou and beyond the conference hall!

Thanks to Wei Zheng-min's visit to Moscow, the complicated issues were settled smoothly, just as we had expected and desired.

One source had alleged that Wei did not attend the Seventh Congress of the Comintern during his time in Moscow and merely left Hunchun, accompanied by ten local Party and YCL cadres on a study tour, and that he aimed primarily to report on the issue of the “Minsaengdan” to the Chinese representatives to the Comintern. Other materials were also

untrue. The archives of the Comintern still maintain records of Wei Zheng-min's attendance of its Seventh Congress.

Wei Zheng-min told me that he had given the Comintern a detailed account of the guerrilla struggle in Manchuria. It went under the title "Feng Kang's Report". In Moscow he used the pseudonym Feng Kang, as well as his real name.

There were discrepancies in the reports of Leftist errors, committed during the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle. Some of them blamed Wei for the errors, while others asserted that the deviations in the struggle against the "Minsaengdan" were righted, following his appointment as secretary of the East Manchuria Special District Committee.

I did not believe that he was totally responsible for the injurious consequences of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle. Frankly speaking, however, it is true that in the early days when, in his capacity of secretary of the Harbin City Party Committee, Wei came to east Manchuria in the winter of 1934 as an inspector from the provincial committee, he was at a loss as to how to deal with such a complicated issue as the "Minsaengdan". At that time, he was more or less influenced by the prevalent opinions that many of the "Minsaengdan" members had infiltrated the revolutionary organizations and the guerrilla army and should therefore be purged to the last man. He subsequently confessed that at first he had suspected that most Koreans belonged to the "Minsaengdan".

This statement would seem to be more or less true, judging from his report about me to the Comintern; it reads, "Kim Il Sung. Korean. Brave and active. Speaks fluent Chinese. A guerrilla. Many people say that he is a 'Minsaengdan' member. Fond of talking to his men and trusted and respected by them as well as by the NSA soldiers."

Despite his mistakes in the early days, it is only fair to say that he contributed greatly to correcting the ultra-Leftist deviation in the purge, going as far as Moscow and receiving the Comintern's answer on the "Minsaengdan". In fact, he had expressed his agreement with me on the issue at the Dahuangwai meeting. I was grateful to him for the accurate and objective report he gave the Comintern about the situation in east Manchuria, avoiding all forms of national prejudice and the satisfactory settlement of everything in our favour.

"Thank you. I'm grateful to the Comintern and all the more grateful to you, Comrade Wei, for taking such trouble to travel all the way to Moscow, despite your poor health. I won't forget all that you've done for me."

This was my heartfelt acknowledgement to him.

Wei said awkwardly that my praise was more than he deserved. He continued, "When combatting the 'Minsaengdan', the East Manchuria Special District Committee and the Chinese communists under it made a serious mistake; they were narrow-minded and went to the extreme in dealing with people's destinies. Many Korean communists and revolutionaries suffered undeserved punishment. I am first and foremost to blame for not combatting the 'Minsaengdan' in a just way. This was severely criticized by the Comintern."

I considered his remark a piece of honest self-criticism.

"A communist is also a human being, Mr. Wei. Consequently, he is also prone to mistakes. I'd like to say that the 'Minsaengdan' issue became complicated, basically because the Japanese had sought to sow dissension between our nations."

"You're right. After all, we've been trapped in their scheme for quite some time and committed fratricide. We killed our own people. When I

first arrived in east Manchuria, someone told me that the Koreans were claiming Jiandao and were thinking of restoring it. He added that I must be vigilant against their attempts to occupy it with Japanese help. For some reason, at first I believed him,” Wei said and smiled bitterly.

I felt sorry for him .

“Mr. Wei, everything’s fine now, so forget about the past. Frankly speaking, I felt heavy-hearted when I saw you off to the Comintern. But I felt complete trust on you, when you sincerely accepted our proposal and said that you’d convey it to the Comintern responsibly.”

“Thank you. I was also convinced that you’d think so.”

The Comintern made it clear that the Korean communists were not guilty in any way when they raised the slogan of the Korean revolution and that was in fact their sacred duty to do so, something the Comintern should have entrusted to them and their legitimate right inalienable even in terms of the principle of one party for one country. I felt as if I were a bird which had been freed from a cage and could now fly high up into the sky. We now had wings, so to speak, and the Korean revolution could now take off.

Wei Zheng-min provided me with a detailed account of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

In those days the Comintern was preoccupied with the urgent task of launching a world-wide struggle against fascism.

The emergence of fascism in Italy and Germany and its consolidation after the First World War had ushered in a dreary, unstable political climate in many European countries and was precipitating mankind into a new war. The fascism created by Fasci di Combattimento, organized by Mussolini of Italy, attained its highest peak under Hitler of Germany and the Nazi Party he founded.

Fascism advocated extreme national chauvinism. Consequently Germany became the source of a new world war. The extreme anti-communist mentality of fascism, combined with anti-Semitism, was the most vicious and pernicious trend of all reactionary views which had existed in all ages and all countries by that time. Fascism reared its ugly head as a force, which could not be ignored in the political lives in Germany and other countries.

Germany's bourgeoisie considered iron fists of fascist dictators like Hitler to be the only instrument to be able to rid Germany of all its crises, overpower communism and bring about the restoration of the Third Reich.

Hitlerite fascism conspired against the German Communist Party as its first undertaking on usurping power. The notorious burning of the Reichstag building, which startled the whole world, was a rare farce which they staged. The political objectives of Hitler and Göring in this incident ended in ignominious failure. Of course, after the Reichstag fire, they outlawed the Communist Party and reduced the Reichstag to a mere rubber stamp, but also they vividly revealed the true nature of fascism to the world as the most reactionary and undisguised bourgeois political system. The world condemned German fascism as a provocateur, dictator and warmonger.

The rise of fascism in Germany awakened the political consciousness of the progressive people throughout the world.

With the onset of fascism and the threat of an imminent new war, the Comintern set the important strategic task of preventing dissension between Communist and Socialist Parties and resisting fascism by concerted efforts. This culminated in the launch of an anti-fascist popular front movement on an international scale.

In these circumstances, the oppressed nations in the East and colonies initiated an anti-imperialist, national united front movement to rally all national efforts into a single force to counter imperialist aggression.

On the basis of this strategic objective, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern required the Communist Parties of all countries to rally all anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces.

Wei Zheng-min conveyed his respect for Dimitrov, saying that his report on the development of the struggle against imperialism and fascism on an international scale had been very impressive.

We believed that Dimitrov, hero of the Leipzig trials, which attracted the attention of the whole world, including progressive intellectuals, was an outstanding man of the times. His appeal to wage an active struggle against fascism gripped the hearts of progressive people throughout the world.

I would like to mention here that the fact that Dimitrov, a Bulgarian, and not Zinoviev, Bukharin or Manuilsky of the Soviet Union, was at the helm of the Comintern symbolized a new phase in the development of the international communist movement; it marked the advent of a new age when the Comintern would function on the basis of the independent activities of separate Communist Parties. We can say that these demands of the times were reflected in the resolutions of the Comintern's Seventh Congress, which accorded considerable independent activities to each party.

It was fortunate indeed that the congress fully recognized the rights and responsibilities of the Korean communists for the Korean revolution.

I was even more firmly convinced, on hearing Wei's report, of the justness of our cause and the correctness of our lines. When he gave me the *Communist International*, the organ of the Comintern, carrying an

article *On the Anti-Imperialist United Front in Manchuria* written by Yang Song, and a letter from the Comintern to a senior official of the eastern area bureau of the Jilin Province, signed jointly by Wang Ming and Kang Sheng, working at the Comintern's oriental department, Wei Zheng-min added that both the article and letter explained the main content of the resolution adopted by the Comintern on Korea.

Yang Song proposed in his article to overcome Left-wing opportunist deviations and form an anti-Japanese united front at the earliest possible date, and maintained that the Chinese Communist Party should from that moment on adhere to the slogan of a united front of the oppressed nations of China, Korea, Mongolia and Manchuria. He also stressed that the Chinese and Korean nations should unite to overthrow Japan's rule of puppet Manchukuo and set up a Jiandao autonomy by the Korean nation, and that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, operating as part of the Chinese-Korean Anti-Japanese Allied Army, should fight for the independence of the Korean nation as well. Yang Song was in reality Wu Ping, a representative from the Comintern, I had met in Zhou Bao-zhong's hut during the first expedition to north Manchuria.

The Comintern did not only provide moral and political backing; it also revealed its support of our activities by proposing measures to help us to speed up the Korean revolution in future.

One of them was a directive that the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces, which had so far conducted a joint struggle, should be reorganized separately into Korean and Chinese armies. This was, in effect, the nucleus of the issue on the responsibilities and rights of the Korean communists for the Korean revolution and played an important role in maintaining the Juche character and independence of the Korean revolution.

If we had organized a separate army of only Koreans, picking them out from all the guerrilla units in Manchuria, as directed by the Comintern, such an army alone could have proved to be a formidable force, capable of countering the two Japanese army divisions in Korea. If we had fought the Japanese army in a spirit of one man as a match for ten, the young people in Korea would not have remained mere onlookers. If they had joined us, the tide of the war would have changed and the country would have been liberated at a much earlier date.

Nevertheless, as communists, who had fought jointly in the same trench against the Japanese, our common enemy, for years, we could not be disloyal to our brothers and comrades-in-arms. If we had removed all the Korean soldiers to our advantage, then such a unit as the 2nd Corps, comprising 90 per cent Korean soldiers, would have come to an end. Chinese soldiers constituted the majority in other guerrilla units. However, most of them had come from the nationalist army: there were only a few communists in each of these units. Moreover, most of the commanders in each unit were Koreans. The core elements of each unit were also Koreans. If separate units of Koreans and Chinese had been created in this situation, it would have been difficult to maintain the Anti-Japanese Allied Army.

The Korean communists had carried out the anti-Japanese armed struggle with immense success by organizing the Anti-Japanese Allied Army with the Chinese communists in the mid-1930s and developing a joint struggle under anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese slogans. In the new circumstances, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was to advance to the border areas, directing its main effort to the Korean revolution. However, we could not run the risk of weakening the joint struggle with the anti-Japanese armed units of the Chinese people. At a time when the

progressive forces supporting the popular front in Spain were fighting together against the allied forces of the fascists, it would have been irrational and contrary to the trend of the times to separate the Korean-Chinese anti-Japanese armed units into Korean and Chinese armies. If the Koreans had formed their own army, when fighting in China, the Chinese people's support might have weakened towards them.

We needed sovereignty, rather than a division of forces. We demanded recognition and respect for the Korean people's right to independence, their right to carry out the Korean revolution, without any restraint, restriction or interference but not divided forces.

Needless to say, Wei Zheng-min and other Chinese comrades were well aware of this fact. But Wei seemed to think that the greatest gift he could give me on his return from Moscow was separate authority. He repeated his proposal to plan the reorganization of the armed forces by nationalities as the Comintern had advised.

I replied:

“I fully understand what you think, Comrade Wei. But I believe that we cannot look at the matter from only one angle. As we're communists, we have to consider everything on the basis of revolutionary principles and class interests. When they talk about the Korean revolution, Korean communists do not seek to support narrow national interests. We believe that the national interests of the revolution should always be combined with international interests and that international interests must not be detrimental to national interests.

“Therefore, I must give deep thought as to whether it would be more advantageous to the revolution to preserve the united Korean-Chinese anti-Japanese armed forces, which have been fighting for years in the same trench, or separate them on the basis of nationality. Perhaps you're

suggesting the reorganization of the anti-Japanese armed forces on the basis of nationality out of respect for the Korean communists, but we don't view this superficially. Furthermore, we are actually operating as the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, although fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese communists. Consequently I don't see any need to separate them."

Wei was clearly pleased, but then asked anxiously, "Does that mean we will adhere to the directives of the Comintern? From a moral point of view, we have no right to bind you, Korean comrades in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army."

"I don't think you need to worry about that," I said. "I would suggest that, while operating as an allied army, we call ourselves the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, when we're in our homeland and Korean villages in northeast China, and then announce ourselves as the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, when we're in Chinese villages. Surely that would mean preserving the allied army system and also carrying out the directives of the Comintern."

"Thank you, Comrade Kim. I didn't expect such generous understanding. This magnanimous approach of the Korean communists represents strong support for the Chinese revolution."

Smiling, I shook Wei's hand and said, "Have we been fighting together for only a few years? And must we part after fighting together only a few more years? Our friendship will last for ever, as long as China remains our neighbour and communism emerges victorious in your country."

"Thank you, Comrade Kim. It is indeed an honour for me to fight in the same ranks with Korean communists like you. I'd like to become your political commissar, Commander Kim Il Sung. I will assist the

Korean revolution by uniting more closely behind our Korean comrades.”

We embraced each other and laughed long and heartily.

To be candid, I had formed a new opinion of Wei Zheng-min after meeting him in Nanhutou. He regretted his past mistake. After restructuring the Party organizations in Manchuria, following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, he was appointed to responsible posts of secretary of the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee and political commissar of the 1st Route Corps of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army; but he accompanied my unit most of the time, rather than the unit of the Chinese comrades. As he said jokingly, he was virtually performing the role of political commissar of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army under my command. For some reason he was fond of my company. It was not surprising that the Japanese official records listed Wei Zheng-min (alias Wei Ming-sheng) as my political commissar. He stayed for a long time in the Changbai area in my company and visited the secret camp on Mt. Paektu several times. He seldom objected to our lines or proposals in the years following the meeting at Nanhutou.

The alliance between the Korean and Chinese communists, which had undergone temporary trials due to the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle, entered a new stage around the time of the Nanhutou meeting.

After it, we continued the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists for nearly 10 years jointly with the Chinese communists and Chinese anti-Japanese forces, developing the Korean revolution and providing active assistance to the Chinese revolution. History of the mutual support and cooperation between the Korean and Chinese communists can thereby be traced to the early 1930s.

A Chinese leader, referring to this fraternity and assistance, said that the Korean people's support for the Chinese people was thin and yet long-term, and that the latter's support for the former was thick and yet short-term. I think that this constituted a sincere evaluation of what our people, a small nation, had been doing for a long time to help the fraternal Chinese people.

The meeting with Wei Zheng-min is an impressive event, which will remain in my memory for the rest of my life. As his visit to Moscow contributed greatly to the removal of obstacles to the Korean revolution, I am still grateful to him.

The following anecdote made my meeting with Wei still more memorable.

One day towards noon, when we were making preparations for a meeting of military and political cadres, my orderly hurried to tell me that a big tigress was threatening our long-range observation post and asked for permission to fire. He explained that the post was located on the top of a rocky cliff, commanding a good view, but that down below the cliff there was a den where a big tigress lived with her two cubs. He continued that the guards had tried to change the post out of fright, but they continued to get along because they had had no other suitable place and the tigress had meant no mischief, but she had gone wild since the previous day.

I figured that there must be some reason behind the tigress's sudden anger and went to the observation post. I looked down from the cliff and saw a very large tigress crouching in front of a cave. I asked what had happened and learned that our comrades standing guard had angered her. They had played with the cubs, sunbathing outside the cave; the cubs had accidentally scratched the backs of their hands with their claws, so

the men had slapped the cubs lightly on the head. The tigress who had been out searching for prey had seen this, and from then on had roared thunderously several times a day at the observation post and jumped half way up to the middle of the cliff.

I said, "Don't be alarmed. The tigress must be rampaging to demonstrate her ability to prevent the sentries from harming her cubs. This is a warning that she wouldn't forgive you, if you were to molest her cubs again. She wouldn't become involved in a hopeless fight with a man armed with a gun, so don't worry."

Only then did the sentries abandon the idea of killing her. They decided to maintain friendly relations with the fierce "Queen" of the mountain. As a first step, they threw the limb of a roe deer down the cliff. They continued providing them with food for some days. The tigress grew calmer. From then on she became our friendly neighbour. After our departure from Nanhutou and advance to the area around Mt. Paektu, the officers and men of the people's revolutionary army operating in this place maintained "good-neighbourly relations" with the tigress.

According to Rim Chun Chu, Choe In Jun's company first discovered the tigress's cave, when camping in the valley of Dajiaqihe. A hospital, an arsenal, and a communication station were situated in this valley. The supply workers also resided there.

At the end of 1935 Rim, on our summons, had come from Wangqing to the direction of Nanhutou in search of the expeditionary force, and opened a hospital for a time in a vacant hut in Xiaogou, treating the wounded; when he found a better site for a secret camp on the plateau in Dajiaqihe, he moved the hospital there. The hut had been occupied by people, who had led a secluded life in the mountains. They used to come

to the mountains when young and led a solitary life in huts, isolated from the outside world throughout their lives until they were 70 or 80; they engaged in hunting, picking medicinal herbs and cultivating opium. Most of the masters of these huts lived to a great age, but they, too, were only mortals. When their solitary life ended, the huts became bare.

The hospital Rim Chun Chu ran treated the guerrillas from our corps and those from the 5th Corps. Ryu Ran Han, chief of staff of the Wangqing Regiment, died while being treated in this hospital.

The Wangqing 3rd Company, led by Choe In Jun, was entrusted with protecting and supporting the patients. The company assaulted the barracks of the puppet Manchukuo army unit stationed in its vicinity to obtain weapons and provisions. They captured about 100 weapons in that battle. When they looked for a place to keep the weapons, they found a cave on the cliff below the plateau, where the hospital and communication station were located. Choe In Jun piled the rifles in the cave and blocked its entrance with stones. On his way down the cliff, he found another cave—the den of the tigress.

Whenever I look back on that Nanhutou meeting, I recall Wei Zhengmin and, at the same time, the tigress in the secret camp at Dajiaqihe, which became an interesting topic during the meeting.

We held a meeting of military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in Xiaojiaqihe for nearly a week in late February 1936. This meeting is also called the Nanhutou meeting. It was attended by 30 to 40 military and political cadres including Wei Zhengmin and other Chinese comrades and Kim San Ho, Han Hung Gwon, Choe Chun Guk, Jon Man Song, Choe In Jun, Pak Thae Hwa, Kim Ryo Jung, Rim Chun Chu, Jon Chang Chol and others. Yun Pyong Do, who had been to the Comintern and returned after receiving treatment at a

Soviet hospital, also took part. He experienced quite an emotional reunion with Wei Zheng-min at Xiaojiaqihe after several months of separation.

Wei Zheng-min conveyed the opinions of the Comintern at the meeting on some issues we had submitted at the Dahuangwai and Yaoyinggou meetings and its directives. The meeting expressed its deep gratitude to Wei for his journey to Moscow despite his poor health and congratulated him on the good results.

In my report I reviewed the experience of the military and political activities we had carried out in the areas along Tuman River in the first half of the 1930s. I made proposals on the important tasks facing the Korean communists to develop the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle in a period when we greeted a new turning-point in the revolution, and the new strategic policies for implementing them. In other words, I advanced new ways of ensuring a major upsurge in the overall Korean revolution centring on the anti-Japanese armed struggle, including policies to transfer the main force of the KPRA to the border point and the area around Mt. Paektu and gradually extend the armed struggle to the homeland, expand the movement of the anti-Japanese national united front, step up moves to found a party, and reorganize the Young Communist League into an Anti-Japanese Youth League. I brought all these points up for discussion.

Everybody who took the floor expressed their full backing and agreement with the policies I had set out in the report. There was scarcely any bickering or arguing for and against a policy. Of all the meetings I had presided over since the start of the anti-Japanese revolution, this was the first one where the discussion of lines went so smoothly and the attendants were in such high spirits. The meeting

began and ended in smiles. The attendants vied with one another to take the floor and looked forward to the day when they would advance to the area around Mt. Paektu, deep into the homeland to fight a decisive battle with the enemy.

Our advance to the area around Mt. Paektu and deep into the homeland was vital to consolidate the motive force of our revolution and defeat the Japanese imperialists through the efforts of the Korean people themselves, by enlisting all their forces. The meeting expressed its absolute support for our proposal to proceed to the area around Mt. Paektu, strengthening our main force, first seizing the border and then extending the theatre of our struggle deep into the homeland.

If we built our bases in the area around Mt. Paektu and launched an intensive armed struggle in the border area and the homeland, we could inspire our people, suffering the brutal fascist military rule of the Japanese imperialists, with hope of national liberation, and promote confidence of victory in the minds of 20 million fellow countrymen, who were eager to see our revolutionary army. This would have a greater demonstrative effect than a hundred words.

The meeting adopted the strategic policy of our revolution on the organization of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and making preparations for founding a Communist Party on a nation-wide scale.

The Korean revolution enjoyed a fresh lift with the meeting at Nanhutou acting as a turning-point. In this sense, the meeting can be called a watershed in the Korean revolution, marking off the two halves of the 1930s. Thanks to the decisions adopted at the meeting, the Korean communists could set up a new landmark to raise the overall Korean

revolution to a higher plane, centring on the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The meeting at Nanhutou can be described in brief as the first time when we fully established Juche in the history of the Korean communist movement and the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle. The decisions it adopted enabled the Korean communists to adhere to a Juche-oriented stand during subsequent stages of the revolution and invariably uphold it as the lifeline of the nation in the face of any adversity.

The meeting can also be called a festival of victors. Victory had been won at the cost of innumerable sacrifices and blood and the strenuous efforts made by the Korean communists unsparingly for the fatherland and the people, and history and the times. The Korean communist movement, shunned by the Comintern, parties of fraternal countries, and by our people, albeit in part, owing to the factional strife among early communists, the break-up of the Korean Communist Party and the mistakes committed by the Leftist opportunists in the struggle against the “Minsaengdan”, could remove these stains of the past and help us embark along the ever-victorious road with the Nanhutou meeting as a momentum.

A short course to implement the policies set forth at the meeting was conducted in Xiaojiaqihe for about a week. A meeting of Party and political workers was held to debate ways of implementing the policy of building the Party.

At the short course and during the meeting we provided a detailed explanation of the policies established at the Nanhutou meeting and proposed a slogan for the immediate period ahead, which reflected the

basic spirit of the meeting: “Let us advance to the homeland and raise the battle cry!”—in the hope of providing fresh impetus to our revolution.

After the Nanhutou meeting we embarked with spirits high on our advance to the homeland.

The anti-Japanese armed struggle was entering a new development phase.

4. My Comrades-in-Arms to the North; I to the South

The wind was howling fiercely on the morning when we left Xiaojiaqihe for the area around Mt. Paektu after the meeting at Nanhutou.

I remembered more than anything else on that southward journey, as I braced myself, the Korean maxim, “A journey of thousands of miles begins with the first step”. We made the first prints of the march on the fresh snow with our feet when leaving the yard of the log-cabin in Xiaojiaqihe.

Our company included Wang De-tai, Wei Zheng-min and some other Chinese military and political cadres. Even Wei Zheng-min, who had been in a Soviet hospital, owing to a relapse of his heart ailment, walked with a light step that day, exchanging interesting pleasantries with Wang De-tai. Although the weather was cold and inclement, we made good progress.

To advance towards the Mt. Paektu area, in accordance with the decisions of the Nanhutou meeting, we should have taken the straight road from Xiaojiaqihe to the south, to Mt. Paektu, via the Laoyeling Mountains, Erqingpai, Mingyuegou and Antu; but we marched north towards Emu at the start, taking the roundabout route from Xiaojiaqihe via Qinggouzi and Guandi in Emu County, Antu and Fusong Counties.

The detour was twice as long a journey as it would have been along the straight route.

We had to take the roundabout path northward, because our comrades in the second expedition to north Manchuria with me were waiting for the results of the Nanhutou meeting, at a secret camp in Qinggouzi, Emu County, where we had established ourselves. The guerrillas, the aged, weak and sick as well as the orphans who had come all the way from east Manchuria to see me, were expecting me there.

The decisions of the Nanhutou meeting, which condemned all ultra-Leftist stupidities committed in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao during the struggle against the “Minsaengdan”, and declared the Korean people’s right to independence and their right to carry out the Korean revolution, would also provoke enthusiastic cheers in the secret camp in Qinggouzi. While fighting bloody battles, trekking over the vast tract of land in east and north Manchuria for years, they yearned to see their homeland and press forward towards it. But most of my comrades-in-arms in Guandi and the secret camp in Qinggouzi had to go farther to the north and fight, in conjunction with the units in north Manchuria, rather than advance with my company to the south, the homeland.

Ever since the Nanhutou meeting, which marked a turning-point in the Korean revolution, the idea of launching the armed struggle deep in the homeland from Mt. Paektu was uppermost in the minds of the Korean communists. However, as we were the ones who had defined the joint struggle with the Chinese people as a major strategic task of the anti-Japanese revolution and engaged in unremitting efforts to implement it, we could not run the risk of abandoning the cause of joint struggle and leave for Mt. Paektu. If we had been preoccupied with the Korean

revolution and moved all the Korean soldiers to Mt. Paektu, the guerrilla struggle in northeast China would have faced great difficulties.

The units in north Manchuria, which were in dire need of military and political cadres and hard-core men, frequently requested joint action with the units in east Manchuria. We had made two expeditions to north Manchuria in compliance with their requests. Around the time of the Nanhutou meeting in Xiaojiaqihe, army corps in north Manchuria had asked us for manpower support. This situation required the raising of the matter of assistance for the Anti-Japanese Allied Army units, fighting in north Manchuria as a secondary item on the agenda at the Nanhutou meeting and the implementation of practical measures to provide support for them.

Consequently, when we were about to advance to the Mt. Paektu area, I had to take a journey up north and part with my comrades-in-arms, who had shared life and death, weal and woe with me for several years. The historic advance to the Mt. Paektu area involved painful farewells with my comrades-in-arms and no promise when we would meet again, people I had trained for a long time with such care.

What would their feelings be, when they had to go northward farther away from the homeland, instead of going to the Mt. Paektu area in my company? This question haunted me, as I left Xiaojiaqihe.

In retrospect, I experienced such painful partings on innumerable occasions during the revolutionary struggle. I had been compelled to part with the people of my home town of Mangyongdae at the age of 13, and with comrades of the Down-with-Imperialism Union immediately after its foundation in Huadian, when we had just become friends. This farewell was followed before long by our reunion with passionate embraces and handshakes. The first members of the DIU I had bid

farewell to in Huadian met me again in Jilin and began to rally young people and students under the banner of the DIU. Those who rallied under this banner were stout, brave young men and women, who would go through fire and water. Each one was worth his or her weight in gold and was dearer to me than my own flesh and blood.

On my release from prison, I had to move the theatre of my operations from central to east Manchuria, which made me part painfully with these comrades once again. My comrades, who had been working in groups of three or five took leave of each other again, as they all dispersed to continue new assignments all over the vast areas of central, south and north Manchuria. This farewell, unlike the one in Huadian, was really serious and more distressing, as there were no promises of meeting again.

My separation from Han Yong Ae, who had accompanied me as far as Harbin, was as painful as were my farewells with Choe Chang Gol, Kim Won U, Kye Yong Chun, Kang Pyong Son, Pak So Sim, Choe Il Chon, Ko Jae Bong and Pak Il Pha.

As I left Harbin, after getting in touch with the liaison office of the Comintern, Han Yong Ae came to see me and entreated me to take her to east Manchuria. She begged me not to refuse her earnest desire to work for the revolution under my personal guidance as she had done in Jilin. She had already been given two assignments, which had not been carried out yet by that time; one was to re-establish contacts, while staying in Harbin, with the organizations, which had been destroyed. The other involved dealings with the inspector from the Manchurian Provincial Party Committee.

I left Harbin with conflicting thoughts; although I was anxious to take her to east Manchuria, I had to refuse because of our work. As I was then

chief secretary of the YCL in the eastern region of Jilin Province, I parted with her with the optimistic thought that I would meet her again in at least two or three months' time. I appointed her my special representative to the Harbin area against her desire, because I had confidence in her high sense of responsibility, which she had displayed in all the easy and difficult assignments given her by the organization, and because such a high sense of responsibility was imperative in promoting the revolutionary work in Harbin and its vicinity. Strangely enough, I had to leave my close comrades-in-arms behind or send them, against their wishes, to distant places. Consequently, I came to the south, leaving Han Yong Ae behind in the north. My farewell to her at that time was a sorrowful one. Leaving her at a place in north Manchuria, I waved goodbye to such a loyal comrade with stirring emotions. She used to share half her portion of pancake with me.

After all, separation had shadowed me every time the revolution had entered a new stage. To maintain and consolidate the revolutionary organizations I had developed with all my efforts, I had to leave those trained in the struggle there while I myself had to go to new places to lay the groundwork for training new fighters. Figuratively speaking, whereas continually I broke up virgin lands, my comrades transformed them into fertile farmlands and orchards.

This revolutionary requirement made our separation inevitable.

However, the devoted comrades, who were ready to lay down their lives, if so ordered, frequently disobeyed me and worried me, when we had to part.

Han Yong Ae was not the only one to importune me like a child to take her along when I moved to east Manchuria. For that matter, how can a farewell between blood-sealed comrades, who had shared joy and

sorrow for several years, be as simple as that between people who have just met each other on a business trip? I reasoned with them and even reproached them, but they would not listen. Even Cha Kwang Su, who should have understood me so well, followed me for five miles and, worried me, asking passionately, “Have we shared life in the shadow of death to part in this way? Why not try to find the best way of fighting for the revolution without a need to part?”

This separation was so painful for Mun Jo Yang that he cried like a woman.

I often asked myself: “Is revolution really so cruel? Is there no way of making a revolution without parting with one another, as Cha Kwang Su claimed?”

But it was actually impossible. Therefore, I tried to persuade them, saying, “We’ll soon meet again. Separation is only temporary. Let’s endure the sorrow of parting by looking forward to our reunion. Let’s part with smiles, rather than tears. According to one saying, every separation has its end.”

Reality, however, frequently betrayed my prediction; only a few survived to see me again. Even those men would leave me to go to the world of no return.

Some people say that life is an endless cycle of farewells and reunions, but many of us bid farewell to one another never to meet again. To be candid, therefore, I often felt uneasy and had ill-boding thoughts at partings.

Again I had to say goodbye to my comrades-in-arms at the secret camp in Qinggouzi, without making any promise as to when we would meet again, to the comrades I had fought shoulder to shoulder with in

east Manchuria for years. This sorrow lurked in our happiness, as we marched towards the Mt. Paektu area.

Noticing the sad look on my face, at a time when I should be happier than anybody else over the advance to the Mt. Paektu area, Wei Zheng-min asked me if anything was wrong.

I said no, as I could not express all my thoughts in one word and did not feel like showing my state of mind to others.

Wei guessed the reason for my sad mood in his own way and said, “By the way, Comrade Kim Il Sung, you only heard recently the news of your younger brother, Chol Ju, who died last year, didn’t you? What a pity! But don’t grieve too much. Brace yourself, please.”

For that matter, the pain of my loss was unbearable. At that time I did not even know the whereabouts of my youngest brother, Yong Ju, my only kinsman in that alien land of Manchuria. I might have looked more mournful probably because, on top of this sorrow, I had to bid farewell to my comrades.

Wei Zheng-min said jokingly to divert me, “The best remedy for a troubled mind is humour, Comrade Kim. I’ll tell you, Comrade Kim, about a quarrel my wife and I had in the old days. You’d better listen to the common events of conjugal life for future reference. You can’t remain a bachelor all your life, can you?”

“You’re quite right,” Wang De-tai echoed Wei’s joke to amuse me. “A man of 24 is behind the season. God only knows perhaps Commander Kim is heartsick at the thought of parting with his sweetheart?”

“Yes, it would seem so,” Wei was elated. “Since you mention parting, I’ll narrate an ancient Chinese tale, ‘Willow-twig Snapping’, a tale of farewell, instead of a love quarrel.”

He went on to say that fortune would smile on me if I did as the story bade.

This story came from the days of the Han dynasty. Apparently there was a bridge in the capital of Han. People taking leave of their friends, Wei said, always came to that bridge, snapped some willow twigs and gave them to their friends as a token of good fortune.

This was the origin of the custom of willow-twig snapping during leave-taking in China; Wei said that the custom was also followed by his village folk. He advised me to follow the custom, when bidding farewell to my dear people so that they would enjoy good luck.

To me, the willow symbolized one's home town: the tale implied that even after one's farewell, one should remember one's home town and native folk by looking at the willow-twig.

If I were to give a willow-twig to each of my comrades, who took leave of me in the biting cold of north Manchuria, I would have to pick a whole load of twigs. Where on earth could I collect so many and could I shake off my sadness in doing so? Anyway, I was grateful to Wei for telling me the story to ease my mood.

Once Choe Chang Gol said, before taking leave of me, on a willowy bank in Guyushu, "I'll vanish like the wind with no ceremony or farewell party, just like Tanjae when parting with Namgang."

Namgang, mentioned by Choe, is Ri Sung Hun's pseudonym, and Tanjae, Sin Chae Ho's pen name. As I have already mentioned, Ri was one of the richest men in our country who devoted his whole life to patriotic education and charity work ever since his early days. Even the younger generation knows that the Osan School in Jongju was founded by Ri. In Jongju he looked after the independence fighters who were going abroad. That is how he and Sin Chae Ho became close friends. At

Ri's earnest request, Sin Chae Ho once taught Korean and Western history at the Osan School. His lectures became so famous, that he gained renown abroad and was often the leading topic of the students' vehement speeches in Jilin.

In late December Kyongsul (1910), when our country was reduced to a complete colony of the Japanese imperialists, Sin was in Osan. One day he suddenly said to Ri, "All things considered, I have to leave this place."

Ri was surprised and tried to hold him back. He said, "Ah, why leave abruptly in such cold weather? If you have to go, please go after the thaw."

"I must go, because I hate seeing the Japanese."

The next day Sin left Jongju like the wind with no promise of return. Apparently Sin went to Russia via China.

Ri regretted that Sin had left; he said to himself, "What a man! To leave even without saying goodbye to me when I could have paid him some of his travelling expenses!"

He used to give a grand farewell party in honour of each of the independence fighters he sent off, in addition to liberal travelling expenses. Consequently he quite naturally felt such regret and sorrow on parting with Sin Chae Ho without even a handshake.

This was what Choe Chang Gol mentioned before leaving for Liuhe.

Kim Hyok said that Sin was very unfeeling to have left Ri Sung Hun without even uttering a word of farewell. But Choe Chang Gol retorted that, if he did not know Sin's qualities, he should not say so, and that Sin had a warm heart and considered Ri the dearest friend of all. He explained that Sin had left Jongju in haste without so much as saying goodbye, because he did not want to be a burden on his fellow

independence fighters and could not endure the pain of leave-taking. Choe Chang Gol was right. Sin Chae Ho was a man of fiery passion, as well as a devoted friend of Ri Sung Hun's.

Not only Choe Chang Gol who said that he would follow Sin Chae Ho's example but also Kim Won U, Kye Yong Chun and other comrades-in-arms vanished like Sin Chae Ho when they left me on new assignments.

My comrades-in-arms all resembled these types of people.

While fighting in east Manchuria in subsequent days, I used to send able, military and political cadres, my precious orderlies and priceless men whom I had trained to various armed units in north and south Manchuria which were in need of manpower support. Tearful separations on those occasions used to tear my heart. Worse still, when I received news that such comrades had fallen in battle and how and when, a wound was left in my heart and soul which would never heal. On the basis of this experience, I felt the intense warmth of revolutionary comradeship and realized the great role played by comrades in the life of a revolutionary.

Consequently I used to tell officials during the construction of socialism after liberation, that revolutionary comradeship is more precious than the love between parents and children, between husband and wife, between brothers and sisters, and between friends.

One cannot experience the true love between comrades, until one has undergone a revolution in the true sense of the word, and one cannot understand such love, until one has shared one's life with comrades in the shadow of death under a hail of fire on the battlefield.

Even in the worst moments of adversity, when they had to fight bloody battles, drinking only water for their meals several days in a row,

my comrades would offer any wild fruit they found in the snow by chance to each other.

As the sad legend about Kyonu and Jiknyo¹⁶ shows, the warmer one's love is, the greater the sorrow one feels at parting. That is why the leave-taking between revolutionary comrades is unbearable.

No matter how painful such partings were, could I avoid them as it was impossible to carry out the revolution without separations?

As I considered each of my comrades-in-arms who would have to go away in different directions on my order, my heart seemed to be on fire.

Unaware of my inmost feelings, O Tae Song and Choe Kum San, my two young orderlies, followed me in high spirits at the thought of going to the homeland, but I knew that I had to send one of them to a unit in north Manchuria.

Late in the afternoon, after a long march, we arrived at the secret camp in Qinggouzi.

Many people tumbled out of the log-cabin in the forest and surrounded us, offering us a boisterous welcome. They were comrades from Wangqing and also from Hunchun who had to remain in north Manchuria, as well as sick and wounded soldiers and the aged and infirm who were to be sent to the Soviet Union.

A little girl darted up to me, calling me by name. She clung to my arm.

“Who's this? So you, too, have come!”

I picked her up in my arms and gazed at her small face. She was Ryang Kwidongnyo, Ryang Song Ryong's daughter; she had lost her parents and her grandmother as well in the Wangqing guerrilla base.

“I came here, General, when I heard that you're coming. You're going to Mt. Paektu, aren't you?”

“Oh, my! How on earth do you know?”

“Uncle Ri Ung Man told me. He said that all of us will go to Korea with you, General.”

I turned my gaze in the direction she was pointing to and saw Ri Ung Man on crutches, smiling among the men. I was so embarrassed that I was momentarily at a loss for words. I mentioned in previous chapters that he had been a company commander of the Wangqing guerrilla unit. As an officer he had proved capable of commanding a battalion or a regiment, given his qualifications and abilities, but when he had had his leg amputated, he had been discharged and withdrew to the second line. Although the wound had not fully healed, he had led an optimistic life, repairing weapons at an arsenal.

“General, I’m right, aren’t I? While staying here, I’ve heard all that you’ve said over there.”

He talked volubly for some time and then asked me to tell him about the Nanhutou meeting.

After unpacking, I gathered together all the soldiers and civilians in the secret camp and informed them of the decisions adopted at the Nanhutou meeting.

Everybody cheered, raising their arms high. When I announced the Comintern’s recognition of the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle in Jiandao as ultra-Leftist and its declaration of the inalienable and inviolable right of the Korean people to fight for the Korean revolution, they shed tears, saying that now they could go to their homeland and home villages, and fight a decisive battle in the homeland against the Japanese imperialists. All those born on foreign soil were so eager to see their fatherland that they could not suppress their surging emotions. Someone talked proudly of Mt. Paektu at the gathering.

No one seemed to think that he or she would have to stay in north Manchuria. The more excited they became, the more embarrassed I felt, for I had to tell them the truth. However, I broached the need for a painful leave-taking.

“Comrades, please recall! Whenever a new situation emerged in the dialectical course of the armed struggle, we were obliged to bid farewell to each other. Today is no exception, when a new turning-point in the Korean revolution has been marked by the Nanhutou meeting, so we must prepare for such a farewell. After the ‘February 26 incident’, the military fascist clique of Japan is more intent on their northward aggression than ever before. You know full well that the Japanese imperialists have occupied northern China, including Qiqihar, and are resorting to ceaseless provocations along the Soviet-Manchuria border in the search for an excuse to invade the Soviet Union. The guerrilla units in north Manchuria endeavour to consolidate the anti-Japanese forces to cope with this. But they experience great difficulties owing to a shortage of hard-core forces. So they requested our assistance on several occasions.

“If all of us proceed towards Mt. Paektu in such a situation, comrades, what will happen?”

I paused and glanced around the room for a while to see that they appreciated what I meant. I could hear an uneasy whisper from one corner of my audience. The whisper spread from mouth to mouth, until it rose to a hubbub, echoing all over the house. I had expected a violent reaction, but I was quite perplexed by this reaction. I could not continue my speech with a light heart, as their reaction foreboded real difficulties for our departure.

But the audience soon quietened down, gazing at me. Feeling that the moment had come to say farewell, I announced the projected shake-up I had thought over and over since leaving Nanhutou.

“Now, the Wangqing Regiment should operate in Comrade Choe Yong Gon’s area, and the Hunchun Regiment in the 3rd Corps area. Comrade Kim Chaek is in that 3rd Corps. Some parts of these two regiments will fight together with the 5th Corps, led by Zhou Bao-zhong in the areas of Ningan, Muling and Weihe. The sick and wounded have to leave for the Soviet Union for treatment to recover at the earliest date.

“You’ll have to excuse me, comrades. As you see, I came here not to take you to Mt. Paektu, but to say goodbye.”

They stared at me in silence for a few seconds. Contrary to my premonition of confused mumblings of disobedience, an almost unbelievable quiet reigned. In oppressive silence they watched me composedly. This was, indeed, strange. I was more afraid of that silence than of thousands of words of outspoken protest. But the silence did not last long. Sounds of sobbing broke the strange silence and rippled from corner to corner.

I stood in confusion before the men who were disheartened at the declaration of leave-taking.

But I discovered a magnanimous character in Choe Chun Guk, who had worked as a political officer for some years under my command. He comforted me, saying, “General, don’t worry. We’ll deal with them properly. Please go and take a rest.” For that matter, he also had to bid farewell to me and organize an Independent Brigade for further operations.

Leaving the work with those who were to remain in north Manchuria in his care, I met the wounded, aged and infirm who were to be sent to

the Soviet Union. During the years of guerrilla warfare, many of our soldiers had been wounded or become infirm. They all had been treated at hospitals in guerrilla zones, but after their evacuation their treatment became a big problem. So we had sent most of them for temporary treatment near Shahezhang and Lake Jingbo; later on we built the secret camp in Qinggouzi and assembled them all there. But this did not solve the problem.

Fortunately, Wei Zheng-min had found, by negotiating with the relevant organization of the Comintern, a satisfactory solution to the problem and relieved us from this worry. Thus the wounded and weak soldiers of the people's revolutionary army were given an opportunity for treatment in the Soviet Union for the time being. Wei had consulted with the Comintern and agreed on the technical formalities regarding the transfer and delivery of the wounded soldiers to the Soviet Union. Thanks to his efforts, the despatch of students to schools under the Comintern had also reached a successful settlement. When the Wangqing and Hunchun Regiments were moving to units in north Manchuria, the group of students were to leave for the Soviet Union together with the group of wounded soldiers.

We planned to form two groups of wounded soldiers from our unit, the aged and infirm and orphans and send them to the Soviet Union one by one. Wang Run-cheng would escort the wounded to the border, accompanied by several men.

As we had decided this matter on our own at Nanhutou, the wounded soldiers at Qinggouzi knew nothing about this.

When I went to see the wounded, Ri Ung Man unexpectedly appeared on crutches before me and barred my way.

“General, it’s a thunderbolt from the blue! Do you mean that I, too, must go to the Soviet Union?”

His voice was loud from the start and his cheeks were twitching from his excited state of mind.

“Calm down, Comrade Ung Man. Sit down.”

I helped him onto a fallen tree in the forest.

Ri clung to my arm and implored, “Please, General, let me work for the revolution by your side until my dying day. Although I only have one leg, I can shoot and repair weapons. And I have a mouth to make speeches which can stir people up to the revolution. Do you think that I’ll live in comfort in the Soviet Union, when my comrades are going through hardships and shedding blood?”

Of course, I had expected such a reaction from this former company commander of the guerrilla army, a man of a fiery temper. In fact, he had had his leg amputated for the sake of the revolution.

I held his hands in mine and said, “If you act like this, the other wounded soldiers will become more stubborn. I, too, feel it painful to think of those who have to stay away from the anti-Japanese armed ranks. You’ve always suffered from physical handicaps. You could manage, albeit uncomfortably, in the guerrilla zone, but in the new fighting situation, where we have to get out of fences and rush now in the east and now in the west like Hong Kil Tong,¹⁷ how can you follow the unit in your condition?”

I talked to him for more than an hour, but it all fell on deaf ears.

“General, I have no thought of living in comfort, on the bread of others, in a country where the revolution has triumphed. If I thought of living in luxury and not taking part in the revolution, then why do you think I bought a box of Browning pistols with the money from my entire

family property and joined the guerrilla army? Please, General, take me with you, for mercy's sake! I don't want to be a straggler."

Ri Ung Man was a dyed-in-the-wool communist, who dreaded straggling from the revolutionary ranks more than death. But there was something too extreme in his way of thinking. Going to the Soviet Union did not mean that he would abandon the revolution or live in luxury. We would be satisfied if he had enough time for treatment in safety and then returned to us with an artificial leg.

Unable to say anything against his appeal, I paced up and down the snowdrift in silence, recalling with emotion the days in Wangqing, when he and I had defended the guerrilla zone. The painful silence, however, moved him.

After studying my face for a moment, he abruptly buried his face in my bosom and said, "You're worrying about me, General. All right, I'll go to the Soviet Union. There I'll turn to Mt. Paektu and pray for your victory every day." He then burst into tears.

No less painful than my farewell to Ri was my parting with Ryang Kwidongnyo. The little girl wept continuously after hearing that she had to go to the Soviet Union. During my stay in the secret camp in Qinggouzi I took her with me everywhere, had meals at the same table with her and slept with her at my side. On the night before we left the camp, the little girl did not sleep, but instead chattered endlessly under the blanket.

"General, they say it's colder in the Soviet Union than here. Is that right?"

She had probably heard that there was a deadly cold tundra in the Soviet Union.

"Don't worry. You'll go to a place where it's not colder than here."

I felt my heart rending as I answered, listening to the sound of the north Manchurian wind howling outside the log-cabin. I thought it was so cruel to send this orphan from one foreign land to another.

But the land, she imagined as a dreary land of snowstorms and biting wind was a socialist country free of exploitation and oppression, and also safe from the Japanese imperialists. She would break away from a cursed world, which molested and oppressed honest people, and would live in that socialist country as merrily as a lark, as freely as an eagle and as happily as a dove. When she had grown up, she would return to our ranks and fight for the revolution. This thought was a source of comfort and hope to me as I sent Ryang Kwidongnyo and those pitiful children to the Soviet Union.

“Uncle Ung Man says, General, that you will visit me once a month without fail while fighting on Mt. Paektu. Will you?”

Probably Ri Ung Man had lied to her as she was so dead set against going to the Soviet Union.

I was struck dumb; I only kept my eyes on her crystal-clear eyes. I had never felt so confused by a child’s questions as I was this time. Fortunately, however, she saved me from replying.

“If you leave Mt. Paektu and come to see us, General, the Japanese will kill more Korean people, while you’re away. Don’t come to see me; please stay on the mountain all the time.”

“You’re a good girl. I’ll not leave the mountain just as you say and will avenge the enemy for the murder of your parents.”

I hugged the little girl in spite of myself. She huddled up to me; strange enough she was trembling, probably because the horrible sight of past murders of so many fathers and mothers flashed across her mind.

I believed that her wish for me not to leave Mt. Paektu reflected the wishes and desires of all Koreans.

“General,” the little girl said after a while, “I’ve heard Mt. Paektu is too high for children like me to climb. So I’m following Uncle Ung Man to the Soviet Union, rather than Mt. Paektu, so they say.”

I patted her on the head in silence. I said in my mind: My dear Kwidongnyo, come to Mt. Paektu later on: then our country will be as good to live in as in the Soviet Union.

That night I didn’t sleep a wink. The tearful farewells, which were in store for me on the next day crowded in on me. How would I say goodbye to them? Should I pick twigs of trees here, and give one to each of them as in the story, or should I disappear quietly just like Sin Chae Ho?

At dawn Choe Chun Guk came to see me.

“When are you leaving, General?”

“Early this morning, after breakfast. The company in Guandi is no doubt waiting impatiently for me. What about the comrades here? Have they calmed down? You will also have to march north very soon.”

Ryang Kwidongnyo, who had been chattering all night was now sound asleep, although the day for leave-taking had come.

“Please don’t worry about us, General. We’ll fight well in north Manchuria, so leave with a light heart.”

“Excellent comrades! That is why the farewell hurts me. And now, you, Comrade Chun Guk...” I mumbled and only looked at him for a while and then gripped his hands.

“I feel easier as I can say goodbye to you like this. But I regret leaving without seeing Comrade Han Hung Gwon. If you have a chance to see him in north Manchuria, please remember me to him.”

We had a light breakfast together instead of a farewell party and took leave of one another. True to Choe Chun Guk's words, the comrades in Qinggouzi saw me off to Guandi with smiles on their faces. Only Ryang Kwidongnyo wept sadly.

I can still feel now how my heart ached as I recall the day when I handed over the nine-year-old girl to Ri Ung Man and left the secret camp at Qinggouzi with a heavy tread.

I heard later on that Ri and the girl had gone to the Soviet Union in the first or second batch of evacuees. I heard nothing more about them for a long time. I only heard about them again, after the liberation of the country, from Jon Mun Jin, a woman of the sewing unit of the guerrilla army, who had left her unit at Qinggouzi for the Soviet Union and returned to the homeland after liberation. I was very happy to learn, albeit so much later, that they were in good health.

Ryang Kwidongnyo must be about 70 now, in other words she's in the twilight of her life.

I still picture her in my mind's eye, the daughter of a former battalion commander, who had been withering away from mental agony owing to accusations that he was a "Minsaengdan" member. I do not imagine a grandmother on this side of 70, but rather a little nine-year-old girl. I cannot picture her as a grandmother. The image of a girl, chirping away like a sparrow that she wanted to follow me to Mt. Paektu, is engraved in my memory.

The farewell at Qinggouzi was not very difficult because Choe Chun Guk had talked so well to his men before leaving for the north, but it was extremely hard to send Kim Ryo Jung's company and the company which O Jin U belonged to, from Guandi to the units in north Manchuria.

The company which O Jin U belonged to, insisted on following me to Mt. Paektu in spite of everything.

I tried to persuade them several times, but they said that they would go to north Manchuria and would merely accompany us as far as Antu. The platoon from the Hunchun young volunteers' corps insisted on the same thing and requested my permission. Hwang Jong Hae, behind the mutiny of the puppet Manchukuo army soldiers in Hunchun on my instructions, was in that platoon, and masterminded attempts to obtain my permission.

I talked to them for hours, explaining in detail the situation in north Manchuria.

As Wei Zheng-min was very envious of the platoon from the Hunchun young volunteers' corps, I had arranged to detach the platoon to his unit. The company O Jin U belonged to left Mihunzhen in poor spirits. As I sent off the company in tears with Wei Zheng-min on a windy hill in Mihunzhen, I, too, wept in my mind over the sorrow of saying goodbye.

The farewells to people who had been sent on an individual basis to the Anti-Japanese Allied Army units in north Manchuria were more heart-rending. These newly organized units of the allied army faced great difficulties owing to the shortage of military and political cadres. In accordance with their request, I sent such cadres as Han Hung Gwon, Jon Chang Chol, Pak Kil Song, Pak Rak Kwon and Kim Thae Jun to them and also my orderly, O Tae Song. In fact, I transferred to them all the cadres I had trained with so much care in Jiandao.

O Tae Song is O Jung Hup's younger brother. While O Tae Song was a member of the Children's Vanguard in Shiliping, his elder brothers

joined the guerrilla army one after another; he had been so envious of them that he had volunteered to become my orderly.

When I told him that he was to go to a unit in north Manchuria, at first he simply smiled. He seemed to have taken my words as a joke. But when he realized that I was serious, he was almost in tears, saying, “Why are you sending me away, General? I won’t go. Will the revolution fail, if I don’t go there? Please allow me to stay by your side.”

The orderly, who used to say “Yes, sir” to any of my orders and satisfied me with his ready obedience, was almost rude on that occasion. I only managed to send him to a unit in north Manchuria after many attempts to persuade him.

Although he was persistent in his arguments, he also comforted me like a grown-up at the moment of farewell. When he saw that my eyes were wet with tears, he even joked, “Without me, will Kum San attend to you as I did, General?”

On the eve of our farewell O Tae Song spent all night whispering with my other orderly, Choe Kum San.

I usually went to bed in the small hours and got up before dawn every day, but that night I put out the lamp early and went to bed on behalf of the orderly who would make a long journey. The two orderlies whispered throughout the night, and at dawn left the room.

I was curious about their whispers and strained my ears.

“Kum San, you must attend the General better, when I’m gone,” O Tae Song said in a whisper. Kum San only sighed.

“There on Mt. Paektu, you must obtain chilli bean paste by all possible means to serve the General at every meal. If you try, you’ll obtain it easily, as many Korean people live there. You know how the General likes it? But we’ve never served it to him. We’re not really

worthy of being his orderlies. Such things weigh on my mind as I'm leaving the General."

"I'll do as you say, so please depart with a light heart. When shall we meet again?" Choe Kum San's voice was quivering.

"Well, I'm not sure. By the way, Kum San, please call on people from Phyongan Provinces on your arrival there. They may have things like pickled fish in their houses. I've heard that the General likes that kind of pickles. I was planning to obtain them on Mt. Paektu and serve as much as the General could eat."

After seeing off O Tae Song early in the morning, I found his note between the leaves of a book.

Dear General:

I am very sorry that I am leaving you, after bothering you so much when you've never slept a night in peace for years on end to liberate the fatherland. But I will fight bravely there, so please don't worry about me. When in distress, I will recall what you have always said, "Let us endure these hardships to win back the fatherland."

I will make a humble contribution to the sacred cause of national liberation by laying down my life without the slightest hesitation and maintaining unstained loyalty to the country which has been nurtured under your loving care. So please don't worry about me. Please take care of yourself, dear General.

This was too profound a note to be written by a young orderly.

All my comrades-in-arms were just as loyal and warm-hearted as him.

That day Wei Zheng-min said in tears that he had realized on his way to Mihunzhen from Nanhutou via Qinggouzi and Guandi, how warm friendship between the Korean comrades was. He said:

“Comrade Kim Il Sung, a strong general has no weak men, as the saying goes, and all your men are as brave and warm-hearted as one man. How I envy you! What an attractive young man Hwang Jong Hae, for instance, is!”

I transferred Im Un Ha as a cook, along with the platoon from the Hunchun young volunteers’ corps to Wei Zheng-min. When departing with Wei Zheng-min and bidding farewell to me, Hwang Jong Hae was as sad as O Tae Song.

For all that, he also consoled me in tears, saying that he would take good care of Comrade Wei as I had asked and guarded Wei well until the last moments of his life, true to the pledge he made at that time.

When Wei’s state of health was critical, Hwang carried him on his back and saved him, by fighting at the risk of his own life, every time they encountered the enemy’s “punitive” forces. Consequently, on his deathbed Wei called his name with affection and said, “Even in the world beyond, I’ll not forget what you, Jong Hae, and other Korean comrades have done for me. Fight stoutly until the day you return home in triumph with Comrade Kim Il Sung.”

However, Hwang Jong Hae, whom Wei had been so thankful to and could not forget, did not return to me, but was instead buried in the wilderness of Manchuria. Whenever I recall Hwang, I am reminded of the southward march along thousands of miles of the roundabout route from Nanhutou to Mt. Paektu. At the secret camp in Qinggouzi, he had stamped his feet like a child, saying that he would follow me. He accompanied me as far as Mihunzhen and then left with Wei Zheng-min. I think my comradely love for Hwang Jong Hae increased during the long march.

How many of my comrades-in-arms I had sent to the north on the thousands of miles of southward march from Nanhutou to Mt. Paektu! Pak Kil Song, Han Hung Gwon, Jang Ryong San, Jon Man Song, Pak Thae Hwa, Choe In Jun, O Tae Song, O Se Yong, Kim Thae Jun, and other countless comrades-in-arms laid down their young lives on the mountains and in the fields of north and south Manchuria.

I also recall the death of Jang Ryong San, a crack shot and kind-hearted man; unfortunately I did not see any more of O Tae Song who had, from a tender age, always run about for me. He was the love of his elder brother O Jung Hup. When I was bidding farewell to O Tae Song, his elder brother, who had been on an expedition to Jiaohe with the 2nd Regiment of the 1st Division, did not even see his departure for north Manchuria.

I once ate with relish boiled green maize with pickled shrimps in the Mt. Paektu area thanks to Kum San. The cuisine was not half bad, but I ate my fill because I remembered O Tae Song's best wish and the affection it contained.

The two brothers fought, the elder in the south and the younger in the north, and I firmly believed that they would surely meet on the day of national liberation, proud of their distinguished services. But both of them lost their lives in a desolate foreign land, never to return to their homeland.

True to our expectations and beliefs, those comrades who had sacrificed themselves displayed the mettle of the Korean revolutionaries and fought courageously everywhere in north and south Manchuria until the last moments of their lives.

I met Choe Chun Guk a year and a half after our tearful farewell at the secret camp in Qinggouzi, some others five or six years later, and

still others in the liberated homeland. All of them solemnly remembered their fallen comrades-in-arms.

All survivors of the war came and told me about their brilliant records. Some of them had distinguished themselves as commanders of invincible, heroic detachments and still others performed brilliant military exploits as such prominent military and political cadres as company commanders, brigade commanders, and political commissars of divisions. But they still had the old habit of playing on my affections and said, shedding tears, “Away from you, General, we felt like children away from their parents. We missed you dreadfully all the time.”

As I recalled comrades-in-arms who had not returned, they comforted me as warmly as they had done in the days of the anti-Japanese war, saying, “Don’t feel too sad, General. How can there be no sacrifices in the fight to win back the country? That day’s parting was the last farewell to them, but they’ll not regret their sacrifices, because the country has been won in return.”

I have now lived for 80 years with the love of these comrades. The fallen comrades left deep wounds in my life, but they enlivened the history of the anti-Japanese revolution and the history of their fatherland.

Consequently I do not regret the sad farewells I bid to my comrades-in-arms during the anti-Japanese war in sending them to the north and the south.

5. Choe Hyon, a Veteran General

We made a major stopover on our way from Nanhutou to Mt. Paektu at the rear base of the Independent 1st Division of the people's revolutionary army, located in Mihunzhen on the Mudan Mountain Range along the border area of the Dunhua and Antu Counties. At one of the large and small secret camps sprawling in the vast forest, we planned to discuss measures to implement the policies adopted at the Nanhutou meeting with Wang De-tai, Wei Zheng-min and other high-ranking commanders of the 2nd Corps.

Mihunzhen is situated in a mountain, where even a man who has been there once or twice can lose his way. The mountain peaks and valleys are so similar, that strangers to the place used to find themselves in a maze there. I marvelled at the wit of the ancient folk, who had named this primeval forest Mihunzhen (maze—Tr.).

At first we were also at a loss on how to find the camps. Fortunately we came across the 1st Company of the 1st Regiment of the Independent 1st Division at Niuxindingzi which Pak Song Chol belonged to, and asked them to show us the way to Mihunzhen. But they refused, saying that typhoid fever was rampant there. They explained that there were dozens of typhoid patients in that valley and that it was dangerous for cadres to visit the place.

They added, "Many of them have already died. We cannot take you, General, to such a place. We cannot allow you to run such a risk."

They flatly refused to show us the way. In those days epidemic diseases took a heavy toll of lives in the people's revolutionary army. Eruptive typhus and typhoid fever, which broke out in guerrilla zones, harassed us even after the evacuation of the guerrilla zones, mercilessly taking precious lives. These diseases seriously weakened the combat ability of the people's revolutionary army.

"As typhoid is borne by man, it can also be controlled by man. Man can defeat epidemics. Epidemics cannot defeat man. So there's no great need to be afraid of them. You're making a mystery out of typhoid."

I thus reproached them for their fear of epidemics. However, they continued stressing the typhoid danger and insisted that I should not go there.

"What do you say, General? Can man defeat epidemics? No. These diseases don't discriminate between the weak and the strong. No man is immune to them, just as no mouse is safe from a cat. You know how strong company commander Choe Hyon is! But he's been bedridden with typhoid for weeks now in Mihunzhen."

"What? Has that steel-like soldier contracted the disease? If so, all the more reason for me to go and see him. I've come as far as Niuxindingzi and if I turn back here and go to Mt. Paektu without visiting Mihunzhen owing to fear of the disease, then imagine how disappointed he'll be, when he learns of it some day! You worry about my safety, but I've already suffered from epidemic fever in Wangqing. I'm immune, so don't worry."

Only then did the commanders of the 1st Company detach a platoon as our guide and escort. They begged me not to enter the patients' ward on any account even if I visited Mihunzhen.

To be frank, I was very disappointed to hear that Choe Hyon was ill. Although I said that a man could control typhoid fever, it was really a horrible disease. That cursed disease would even afflict a commander of the revolutionary army. It would naturally grow more rampant among such hot-tempered men as Choe Hyon. It would attack anyone, but used to play more havoc with hot-tempered and impatient people. I had the premonition that the life of my precious comrade-in-arms was at stake.

"What's happened to you, Commander Kim? Are you worrying about Comrade Choe Hyon?" asked Wang De-tai, as he saw me walking silently, in low spirits. Although a brusque, unsociable, taciturn military commander, Wang had an amazing ability to read people's minds.

"Yes, but how'd you know?"

I was grateful to him for breaking my silence. A man keeping silence is liable to be haunted by all kinds of trivialities.

"Why shouldn't I be able to guess? Your silence in the company of a friend like me indicates that you're preoccupied with the fates of people."

"You're right. I've been thinking of Choe Hyon all the time. I hope he'll be alright, but I feel very uneasy about him."

"Please don't worry. Choe Hyon will survive. He's a man of strong will."

"You think so? Then I'll be very happy!"

"Well, Choe Hyon is a very happy man. How happy it must be for a man to appear in other people's dreams, be remembered by them and live in their concern!"

Wang's simple and yet profound reasoning moved me. I fully agreed with him.

"That's very profound. But I've never thought about it."

"Perhaps Choe Hyon is yearning to see you at this moment. He's missed you so much in daily life that I was almost jealous of you. As far as I can remember, you've met one another only once, so how come you're such devoted friends?"

"I can't explain it myself. Two nights in his company was equal to about ten years of friendship. I was charmed by him at that time. I wonder if I'm carrying a torch for him."

"Oh-ho, you don't say! Since his experience at Macun he talks about you all the time."

By Choe Hyon's experience at Macun, Wang meant his visit to Macun in Xiaowangqing and his interview with me. My first interview with him has already been mentioned in the *Reminiscences of the Anti-Japanese Guerrillas* and briefly in Volume 3 of my own reminiscences.

It is generally known that the battle of the Dongning county town occasioned that meeting. Choe Hyon arrived late at Macun owing to the messenger's carelessness and belated delivery of my 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 me, "As only the good-for-nothings in Yanji were dawdling away, not even approaching the gates of the county town, when the NSA 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.”

My humble request frightened this tried veteran as much as if something serious had happened.

“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.”

He changed his way of addressing me. He was a typical soldier, who would do anything he said he would. It was only on official occasions that he addressed me politely. This freed our friendship from bothersome etiquette and formalities; it stressed the truthfulness and originality of our friendship.

In the days, when each comrade we rallied through our “pearl-diving” efforts was treasured as a prime mover of our revolution, indispensable for its progress, it was evidently a noteworthy event and good fortune in my life to have found such a stout companion as Choe Hyon.

My interview with him at Macun afforded me enormous satisfaction from the very beginning.

My first impression of him was too strong to even express. Strangely enough, however, Choe Hyon, though a new acquaintance, seemed like an old friend. His voice, his features and manners were familiar to me. I even felt that at some time in the past I had discussed the anti-Japanese, national salvation struggle with this sturdy man.

Choe Hyon gave me this impression, probably because he had all the characteristics of the typical soldier I had thought up and perfected in my mind up to that time, and also because I had heard a lot about him since I had come to Jiandao.

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 our nation. That year Ri Jun committed suicide in The Hague by disemboweling himself, King Kojong 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 —Tr.) were dramatic events which made young Choe Hyon’s blood boil.

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. When he was eleven years old, his father Choe Hwa Sim, who was an Independence Army soldier under the command of Hong Pom Do, began to assign him to deliver messages. That year his father presented him with a pistol.

The massacre of 1920 drowned all the Korean settlements in Jiandao in a bloodbath. Choe Hyon lost his mother in the massacre. He followed Im Pyong Guk to the Maritime Province of Russia with his father. Although a stranger to the place, the people and their language, he resolved to fight the Japanese imperialists all his life. Commander Im Pyong Guk appointed him as his orderly and sent him to one of his detachments. An excellent horseman, Choe Hyon faithfully carried out his duty, riding between the detachment and the headquarters on horseback. When the thirteen-year-old, small boy rode like an arrow on horseback through the plain, the Russian people admired and envied him.

At one point he rushed to the front line on horseback amidst a tirade of bullets with his three colleagues. The three were killed and he was wounded in the arm. But he rushed on boldly through the hail of bullets without caring for his wound, and dutifully delivered the message to the command post. Applying a bandage to his arm, Im Pyong Guk praised him, saying that he would become a general of the Independence Army.

After the routing of the Independence Army unit, he returned to Jiandao and joined the General Federation of Korean Youth in East Manchuria, thanks to the good offices of Yun Chang Bom, commander of the Independent Regiment in later days. His days in the GFKYEM can 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 in Jiandao 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 the prison. His trials in prison finally transformed this former orderly of the Independence Army into a fully-fledged communist.

Anecdotes about him and the breathtaking risks he took in Yanji prison, referred to by the warlord authorities as Jilin Prison No. 4, 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 people to fill his own stomach.

Determined to teach him a lesson, Choe Hyon put a high-quality cigarette of the *Kal* brand 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 Hyon 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 Hyon as their benefactor from then on.

Not long after Choe Hyon's life imprisonment the warlord authorities frequently sent student visitors to the prison from the Taesong, Tonghung, Yongsin and Unjin Middle Schools, the Yongsin Girls' School and several other schools in Longjing. In this way the enemy planned to benumb revolutionary consciousness and break the fighting spirit of the young 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 them 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. He 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 Yanji prison, he worked in a shoemaking factory as a shoemaker, in a print-shop as a compositor and in a clothing factory as a tailor of high-quality suits. He also worked as a carpenter at a woodworking shop and cut the hair of the warders, chief warder and

even the head of the prison, as well as that of the prisoners. 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. With Yun Chang Bom and his other comrades, he succeeded in helping Im Pyong Guk, his former superior in the Independence Army, and other revolutionaries to escape. A man of inborn audacity and tough training in a wild world, Choe Hyon was ready to burn himself and jump off a high cliff, for the sake of justice.

After his release, he joined the Red Guards in Taiyangmao 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.

This amounted to everything I had known about this courageous man by the time I met him in Macun.

After greeting each other at our first meeting, he 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?”

I agreed to talk with pleasure.

We talked all night unaware that day was breaking.

Next morning the sentry warned headquarters that the enemy was about to attack the guerrilla zone. I manned the unit on the heights 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 wanted 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.”

He kept on smiling as followed me 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.

I ordered the guerrillas to mercilessly mow down the enemy by long-range sharpshooting, and 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 he hit an enemy soldier approaching a grain stack with a fire stick with a single shot. We were about 500 metres away from the enemy, but he killed each of the enemy with one bullet. His marksmanship was really admirable.

“Well, do you feel a bit better now after such regrets about missing the battle of the Dongning county town?” I asked when the enemy had been repelled.

He shook his head, licking his lips, and said, “A little, but I’m still not satisfied.”

That night too, we talked until late mainly about the immediate tasks of the Korean revolution and ways of carrying them out. The allied front with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist armed units, the anti-Japanese national united front, the founding of a new Party of a Juche type, and some other important matters relating to the political line were topics of our practical talk.

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.”

On seeing him off, I gave him four *Dataigan* (a large-calibre pistol—Tr.) captured at the battle of Dongning county town and an amber cigarette-holder, as souvenirs of our first meeting. That cigarette-holder became his favourite one.

Whenever concentrating on decisive battles and campaigns, his cigarette-holder would belch out thick smoke. There were many heavy smokers around Choe Hyon, who kept a covetous eye on it. They all tried to get it by various methods, ranging from force, sweet words, barter to snatching it greedily from the owner’s pocket when he had a bit too much to drink. But they all failed.

In the days after liberation some habitual smokers among the high-ranking officials of the Party and Government even tried to strike a bargain with him, saying, “Comrade Choe Hyon, they say your cigarette-holder sweetens cigarettes like honey. Won’t you let me have a try at it? I’ll pay liberal ‘rent’ for it.” Such a bargain did not work with the stubborn owner either. Only Kim Ik Son, who was his close roommate in a holiday home in Rajin, managed to borrow it for one day.

The cigarette-holder is now displayed 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 held dearer than jewellery or gold for decades, Choe Hyon blazed with fury and turned them away, saying, “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 every one 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 our first meeting, and the theatre of war reeking with powder fumes he had trekked, with a Mauser at his side, until he had almost reached forty in the days of the guerrilla struggle.

Those memorable two nights and three days, which linked him and me and made him my lifelong companion, had built up an impregnable iron fortress, which guarded our friendship.

I got the strongest impression at our first meeting that he was very straightforward and frank. He spoke as he had seen things and thought.

His ideas and feelings were reflected on his face at different moments. Lies, tricks and diplomatic dealings do not work with such a man. His childlike simple mind purified other people's minds with magical power. Fascinated by that bewitching power, I opened my inmost thoughts to him.

As soon as I arrived at the secret camp in Mihunzhen, I immediately went to the dug-out which housed about 50 fever patients, including Choe Hyon, whom I was so eager to see.

When the supply officers, who had been guarding the camp, flung open the door to announce my arrival, he got up from the bed with difficulty and crawled to the door.

His face, reduced to skin and bones, had become so haggard that at first glance I did not recognize his former expression which had been engraved in my memory in Macun.

"I say, Commander Kim. Don't come in for mercy's sake. You mustn't!"

He looked at me with blazing eyes, waving his arms, so I hesitated for a moment at the door.

"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?" I said jokingly.

However, he 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?"

"Ha, ha! You said you've shot a hundred boxfuls of cartridges, but I didn't know that you're such a cry-baby."

Realizing that his words had no effect, he swore at the supply officers who had brought me there.

“You fools, why did you bring Commander Kim here? Is this the way to attend to him?”

The supply officers standing by the door became frightened and ran away. While he was reviling them, I strode to the middle of the room.

“You were as hard as a birch club, so why all this fuss about typhoid?”

As I took my seat beside him and held out my hand to shake his, he hastily hid his hands under the blanket.

“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?”

“Why did I come here? To see you, Choe Hyon. It’s strange to see that you’ve contracted an infectious disease.”

I pushed my hand under the blanket and took his hot hand and held it for a long time. His eyes immediately filled with tears.

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

Although he had previously begged me not to come near him, he now gripped my hand tightly and would not let go. Choe Hyon was at that moment like a child.

He asked some questions about the second expedition to north Manchuria and explained for some time the damage typhoid had caused. I changed the conversation to personal affairs, related to his fate.

“I’ve heard that you suffered severely from suspected involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’. Is that true?”

“Yes, it’s true.”

He nodded his head sadly and explained in haste how he had come to be suspected.

“In Macun you told me a lot about the united front. I believed it was the only correct line in the world. On my return to Yanji, I explained it to my comrades in the unit, and even Wang De-tai, the corps commander, said that the united front was vital to us. But I was accused of being a ‘Minsaengdan’ member, while trying to realize the united front.”

After our leaving for the first expedition to north Manchuria, Choe Hyon, leading his company, had proceeded to the border area between Dunhua and Huadian Counties and carried on energetic political and military work to expand the area of guerrilla activities. Expansion of the guerrilla zone in this area was dependent on good work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units encamped at the dead end of the Dahuanggou valley.

There were two mountain rebel units, each comprising 80 and 100 men, in the valley at the time. The unit with 80 rebels was well disposed towards us, for the operatives from the guerrilla army had conducted a great deal of anti-Japanese propaganda. This unit maintained friendly relations with the neighbouring self-defence corps units. The self-defence corps units in the area had switched from pro-Japanese to anti-Japanese troops and gave active assistance to the rebel unit in various forms and ways.

But the other rebel unit was given to robbing the people of their property and preparing to surrender collectively to the enemy, while maintaining secret contacts with them in Liushucun. Antagonism between the two rebel units, one aspiring to fight the Japanese and the other ready to surrender, was precipitating a bloody armed clash. If the unit trying to surrender had been left to its own device, it would have been impossible to lead the other rebel unit on to an anti-Japanese road or manage to effect the anti-Japanese allied front with it.

Choe Hyon gave a banquet, allegedly to help to reconcile them. The commanding officers of the unit, who wanted to surrender, were also invited to the banquet. When they arrived, Choe Hyon's company disarmed them by surprise. But he did not touch the other unit or attack the self-defence corps unit, which was on friendly terms with that unit.

The fact that Choe Hyon did not attack the self-defence corps unit was fair and reasonable, as it conformed with the line of a united front. But the head of the political department of the corps headquarters and other Leftist superiors incriminated Choe Hyon, publicly saying that as he had not attacked the enemy, he had actually surrendered to them. They dismissed him from his post of company political instructor and deprived him of his favourite Mauser. This measure was so unjust that even Wang De-tai protested, saying, "If Choe Hyon is a 'Minsaengdan' member, who is not a 'Minsaengdan' in our 2nd Corps?" Choe Hyon was demoted to private, and subsequently worked as head of the supply department of Wang De-tai's corps headquarters for a year. He only became company commander at the end of 1935.

"I was saved, thanks to your efforts, Commander Kim. If you had not spoken out in our defence at the Dahuangwai meeting, at the risk of your own life, I would have been forced to live like a mole as a 'Minsaengdan' suspect. Please tell me, Commander Kim, was it a surrender not to have attacked the self-defence corps?"

He sprang up from his bed and gazed straight into my eyes. His serious face flushed scarlet all of a sudden.

I held his two hands in mine with affection and shook my head.

"How could that be a surrender? It was a just and good thing to do for the anti-Japanese front... Your demotion on a charge of involvement in the 'Minsaengdan' was preposterous."

“That’s right. I’m the last man to be a member of the ‘Minsaengdan’. Damn those bastards! I can hardly repress my surging anger!”

“It’s shocking that thousands of people have been punished like you or killed on a false charge of involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’.”

“They talked nonsense. How can such revolutionaries as Yun Chang Bom and Pak Tong Gun be ‘Minsaengdan’ members? They chose and executed only the hard workers and good fighters, and swaggered about, putting on airs, as if they’d performed some great exploit. If that had represented the communism that we’re after, I wouldn’t have come to Jiandao from Maritime Province.”

“The anti-‘Minsaengdan’ struggle was a tragic event, which should never be repeated in the history of our anti-Japanese struggle. How many Korean communists were murdered! Fortunately, the Comintern officially pointed out the correctness of our opinions, expressed at the Dahuangwai meeting and the ultra-Leftist error committed in the anti-‘Minsaengdan’ struggle by the east Manchuria Party committee, and assigned us the task of taking measures to correct the situation as quickly as possible”.

He shed tears while listening to me.

“If that’s true, I want to give three cheers. Thank you, Commander Kim.”

“What’s important is how to make up for the wrongs done to comrades-in-arms who were murdered on a false charge and how to make up for the tremendous loss sustained by our revolution. Don’t you think so?”

“You’re right, Commander Kim. We must do our best to make up for the loss. As survivors, we must become seeds.”

I was very satisfied with his answer. He was well-versed in military affairs and politics. During subsequent work with him over the next decades, I realized clearly that he was not only a master of military operations but also an able political worker with an opinion of his own. He was skilful in military operations and, at the same time, efficient in political work and agitation. He was experienced in military diplomacy and breaking up the enemy forces from within. The soldiers and police of Manchukuo under his influence supplied him with ammunition and weapons regularly and frequently informed him of enemy movements.

Regarding Choe Hyon as only a soldier is a short-sighted view. One day the veterans of the anti-Japanese war saw the Soviet film, *Chapayev*, and gave their impressions. One of them said, “That Chapayev is just like our General Choe Hyon. General Choe Hyon is a model Chapayev, in his way of speaking, moving, thinking and fighting...”

Choe Hyon retorted in anger, “So I’m Chapayev, eh? Choe Hyon is Choe Hyon and no one else!”

His answer diverged from the views of his colleagues who were accustomed to seeing him as a man who commanded battles by rule of thumb. It is not correct to identify Choe Hyon with Chapayev. When one estimates Choe Hyon, one should always bear in mind that he was not only a military officer; he was also a competent political worker who had been political instructor in the guerrilla army and a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea.

Looking trustingly at his eyes, which blazed with ardour and confidence, I put my hand on the back of his hand and continued:

“If the seeds gain ten, one hundred and one thousand people and if those one thousand seeds gain ten thousand people, then we’ll soon be

rich in manpower. This is a great job that the Korean communists should undertake first and foremost. For this work, we must move to the Changbai area bordering the homeland and the Mt. Paektu area as we stressed at the Nanhutou meeting, and build new types of guerrilla bases.”

He straightened his body up hastily at the mention of the phrase, new types of guerrilla bases, and twitched his eyebrows several times.

“Why do you talk about building guerrilla bases again when we’ve just evacuated them?”

I explained the need to build new types of guerrilla bases and the differences between these bases and the former ones. His keen political mind which enabled him to understand everything quickly and digest things promptly, was really wonderful. Choe Hyon expressed his absolute support for the policies adopted at the Nanhutou meeting: policies which would act as a strong lever in developing the Korean revolution on a Juche-oriented line. The decisions adopted then saved Choe Hyon and all other typhoid patients in the secret camp in Mihunzhen from the abyss of despair.

Choe Hyon said, “I’ve gone through many deadly crises in my sickbed. On such occasions, I even wished I were dead. I was deluded into thinking that if I died, everything would come to an end and I’d forget the pain. But this reunion with you, Commander Kim, has chased away this foolish idea from my mind. It makes me want to live and fight to the end.”

As he spoke highly of our reunion, I gave it a profound meaning.

“You say you’re encouraged by seeing me, but I’ve gained strength from seeing you. I’m very happy that you survived the ‘Minsaengdan’ fuss, for survival itself is a great achievement in that situation.”

That day I went all around the whole secret camp with Ri Tong Baek.

The medical conditions and food situation in the camp were deplorable. The 7th Company of the 1st Division not far from Mihunzhen brought provisions they managed to obtain now and then, but they were far from enough to feed the dozens of people here. When food grain ran out, even gruel was unavailable; they then rubbed the rotten husk of maize, poured boiling water over it and drank it. Even that coarse food was not enough to go round.

A man named Kim ran the camp, but he was a coward, who only cared about his own safety. On arriving at the hospital under escort, Choe Hyon asked him to look after the affairs of the camp. But Kim neglected them on one or another pretext. In the autumn of 1935 Choe Hyon had buried a great deal of grain and subsidiary food in the vicinity of the camp, which he had captured from a landlord in the Dunhua area, but Kim whined that there was no grain there; he served patients with bean gruel once or twice a day, but not on a regular basis. Leaving the patients to the care of a few sewing-unit members, he himself went to another camp almost three miles away, so that he wouldn't contract the disease, and lived in luxury on rice and meat.

Kim also kept women guerrillas on guard duty.

Kim Chol Ho, Ho Song Suk, Choe Sun San and other women guerrillas underwent a great deal of hardships at that time, nursing the patients. There were the supply officers Kim, Kwak and Ryu, of course, but they were fully preoccupied by external activities. They were, therefore, unable to look after the patients. The women guerrillas did the sewing, stood sentry and nursed the patients in turn.

The typhoid patients, who were extremely nervous owing to never-ending pain, were hard on their nurses. They almost went crazy from desire for cold water. For some unknown reason, it was rumoured among the soldiers of the people's revolutionary army at the time that for typhoid patients drinking cold water was tantamount to committing suicide by taking poison, and this rumour was applied to their treatment. Taking the rumour as truth, Choe Hyon declared a ban on drinking cold water in the hospital and threatened to severely punish the patients if they disobeyed.

But the patients, who were going mad from thirst, cried for cold water despite everything. Some of them picked off the icicles hanging on the eaves and ate them behind the nurses' backs. They had been so obedient to the discipline of the guerrilla army, but they lost patience out of their thirst and behaved like unbridled horses. When the women guerrillas offered them gruel instead of cold water, they would fling the bowls away, raining foul language on them. However, the women guerrillas flatly rejected their demands, and kept vigil in turn and watched over them so that they would not drink the cold water from the jar.

One night a messenger with the peculiar name of Maeng Son, unable to bear the thirst, crawled to the jar. Ho Song Suk was on duty that night. As soon as she saw him, she rushed to the jar and snatched the dipper from his hand, scolding him loudly, "Comrade Maeng Son, have you forgotten the order? Do you want to die? Go back to your bed at once."

At his wit's end, he took up a piece of firewood lying in front of the stove and hit her hard on the leg with it; then he greedily drank the water. He lay in bed through the whole night with the blanket pulled up over his face, as if he were dead.

Ho Song Suk thought he was dying and consequently kept vigil by his side all night, even after she had been relieved of duty. Other patients were also worried that he would have a hard time of it. At daybreak, however, Maeng Son, whom everyone thought would have died, pushed the blanket aside, got up, and hugged Ho Song Suk.

“Thank you, Comrade Song Suk. I’m alive. Thanks to your conniving at my drinking the water, my fever subsided. Where has my fever gone?”

“It’s gone through the sweat pores of your body. Look! The blanket is steaming hot.”

Holding high the blanket, wet with perspiration, she looked around the ward. The patients awoke and gazed at the blanket.

As a result, the ban of drinking cold water was withdrawn, and the patients began to drink as much water as they wanted. Many of the typhoid patients in Mihunzhen escaped death with each passing day. Patients who recovered cooked the food together with the women guerrillas just as if it were for a festival.

We found, with supply officer Ryu, the large amount of rice and meat captured by Choe Hyon in Dunhua in the vicinity of the camp. From that time on the meals in the camp began to improve. The soldiers, who had been trained in the expeditions and battle, stood sentry every day instead of the women guerrillas, without wilting from the fatigue, which had built up during the long expedition.

When everyone was again on his feet with the joy of recovery, Wang De-tai, Wei Zheng-min and I held a meeting of the military and political cadres of the people’s revolutionary army in Mihunzhen and took practical measures to implement the policies put forward at the Nanhutou meeting. Kim San Ho, Pak Yong Sun, Kim Myong Phal, and many other

cadres above the level of the company political instructor of the people's revolutionary army attended it.

The decisions adopted at the Nanhutou meeting were strategic tasks to be implemented unfailingly in the latter half of the 1930s by the Korean communists, who had evacuated the guerrilla bases as fixed, liberated areas and begun to expand the theatre of operations to the region of Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. We had to take some relevant tactical measures to implement these tasks.

We had devised a plan to make the Mt. Paektu area the strategic base of the Korean revolution and, by moving freely to north and south Manchuria and deep into the homeland, raise to a higher plane the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle and the communist movement of our country via active military offensives and political activities by large units. In other words, we had decided to enlarge the theatre of our operations. To put this plan into practice, we had to solve first and foremost the manpower problem in three sectors—the Party, military and nationwide united front forces. We had to build them up in order to advance the revolution onto a higher plane.

We debated at the Mihunzhen meeting the reorganization of the people's revolutionary army units to meet the demands of the times and decided on the areas of activities for the divisions and brigades which were to be established.

First of all, the meeting decided to set up a new division and an independent brigade in order to amplify the combat forces of the people's revolutionary army from two divisions to three divisions and one independent brigade. On the basis of this decision, the meeting allocated an area for each unit's activities; the 3rd Division (later renamed the 6th Division) to be newly formed was to operate in the

border area along the Amnok River, centring on Mt. Paektu, the 1st Division in the areas of Fusong, Antu and Linjiang, and the 2nd Division in Jiandao and north Manchuria. The new brigade was to gradually proceed to the area along the Amnok River, after mobile operations in north Manchuria and keep the enemy forces appearing in the boarder areas under control. This was a militant decision, requiring the swift doubling of the combat forces of the people's revolutionary army by lightning measures.

The military and political cadres attending the meeting appraised the reorganization of the people's revolutionary army as a step forward in the overall anti-Japanese armed struggle, and enthusiastically supported this measure. However, not all problems were solved smoothly. When debating ways of implementing measures, an irrelevant opinion was advanced, which slowed down the meeting—on the shortage of cadres.

It was quite reasonable that some people were apprehensive over the reorganization of the people's revolutionary army, owing to the lack of cadres, while welcoming the reorganization in all circumstances. During the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle, a considerable number of military and political cadres had been removed from the ranks of the people's revolutionary army. The aftermath of ultra-democracy in the army was another factor which engendered the shortage of cadres. There were many cadres on the active list who had not even been freed from the stigma of the “Minsaengdan”. Many units of the people's revolutionary army frequently requested commanding officers.

We mapped out a plan for appointing cadres for the new units to be organized on the principle of boldly trusting people and unhesitatingly promoting them. According to this plan, the 3rd Division was placed under my direct command. An Pong Hak remained the commander of

the 1st Division and Choe Hyon was promoted to commander of the 1st Regiment of the 1st Division.

The meeting at Mihunzhen also debated the organization of a preparatory committee to found the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

While the Nanhutou meeting was a milestone between the first half of the 1930s and the second half, the Mihunzhen meeting was, figuratively speaking, a stepping-stone, along with the gatherings at Donggang, Xigang and Nanpaizi, leading the Korean revolution to the great events of the 1940s. The “express”, departing from Nanhutou ran at full speed to Xiaohaerbaling via Mihunzhen, Xigang and Nanpaizi, those memorable “stations” on our historic advance from Nanhutou to Xiaohaerbaling: throughout this time our friendship, our hearts and souls had so profoundly been devoted to the journey.

I congratulated Choe Hyon on his promotion to regimental commander and bade him farewell.

“Next time let’s meet in the Mt. Paektu area. I wish you health and success!”

He gripped my arm and, like a child, beseeched me urgently:

“If you don’t take me with you, I won’t let you go. I, too, want to go to the Mt. Paektu area and fight under your command.”

“Why are you supposing that I like saying farewell to you, Comrade Choe Hyon? I, too, want to do the same, as a tender-hearted man. If all of you come over to my side, then what should we do with the other units? It’s only when such commanders as you, Choe Hyon, and Choe Yong Gon, Ri Hak Man and Han Hung Gwon take charge of big fronts and fight, that our revolution will advance at a fast pace in wide areas. I want to see the Choe Hyon who has become a tiger, not a chicken.”

“Can I become a tiger? Oh, my!”

He repeatedly exclaimed “Oh, my!” and gazed at something far off, with narrowed eyes.

“Then, I’ll not persist any more today. But it’ll be different next time. Don’t forget me even in your dreams. I, too, will dream that I’m beside you.”

I met him for a third time at the secret camp of Yangmudingzi, Xigang, Fusong County. Of course, he again tried to strike the same bargain which had remained unsettled in Mihunzhen. But, his wish was not fulfilled then, either. As soon as he came up to me, he requested that I transfer him to the main unit, but his attempts ended in failure.

He wanted to be at my side all his life and tried his best to make this come true. But each of his attempts gave way to other temptations, which were stronger and more realistic than his own desire. In other words, he was impelled by his crystal-clear conscience and spirit of devoted service to come to the forefront of my concerns and interests.

Keenly aware that, despite his wish to assist me by my side, he should be the first to give way and take the brunt in response to my call, he thereby demonstrated his loyalty and the charm of his character. These two wishes were involved in a continual tug-of-war in his mind throughout his life. Although these two wishes were dear to him, he always left me with the firm resolve to do his bit, by taking up the post which I regarded as important in a difficult situation.

This was evidently a pleasant contradiction, which ran throughout his life. Apart from his later years, when he assisted me as Minister of the People’s Armed Forces and Minister in the Administration Council, he had lived all his life amidst powder fumes on the front line. He had fought hundreds of battles in the latter half of the 1930s. Hundreds of

battles—large and small—including the battles at Sandaogou, Wudaogou, Xiaotanghe, Huanggouling, Jinchang, Pulgunbawi, Komuijari, Jiansanfeng, Naerhong, Laojinchang, Mujihe, Fuerhe, Weitangou, Tianbaoshan, Dashahe, Dajianggang, Yaocha and Hancongou, were all associated with his name and fully demonstrated his talent and unparalleled bravery as a distinguished military commander.

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

In the days after liberation he helped build a new country by force of arms at the forefront on this side of the 38th parallel.¹⁸ During the war against the US imperialists, he commanded an army corps in the eastern sector of the front. His confident words of command, calling on the soldiers to charge, always reverberated across decisive battlefields, which the fatherland and people were watching.

The farther he was from me, the closer and dearer he was in my mind. Just as the saying has it that even a thousand miles seem only a hailing distance to bosom friends, I think space and time do not matter to friends who love and respect each other. Choe Hyon was a loyal man who assisted me more than others, although he was farther away from me.

Ever since the early days of construction of the new country, he carried along everywhere my photograph in the folds of his pocketbook. The photo was the size of a matchbox. Funnily enough, I had no idea how he obtained it. Apparently he coaxed Jong Suk to give the photo to

him when leaving for the 38th parallel as commander of a brigade, but I can't be sure. When he formed a second front behind the enemy lines and fought guerrilla warfare, he looked at that picture whenever he missed me.

One day he decided to give an official commendation on his own to a squad leader, who had performed distinguished services in the enemy area. The squad leader's name was Kim Man Song. During the operations behind enemy lines the squad had captured 50 vehicles—22 three-quarter-ton trucks and 28 gun carriers—and killed or wounded about 150 enemy soldiers. The exploits deserved the highest decoration.

But the corps headquarters, out of contact with the Supreme Headquarters, had no decorations or letters of commendation. But Choe Hyon, who would not hesitate once he had made up his mind to do something, called the squad leader and conferred on him my photograph, which he had been carrying since liberation.

“This is a higher commendation than a decoration. You know that General Kim Il Sung is the head of our country? When we were fighting guerrilla warfare in Jiandao, the General was our leader. At that time we yearned for him very much. If you keep this photo next to your bosom, no bullet will pierce your heart.”

These were the words Choe Hyon had used, when conferring the photograph on him.

He subsequently reported back to me at Supreme Headquarters. I provoked him gently.

“But, you are just Choe Hyon and no one else. However, the squad leader, Kim Man Song, suffered a great loss. Can a photograph the size of a matchbox be equal to a decoration?”

“That’s stingy of you. Who, if not Choe Hyon, would confer such a commendation? General, the photo is one thing, but you have to give him the award. I mean in the name of the Supreme Commander.”

This was a surprise counterattack. I was taken unawares by this master of allurements. The warm heart of this broad-minded “Uncle Corps Commander”, who held his men very dear, almost moved me to tears.

“Yes, I will. The photo was your commendation. I will thank him and also confer a decoration on him in the name of the Supreme Commander.”

From this detail we are able to get a deeper understanding of Choe Hyon. The story contains his noble outlook on the world.

This is roughly the kind of man Choe Hyon was.

I do not know what else to write to give a more faithful description of his human appeal. His autobiography, stained by powder fumes and weathered by storms, included too many facts and events to provide a full description.

Choe Hyon was an optimist, who knew no disappointments all his life, a tank-like man, who pushed straight ahead in the face of all adversities.

What kind of people did he love? He loved frank, ordinary, industrious, daring, faithful and imaginative people and also others who did not backbite and knew how to make the requisite decisions.

He did not like sycophants, cowards, idlers or chatterboxes. He was always guarded against people who were enigmatic and masqueraded.

The whole country knows that he was mad about chess. When he lost even one game, he would become so furious that he lost his appetite. For all this, he became even angrier if his opponent purposely lost a game or

played for a draw just to soothe him. Choe Hyon was also a rare film lover. He was so fond of films that Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il presented him with a film projector. Choe Hyon liked war films best. But he hated seeing war films, where too many people were killed.

During his last days on his sickbed I visited him several times. Weak from fighting his ailments, he looked so fragile, and unsightly that he reminded me of a boy in his early teens.

I even wondered if this was Choe Hyon, veteran of a hundred battles and “Tough Fellow”, who had struck terror in the enemy during two wars.

His hands, which used to be as stiff as a plank, were as soft as a child’s hands, after losing their muscles and roughness. I gripped those hands and said, “Look here, Choe Hyon! Can the tiger-like ‘Sai Ken’ fall down like this?”

All of a sudden, his lips twisted and he burst into tears. I wiped the tears away with my handkerchief and calmed him down.

“Don’t cry, Comrade Choe Hyon. Tears only make you weaker.”

“I cried, Leader, because I was reminded of that day at Mihunzhen. The day when you also gripped my hand like this.”

“Mihunzhen? Yes, I did. Somehow I miss those days. The times were hard, but we were vivacious young men in our twenties. By the way, you were thirty years old at that time, weren’t you?”

“You’re right. I was twenty-nine according to today’s calculations. I remember making a pledge with you, hand in hand, ‘Let us share life and death together!’ Do you remember?”

“Yes, and why not?”

“I’m afraid I can’t keep the pledge and I’m going before... I’m sorry.”

“There’s no need. It’s I who should feel sorry. If I had taken better care of you, you wouldn’t have come to this pass. But I made you work too hard all the time, making you do only hard jobs. I regret it so much.”

“Don’t. On the contrary, I’ve given you much trouble all my life. When I die, you must remain healthy and reunify the country. Please take care of yourself, Leader. This is my last wish. The worst thing is that you don’t care about your health.”

Apparently he talked about me all the time until his last minutes. Whenever my assistants visited him to inquire how he felt, he used to ask, “Is the leader well? Is Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il fine?”

I so regretted overworking him all his life that I ordered a film about him, which was circulated across the country. The title of this film is *A Revolutionary*.

His merit in family life is that he taught his wife and children to be single-heartedly loyal to the Party and the leader.

His wife Kim Chol Ho was an indefatigable fighter who had devoted her whole life to the revolution. She conducted underground activities in enemy-held areas and fought shoulder to shoulder with us. It was far harder for a woman to fight severe battles against the enemy, carrying weapons for 10 years in the steep mountains and the sea of forests and snow in Manchuria in 40°C below zero than go on an arctic expedition. Hearing the guns of the enemy’s “punitive” forces, she gave birth to a baby on a snowbank. She cut the umbilical cord herself without the help of a midwife and there and then fired at the enemy who were pursuing her. She fought like a phoenix. She considered all the hardships she had suffered in the days of the guerrilla warfare so valuable, that she used to cook uncrushed maize gruel once or twice a month for her children until the day she passed away.

Whereas Choe Hyon was an unfailing engine, leading Kim Chol Ho along the bright road, the latter was a ray of warm sunlight, who covered the latter's tumultuous career with beautiful flowers.

Together with her husband, she brought up her children strictly, as if she was raising them in the snowstorm of Mt. Paektu. Her sons now work hard in posts, appointed by Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il to add lustre to our style of socialism, which regards the popular masses as supreme and educate the third and fourth generations of the revolution as loyal people.

Their son Choe Ryong Hae, the general commander of the youth, performed a great exploit, by ensuring the holding of the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students, which would remain a grand monument in the history of the communist movement in our country. When his mother Kim Chol Ho died he stayed at her funeral ceremony for some minutes and then went to the People's Palace of Culture to attend a meeting of the international preparatory committee to make the festival a success. On receiving a report about it, I thought, "Like father, like son."

It is an immutable law of nature that an apple tree bears only apples and a pear tree only pears. There is no difference between this law and the law of society. Accordingly a new generation, born with the soul of Mt. Paektu, grows up on the land of Mt. Paektu. It is indeed a matter of pride that the second, third and fourth generations, under the leadership of Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il, are inheriting and consummating the Korean revolution in a spirit of loyalty and filial devotion, the revolution, initiated and developed by the first generation, who devoted heart and soul to the cause, amid snowstorm and raging winds. I am convinced that our younger generation will remain loyal to the last to the

cause of their forebears. It is only natural for an excellent new generation to emerge from the embrace of excellent forebears.

CHAPTER 12

**To Hasten the Liberation
of the Country**

The Birth of a New Division

20 Yuan

**Revolutionary Comrade-in-Arms
Zhang Wei-Hua (1)**

**Revolutionary Comrade-in-Arms
Zhang Wei-Hua (2)**

**The Association for the Restoration
of the Fatherland**

March-May 1936

1. The Birth of a New Division

When we left Mihunzhen, our company comprised less than twenty people. Two young orderlies, ten guards including O Paek Ryong, Kim San Ho and the old man “tobacco pipe”, who had followed us and in so doing had given up teaching at a village school in the secluded land of Helong. These were all members of my company. One company from the Wangqing Regiment, who had followed us from Guandi, left us towards Yilan County to join some units in north Manchuria.

Although my company on the journey was small, I was indescribably happy at the thought that my long-cherished dream would come true.

“I must go to Fusong quickly. The soldiers of the Second Regiment will be waiting for me at Maanshan. I must make them the backbone of a new unconquerable division.” This was my intention, as I left Mihunzhen.

It was imperative to organize a new division to carry out the Juche line of our revolution.

Nobody would now dare to dispute or interfere with our concentration on the Korean revolution. There would be no more obstacles to the Korean revolution, along the path we had long sought and paved. If we ran straight ahead along this path, we would be able to liberate the homeland and build a country, a land of bliss for the people.

To this end, we had to prepare a strong engine and train, which would run along this path and also had to build a powerful headquarters.

What engine would lead the Korean revolution? This meant the division to be organized as the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The future Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland might be compared to the train, which would be pulled by that engine. Mt. Paektu, where we soon established ourselves, would act as the headquarters of the Korean revolution. We had to grapple with these tasks straight away.

The new division we planned to organize at that time was not a conventional division, set aside exclusively for military operations to destroy the Japanese imperialist army and police. As well as conducting military operations, this division planned to advance to Mt. Paektu, our destination, and expand the network of Party organizations throughout the homeland, rally all the people behind the ARF and other anti-Japanese organizations and rouse them and lead their resistance against the Japanese. Consequently a political potential was needed to perform these tasks. Of course, other divisions also had to perform these tasks, but an elite division to lead other divisions in this undertaking was essential. Consequently I compared the elite division to an engine.

How was this powerful division, the engine of the Korean revolution, to be organized?

Most of the people I discussed this matter with proposed the recall of all Korean soldiers from different units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army and the formation of a large force and then a move to Mt. Paektu. Some others insisted that sturdy guerrillas be selected from different units of the 2nd Corps to form the division. Although their idea was sensible in some respects, none of them had considered the destiny of

our Chinese comrades, who were fighting with us against the common enemy, or the prospects of a joint struggle. Their proposal was motivated by their impatience to witness the birth of the new division, without regard to everything else, or by a self-centred approach as it is called nowadays.

In the end I decided to divide hundreds of soldiers, who had been under my command during the north Manchurian expedition, among the units operating in Weihe, and go to Fusong to organize a new main force, with the 2nd Regiment operating there as the backbone, by recruiting excellent young people from east Manchuria and the homeland.

When we left Mihunzhen, Wang De-tai gave us twenty or so horses, which had been captured from an enemy's timber mill.

“Commander Kim, I am sorry to see you leaving, following the transfer of all the men you have trained with painstaking effort to units in north Manchuria. I hope you will accept these horses in exchange for your men and make them your companions. They will be useful because they seem to have been trained.”

We made a southward journey on these horses. We almost lost three of the horses during a stop on the march. We had allowed them to graze, and they disappeared into the forest beyond our view. I ascertained that there was no enemy around and told my orderly to fire a few shots. At the sound of gun shots, the three horses appeared from different directions and ran towards us.

On our way we met evacuees from the Chechangzi guerrilla zone on a mountain, and gave them these horses for use as draft animals.

The march from Mihunzhen to Maanshan was the most difficult part of the whole southward journey of over six months from Xiaojiaqihe

valley in north Manchuria to Sobaeksu mountain valley on the northern tip of Korea.

The enemy appeared from all directions and detained our small force. After leaving Mihunzhen, we had to fight one or two battles every day, sometimes three or four battles. Now and then the enemy did not even give us time to cook or mend torn clothes. Battle was so frequent that the old man “tobacco pipe”, who could allegedly skip meals, but not smoking for a single day, was not able to smoke all day for several days. We could only cook and dry wet shoes at night in a shelter. But we could not relax at night. Our men were so few in number that it was difficult to post guards. At least one man was needed for the gate guard, two at the foot of the mountain and another two on the top of the mountain for each shift, but we did not have enough men to relieve them, if the wounded and nurses were excluded. Consequently I also stood guard now and then in place of the soldiers. During his patrol one night Kim San Ho saw me standing as sentry, and made a great fuss as if something serious had happened. He meant that the commander was too indulgent to his men. It was very hard to soothe him, when he was complaining. I persuaded him to think of the young men.

I said to him: “Look how exhausted the men are from march and battle during the day and from guard duty every night! How many times can I stand guard for them? When we arrive at Maanshan, we shall have a number of people and I will have no opportunity to stand guard.”

Aware that I would not listen to him, Kim San Ho went away in silence.

“Let’s go to Maanshan quickly!” I said to myself.

I thought that the embrace of many comrades-in-arms and a comfortable shelter was in store for us in Maanshan and that our

hardships would end there. Such hope strengthened and encouraged all of us who were exhausted by the march and battles to continue without proper food and rest.

Every valley and mountain ridge of Antu and Fusong on our route to the south were familiar to me, and each plant and tree evoked in me strong memories. Songjiang, Xinglongcun, Shiwuli, Xiaoshahe, Liujiafenfang, Fuerhe, Dadianzi, Liushuhe, Nandianzi, Dujidong, Wanlihe, Naitoushan and other places were closely connected in different ways with my younger days. Treading on familiar ground, I was stirred by irresistible emotions.

When we climbed on the hill west of Daxibeicha, a striking scenery unfolded, which awakened deep emotions in my mind. The out-of-the-way village at the foot of the hill was an unforgettable place, where I had worked underground in the guise of a farmhand, preparing the foundation of the guerrilla army. On this very hill I would meet the members of an underground organization at that time. Each of the plants, trees, and rocks was a memento of those days.

Scanning the stretch of rolling southern hills and recollecting my bygone days, I glimpsed a distant view of the Xiaoshahe hill, where I had declared the foundation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army four years earlier. My mother's grave was located on a sunny place, a little way down from the top of the hill.

A lingering desire to trace the familiar lane back to her grave and bow to it before proceeding to Fusong arrested my step. Four years had passed since I left the Tuqidian valley, after bidding farewell in tears to my mother's grave which was sparsely sodded. Four years was enough for the turf to strike deep roots. My heart suddenly throbbed with a desire to talk to my mother in the grave, even for just one moment and

press my cheeks against the new shoots, which might be sprouting from under dry leaves. I remained on the ridge of the hill, unaware that my men had already climbed down the hill. Apparently the memory of my mother was ever stronger as the day when foods are offered to ancestral tombs was approaching. I heard that Mr. Kang Je Ha's family visited my father's grave in Yangdicun twice a year to perform ancestral sacrifices and weed it, but I had never heard what had happened to my mother's grave at Tuqidian valley.

"General, why don't you come down the hill?" inquired Choe Kum San, turning back from descending the hill.

I only now awakened from reverie and quickened my pace. "General, what are you thinking about? I have heard that your mother's grave is near here. Probably..." He asked in a whisper cupping his hands to my ear. This young orderly's penetrating insight compelled me to open up my heart.

"That's right! I was thinking about my mother."

"General, surely you should pay a visit to your mother's grave?"

"Yes. But I have no time."

"Nevertheless, it would be too unfeeling not to. It is only a hailing distance to Xiaoshahe. I was told that your younger brother is living in Tuqidian valley."

"Even if time allows me to, I cannot. My mother herself does not want me to."

"That's strange. Why not?"

"As her last wish, she said that I should not move her grave before Korea gains independence. I do not call at her grave, because I respect her last wish."

Choe Kum San cocked his head, as if he were not satisfied.

“Will Korea fail to gain independence if you call at the grave? General, her last wish is a last wish, but please pay her a visit.”

“No, I can’t. I was not an obedient son in her lifetime, so I want to be obedient, at least after her death. Don’t tell me what to do. I haven’t done anything great yet, so how can I visit her grave?”

Kim San Ho and O Paek Ryong joined the battle to persuade me to visit Xiaoshahe, but I declined. Deep in spirit, however, I was by my mother’s side.

Climbing down the hill I said in my spirit, “Mother, I cannot visit you at the Tuqidian valley, because I am on a hasty journey. Treading the soil of Antu, I am very sorry that I haven’t added a handful of earth to your grave and never weeded it, while you were exposed to the cold snow and cold rain through all seasons. I also haven’t taken care of my younger brothers. I heard that Chol Ju fell in battle last year, but I do not even know where he is buried.

“But, mother, the prospects of the Korean revolution have become bright. I am going to organize a large division in Maanshan. As commander of this division, I will fight a decisive battle, centring on Mt. Paektu. If I fail to liberate the country, I will not visit your grave as you so desired. But trust me and wait for me, mother. I will liberate the country without fail and take you to Mangyongdae.”

We hastened our march towards Maanshan. We expected a great deal of our journey to Maanshan. Consequently, when a saddle-shaped mountain came into view beyond a sea of forest, all of us shouted, “That’s Mt. Maan!”

We first came upon an insam (ginseng) field. The edge of the field was covered by two shabby and empty log-cabins. In dusk we found another small log-cabin in a deep valley. Two or three men lived in

seclusion in this cabin. Here we met Kim Hong Bom, the head of the political department of the 1st Division, who was eating baked potatoes.

“Where is the Second Regiment?”

“It moved to Jiaohe on an expedition early this month.”

Kim Hong Bom’s casual answer acted as a thunderbolt from the blue. The absence of the 2nd Regiment meant that it was impossible to organize the new main force which we had planned at Nanhutou. I felt as if I had lost a trusty prop.

As it was operating as an Independent Regiment, it had been one of the pure Korean units renowned as the “Koryo red army” for its high combat efficiency. This regiment was composed of companies which had been selected from each county guerrilla zone in east Manchuria including Yanji, Wangqing and Helong. Most of its soldiers were closely connected with me. Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Ju Hyon, O Jung Hup, Kim Phyon, and other hard-core elements of the regiment, to say nothing of regimental commander Yun Chang Bom and its political commissar Kim Rak Chon, had been trained by me.

I last met the 2nd Regiment in May 1935 when it arrived in Tangshuihezi, Wangqing County, on my call. During the ten days I spent with the soldiers, I got them to study, gave them training and sometimes committed them to battle. They developed as quickly as men under my personal command. They were the very heroes who defended the Chechangzi guerrilla zone to the last and thereby created the legend of the “indomitable Chechangzi”.

When we were on the second north Manchurian expedition, the 2nd Regiment evacuated the Chechangzi guerrilla zone and advanced towards south Manchuria and then moved early in 1936 to Maanshan, Fusong County, via Naitoushan, Antu County. The regiment was due to

stay in the Fusong area in the winter with its headquarters and supply base on Maanshan, waiting for us. This was all we had known in Nanhutou about the activities of the 2nd Regiment. When I left for Maanshan, I transferred the men on the north Manchurian expedition to other units, as I believed that if the 2nd Regiment came under my command, I would be able to organize a new division using it as the backbone.

“Didn’t you receive the message we sent to the Second Regiment?”

On my arrival in Mihunzhen, I had sent a liaison man over here, with the instructions that the 2nd Regiment should wait for me.

“No, we didn’t get the message. After the Second Regiment departed on expedition, nobody has come here.”

Then, something must have happened to the messenger on the way. Even if he arrived without accident, he would have not met the 2nd Regiment which had left.

“Why did the Second Regiment move to Jiaohe?”

“I don’t know....”

“Didn’t they say when they would be back?”

“No, they didn’t.”

“Who led them?”

“Regimental commander Zhang Chuan-shu and its political commissar Cao Ya-fan.”

“Are you alone here, then? What are you doing here?”

When I asked, Kim Hong Bom replied, much to my surprise:

“There are more than one hundred ‘Minsaengdan’ members in the Sampho secret camp. I am remaining here to watch them.”

“Why are there so many ‘Minsaengdan’ members? I found the log-cabin on the edge of the insam field empty.”

“‘Minsaengdan’ suspects have now gone to Mayihe, Linjiang, to obtain foodstuffs.”

“If they can be sent on such a mission, how can they be ‘Minsaengdan’ members?”

“We can hardly starve them to death, can we?”

“Have you any evidence to indicate that they are ‘Minsaengdan’ members?”

“There are files of evidence for each of them. Written confessions, written statements, examination records...”

Kim Hong Bom produced a big bundle of documents from a dark corner of the room.

“These are the documents.”

This bundle of “Minsaengdan” documents was the first reception at Maanshan for me, who had come all the way, despite all the hardships, to meet the 2nd Regiment. There were so many document bundles that they filled up a whole room.

When I received the musty bundles of criminal records, instead of loud cheers and exciting embraces, I trembled as if I had been deceived or mocked.

A mere mention of “Minsaengdan” made my blood run cold, but this “Minsaengdan” devil running wild in guerrilla zones was still torturing a lot of people. How had these old document bundles come to be brought here?

Almost one year had passed since we had repeated those arguments in Dahuangwai and Yaoyingou. Only one and a half months had passed since we had heard about the judgement of the Comintern. The news might not have reached the people here yet. However, it was beyond imagination that the “Minsaengdan” farce was still going on, long after

the whole of east Manchuria had condemned the “Minsaengdan” case as fictitious.

Why were they trying to incriminate one hundred stalwart people? Were they not satisfied with the murders of people like Kim Rak Chon?

I ordered Kim San Ho to despatch a messenger immediately to Mayihe, Linjiang, to fetch them all. Then, I unwrapped the bundles of “Minsaengdan” documents and examined them one by one. I went through the papers, foregoing sleep and continued on the next day, too. The more carefully I examined the documents, the more enigmatic they seemed to me. These papers vividly recorded serious crimes, which nobody could dare deny. I closed the documents. Any examination of the papers could only do harm. If I believed these papers, I would lose so many people. I could not believe what had been written on sheets of white paper, which could absorb all kinds of ink.

After receiving my message, the “Minsaengdan” suspects, who had travelled round Mayihe, Linjiang County, covered more than a hundred miles in only two days crossing the Longgang Mountains and came to us.

On learning that they had reached the Sampho secret camp, I went to see them with Kim Hong Bom. When I opened the frosted log-cabin door, I found the room crowded with ragged people. It was a strange meeting, which did not arouse any excitement, cheers or tears. Nobody saluted me or stood up to report on what they were doing. No single man looked up to me. Only a dead silence reigned over the room—a hushed silence and quiet. How hard they had been oppressed! They even seemed to think that they had lost the right to glimpse or greet people. Could a felon be as depressed and miserable as they were?

“Comrades, you have gone through a lot of trouble.” I could not speak properly, feeling a lump in my throat. “Seeing you, I can hardly ask ‘How are you all?’ But, I am glad to see you. I came here to see you, all the way from Lake Jingbo in north Manchuria.”

But none of them responded to my greetings. Still I was met only by hushed silence: there was not a sound of breathing or coughing. I had never been met by my men like that in the four years of war against the Japanese.

I continued:

“I came here to see you comrades of the Second Regiment, in order to set up a new unit and go to Mt. Paektu to fight there. But I was told here that all the sound people are on an expedition to Jiaohe and that the people staying here are all bad. I examined the papers which accuse you of involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’. According to these documents, all of you are ‘Minsaengdan’ members. But I don’t believe that I can judge you by these papers. I can only have a correct view after hearing what you have to say. So I hope you will open up your hearts. Speak frankly without fear or trying to read another’s face.”

I appealed in this way, but the thickly-frozen silence did not break easily.

I told a man in the first row to reply first, asking him if it was true that he was a “Minsaengdan” member.

He hesitated for a while with his head dropped low and then said in a feeble voice, “Yes, it is true.”

I had not wanted to hear such a reply. I had wished him to cry out against the charge in tears and beat his breast. His reply merely disappointed me.

I asked a tall young man the same question.

“Tell me, Comrade Ri Tu Su, is it true that you joined the ‘Minsaengdan’?”

This young platoon leader from Chunchon in Kangwon Province had bitter grievances against the Japanese imperialists. There was a blue scar on his right thigh. Once I had asked him which battle he had been wounded in. He had replied that he had been bitten by a dog.

This had happened when he was ten or so years old. In a time of spring poverty, before the barley harvest, his family lived on gruel which was not even salted. As the salt had run out, he made three bundles of firewood and went to the market. He sold them and bought one *toe* (1.8 litres—Tr.) of salt. He was returning home in high spirits with the salt sack on top of his A-frame carrier. Passing a Japanese house, a wild dog swooped upon him and bit his thigh. The Japanese boy, who had set the dog on him, hid in the house and latched the gate from the inside. Witnesses of the incident were indignant with the wicked Japanese. They carried the bleeding boy on their backs to the police station, protested and accused the criminal. His injury was very serious: a piece of flesh was torn off. The people hospitalized him.

Tu Su was treated in hospital, eating rice, for the first time in his life. The boy with dishevelled hair, who hated eating gruel, was happy eating rice. He believed he would prefer to suffer the injury longer, rather than leave the hospital. He never imagined even in his dreams that his hospital life would bring great misfortune to his family and himself. He thought that the dog’s owner would pay the doctor’s fee.

Later, the hospital authorities declared that they could not continue treatment, unless he paid. The doctor’s fee amounted to 20 *won* . Where could he obtain such a large sum of money, a boy who had been forced to leave school after attending it for only three months in the first year of

primary school, because he could not afford to pay school fees of 20 *jon* a month?

The boy's grandfather, father and brothers frequently visited the dog's owner, the police station and hospital, begging, protesting and accusing. But nobody accepted the appeal, protest or complaint of the victim. They said that the boy who had been bitten by the dog was to blame for the accident. They were all Japanese, who could not take the Korean side. Finally Ri Tu Su borrowed 20 *won* and paid the fee.

The interest grew on the loan and in two years the debt had swollen to such an extent that he could not pay it back, even by selling his house, which had been handed down through generations. His family, which could not live in Chunchon because of the continual demand for payment, left their dear home town secretly at night and made a northward journey. The money lenders chased his family five miles away and took by force a roll of silk, the family's last property, from his grandmother's bundle.

The descendants of the Ri dynasty, who had lived in the octagonal mansion with detached buildings for guests and servants and had owned several hectares of land, enjoying the respect and envy of others, became penniless, after losing everything—the dynasty, country, house and last roll of cloth and wandered from place to place.

The plaintive voice of a steward in the dining-room of a steamer from Wonsan to Chongjin stirred up the young boy's heart to feel the grief of a stateless nation and the sorrow of departing home.

“The sorrow of people like you who leave the homeland for a foreign land can never be assuaged and the tears of blood shed by you wanderers flood the East Sea. But sighs and tears will get you nowhere. Please

endure your sorrow and take this meal cooked with the rice and water of the homeland before you leave.”

The boy, Ri Tu Su, felt his throat contract on hearing the steward’s sympathetic words.

Bidding farewell to the homeland, deprived of his country, his house and his home town by the Japanese, the boy thought that he could never live with the Japanese under the same sky. He made the firm resolve that once he had grown up, he would not tolerate the Japanese, not even a dog or cat, stirring under the Korean sky. Even before he had attained manhood, he took up arms and joined the guerrilla army.

It was evident that such a man would never join the “Minsaengdan”.

But Ri Tu Su answered in the same way as the first man.

“Yes, I did join ‘Minsaengdan’.”

He said the same thing with the same attitude as Hunter Jang, when I called at the “Minsaengdan” prison in the valley of Lishugou, Xiaowangqing.

Repressing my surging resentment, I told him to explain in detail how he had joined the “Minsaengdan”, if he ever had done so. He repeated stammeringly his written confession and statement. He spoke so logically that he left no room for doubt.

All the “Minsaengdan” suspects unanimously admitted their crimes.

With patience I asked Ri Tu Su again:

“Comrade, because of a Japanese dog, you fell into debt and lost your house and home town. A Japanese dog not only bit your flesh off, but also destroyed the livings of your family of more than ten people. Owing to a Japanese dog, you became more miserable than a dog. And you claim that as such you came to embrace the enemy of your own accord, and became a mad dog, which kills his compatriots and bites at his

comrades. Can this be true? Is it true that you are acting like a lapdog of the enemy, and are not even fed?"

Ri Tu Su could say nothing, with tears trickling from his eyes. He trembled, sobbing and biting his lips. An oppressive long silence continued. I left that cursed log-cabin. The fresh air lightened my depressed heart and cooled my resentment. I felt very refreshed.

During my talks with the "Minsaengdan" suspects, I discovered something I could not understand.

Even when subjected to inhumane torture by the enemy, a torture mostly as cruel as the religious penalties meted in the Middle Ages, our comrades used to flatly deny their alleged crimes. Their resolve never faltered even in the face of death sentence. But these "Minsaengdan" suspects were saying to me, a communist, that they had committed crimes they had not committed. How could I explain this?

Walking up and down the forest, I wondered why they were giving me such a suicidal answer.

They were not "Minsaengdan" members any more than the sky is the earth. Why, then, were they saying that they had joined the "Minsaengdan" and admitting of their own accord that they had committed crimes?

Pak Chang Gil, a boy in Gayahe, and Hunter Jang in Macun also insisted that their false statements were true. What caused this absurd state of affairs?

When they were first suspected, they all denied. But their true statements brought them even greater miseries. Their sincerity was taken for hypocrisy and their true hearts for deception and their honesty for craftiness. The more true words they uttered, the more they had been incriminated and the harder they had been tortured.

What incoherence would take place, when brutal tortures and mental afflictions reached a limit?

What was the use of living, distrusted and ill-treated by revolutionary comrades, who had shared weal and woe under the same roof for years? If they had wished to escape death, they could have abandoned their weapons, defected from the mountain and signed a surrender document or become stooges of the enemy. But how could they have, with a communist conscience, turned their coats? They must have abandoned themselves, leaving everything to their fates.

Stupid misunderstanding and distrust from their own comrades-in-arms had driven one hundred stout guerrillas to despair and self-abandon.

We can say that for a revolutionary collective united ideologically and morally on the basis of a common ideal, rather than pursuit of money or profit, confidence in one another is the lifeblood, which guarantees its unity and solid development. Thanks to mutual trust, communist morality runs high in the collective: comrades love one another, superiors take loving care of their subordinates, and subordinates respect their superiors.

For Korean revolutionaries, confidence is the starting-point of the communist relationship which links the past, present and future. In the past we rallied comrades and people on the basis of confidence and now we maintain the single-hearted unity of our society on the strength of love and trust. In our society based on collectivism, trust represents its strong foundation. Our Party members and working people take the greatest pride in the trust displayed in them by their organization and comrades. But, when they think that their organization distrusts them and that their comrades shirk from them, they feel the worst anguish.

Consequently I emphasize, whenever I meet with cadres, that we must work well with people.

Capitalists cannot live without money, whereas communists cannot live without trust. In our country trust is an integral part of social relations and the mode of existence of collectivism. Everybody who believes that his organization and comrades trust him can display unfathomable energy in the struggle for the Party and country. I think that the saying that trust produces loyal people and distrust traitors is based on such a principle.

The bundle of “Minsaengdan” documents destroyed this principle of trust in our rank during the anti-Japanese war, when we waged a joint struggle in a foreign land. One can guess the great sense of confusion and damage infused by this bundle in the lives of fighters who had joined in the revolution, only with trust in the organization. In those days there was no distinct borderline between our camp and the enemy camp. The enemy was everywhere around us, everywhere beyond a pass and across a river. Distrusted people could run away to the enemy area, saying, “Carry out the revolution yourselves.” There was no way to prevent them. Branding innocent comrades in the revolution as “Minsaengdan” was tantamount to kicking them off to the enemy camp.

I could only save these desperate people by eliminating the stigma of “Minsaengdan” from them once and for all. Mere words were not enough to rehabilitate them. Action was needed.

I went out of the forest and made for the log-cabin again. At that moment a woman soldier appeared suddenly before me from behind a tree. She was tall and beautiful with lustrous eyes. Apparently she was open-minded, but her face was bathed in tears.

“General, I am not a ‘Minsaengdan’ member!”

Her words surprised me and rejoiced me beyond measure.

“I was accused of involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’, because I was married to a ‘Minsaengdan’ suspect. But he is not a ‘Minsaengdan’ member. Nor am I. How could we become spies of the Japanese? Both mother Jang Chol Gu and I were wrongly accused of being ‘Minsaengdan’ members because of our husbands.”

This brave woman guerrilla was Kim Hwak Sil, who in later days was nicknamed “woman general” and received a gold ring as commendation for bayoneting six enemy soldiers at a stretch in the battle of Fusong county town.

As daughter of a slash-and-burn farmer, she had joined the guerrilla army in Chechangzi.

The Dongnancha forest of the Chechangzi guerrilla zone was home to an arms repair shop managed by Pak Yong Sun and a sewing unit run by Pak Su Hwan. Kim Hwak Sil was a cook for 20 members of the arms repair shop and the sewing unit.

One day an accidental explosion occurred in the arms repair shop. The repair shop was enveloped in flames and powder fume in an instant. A young man, Kang Wi Ryong, working in the repair shop after his discharge from the army, stigmatized as a “Minsaengdan” member, fell unconscious at the explosion, caused by mistake when he was salvaging cartridges. At this dangerous moment, frightened workmen rushed out in haste, but Kim Hwak Sil ran into the repair shop through the flames and took the faint man out of the shop by carrying him on her back. Although Kang’s burns were serious, the surgeon sterilized his burns, removed the burnt skin from his face, applied vaseline to the burns and bandaged them. This constituted the only treatment he had received. Then, Kim Hwak Sil nursed him, melting beeswax on paper and

applying it to the burns, removing the gums from his eyes and washing his feet. In the course of her devoted care of this young man, they fell in love with each other. They wanted to marry. But Kang Wi Ryong, suspected as a “Minsaengdan” member, because of the two accidents he had caused, was afraid of marrying for the trouble she might get into. They merely made a secret engagement. Pak Yong Sun and Pak Su Hwan encouraged them to marry, saying that they should not hesitate, as long as they loved each other. Encouraged, they went to the Chechangzi people’s revolutionary government and registered their marriage. This marriage became an issue. The purge committee regarded the marriage with a “Minsaengdan” member as a counterrevolutionary act, increasing the number of “Minsaengdan” members and benefiting the enemy. Leftist chauvinists separated Kim Hwak Sil from Kang Wi Ryong after a fortnight of marriage and banished her to Wangbabozi. They did not allow her to take part in organizational life, treating her as a criminal. Finally, they put her in a group of “Minsaengdan” suspects.

Nine months after her forced separation from her husband she heard that Kang was working at the arms repair shop near her, but she could not meet him, as Cao Ya-fan or Kim Hong Bom did not approve.

Some time later Kang Wi Ryong was compelled by Cao Ya-fan to go to Jiaohe with the 2nd Regiment. The expeditionary unit needed a man who could repair weapons and so it took him to Jiaohe.

“If Kang had been a ‘Minsaengdan’ member, I would not have taken him out of the flames, let alone married him. His father and brothers were killed by the enemy in the ‘punitive’ atrocities. He fought courageously. Even men of the Chinese national salvation army spoke up in his defence at his public trial.”

I was thankful to her for her words.

Kim Hwak Sil, like Jang Chol Gu, was being treated as a criminal because of her marriage.

I entered the log-cabin with Kim Hwak Sil. The people in the cabin did not stir and their heads remained low.

Looking around the room I said in an emphatic tone:

“Comrades, raise your heads. I have not come here to accuse you of any crime or judge you. I am here to find comrades who will go with me to Mt. Paektu to fight. I am here to see my comrades-in-arms and revolutionary comrades. But you comrades claim that you are all pro-Japanese traitors and reactionaries who cannot become my comrades-in-arms. I refuse to believe this. If you joined the ‘Minsaengdan’, why don’t you go to the Japanese, rather than suffer hardships in mountains without eating or dressing properly? Why are you suffering all these hardships, instead of living in comfort with your wives or husbands in a well-heated room, engaging in farming? Tell me why. Have you borne your crosses for years merely for the Japanese imperialists? Have you endured the icy cold and snowstorms, eating and sleeping in the open in this desolate land of Manchuria to become a lapdog of the Japanese and kill off your fellow countrymen and comrades? Tell me, Comrade Ri Tu Su. Have you fought through all these hardships to become such an animal, like the Japanese dog which bit your thigh?”

Ri Tu Su burst into tears and cried.

“How can I... how can I be a Japanese lapdog? No, I am not their dog. I am not a ‘Minsaengdan’ member!”

Then, they all shouted, “No, nor am I.”

They spoke spontaneously, as if at a meeting of indignation, condemning those who had incriminated them and giving vent to their grief caused by the “purge” campaign.

Everyone gave free expression to their pent-up sorrow, waving their fists and shedding tears.

Towards the end of the meeting, I instructed Kim Hong Bom to fetch all the bundles of “Minsaengdan” documents and burn them. Kim Hong Bom was surprised.

“How can we destroy legal documents, without the permission of the purge committee which prepared them? You will get into a great trouble if you burn them.”

Kim Hong Bom was an experienced political worker who had been a full-time Party worker even before joining the army. He was a graduate from Yanji Normal School. He was well-informed and experienced, but was incapable of creative thinking or judging and dealing with things at his own discretion.

“Don’t plead the law as your excuse: instead go and fetch the bundles of ‘Minsaengdan’ documents. There is no reason not to do things on our own.”

“These documents were drawn up following the procedure on the basis of the organization’s decision. How can I answer if asked why I connived at the destruction of the documents? How can I answer when you, General, are gone?”

His face turned pale and his legs trembled. I did not blame him.

I, too, had never heard that any individual had burnt a legal document at his will with impunity. It would be a rare incident. But I was firm in my resolve to destroy these evil documents, which would bring nothing

other than distrust and desperation to these one hundred “Minsaengdan” suspects.

I knew full well how dangerous my decision was.

In fact, it amounted to a great risk for me to deal with an issue, which could only be handled by people who had organized the “purge” campaign and drawn up the documents. The destruction of a piece of written evidence alone was a serious enough offence for me to be punished ten or a hundred times by the executors of the “purge” campaign, who had unlimited power to ascribe, if necessary, any undesirable occurrence to the work of the “Minsaengdan” and could invent any story. By way of reprisal, they could punish me as I had brought the issue of anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle even to the Comintern.

I told Kim San Ho to fetch the “Minsaengdan” documents.

My decision to destroy them was really audacious.

I was resolved to do anything to save one hundred men, even if it meant sacrificing myself.

To finish off the meeting after preparing to burn the “Minsaengdan” documents, I said:

“It is difficult now to decide who is a ‘Minsaengdan’ member or who is not, as nobody can prove it. However, I can declare clearly today that there is no ‘Minsaengdan’ member here, as you all denied this fact. I believe what you have said. You must understand that you should start with a clean slate now. Your stained records will no longer exist.

“However, you should bear in mind that the value of a revolutionary is appraised not by his past, but by his actions at present. All of you now have a white paper. The priceless nature of the life and struggle you record on this paper is entirely dependant on your efforts.

“I believe that you will make a fresh start and record on this white paper the distinguished service you rendered to your fatherland, your fellow people and history. By declaring null and void any suspicion of your involvement in the ‘Minsaengdan’, which troubled you so much, I wish to announce that from now on all of you belong to the main force of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army.”

I selected a few people from “Minsaengdan” suspects and told them to pile up the documents on the ground, and then set fire to them.

While setting fire to the documents, I wished to burn away the dishonourable past of “Minsaengdan” suspects and hatred and mistrust in human beings, which are the root cause of all social evils.

The destruction of these papers is still vivid in my memory, after much more than half a century, no doubt because I wished for something too great and serious to be forgotten. When the bundles of papers turned into flames, the men and women burst into tears. They understood me.

They were born again as new men and women. Now they trusted, helped and loved one another. Even Kim Hong Bom became a new man.

Next day, I organized hunting for recreation. Aware of this fact, Kim Hong Bom brought a hundred rounds of ammunition, which he had kept in reserve for his own security. It was a great event, that he presented all the ammunition to people he had treated as prisoners until the previous day.

Everybody had been given only a useless weapon as *taotong* and three or four rusty cartridges. So their cartridges contained only wooden bullets. Apparently the people who had distrusted and treated them badly had been afraid that they would retaliate, if they had good rifles and ammunition.

Kim Hong Bom, looking at the ashes of the “Minsaengdan” documents, said:

“General, when you set fire to them yesterday, I trembled with fear and meekly left the place. I thought that I would be dismissed as a conspirator in a felony for my mere presence on the scene.”

“Don’t you tremble now?”

“As I believed that death in support of justice was honourable, I could dispel that fear.”

“Thank you for your thinking so.”

“Don’t mention it. I must thank you. General, you’ve transformed me into a new man. You’ve saved me as well.”

I felt awkward at his flattery. He was older than I.

“Don’t extol me, a young man, to the skies.” As I said this, he shook his head.

“No. I’m not extolling you. I truly envy your large calibre and heart. I’m not flattering you.”

“Enough of your flattery. Won’t you go hunting with us today?”

Kim Hong Bom accepted my suggestion in a cheerful mood.

That day, hunting was very interesting. I lent my bodyguards’ rifles to the former soldier suspects, so that each of them could try a shot with a good rifle.

That day we bagged seven or eight wild boars and roe deers, thanks to many chasers. In terms of woman soldier, Kim Hwak Sil distinguished herself by killing a roe deer at the first shot.

I made sure that supper was served that day in plenty by cooking the meat of hunted wild animals and some maize and wheat flour, which still remained. The dinner was followed by a recreation party.

The dinner and recreation party held in the dilapidated log-cabin of the Sampho secret camp on Maanshan was simple, but it was a significant event.

Instead of organizing a new division with the 2nd Regiment as the backbone, the new division was born from the flames, which reduced the iniquitous documents of distrust into ashes.

News that the “Minsaengdan” documents were burnt and that a new division had been formed, spread quickly. Consequently, people in hiding came to us from everywhere. The Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Corps men from Helong, who were taking refuge in the Dajianchang valley, were the first to appear. They included Paek Hak Rim who became an orderly of the Headquarters later, as well as Kim Hye Sun, a renowned singer, nicknamed “oriole”.

Pak Rok Kum (real name Pak Yong Hui) also joined us at that time. She was the first commander of the women’s company, which provisionally existed in the new division.

The young men, who suffered from typhoid in Laomudingzi, Fusong County, were enlisted in the new division. I organized a platoon with them and appointed Kim Jong Phil its leader. Kim Ju Hyon and his fellows, who operated in the forest near Wudaoyangcha, Antu County, also joined us. Kim ThaeK Hwan’s small unit came to us from Chechangzi.

I organized regiments and companies with all the requisite formalities. I appointed Ri Tong Hak, nicknamed “hasty man” and Kim ThaeK Hwan as company commanders, and Kim Ju Hyon as political instructor. Kim San Ho, who assumed the duty of regimental political commissar of the main force always smiled happily.

We were about fifteen, when we arrived in Maanshan, but our unit increased rapidly to hundreds of soldiers in Donggang.

We strove to improve the weapons and equipment of the newly-organized main force.

I had already mentioned that most of the weapons of the “Minsaengdan” suspects were *taotong*. I organized groups of 10 to 15 men and appointed their leaders. Instructing them to prepare for fighting on their own, I said:

“You must obtain new rifles and ammunition within a month. The Japanese have lots of rifles. You can lie in ambush and launch surprise attacks on the enemy. You may bayonet or shoot them to capture weapons from them.” Then each of them had a bayonet. They came back in a fortnight, rather than a month, carrying new rifles with the necessary ammunition. Some of them even captured machine-guns.

I organized a regiment with these men as the backbone and later on I drew on this experience to organize the 6th Division and the 2nd Directional Corps, by recruiting many new men and women to fight against the Japanese imperialists.

During the battle of Xigang, which followed the attack on Xinancha, we achieved our aim of comprehensively re-equipping the main force.

In Xigang there was a regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army. We had our eyes on the modern weapons of this regiment. As this was a virtually inaccessible isolated area, surrounded by a vast forest, it was favourable for our surprise attack. Aware of such weak points, the enemy had built a wall of logs three times higher than a human being around the barracks as well as gun emplacements at its four corners.

As it was difficult to break through the wall from any direction, I decided to create confusion in the enemy’s position, by launching a fire

attack and forcing them to surrender. The enemy barracks consisted of wooden buildings.

When it was dark, I ordered Kim ThaeK Ryong and other skilled grenadiers to set fire to the roofs of the enemy barracks by throwing oiled and kindled cotton balls at them.

The roofs, which were still wet from early summer drizzle, did not catch fire easily, but the fire attack was successful. Our soldiers instantly shouted, "If you surrender, you will not be killed. Lay down your weapons and come out from behind the wall." But the enemy refused and put up a stubborn defence. I sent some men to a house, located nearest to the enemy's underground gun emplacement to dig a tunnel from the kitchen of this house to the target. Meanwhile, I sent scouts to find the mother-in-law of the regimental commander of the puppet Manchukuo army. We advised the old woman to persuade her son-in-law to stop his reckless resistance and hand over their weapons.

The old woman disappeared through the wall and came back with a letter from her son-in-law, which indicated that he would surrender if allowed to escape to Fusong with half his men. I rejected his proposal and demanded unconditional surrender. After seeing her son-in-law again, the old woman said that he was ready to reduce the number of soldiers accompanying him. Obviously he was delaying the negotiation process in the hope of external reinforcements.

We had already dug half of the tunnel to blow up a gun emplacement. I showed the old woman the tunnel and explosives and asked her to convey our ultimatum that, if he did not surrender we would blow up all the emplacements.

The old woman went through the wall a third time and came back to me with a smile. She said that her son-in-law requested that he be allowed to take only two bodyguards with him.

I agreed.

He lined his men and gathered their weapons in one place before escaping with two guards through the northern gate. All these weapons fell into our hands.

If we had not organized the new division, we could not have thought of attacking such a big county town as Fusong and could not have won victory after victory on the Amnok River and around Mt. Paektu.

Contrary to my expectations, the 2nd Regiment was unable to help us organize and consolidate the new division. Only when we had established ourselves on Mt. Paektu, did we meet over six months later the 2nd Regiment we had planned to see at Maanshan. By that time our main-force division had become fully-fledged.

Although their arrival was belated, my reunion with O Jung Hup, Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Phyoung and other close comrades-in-arms marked the happiest event for all of us, because we were able to share board and bed with them. Kang Wi Ryong also reached us safely and joined the new division. It was fortunate for me to think that the last scar would be removed from Kim Hwak Sil's heart.

The day after his arrival, I summoned Kang Wi Ryong.

"Comrade Kim Hwak Sil is your wife, isn't she?"

This tall man went crimson.

Apparently he felt awkward admitting that he had a wife.

"Comrade Hwak Sil is not here. She is working in the sewing unit in the Hengshan secret camp in the rear several miles away. Go and see her there. I will give you a guide,"

He hesitated smiling awkwardly and replied that he would go and see her later.

“If I send for her, it will take you twice as long to meet her. So you might as well go there yourself.”

“I would prefer to meet her later. Thank you.”

Kang’s indecisive attitude was a big disappointment to me.

“You may not mind, but I cannot remain indifferent to her loss of weight because of you. Go at once and don’t make any more excuses.”

He dropped his head for a while and looked at me imploringly with tears in his eyes. He said that he could not go and see his wife, before he had been appointed to a unit and that he had taken up arms for the revolution which he considered his first duty to attend.

I felt obliged to give him an excuse for going to his wife. “I will assign you a task. You should take over to the sewing unit the women soldiers who came here with the 2nd Regiment, and make cotton-padded military uniforms there. You will be punished if you return before finishing this task.”

Kang Wi Ryong obeyed the orders.

This was how the couple who had been separated against their will for a long time by the Left-wing chauvinists met again with deep emotion.

The destruction of the “Minsaengdan” documents at Maanshan gave birth to new men, a new division and new love.

Thanks to our trust in people, we won everything.

I can say that such trust generated absolute and unconditional loyalty to the leadership of the Korean revolution in all our revolutionary ranks and further consolidated genuine ideological and moral unity behind this leadership during the struggle.

Following the birth of the main force of the KPRA, the historical roots of our single-hearted unity were irrevocably established in the minds of the Korean communists thanks to the values of trust, love and benevolence.

These “Minsaengdan” suspects in Maanshan remained loyal to the revolution until the very last moments of their lives, devoting their unstained consciences and warm patriotic hearts to time and history.

They rendered distinguished service which will shine on for ever in the history of our national liberation revolution.

2. 20 Yuan

While Leftists examined the “Minsaengdan” papers in the secret western camp of Maanshan, dozens of children suffered from illness, crying and shivering with cold and hunger in the shade of the secret eastern camp of Maanshan, where the spring thaw had still not set in. Most of these children were orphans who, with their elders, had experienced for years trials and tribulations in Chechangzi, the last stronghold of the revolution in Jiandao. After the evacuation of guerrilla zones, they came via Naitoushan to this rear secret camp in south Manchuria, where the enemy’s atrocities occurred less frequently, under the protection of a people’s revolutionary army unit which was engaged in a westward march. Some children in the Maanshan secret camp were Children’s Corps members from Yanji.

It was laudable that, when the guerrilla zones were evacuated, they came to this remote place of Fusong, instead of wandering in the enemy area, begging or picking pockets on roadsides, at shops or in markets.

But how had these children, now under the protection of communists in the secret camp of the people’s revolutionary army come to be victims of hunger and cold? Did the people in charge of them suddenly become cruel to them, acting like stepfathers or stepmothers? Or did the children become spoilt and cry or grumble at a small difficulty?

No, neither of these was true.

What, then, did their crying mean? Did it represent an inarticulate warning that their physical pain from cold and hunger had reached the limits of endurance? No, they had frequently experienced such hardship in the guerrilla zones. Our Children's Corps members did not resemble rich men's children, who would complain about such hardships. Such cold and hunger were overcome by these children, who had been orphaned and even bereft of their brothers.

However, it was true that they were living in tears. One day when the meeting for the organization of the new division was about to close, Pak Yong Sun slipped a note into my hand. The note said:

“General, can you spare time for the Children's Corps members in Maanshan after the meeting? They are now in dire straits. I hope you will visit the Maanshan secret camp with me after organizing the new division. The children are eager to see you, General.”

Kim Jong Suk, too, gave me a detailed account of their miseries when I reached the secret camp later. Many of the orphans in Maanshan had been under her guidance before. She had been a Children's Corps instructor, when she lived in Fuyandong. She said that the children were very fond of her, when she was in the guerrilla zone.

Naturally Kim Jong Suk cared about the children. When the people suffered from famine in the Chechangzi guerrilla zone, she became closer to the children. Then she became cook for the corps headquarters. The starving children used to look in on her every night and ask for food. Sometimes they slipped into the kitchen and ransacked sideboards and rice jars. On those occasions she would give them scorched rice or pine bark cakes out of her own share which she had kept in secret. She used to miss one meal every day for the hungry children.

The Children's Corps members, who had suffered all sorts of hardships in Chechangzi, never forgot her benevolence. When these children came to Naitoushan with the guerrillas, Kim Jong Suk directed the Children's Corps there. I understood the reason for her tears, as she explained the children's miseries in Maanshan.

The dire existence of dozens of orphans in the care of communists in the revolutionary army camp, far from the battlefield, constituted an alarming accident which must not be overlooked. I grew nervous. What trouble made them await me so expectantly?

Children's tears cry out for justice. When brute force mocks or tramples upon justice, they declaim their indignation. This crying indicates the young souls' denunciation of all those who offend and maltreat them. It protests and condemns all injustice and also complains of their damaged dignity and violated rights. Their tears forewarn an imminent disaster and appeal for their delivery from it. Their crying is their strongest appeal to all those who love or can love them. People listen to this crying with anxiety, as the love and care of children represents the most elementary human qualities.

The Children's Corps members in Maanshan comprised the sons and daughters, our fallen comrades-in-arms left in our care. They were worth their weight in gold. In wills, their parents entrusted us with the future of their children. They wanted us to raise them as revolutionaries, just as they would have done. We shouldered a heavy responsibility for training them as defenders of justice, the soundest and best men in the world, and this noble task reflected the demands of our conscience.

My concern over the fate of the children in Maanshan was not due to human sympathy or motivated by petty bourgeois sentimentalism. It was the right and duty handed down to me by their parents when they parted

this world. Even if their parents had been alive, we would not have remained indifferent to their tears. This was the humanistic feeling of a communist.

In communist human relations, the son of my comrade-in-arms is my son and vice versa. When I am ill, my comrade also feels my pain and vice versa, and when I am hungry my comrade also feels my hunger and vice versa—this communist ethics and morality transforms the communist into the most beautiful human being in the world.

While rescuing his comrade's daughter from drowning, the chairman of the management board of side-line fishing teams discovered that his daughter was also floundering in water. An ordinary man would have rescued his own daughter first and then the other girl. Even if he had done so, he would not have been blamed. But the chairman saved his comrade's daughter first, and then swam to his own daughter, but she was already dead. The villagers ran to him and consoled him in his sorrow, but he said calmly as he looked at the delivered girl:

“I do not think my daughter is dead. This girl is also my daughter.”

Communists make the ultimate self-sacrifices, which are inconceivable to narrow-minded or selfish people, but they themselves regard it as nothing unusual, blush and feel shy at compliments. This is the personal charm of communists and a particular virtue of Koreans.

Our original plan was to advance straight to Changbai through Fusong, after organizing the new division. However, the miserable state of the children in Maanshan led us to change our original plan. I would not have been free of anxiety without seeing them even if I had gone to Changbai.

After the meeting at Mihunzhen I went to see the Children's Corps members who were in the Maanshan secret eastern camp. Pak Yong Sun,

head of the Maanshan arms repair shop, guided me to the camp. I was grateful to him for volunteering to guide me of his own accord.

It provided a good opportunity for me to know him inside out. Our friendship, which had started in Macun was consolidated by this reunion. At that time he told me the long history of his family: it could serve as the source for a multi-volume novel.

His ancestors were the first Koreans to settle in the foreign land of Jingucun in the 1860s, the pioneers who popularized the Korean method of farming in that area. In his father's generation, his house was furnished with a simple blacksmith's. As a boy, he worked as his father's assistant at the blacksmith's. It subsequently made him famous as an excellent technician, repairing and manufacturing weapons. During the farmers' slack season, his father would often go hunting with a gun. When he was 17 years old, he became interested in hunting as a hobby. Because he had to hunt now and then without his father's knowledge, he could not enjoy it to the full. His father kept the hunting gun under his strict control. He allowed the eldest son to go hunting, but did not allow Pak Yong Sun, the second son, to touch the gun. Even if he merely touched the barrel, his father would shout, scowling at him. But when he was 18, the situation changed. He killed a tiger with one shot, which old hunters from Jingucun failed to do, although they tried several times.

He pulled a bristle from the tiger's moustache and brought it home in high spirits. It was a hard-gotten hunter's license of his own. All the villagers came to his house to see the tiger's moustache. His father inevitably recognized this young hunter's marksmanship. Since then, the old hunters of Jingucun called him "Hunter Pak". Needless to say, he was allowed to hunt. By the time he started underground revolutionary

work, after taking a job in the Jilin Coal-mine and the Baogelazi Mine, he had hunted hundreds of wild animals with the gun.

Hearing his account of the event, which had led to his nickname “Hunter Pak”, I thought that if he had become a sniper of the people’s revolutionary army, rather than a workman in the arsenal, he would have killed more enemy troops than the wild animals which he had killed. But I was surprised to learn that he was more skilled in smithery than marksmanship. In a combat unit he was regarded as an ordinary soldier, whereas in the arsenal he was regarded as indispensable.

Pak Yong Sun joined my company with several pheasants in a straw bag. His bag full of pheasants reminded me with deep emotion of Ri Kwang who had come to Mingyuegou carrying on his back a heavy rice knapsack laden with several pheasants.

“Comrade Pak, do you go hunting nowadays?” I asked him pointing at the bag. He hitched up his bag wrinkling his face.

“I gave up hunting a long time ago. I caught these pheasants with a noose. I could not go and see the children empty-handed, so I caught them.”

“You clearly love the children greatly. That’s laudable.”

“Do I love them?” He queried and for some reason made a wry face.

“I am not worthy of such a compliment. I am a coward.”

“Coward? Why?”

“I am ashamed to think about it. Nevertheless I must confess to you, Comrade Commander. Once I called on the children in Maanshan with a dozen hares I had caught. How they were rejoiced seeing the hares! I was pleased, too. Then the head of the political department of the 1st Division suddenly blocked my way and rebuked me, saying ‘Who are you? Why are you hanging around here without permission? Who told

you to offer such charity? Don't you know that they have been labelled as suspects?' He dressed me down and waved me away as if I were a fly."

"What happened next?"

"I returned to the arsenal with the hares."

"Were you scared?"

"Yes, I was afraid and indignant. Now I have sufficient courage to talk big, but I dared not to in those days. If the head of the political department had branded me a counterrevolutionary, who helped young 'Minsaengdan' members, that would have been the end of me. But fortunately there was no such branding. Subsequently I could not visit the children's village. I am ashamed of my actions."

Hunter Pak frowned at Kim Hong Bom, head of the political department of the 1st Division, who, wearing leggings and straw sandals, was walking ahead of us in the snow.

"What do you feel now? Are you still afraid of him?"

"No, I have nothing to fear. I feel strong by your side. It disgusts me to think of those years of the oppressive 'Minsaengdan' fuss."

"It was literally a nightmare. The younger generation will bow to you for the mere visit you paid to the children taking the hares with you. How noble and beautiful it is to love and sympathize with children!"

When I said this, his strained look was relaxed and he strode along. I was tearfully grateful to this stern, brusque and dignified man for his candid confession: it was typical of the diary entry of a literary young girl. The upright and pure character, expressed in his words, behaviour and kindness, moved me to the heart.

If anyone asks me when I am most happy and joyful, I will respond:

“Joyful and happy events occur every day in my life, because I live optimistically all my life among people who are the most independent politically, most progressive ideologically and most civilized and pure-hearted culturally and morally, in a country, which creates the most beautiful and ideal life in the world. Every day and hour of my life is full of joy and happiness.

“It gives me particular pleasure or happiness to be among the people, discover amongst them excellent people who can set an example for the whole country and debate state affairs, their living and our future.

“It also gives me great happiness to be among the children, we call the flower buds of the country.”

I can say that this is my lifelong view of happiness.

The talk with Pak Yong Sun no doubt gave me such satisfaction, because of my view of happiness. Pak Yong Sun was one such exemplary revolutionary and model conscientious man, I discovered in life. His practice in subsequent years proved once again that he was a man of unusually strong revolutionary principles, who never compromised with injustice and was fair and square in all his dealings.

In 1959 Pak toured different places in northeast China, leading a group of visitors to the old battlefields of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. One hot summer night his group lodged in the front room of a simple, cosy farmhouse. The farmers in the village papered the walls of the room and spread new mats for the guests from the neighbouring country, who were continuing a laborious expeditionary tour every day following the footprints of their forerunners.

At midnight, however, some group members, who were sensitive to bed-bugs, left the room one after another with their beddings, owing to the bed-bugs and spent the night on a straw mat spread out in the yard.

Pak Yong Sun alone remained in the room all night. The group members considered that the headman was either an unusually sound sleeper or immune to blood-sucking.

Next morning he grouped all the members and criticized them severely:

“You expeditionary group representatives of one country have slept on the straw mat in the open air like a vagrant tribe, unable to endure the pestering of bed-bugs. Don’t you realize that you have rejected the hospitality of this village people, who bothered to provide us with good lodging? Haven’t you any sense of honour or patience to endure such inconveniences? If you disgrace our delegation again, I will send you back to the homeland, as I deem it a serious offence.”

Only then did the group members realize that this upright and taciturn man, a veteran of guerrilla war, had remained in the room, despite the pestering bed-bugs, because he could not afford to abuse the host’s hospitality. I subsequently heard this anecdote from the group members.

On our arrival at the secret camp, the children crowded out of the log-cabin vying with one another shouting “General!” The voices of the children, ringing like a silver bell under the sky of the secret camp evoked strong emotions in my body and soul. I hurried to them. They were the children I came to see. They were the children who followed the revolutionary army to this place, treading the thorny path across the steep mountains, deep forests and snow-fields, determined to avenge the enemy for killing their parents and brothers by beating, bayoneting and burning them. They were the children, who had awaited us in sorrow through the winter in this merciless, desolate mountain, in a prison

without a wire fence, falsely accused of relations with the “Minsaengdan”.

The national chauvinists and Left opportunists, who had become used to putting the slogans of ultra-revolutionary “principle” and “class spirit” above the interests of the people, mocking and maltreating the masses, turned their faces away from the children claiming that they were a burden of the revolutionary army. Afraid that the location of the secret camp would be exposed to the enemy if the children resided nearby, they built a small kingdom for their self-protection and were living in seclusion in a deep forest. And they forbade the children from approaching edges of the forest. These “stepfathers” had not given them even a handful of grain or a piece of cloth, although they knew full well that the children were living on grass roots, shivering with cold in the severe winter cold.

Even the children’s sympathizers as well as the individuals who dressed their wounds with ointment and bandaged them, blew warm breath on their frozen cheeks and hands, patted them with affection and cried with the children when they were crying, had been registered on the list of “Minsaengdan” suspects and persecuted.

On the way to Maanshan, leading the Children’s Corps members, Kim Rak Chon, a crack shot, who became acting commander of the Independent Regiment after Yun Chang Bom’s death, had suits made for them from the fabrics, kept by the workers of the regiment’s supply department, as he could not remain indifferent to the ragged children. The children thanked him tearfully. For this kindness, however, he was accused of being a “Minsaengdan” member and executed. Not a trace of human or communist fragrance remained in this secret camp, where sympathy for children was regarded as a crime and rejection was

considered as a merit. Scores of eyeballs glistening with tears and surging towards me, accused all those who had lost human nature and discarded even elementary human morals.

The children running at full speed towards me suddenly hesitated. The tallest leading boy halted in the middle of the open space as if he had come across an obstacle. The other children following him stopped abruptly, like waves breaking on a rock, and looked at me from a distance. Seeing them hesitating in a crowd, I asked Pak Yong Sun in a low voice:

“Comrade Pak, why are they hesitating like that?”

“They may feel ashamed. Look at their shabby appearances.”

I was struck by their ragged appearances. They were virtually naked. Their burnt, torn and worn-out clothes were in tatters. Threatened with death and starved for months, they all looked pale.

The miserable sight of these young sufferers reminded me of my brother Yong Ju, whom I had never seen since our farewell at Xiaoshahe. Yong Ju was about the same age. My youngest brother saw me off in the waist-deep reed field, choking down his sobs together with another brother Chol Ju: that sight was still fresh in my memory. I regretted that I had not worried about my brothers, not writing to them for four years ever since leaving Xiaoshahe, entrusting the future of my brothers to neighbours, who were neither relatives or even carried the same surname. When she met me in the Donggang secret camp in spring 1936, Kim Hye Sun told me that Yong Ju was directing a Children’s Corps organization in Antu and once went to Chechangzi leading a children’s art troupe in spring or summer 1935 and gave performances staying there several days. She said that she cooked for art troupe members at that time .

Claiming that his song was impressive, Kim Hye Sun recited from memory the words of the song. The Saenal Children's Union and the Paeksan Youth League members used to sing this song when I directed the art troupe activity in Fusong. The song reads:

*Dear friends, participants in this meeting!
Please take care of your backs and shoulders.
What fun it would be
If you strained them with laughter?
Then you won't need the medical
men Hua Tuo and Pian Que.
Let's better do a jig.
But then, shoulders can strain from dancing.
So, take care of your backs,
participants in this meeting!*

Hua Tuo and Pian Que were famous doctors in ancient China.

I was greatly relieved by the news she brought me in Donggang. However, while visiting the children in Maanshan, I had not learned of the whereabouts of my brother. Looking at the sad eyes of the children, who crowded vacantly like late autumn fallen leaves, which were blown into a corner by the wind, I thought that my Yong Ju was also shivering with cold and that he would go hungry in rags like those children and miss this unkind elder brother.

How could those cruel and hateful men label as "Minsaengdan" members children who had followed them to this mountain with a determination to take part in the revolution? Surely they could realize

that they were not and could not have become “Minsaengdan” members. Had they no mercy or sympathy to feel pity for them and take care of them? How could those men, who had pledged to dedicate their lives to human emancipation, remain indifferent, while children got into this mess, children who were the weakest human beings and needed care more than anyone else?

Pang Jong Hwan, a writer and famous champion of the children’s movement, who coined the word *Orini* (child—Tr.) and established “Children’s Day” for the first time in Korea appealed to the world in his article *Promise on Children’s Day* :

“Treat children better than grown-ups. Adults can be compared to roots and children to sprouts. If roots sit on sprouts, because roots are more important, then the tree will die. Only when the roots raise the sprouts, can the tree (the family) thrive...”

This is one paragraph of the leaflet he wrote and distributed on the occasion of “Children’s Day”, May 1, 1923. Every word of the appeal reveals his warm affection for children.

When I attended Changdok School, my teacher Kang Ryang Uk often said similar things to the parents of schoolchildren. I am not sure whether he copied them from the *Promise on Children’s Day* or adopted them in his own way. Anyhow, I saw truth in his words whenever he said to the schoolchildren’s parents and brothers that one should respect children and that otherwise one cannot enjoy respect from them.

Their appeal to treat children better than grown-ups is the voice of a noble idea which can ring out from the souls of people who love the younger generation more than themselves.

How strong an appeal to love for children is the famous saying “A world without children would be a world without sun”!

All great men in the world, who left their names in history ardently loved children. It was not only Karl Liebknecht’s writings, which revealed that Marx was a faithful friend of children. The anecdote of how this great man used to become a “horse” or “coach” for his charming children is used throughout the world as a good topic of conversation. People still remember Pestalozzi of Switzerland, because he was an excellent educator who devoted all his property and life to children.

All the great men of the East and West recalled by mankind were children’s true friends, teachers and fathers, who regarded love for children as the noblest of all virtues.

Why did the masters of Maanshan, who were neither nobles nor bourgeoisie, the communists in this secret camp, who preached humanity and chanted human emancipation whenever they opened their mouths, make the children so miserable?

I could not repress my surging indignation. It was appalling to see that pure young souls, who had considered the revolution more sacred than their own lives, had been trampled upon mercilessly in their buds. I was one of those who knew them inside out. I knew better than anyone else how these children had overcome famine in Chechangzi together with adults, how they carried rice balls to the people’s revolutionary army in Naitoushan and stood guard day and night to help them. Each child’s biography remained fresh in my memory like a story. The experience of nine-year-old Ri O Song from Baicaogou, who was now shivering with cold like a rain-wet chick under the shoulder of a taller boy, covering his exposed knees with frozen hands, eloquently spoke of

the grave nature of the hardships experienced by these children. He had already witnessed mass starvation in Chechangzi. When hungry, like other children he found frogs in hibernation or dug out seeds in the field, when the spring sowing season ended.

Ri O Song's father died of hunger in Chechangzi. He picked barley ears in the field, rubbed them between his hands and placed a small handful of grain into his father's mouth, but could not prevent his father's death.

With his younger sister, he overcame spring famine before the barley harvest season, by living on herb roots and tree barks, and left Chechangzi following the people's revolutionary army, which withdrew to Naitoushan. But he was also treated as a "Minsaengdan" suspect because he was a brother of Kim Rak Chon's wife.

On the long march to Naitoushan, fourteen Children's Corps members, headed by Son Myong Jik, fully demonstrated the indomitable fighting spirit and loyalty to the revolution, which they cultivated through their organizational life. Waist-deep snow and steep mountains blocked their way forward and the "punitive" troops followed on their heels.

On the first day of their march, they ran out of food. They appeased their hunger by chewing pine needles or making snow balls and licking them. When a maize cake was divided among fourteen for one meal, it was decent food. When they slept in the open at night, Son Myong Jik, Ju To Il, Kim Thae Chon and other older boys from higher classes sheltered the children under ten years of age in their arms from the wind and kept watch, snatching a short sleep in turns.

Son Myong Jik, head of the Children's Corps, demonstrated a distinguished organizational ability and leadership, when looking after

the ranks. Ever since his days in Wangyugou, he worked well with the Children's Corps members. Once he became engaged in underground work in the enemy area led by Kim Jae Su. He had begun learning classics in the village school at the age of seven and mastered a primer of Chinese characters and *Myongsim Pogam* before he was ten and moreover was clever and quick in visual learning. Consequently he was the right boy for underground work. In his Children's Corps days he managed to oust seven reactionary teachers including a Japanese language teacher from his school by mobilizing the organization and thereby won the confidence of revolutionaries from his early days.

His family was made up of true revolutionaries: it had inherited a patriotic spirit through generations. His grandfather was a commander of the righteous volunteers around the time of "annexation of Korea by Japan". His father Son Hwa Jun was a revolutionary fighter, engaged in secret work as the head of one hundred households in the enemy's administration. Kim Pong Sok (Son Pong Sok), a male cousin of his father, was my faithful orderly, who died several hours before the liberation of the country, while leading a small unit's operations.

What crime had these children committed, if any? They followed us to this remote mountain blowing on their frozen hands, saying that they would follow the revolutionary army even if they had to die. They would snatch a light sleep around a campfire, covering their bodies with dried leaves longing for the liberated homeland, while the rich men's children dined on all kinds of delicacies on a table inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Why couldn't we dress these brave buds with decent cotton clothes and serve them with bean gruel, even if we could not afford to supply them with luxurious food and clothing?

“Hey, boys and girls, raise your heads. You are not to blame for your worn-out clothing. Come quick.”

I approached the children with open arms.

I had hardly finished speaking when tens of children wept loudly, surrounding me.

I went into the barracks with the crying children. Four or five children who were bedridden from illness for several days still lying, huddled up in a corner of the room without a blanket. I inquired into the disease they were suffering from: nobody replied. The soldiers guarding the camp said that it was an internal disease, but they were not any more specific. Only Pak Yong Sun knew full well that they were suffering from heartbreak. What disease could they name, when they themselves had branded the innocent children as “Minsaengdan” suspects?

I called my orderly and told him to take out my blanket from the knapsack. It was my one and only blanket, which we had captured when attacking a Japanese supply convoy in Wangqing. I thought I would feel much easier, if I covered the sick children with even one blanket. The men took the hint from my words and bustled about to remove their blankets from their knapsacks. I returned the blankets to them.

“Comrades, take them back. Can my mind be warm, even if I cover myself with one hundred blankets, when these children are ill in bed and shiver with cold? You’d better take care of them, before you become concerned about me.”

The supply department members of the secret camp dropped their heads on hearing my words.

I continued in a thick voice:

I cannot help pondering about the revolutionary view of worth. Why did we start the revolution and why do we still carry on the revolution

overcoming all hardships? We have embarked on the revolutionary path, not because we want to destroy something, but because we love people. We rose up in revolt against the hateful world to free people from all sorts of injustice and abuses, defend humanity and safeguard all the wealth and beauty created by mankind. If we had not sympathized with the oppressed class, if we had not felt compassion for the people, who were crying in sorrow as a ruined nation, and if we had not loved our parents, wives and children who were living in poverty deprived of all rights, we would have returned to our well-heated homes, unable to endure the hardships even for a single day.

How can we communists leave children in such a miserable state? Your unstained love for the people, the love you cherished, when you set out on the road of revolution, began to cool down. This is what I regret now.

In a sense, our revolution represents a revolution for the younger generation. How can we claim to be working for the revolution and be proud of being communists, without feeding children properly or providing them with decent clothing?

The children are the flowers of the working class, the nation and mankind. It is the noble duty of us communists to cultivate these flowers with due care. The future of the revolution depends on our education of children. The revolution is not carried out by one generation: it is consummated through many generations. Today we are responsible for the revolution; tomorrow, however, these children will be the main force, bearing the destiny of the revolution. Consequently, if we are to be loyal to the Korean revolution right to the end, we must raise stoutly our successors, who will carry forward our revolution. Moreover, they are the bereaved children of our comrades-in-arms. For the sake of our

loyalty to these comrades-in-arms, we must value and take good care of these children.

If anybody turns away from the children for fear of persecution by higher authorities, how can he hold out his chest to the muzzle of an enemy's rifle? You have become unconsciously stupid, recoiled in a shell of self-protection, instead of sympathizing with suffering people. Comrades, please ask yourselves one question. Is this the behaviour of communists who are out to transform the world?

If you despise children, you despise yourselves. If we neglect them or shy away from their difficulties for the sake of our own self-protection, posterity will not remember us in the remote future. Our efforts for the children will affect their attitude towards us after many decades as well as the looks of the country they planned to build. The more warmly we love them, the more prosperous, civilized and beautiful the homeland will become in future.

Comrades, by loving the children we immediately mean that we love the future. Thanks to the efforts of these children, our country will be built into a garden, which is bright with flowers. Let us take better care of the younger generation and train them for the bright future of our country and humanity.

This was the gist of my speech in the barracks that day.

I can say that this is my view on the younger generation, a view I have maintained throughout my 80 years. I still feel the greatest value of life and happiness, when valuing and taking care of them.

What pleasure would we find in our lives without children? This belief motivated us to bring up the pencil problem, as an item on the agenda of the first session of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea and prompted us to celebrate New Year's Day with children

every year. Our love for the younger generation is also expressed in our respect and love for the teachers who educate the children.

One of the first Cabinet members of our Republic was Minister of Public Health Ri Pyong Nam. He was a famous doctor and a conscientious patriot, engaged in medical service as a pediatrician since the pre-liberation days. He came to Pyongyang from Seoul to attend the April North-South Joint Conference. At our request he became the first Minister of Public Health of our Republic. He was distinguished by his warm love for children and great skill in dealing with them.

The pediatrician always carried a small toy bell in his pocket to soothe crying babies. By jingling the toy bell several times, he could calm crying babies, who were suffering from recurrent disease and examine them easily. Thanks to humorous looks which outdid any clown, and various jocularities which would make anyone burst their sides with laughing, he flattered his baby patients and treated them in an instant. This great skill always gained him respect and friendship from his patients.

On one occasion my daughter Kyong Hui caught measles and suffered greatly: a rash did not appear on her skin. Worse still her disease was complicated by pneumonia, due to careless exposure to the wind. She cried all the time, calling out for her mother. Whenever his younger sister cried out with pain, her brother Kim Jong Il would say, "You must not call for mother in the presence of father." The pediatricians of the government hospital were at a loss what to do. At that moment Health Minister Ri Pyong Nam came to her sickbed.

He recognized the symptoms without even taking out a stethoscope and diagnosed her disease. "Pneumonia came before measles," he said. In accordance with the Minister's prescriptions, the pediatricians gave

her oxygen inhalation. Kyong Hui regained consciousness from a coma within a single day, bursting out in tears. At the same time a rash appeared.

I asked Ri Pyong Nam, “Doctor Ri, how is she? Why is she crying?”

“That’s a good sign. When they get better, the children burst into tears. Your daughter will recover completely within three days.”

Ri Pyong Nam took out his pocket watch—the frame and string were all made of gold and an amber toy was attached to it—and waved it before her nose. He used the gold watch as a sedative with the toy bell to soothe infant patients. My daughter stopped crying and smiled. She completely recovered in three days. I admired his skill.

“Indeed, it’s wonderful. Your prediction comes true every time. You are more a friend of children and child psychologist than doctor. In my opinion pediatricians should love children more passionately than anyone else.”

“Yes, they should. A man who does not love children should not apply his stethoscope to their chests.”

I met Ri Pyong Nam in Kosanjin in autumn 1950. He remained unchanged, save for one thing. He had a shabby pocket watch without string, took it out and looked at it when necessary. I asked him what had become of the bright gold watch which he had used to soothe Kyong Hui. He replied that he had contributed it to the country to assist in the procurement of military equipment. I was greatly moved by his patriotic devotion and unstained conscience, which involved a sacrifice of his all for victory in war. As his watch was so shabby, I subsequently gave him a new wristwatch.

These facts proved to me that only those who love children wholeheartedly can be true patriots and only those who love human beings

sincerely can be real patriots. Love for the younger generation is the most devoted and dynamic kind of human love; it is the purest and most beautiful of all paeans dedicated to humanity. Communists create such paeans and serve and fight for them.

If there had been one friend of children like Ri Pyong Nam in Maanshan, the children would not have been driven to such a plight.

I thought that now the time had come to spend the 20 *yuan* my mother had given me before she passed away. She had told me to use the money only in an adversity, which could not be overcome without money. She had earned it by working on hire until her fingers bled.

My boyhood was spent without any knowledge of money. My father never gave money to his children. When I needed notebooks or pencils, he asked my mother to buy them, forbidding me to go to a shop or market. My father held that if one became interested in money in childhood, one would grow up a miser and snob devoid of regard for one's country and nation.

One day, my father, who was bedridden, suggested going sightseeing and came out of the house taking me along. It was an unprecedented event for my bedridden father to go onto the street with me. He had occasionally taken me along when he needed an interpreter, because he did not speak Chinese well. I was a faithful interpreter for my father.

“Apparently, something urgent has happened, as he only leaves the house when he is seriously ill. Why is he in a hurry? Whom is he going to meet?” I thought as I helped my father out of the bed.

Only when I was outside did I remember that it was my birthday. As my father was sick in bed, I had no time to think of my birthday.

After looking round the street, my father unexpectedly went into a shop taking me by the hand. This outing went beyond all my

expectations. “Why has he brought me to this shop?” When I looked at a show-case, silently preoccupied by this thought, my father told me to choose a pocket watch. This shop displayed a lot of pocket watches; some of them bore portraits of Sun Yat-sen.

I chose one without Sun’s portrait and my father paid 3 *yuan* 50 *fen* for it.

He said in a serious tone of voice:

“You are old enough to have a watch. A man fighting to win back his country must value two things. One is his comrades and the other is time. I give you this birthday present in the hope that you will value time. Keep it well.”

I accepted his words as meaning that I had become a man.

Somehow I felt that I was hearing his last wish. He apparently felt that his days were numbered. In this frame of mind, he gave me the watch and also passed on to me the independence cause which he had devoted all his life to. The event amounted to a celebration of my manhood.

Less than two months later, he passed away. I subsequently entered the Hwasong Uisuk School with this watch, met like-minded people there and organized the Down-with-Imperialism Union. During the guerrilla struggle, I followed my daily routine by this watch and set the time of attacks and rendezvous by this watch.

Around the time of the Pochonbo battle, I received a wristwatch in place of the pocket watch. My comrades-in-arms suggested that I wear a new wristwatch for the sake of a commander’s dignity, as my pocket watch was now outmoded. I gave one of my comrades the pocket watch I had kept for 10 years and put on the new wristwatch.

My father thereby made sure that I grew up with no knowledge about money until I began to fight for the revolution. Only in Jilin did I buy myself things in shops.

If I say that in this way I became indifferent to money, the reader will not consider it strange. Reviewing my 80 years of hardships, I would like to tell young people that if you are captivated by money and wealth, you become a dirty man, who is disloyal to the leader and the Party, the fatherland and fellow people and, worse still, thinks nothing of his parents, wife and children.

Strict control of the children, to prevent them becoming interested in money from childhood, represented a peculiar family tradition established by my father.

However, my mother broke with this tradition for the first time, when she faced her death and gave me 20 *yuan* as an inheritance, the epitome of her life of hardships.

I received the money as a treasure, feeling as if the whole of my mother's hard life were condensed in a few notes. These notes were like an amulet for me. This money dispelled hunger, cold and fear from me. I felt as if my mother were protecting me with her body and soul, always staying near to me. I decided not to spend this 20 *yuan* on myself, whatever might happen. I wanted to keep it for ever, if possible, as a token of my mother's love for me.

However, grave reality shook my determination many times. I hesitated many times over use of this money, fumbling in my pocket. We had faced a number of situations, where money was required.

When we parted with the memorable old man Ma, who saved my company on the heights of Luozigou, I offered this money to him as a token of my gratitude. It was only natural for a man to wish to thank his

saviour. If I failed to repay his kindness when I had money in my pocket, after consuming the old man's provisions for one year, by staying in his mountain hut for nearly 20 days, heaven would blame me. But this saintly old man declined the offer. "While fighting to liberate the country you may find yourselves in greater difficulty than now. Use the money in such times. I am nearly dead and money is no good in this remote mountain, so I don't need money. I can make a living by catching wild animals with my noose."

So the 20 *yuan*, a token of my mother's love for her son, remained in my pocket.

If I dressed the ragged children with this money, my mother, too, would be happy. "Mother, four years have passed since I left you with this money. I have kept it until now to provide against future need, although I have gone through many crises. Now, however, I must spend it. I must provide clothing for children who have no kith and kin in the world. Although I realize that I may encounter more trying situations in the future, I have made up my mind. I hope you will support my determination. You know that I am very fond of children," I said to myself, turning to my mother who lay buried alone on the cold slope of the Tuqidian valley.

"Go to Fusong county town with this money and buy cloth. Make clothes for the children," I ordered regimental political commissar Kim San Ho.

He was extremely embarrassed and received the money with reluctance. As he had been my companion for years, working for the Anti-Imperialist Youth League since his days in Wujiazi, where he had lost one finger bitten by a straw cutter, while working as a farmhand for

a landlord, he knew the details of this 20 *yuan* better than any other man.

“General, I must obey your order, but I feel my hands trembling. What kind of money is this?”

He went to Fusong county town and bought seven or eight rolls of gabardine-like fabrics, which cost ten *fen* a foot. Although he was a man of great strength he said that his tongue nearly lolled out carrying them on his back. On the way back he was robbed of all the fabrics by the remnants of mountain rebels who had become bandits. The bandits ran away after binding him to a tree, so he was nearly frozen to death, although he was strong as an ox. I sent a small unit to save Kim San Ho and take back the fabrics.

Seven or eight rolls of cloth were not enough to provide all the children with clothing. I wrote to Zhang Wei-hua and sent Kim San Ho again to Fusong with the letter. Kim San Ho obtained a lot of cloth with the help of Zhang. We made clothes for the children and one hundred soldiers enlisted in the new division, after shaking off the stigma of “Minsaengdan”. Now my heavy heart was somewhat lightened.

In fact, 20 *yuan* was not a large sum. But I felt greatly relieved at the time. Then we left Maanshan.

The children in new clothes were ecstatic and begged us to take them with us. I agreed to take them despite numerous objections. Apart from children who were too young to follow us and the sick, most of them joined us on the arduous southward march. It was quite an adventure for the revolutionary army, which was moving from one place to another to engage in guerrilla warfare, to take the teenagers with it. Although it was unprecedented in the history of guerrilla warfare and went against common knowledge, I was determined to train them in the flames and

raise them all into men of iron will. It was hardest to jump over fallen trees and cross rivers. Consequently we assigned each soldier the task of protecting the children in battle and on the march. Our soldiers protected the children as the apples of their eyes. They brought them up, carrying the children in their arms, when passing fallen trees and taking them on their backs when crossing rivers and protecting them with their bodies from the enemy fire.

The children who followed me to the Mt. Paektu area all joined the revolutionary army and grew up into excellent military and political cadres through fierce battles. Nine-year-old Ri O Song who had stayed in the Dajianchang secret camp for a while, because he was not allowed to follow the army, also served as Sun Chang-xiang's orderly and later came to Changbai and became my orderly. He was scarcely 12 years old in May 1939 when my unit advanced to the Musan area. He could not cross the river by himself because it was too deep, so I carried him in my arms across the river. The children who grew up under our wings now play a pivotal role in our Party, state and army.

I was so indignant and shocked at the sight of ragged children in Maanshan that I resolved to establish a system after the country's liberation, whereby the state would provide children with clothes free of charge. In the latter half of the 1950s, when we were reconstructing the country, which had been devastated in the war, our state began to supply children with clothes. It was a miraculous success, which could only have been achieved by the Korean communists who had experienced the sorrow in Maanshan. Every year we spend hundreds of millions of *won* on children's clothing.

Foreign visitors to our country sometimes ask me; "If the state spends so much money on free clothing, surely the state loses out? Everyone can

buy cloth in the shop and make his or her own suit. Why should the state provide children with school uniforms? How do you make up for the losses from free clothing?”

I respond by recalling the days when I had met the ragged children in Maanshan. It is only natural that politicians from capitalist countries with no experience of the anti-Japanese war do not understand the historic meaning of the policy of the Government of the Republic and consider it only from the financial point of view. A “loss” incurred by the state for the good of the people is not a loss. The more money it spends on the people’s welfare, the greater happiness our Party feels; and the greater the “loss” it incurs for the children’s sake, the more our state is satisfied.

I believe that as long as the socialist system exists and the traditions of Mt. Paektu are carried forward in our country, such a communist policy as state provision of clothing for children will continue to be implemented in the future.

As well as all the children of the country, the former Children’s Corps members of Maanshan and anti-Japanese war veterans receive every season new clothes, thanks to the benevolent care of Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il.

On my 70th birthday Ri O Song and Son Myong Jik appeared before me, wearing new uniforms which the Secretary gave them as a gift, and recalled the days in Maanshan with deep emotion.

3. Revolutionary Comrade-in-Arms

Zhang Wei-Hua (1)

As I mentioned in the previous section, shortly after Kim San Ho's return to Maanshan with cloth I sent him back again to the Fusong county town. Cloth worth 20 *yuan* was not enough to make clothes for all the Children's Corps members. Cloth could be captured from the enemy in battle, but I did not intend to fight in close combat in this county town, which had been associated with me for a long time. The new division we organized gave the revolutionary army a new look. We exploited this success to increase its military and political capabilities.

If we had opened fire before building up our strength, we might have been surrounded by the enemy in Fusong and encountered many obstacles on our way to the Mt. Paektu area.

We could only obtain cloth with help from Zhang Wei-hua. Only Zhang Wei-hua, the son of a rich man, my comrade-in-arms and an active member of the organization who was loyal to the cause of anti-Japanese national salvation, would regard my headache as his own and save me from difficulties at any cost.

Kim San Ho was somewhat astonished when I ordered him to go to Fusong again. His bewilderment was only natural, because he had been told to go, where he had been a short while ago. I wanted to let him

relax. However, I inevitably assigned him to another heavy task for the children and the newly-formed unit. He was the right man to deal with Zhang Wei-hua without a hitch. When Zhang Wei-hua was teaching at Samsong School in Wujiazi, under the childhood name of Zhang Ya-qing, Kim San Ho worked with the young people there in the branch organization of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. Although they had maintained no personal or business relations, his backgrounds could serve as an identification card.

“I am sorry, Comrade San Ho. Whenever I have a difficult task, I feel obliged to turn to you. I don’t know why. Isn’t your commander so cruel?”

I said this, when Kim San Ho reported to me to receive a new assignment. He had been taking a rest, after returning to Maanshan together with the small unit, which had rescued him.

“Please don’t speak in a roundabout way. It’s not like you, Commander. Tell me straightforwardly what I should do,” he said in a bass voice, after looking at me with bloodshot eyes for a few seconds.

His words comforted me considerably.

“Good, you must leave for Fusong again tomorrow morning. I’ve decided to send you to Zhang Wei-hua. After all, I think we need his assistance. Do you remember a Chinese young man, who was teaching at a primary school in Wujiazi?”

“Do you mean Mr. Zhang Ya-qing? Of course, I remember. I cannot forget his eyes and how he peered shyly at people over his spectacles. His guitar play sounded good.”

“Well, then, I will write a letter of introduction for your visit. Make a round of the town first, reconnoitring it carefully and find Zhang Wan-

cheng's house in Xiaonanmen Street. This Zhang is Zhang Wei-hua's father, one of the richest men in Fusong."

Kim San Ho looked at me, beaming with a smile and throwing out his breast. He smiled happily, as if he were going for a picnic.

This unusually tall man resembled a diligent farmer and was respected by his colleagues. When he had work to do, he was vivacious, whereas when he had nothing to do, he was in low spirits as if suffering from a disease caused by pent-up rage. His looks clearly indicated whether he had something to do or not.

I wrote to Zhang Wei-hua through the early morning hour, which was most precious to me in my daily routine.

Someone made a double-bottomed bean oil can to carry the letter in the bottom space. Kim San Ho left Maanshan, carrying this bean oil can with satisfaction. To pass him off as an oil peddler capable of clearing a search by the military or police, Pak Yong Sun found a cloth for him, which was shabbier than a coolie cloth and glistened with oil-stained grime.

I waited anxiously for news from Zhang Wei-hua. I was lost in thoughts about Zhang Wei-hua throughout the several sleepless nights I spent waiting for Kim San Ho. Every second passed in my yearning for Zhang.

How good I would have felt to go down into town in the guise of a coolie with a face towel, like a dustcloth hanging from my belt, as Kim San Ho had done, and meet Zhang Wei-hua! How happy it would have been to be able to take a walk with Zhang along Xiaonanmen Street, where my old house was, meet my teachers and old classmates in Fusong Senior Primary School No. 1 and call on my father's grave in Yangdicun!

If I had not had a lot of work to do and had not been surrounded by my comrades-in-arms, who were protecting me with greater concern than they would their own relations, I might have ventured to go to Fusong at any risk. However, so many people knew me in that place, where I was eager to go. As I had lived in Fusong for a long time in my school days, I was widely known as a man who was *persona non grata* to the military and the town police as well. Fusong was another den of warlords, where I had been arrested by the local authorities and held in custody. But I loved this town as much as ever, because a part of my childhood had been spent there, and my father's grave and dear Chinese friend Zhang Wei-hua were there.

On one side of the crossroad in Fusong, there was a distillery called Dongshaoguo, where I met Zhang Wei-hua on my way to south Manchuria on an expedition in June 1932. The name of this distillery was changed later, but it had been restored to its original name, when it became known that I met Zhang Wei-Hua on my way to south Manchuria there. On my 80th birthday Zhang Jin-quan (Zhang Wei-hua's son—Tr.) presented me the famous liquor, Dongshaoguo, produced in this distillery. At that time I felt the warm hearts of the Fusong people again.

I met Zhang Wei-hua many times in this distillery. We exchanged our opinions over the revolution and our future. Zhang told me that his wife was pregnant. She gave birth to Zhang Jin-quan, who is now living in Fusong.

Zhang Wei-hua admired the steady appearance of my men.

“Song Ju, your men are hale and hearty. You organized a fine army within less than one year after we last met on the train. You have

achieved a great deal. You can now accomplish a great cause. Marvellous!”

He praised me profusely, turning up his thumb. His artless compliment nearly perplexed me.

“Wei-hua, don’t extol me to the skies. We have only started. We are still babies. In giving birth to these babies, the dozens of rifles you gave us produced a great result. You played the role of midwife, by rendering distinguished service to the birth of our army.”

“Don’t praise me too much. I reproach myself for my inability and lethargy. You still trust me, don’t you?”

“Of course I trust you. I trust you very much. My affection for you will not change, even if the River Songhua may flow backwards.”

Zhang Wei-hua suddenly grasped my hands and gazed at me eagerly.

“If so, accept me into your unit. I want to take up arms and fight the Japanese. If you don’t agree, I won’t allow you to leave Fusong.”

His point-blank request made me joyful.

“Really, Wei-hua?”

“Yes, of course. Ever since your unit’s arrival in Fusong, I have only thought about this. My wife agreed....”

“Then, your father? Will he let you go?”

“It matters little whether he does or not. If I want I can go. As you said on the train, there would be no family without the country. So we must carry out the revolution, regardless of the wishes of our parents. Chen Han-zhang has taken part in the revolution, even though he is a son of a rich man. Therefore, I can work at least among the Chinese national salvation army units.”

“It is a good idea for you to join the guerrilla army. But, Wei-hua, the revolution needs more than just one front: armed struggle. I hope you will stay in Fusong and work underground for the revolution.”

“Underground revolutionary work? Do you mean that you cannot admit me into the guerrilla army?”

“No, I don’t mean that. I want you to fight on another front. The underground revolutionary struggle, to educate the masses and rally them into an organization, is no less important than armed struggle. Unless the fighters on this front rally the masses closely, the armed struggle will not have a strong foundation. Consequently we decided to build up a strong underground revolutionary front in Fusong. I want you to command this front.”

Zhang Wei-hua polished his glasses slowly, dropping his head as if in low spirits.

“So you intend to send me to the second front, which cannot be reached by enemy fire. You think I cannot endure hardships because I have lived in luxury in a rich family?”

“Of course, I must admit that I have considered such a matter. Wei-hua, your physical build is not up to guerrilla warfare, which requires trekking steep mountains. I am frank with you. I do not doubt your mental strength, but I worry about your physical condition. So you should help our work as much as you can by running a photo studio or teaching at school rather than undergo hardships in mountains. Your reputation as a rich man’s son is very useful! It can hide your revolutionary activity.”

The next day, too, I persuaded Zhang Wei-hua patiently. In the end, he accepted my advice.

On the day we left Fusong, Zhang said as he saw me off.

“Frankly speaking, I was determined to join the guerrilla army, because I wanted to be by your side; I had nothing against the underground struggle. My life without Song Ju is like an orchestra without violins. You may not know how much I have yearned for you. Don’t forget me wherever you go. I have no closer and more precious friend than you, Song Ju. Take care of yourself.”

Zhang Wei-hua said farewell in tears. That day I enlisted him in a secret organization of the Young Communist League.

Four years had passed since then. Four years was quite a long time. However, I had been concerned about him and yearned for him all these years.

I waited for Kim San Ho impatiently.

On his arrival in Fusong county town, Kim San Ho peddled about the town for a while and discovered that Zhang was running the Xiongdi Photo Studio. There was only a sign. In actual fact, it constituted the headquarters, which directed underground organizations in Fusong. There Zhang Wei-hua maintained contacts with organization members, while earning money. When Kim San Ho called the owner and asked, “May I see you, Mr. Zhang?” he showed the guest into the photo development room.

“General Kim Il Sung sent me to you. He is staying in the vicinity of Fusong. He asked me to see how you are living, so I came here on his behalf,” said Kim San Ho to Zhang Wei-hua.

Zhang recognized him and was glad to see him.

“Oh, Kim Song Ju! He is near here? Can you guide me to his place?”

“It is difficult to go there right now, because it is quite away from here. We will choose a suitable place nearby and inform you. What about meeting General Kim Il Sung there?”

Zhang Wei-hua looked at San Ho dubiously, but, as he read my letter, a broad smile spread over his face.

“All right. I will wait for your message. Please tell Kim Song Ju that I received his letter with thanks. And also report that I am healthy and have been faithful to our promise.”

Kim San Ho came back to the secret camp in high spirits. His report, replete with news, was the greatest gift I received in spring 1936. I could not calm down, as if I were intoxicated by the fragrance of spring and strolled about the secret camp until I was tired. I proposed as our rendezvous a cave near Miaoling, Fusong County. Most comrades agreed. But some of them, knowing that I was going to meet the son of a rich man who owned dozens of hectares of land and many insam fields and private soldiers, objected to my trip to Miaoling, feeling uneasy about the venture.

“Comrade Commander, may I take the liberty of suggesting that you’d be wise not to meet the son of a rich man Zhang? You say he is a friend from primary school and organization member for some years, but class nature will not change. Anyhow he is the son of the exploiting class,” one of them said.

I brushed him aside.

“Comrades, I thank you for your concern for my safety. But I cannot follow your advice. You now talk nervously about class nature, as if your Commander were falling into a trap. It is an insult to my precious comrade-in-arms, Zhang Wei-hua, as well as an insult to our policy of the united front.”

“Comrade Commander, when we worked in local organizations we were told that man’s class nature could not change and that we must not compromise with rich men on any account. Since our enlistment in the

revolutionary army, many commanding officers have taught us this. So we believe only in the principle of struggle between landlords and peasants and capitalists and workers and are convinced that we must overthrow or liquidate any members of the exploiting class.”

They were very stubborn in their objections to my trip to Miaoling. But I did not shout them down, even though they came up with ultra-revolutionary phraseology, which ran contrary to revolutionary principle. In those days many people in our ranks still copied or applied mechanically the propositions of the classics, instead of approaching them in a creative manner in relation to revolutionary practice. They considered the propositions of Marx or Lenin as absolute law, which they could not deviate from even an inch. To free them from their dogmatic way of thinking, one had to go to unremitting efforts to teach them the principles of revolution.

I responded:

Of course, it is right to fight against the exploiting class. I also agree that landlords and capitalists are the hostile class. But you should bear in mind that we must not tar all landlords and capitalists with the same brush. Some of them even love the country and fight the Japanese. Comrade Kim San Ho, who is present here, knows Wujiazi well. He knows how sincerely landlord Zhao Jia-feng helped us in our revolutionary activity. Zhang’s father Zhang Wan-cheng supported us more actively than Zhao Jia-feng. In autumn 1930, when we were preparing for the armed struggle in Wujiazi, Zhang Wei-hua gave me dozens of rifles free of charge, which his private soldiers had used. You know full well what each of your rifles cost us. Many comrades laid down their lives for a single rifle. However, Zhang Wei-hua gave us 40

rifles, when we had to obtain such rifles at the cost of our lives. Why can't we trust Zhang Wei-hua?

I won't tell you here how friendly Zhang's family were to me and the great help they accorded my family. But I must state here the losses borne by our revolution, owing to one-sided interpretations of the class spirit and class struggle. You hold that landlord Zhang Wan-cheng must be liquidated, because he belongs to the exploiting class, no matter how much he has benefited the revolution, while an enemy's agent of worker or peasant origin should be welcomed, because he belongs to the basic class of our revolution, regardless of the harm he has done to the revolution. How absurd this all is.

Communists must always be fair to other people. This means that they should appreciate good people as such and their merits as virtues, regardless of their party affiliation, religion or social strata. Communists must always maintain a scientific attitude in appreciating people. This means that they must judge a man correctly from an objective point of view, mainly by his ideas and practice, rather than a ready-made formula. If they regard a man's origin as absolute in judging him, they cannot make a scientific and fair judgement of him.

What will happen, if we judge people in a Leftist manner by asserting exclusively the class spirit and class struggle? It will no doubt throw many people over to the enemy camp. The enemy wants us to become such blind fools, who doubt people thoughtlessly and knock them down recklessly.

Comrades, we have suffered a lot as targets of the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle in Jiandao. When you were distrusted by people, who had shared life and death living under the same roof, you

wailed beating your breasts. How dare you, despite such bitter experience, suspect an innocent man, just as the cursed ones did?

After persuading them in this manner, I left Maanshan secret camp for Miaoling, accompanied by a few bodyguards.

The apprehension of opponents to my visit to Zhang Wei-hua on the charge that the class nature of rich people would never change, was superfluous. I was displeased by their imprudent remarks, which seemed to discredit the friendship between Zhang and me and the intimate terms between his family and mine. They seemed to fling mud at our ten-year-old, noble and deep-rooted friendship which had been as constant as the stream of the River Songhua. It was a sincere, profound and genuine friendship which could not be defamed on any account. It met the interests of the revolution as a whole and communist humanism and morality.

If all rich people in the world were to be defined indiscriminately as reactionary, on the basis of a single point of view, which charge such people as exploiters, we communists would not need to go through an arduous path of social transformation to make ourselves rich.

Ever since childhood, I had avoided judging people by the standard of their property, going instead by their love for fellow human beings, fellow countrymen and their motherland. I even regarded rich people in a favourable light, if they loved their fellow people and country. I even disregarded poor people, if they lacked human love or love for their country. In a nutshell, I evaluated people mainly by the criterion of ideology.

Kang Yun Bom, whom I have already mentioned as my first childhood comrade, was the son of a well-to-do man. His family even had a small orchard. His family was rich beyond bounds, compared to

my family at Mangyongdae. However, I loved and trusted him, as he loved the country and the people more passionately than others.

Paek Son Haeng whom I mentioned in Volume 1 of this book was also a millionaire, but was respected by Pyongyang citizens all her life. In fact, she became rich owing to superhuman hard work and her austere life.

Of course, a number of misers, who have vast tracts of land and are extremely rich, build their wealth by exploiting people inhumanely. There are also wicked rich men, who commit outrages violating human morality and cause all social evils. But not all rich men are wicked.

Paek Son Haeng did all kinds of work. She earned money tirelessly, sparing no time to powder her face even once, selling bean sprout, bean curd and flowers, weaving hemp cloth and cotton cloth, raising pigs and selling even food leftovers. She donated all her money to society—tens of thousands of *won*, which she had earned with the sweat of her brow for decades, ever since she was widowed at the age of 16.

She made her first contribution to society by building a stone bridge in Songsan-ri, called Solmoe Bridge. Later on, Pyongyang people, who had been moved by her noble deed called her Son Haeng (good deed—Tr.) and renamed Solmoe Bridge as Paekson Bridge after her.

In those days, there was a city public hall for the Japanese in the new street of Pyongyang. No Koreans were admitted. Indignant at the Japanese, Paek Son Haeng proposed the construction of another public hall exclusively for Koreans and assumed the whole burden of this project, investing tens of thousands of *won*. The three-storeyed stone building, which was once Pyongyang public hall still stands as it was near Ryongwang Pavilion.

She invested a colossal sum of money in the development of national education. Kwangsong Primary School, Changdok School, Sungui Girls' School and other schools in Pyongyang were financed from the products of tens of hectares of land she contributed. By studying in Changdok School, which owed a great deal to her charitable contributions, I also benefited from her benevolence.

Whenever she met children on her visits to schools she was sponsoring, she used to say:

“You are the sons and daughters of Korea who shoulder the future of the country. You must study hard, day and night, without being tempted to play or put aside your books, when you hate studying. The independence of our country depends on how you study.”

Once a high-ranking official came from Seoul to convey the commendation of Government-General to her and requested an interview with her, but she declined.

My childhood principle of judging people from their thoughts and deeds had a considerable influence on our communist and national liberation movements in subsequent years. If we had not called on the whole nation to rise as one on this principle, many people would not have rallied themselves behind the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and, now, when national reunification is the supreme task, many people in south Korea and many overseas compatriots would not have shouted “We want reunification”, shoulder to shoulder with one another under the banner of great national unity. If we had been opposed to rich people in general on the basis of social status, without considering his or her ideas and real mind, such intellectuals of the property class as Jong Jun Thae, Kang Yong Chang, Ro Thae Sok, Ri Ji Chan and Kim Ung Sang would not have appeared on the political stage of our country

after liberation and would not have displayed the spirit of total devotion and rendered distinguished services in developing science and technology in our country.

I approached Chinese rich men from the same point of view. If I had not held such a point of view, I would not have made friends with Chen Han-zhang, the son of a great landlord, and admitted Zhang Wei-hua, the son of a man of great wealth, into our revolutionary organization and pledged eternal friendship. As the examples of Chen Han-zhang or Zhang Wei-hua go to show, people from the property class and their sons and daughters number among the outstanding figures who pioneered the communist movement in China.

Zhou En-lai who devoted all his life to the happiness of the Chinese nation, the communist cause and the cause of proletarian internationalism was also the son of a rich government official in the closing years of the Qing dynasty.

I think it was largely thanks to my influence that Zhang Wei-hua devoted all his life to the communist movement regardless of his family origin, joining hands with the communists, who regarded the property class as hostile to them. His father educated him in patriotism, whereas my comrades and I exercised communist influence on him. When I was enrolled in the fifth year class of Fusong Senior Primary School No. 1, he was merely a young patriot. I was also a mere patriotic-minded boy in those days. He began to adopt the communist idea when I organized the DIU and the Young Communist League and expanded their network everywhere. At that time I organized a secret communist group, which could work as the Party organization in Fusong, arranged around my mother and Pak Cha Sok. Zhang Wei-hua maintained relations with this

group together with Jong Hak Hae and Chae Ju Son. Ever since then, Zhang fell under communist influence.

Since the first day of enrollment in Fusong Senior Primary School No. 1, thanks to the good offices of Chairman Shi, I studied together with Zhang Wei-hua. It seemed a play of history that Kim Song Ju, an unlucky boy from a ruined country, and Zhang Wei-hua, the son of a millionaire, studied in the same class. It was strange, indeed, that our unprecedented friendship sprouted and blossomed from this anomalous link. However, our friendship did not occur only because we studied together. It also originated from the friendship between my father Kim Hyong Jik and Zhang's father Zhang Wan-cheng.

After escaping safely from a den of bandits in Manjiang with the help of Kong Yong and Pak Jin Yong, my father stayed for a while in Daying where many Koreans lived. He requested sub-county head Choe, an independence fighter with whom he had been on friendly terms, to help him obtain the approval of the county authorities to reside in Fusong. Choe called on the county government, but the county head did not want Korean revolutionaries to live in the area under his jurisdiction and so rejected his residence request on the reason that he was a refugee.

At this moment my father heard that Zhang Wan-cheng, a millionaire in Fusong, had fallen ill and was looking for an excellent doctor. At the request of Choe, my father treated Zhang. During his treatment Zhang was charmed by my father's calligraphy. Zhang was also a good calligrapher. This occasioned their friendship. My father requested that Zhang Wan-cheng exercise his influence on the county government to approve his residence request in Fusong. The sub-county head Choe, too, persuaded Zhang Wan-cheng and negotiated with Chairman Shi, the most influential intellectual in Fusong. Chairman Shi's full name was

Shi Chun-tai and he was the principal of a middle school in Fusong. As he worked as chairman of the educational association, in addition to his regular office, the Fusong people called him Chairman Shi. He promised to help my father.

Zhang Wan-cheng went to the county government and persuaded the county head. "There is a Korean exile. I hope you will allow him to settle down in the town and open a surgery. I know you are afraid that the Japs will provoke you, if you approve. But it is only natural that Koreans fight against the Japanese who occupied their country. If you approve it will be good, because you are not a pro-Japanese. What are you worrying about in this place, where there is no Japanese consulate? You have only to deceive the consulate police and spies coming from Linjiang. You should not refuse Kim Hyong Jik's request to settle down in Fusong." Touched by such words, the county head inevitably approved my father's request.

When my father was bustling about anxiously to obtain approval from the authorities to reopen the closed Paeksan School after its reconstruction, Zhang Wan-cheng, together with other influential persons, also helped my father achieve this aim, by persuading the county authorities in the name of the deputy director of the chamber of commerce and the committee member of the educational association. Whenever my family faced a major problem, which was difficult for us to resolve on our own, he gave us selfless assistance, exerting his efforts when required and giving money if necessary. The help of Zhang's family continued even after my father's death. Zhang Wan-cheng would often send us money and food, worrying about my mother who was going through hardships supporting children as a widow.

When I was studying in Jilin, my uncle Hyong Gwon was arrested and imprisoned by the warlord authorities. As misfortunes always come in pairs, my mother became helpless when my uncle was imprisoned shortly after my father's death. After serious thought, she called on Zhang Wei-hua's father and requested him to persuade the police. Thanks to his negotiations with the police, my uncle was released soon afterwards.

Zhang Wan-cheng was a conscientious nationalist, who advocated national independence and loved his country ardently. Although he was a man of great wealth who could live in comfort, indifferent to changes in the world, he sympathized with my father who was experiencing all sorts of hardships in his attempts to liberate the country and, after my father died of illness, he supported and protected me, showing warm affection for my cause as fighter for national independence.

Zhang Wei-hua knew that I was a communist, but his father regarded me merely as a fighter for national independence.

Fusong was home to stooges of the warlords and spies of the Japanese consulate, as well as many conscientious men of influence and patriots such as Zhang Wan-cheng, Shi Chun-tai, Yuan Meng-zhou and Quan Ya-zhong. Yuan Meng-zhou was Zhang Wei-hua's maternal uncle. When I attended the Senior Primary School No. 1, he taught there, after graduating from Shenyang Normal School and later worked as headmaster of the school. His subjects, sports and organ practice, were the interesting lessons and were the favourites of pupils. Quan Ya-zhong, who belonged to the left wing of Kuomintang had a good ideological tendency. He had a hospital and watch shop, running both of them at the same time, but had progressive ideas. His elder brother Quan Ya-zhe was also a good man.

The friendly relations between my father and Zhang Wei-hua's father naturally exerted a great influence on the friendship between Zhang Wei-hua and me. When my father went to Zhang's house to treat him or Zhang Wan-cheng came to our house to see my father, I also frequented Zhang's house or Wei-hua came to our house to study together.

Whenever Zhang Wei-hua came to my house, my mother served him Korean foods. He greatly enjoyed Korean dishes. Zhang's family cooked Chinese dumplings for me. As Zhang liked Korean food, I liked dumplings. The people from Shandong cooked dumplings very well. Zhang Wan-cheng came from Shandong.

In the mid-1920s, Fusong county town was square-shaped, with a gate in the east, a gate in the north, two gates in the west and Xiaonanmen gate and Dananmen gate in the south. Zhang Wan-cheng's shop was situated slightly north of Dananmen. By going straight a little further from the shop and turning a corner, I could find Zhang's house. We went round all the streets of this town and passed all the gates. We had been everywhere and played all games. We frequently played tennis in the yard of our school and went swimming on the River Songhua. We also took part in literary entertainment contests.

Zhang Wei-hua was stout-hearted and enthusiastic, although introspective. He volunteered before anyone else to defend justice without hesitation and never tolerated anybody who was unjust. He was so sharp that he could stand on the edge of a sword, if he was determined.

A policeman once knocked down a teacher of our school in the presence of his pupils, finding faults with him about a trifling matter. The pupils, who regarded teachers as divine, became furious with indignation at this surprising incident. Zhang Wei-hua and I made

speeches denouncing the police to stir up the pupils. “For the policeman to beat a teacher is an infringement on the school and a serious insult to teachers and pupils. How outrageous it is for a petty policeman in a county town to beat the teacher! As his pupils, we must demand an apology from the police authorities. We must force the scoundrel to come to school, take off his cap and apologize to the teacher.”

We surged to the county government building carrying placards with the inscriptions: “Punish severely the brutal policeman who beat the teacher!” and “Let us defend the rights and interests of the teachers!” and went on a sit-in struggle demanding the punishment of the evil policeman. But the county government would not listen to the just demand of the pupils; it tried to settle the quarrel by coaxing them. The struggle failed.

We resolved to punish that policeman by force. One night I was told that the policeman was going to the theatre. It was a good opportunity to teach him a lesson. But, if we were to escape from the theatre in a short span after beating him, we had to destroy a gas lamp hanging on the ceiling of the stage. Who could blow out this lamp? After debating this matter repeatedly, Zhang Wei-hua assumed this task. That evening over ten pupils went to the theatre and started their planned action. When an interval came, Zhang jumped on stage and destroyed the lamp with a wooden pole. With my shout “Beat him!” the pupils flogged the policeman, until he begged for mercy on his knees and then we vanished.

On the way back home Zhang said:

“I’m satisfied. I have realized for the first time tonight how pleasant it is to punish injustice by force.”

“We must not tolerate such a scoundrel. We cannot live with such people under the same sky,” I said.

Zhang paused abruptly and asked me seriously, “Song Ju, which school will you go to after graduating from primary school?”

I had not expected this question. I had never thought seriously about my future after primary school. So I replied casually.

“Well, I would like to go to middle school, if possible. But I don’t think I can afford it. What about you, Wei-hua?”

“I want to attend the normal school in Shenyang which my maternal uncle graduated from. My father, too, advised me to do so. If you don’t mind I will take you with me to Shenyang. We can go to the same school there. After finishing normal school we will go to university together.”

“It’s very kind of you to say so. But, is it really possible for me?”

“Why? Because of a school fee? You need not worry about it. I will help you.”

“My parents will not allow me to do so. I myself don’t wish to study all the time. How can a boy of a ruined nation enjoy the luxury of studying at university?”

“Do you mean that you will join your father in the fight for independence? When you go to join in the revolution, I will follow you.”

“What about Shenyang? You said you would go to a normal school.”

“Only if we go together. I won’t go to Shenyang without you. I want to be with you all my life. If you go to higher school I will too, and if you become a communist so will I.”

That was the point Zhang Wei-hua wanted to tell me that night. His words moved me deeply. I grasped his hand and said in a whisper, “Thank you, Ya-qing, but do you know what communism is?”

“Of course. It may be what Li Da-zhao or Chen Du-xiu is doing.”

“A communist must be ready to risk imprisonment or his life. Are you ready for that?”

“I am not afraid of such things. I don’t care about prison or death, as long as I am with you.”

His unexpected declaration dumbfounded me. I could not guess what had inspired him to declare like that. But clearly his words that night expressed his ideal and faith, which he had long cherished in his mind. Zhang Wei-hua tried to make my ideal and faith his own. He did not define his doctrine first and then choose a friend who shared the same doctrine, but made a friend first and then shared his friend’s doctrine. His way of deciding his future was simple and yet profound. Zhang’s such attitude was based on his unqualified trust and friendship with me. Zhang Wei-hua respected me sincerely and followed me.

It was only natural that when I departed for Hwasong Uisuk School, he wanted in tears to follow me. My farewell with Zhang Wei-hua was unbearable. The thought of our parting depressed him so much that I had to spend two sleepless nights sharing the same bed and persuading him. We spent one night in my house and another in Zhang’s house consoling each other. When I left for Huadian he came as far as the ferry on the River Songhua to see me off and said farewell in tears.

That day he asked me, “Song Ju, is the difference in social status as great as the height of Mt. Everest?”

“The difference in social status has nothing to do with this matter. Your father does not permit you to go, because he does not want you to live away from home.”

“If my father restricts me, because of difference in social status, I will become a poor man for the sake of our friendship. Anyhow, Song Ju, remember that I will join you someday, wherever you go and do what you are doing.”

Zhang Wei-hua kept his resolve. He came to me as I attended Yuwen Middle School in Jilin. He came with a pistol stolen from his father, telling none of his family where he was going.

I was embarrassed by his unexpected appearance.

“Song Ju, I have left my family at last to come to you. You can see, how determined I am.”

He took out the pistol. He threw his head back amusingly and gazed at the ceiling.

“I wonder that your father let go of you.”

“He didn’t. He ordered me to go to Shenyang right away but I slipped out of the house.”

“Won’t your parents worry about you?”

“There may be an uproar. But I don’t care. If they don’t find me, one of them will come to Jilin. In all probability, they know that I came to see you.”

Zhang was right. Several days after he arrived, his elder brother Zhang Wei-zhong called at Yuwen Middle School, taking private soldiers with him and asked for whereabouts of his brother. Hearing that his brother was staying with me, he sank to the ground.

“Then, he is safe! We thought he had been kidnapped by bandits.”

“Brother Wei-zhong, I will take good care of him. Don’t worry.”

Zhang Wei-zhong said, “Song Ju, I’m relieved. I will leave Wei-hua under your care.” He returned to Fusong with his private soldiers without taking back the pistol.

Afterwards I sent Zhang Wei-hua to Wujiazi and Guyushu. He worked as a teacher there for about a year before returning home on my advice that he should finish a higher school as his parents wished and then rejoin our ranks to continue his revolutionary activity.

Our friendship deepened day by day and month by month in the constant repetition of such meetings and partings.

Apparently, the cave where I met Zhang Wei-hua still exists in Fusong. This cave in the shape of the letter “L” was 15 metres long. It was concealed so deep in the folds of nature that nobody could imagine a better place for a secret rendezvous.

When he met me, Zhang Wei-hua cried with joy. I also shed tears, holding in my arms his shoulders, which reeked of film solution.

“Song Ju, why have you come so late? Where have you been all these years? Why have you never appeared in Fusong? You can’t imagine how eagerly I have waited for you.”

This was Zhang’s first greeting.

“I have also been anxious to see you. I wanted to come to Fusong. I wanted to see you, Wei-hua.”

“You should have written to me, then. I don’t know your address, but you know mine.”

“Wei-hua, forgive me. There was no post office in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao where I lived.”

“No post office? Is there such a place in the world?”

I told him about all the hardships we had suffered during the past four years.

He wiped away his tears with the back of his hand while I was talking.

“Wei-hua, why do you cry all the time? Is there anything wrong with you?”

I paused for a while and looked into his face.

Zhang put on a forced smile, as he dried his tears.

“I cry, because you experienced such a miserable life. The thought of being away from you, while you went through all these hardships, rends my heart.”

“No, that isn’t true. You have always been in my mind, encouraging me.”

“Thank you, Song Ju. The mere fact that you have not forgotten me makes me happy. From now on I will call you General or Commander as others do.”

When Zhang Wei-hua suddenly broached the fact that other people addressed me “Commander”, I waved my hand in haste.

“Please call me Song Ju, even though others address me commander. I, too, will call you Wei-hua, rather than Mr. Zhang. Song Ju, Wei-hua! How good these sound! Wei-hua, how have you been getting along all this while?”

He shook his head like an old man and smiled a melancholy smile.

“After hearing all your exploits, I don’t feel like talking about myself. What could I do in this Fusong which is like a hen-coop? Together with Kang Pyong Son, one of your mates at Hwasong Uisuk School, I opened the Xiongdi Bookstore and Xiongdi Photo Studio and guided a YCL organization using them as bases. That is all I have done.”

He explained briefly about the activities of the YCL organization and the movement of anti-Japanese organizations in Fusong.

I spoke highly of his success. And I gave him a new assignment to form a Party organization based on the YCL organization.

Zhang Wei-hua was greatly embarrassed by the new assignment.

“Song Ju, can I carry out such a great task? I have little experience in underground work.”

“You have directed the YCL organization for four years, providing rich experience. I will send political commissar Kim San Ho to you now and then, to help you.”

We talked for more than three hours.

When our conversation passed from the practical sphere to personal life, Zhang took me by the arm tightly and asked me how my family was. I reluctantly told him the news of my mother’s passing, Chol Ju’s death in battle and Yong Ju’s role as a Children’s Corps member, eating another’s salt. In fact I did not wish to broach these topics as I knew his sympathetic character and was afraid that Zhang would be depressed at this news. Then, I would also feel my heart bleed. I had never wished to mention such tragic events in our first reunion in the four years.

In this way things evolved against my intentions. Hearing the news of our family, Zhang sobbed for a long time, burying his face in his hands.

“Then, you really are an orphan. I pity Yong Ju as well. What can I do for him? Can you give me his address?”

Zhang took out his fountain-pen and pocket-book and looked at me. I shook my hand.

“Wei-hua, Yong Ju is already a man. At his age he can stand on his own feet. You need not think of helping him.”

Zhang did not abandon his intention and waited for his address, holding open the pocket-book. I reluctantly jotted down Kim Jong Ryong’s address in Antu. If he had not died a tragic death at such a young age, he would have been of great help to Yong Ju in Antu.

After our meeting in the cave in Miaoling, we met again in the hot spring village of Daying. Our Headquarters, comprising 20 to 30 soldiers, was stationed in the mountain valley in front of Daying: from there I used to go to see Zhang Wei-hua. At that time Zhang stayed in

Daying on the pretext of taking hot spring baths. As the enemy shadowed my associates and friends and watched them tenaciously, he was very careful of the safety of our Headquarters.

I had a long talk with Zhang, taking a hot spring bath together with him. I still remember him telling me proudly that he had built a Party organization of hard-core elements, who were trained in the YCL organization, as I had advised. His happy look as bright as morning glow still remains fresh in my memory.

During his stay in Daying we enlisted three YCL members in our unit he had recommended. I will never forget the happy smile, which spread over his face on seeing the young men, whom he had trained with all his care, appear before him dressed in revolutionary army uniforms and with rifles on their shoulders. Secretary Yan, one of the three young men, who was formerly a teacher, wrote many slogans on the trees around the secret camp in the latter days when we were operating in the Mt. Paektu area. Many of his slogans still remain in the sites of secret camps.

I recall now with deep emotion, from the talks we had in Daying hot spring, the last conversation before our leave-taking. At that time Zhang asked, as he took my hand, “Song Ju, whenever I see you, one thing troubles my conscience.”

“What is that?”

As he gazed at me with shame, I also watched him curiously.

“As I married so early before the age of 20, I became a father of one child already four years ago and will be a father of two children in a few months. When you were on arduous south and north expeditions, I enjoyed a luxurious life with my wife bringing up my child. How shameful it is!”

“Don’t talk nonsense. What is wrong in your being married and having children? It is a matter for congratulations.”

“But you are not married, although you are one year older than I. Tell me. Will you always remain single?”

“Well, I have never thought about marriage. It will take many more years for marriage to become my main concern.”

“Then, you’ll miss the right time. If you don’t mind, I will choose a suitable match in Fusong. If I fail in Fusong, I will go round all cities, Shenyang, Tianjin, Changchun, Jilin and Harbin to find a woman of matchless beauty.”

“Say no more. Can such a beauty live in mountains, eating tough whole maize gruel?”

“See if I don’t choose such a beauty as Yang Kuei-fei for you.”

He told me such a joke and shook my hand warmly and left Daying. His smile at that time remains in my memory as an indelible image. This was the last time I saw his smile.

Of course, I knew that he spoke half jokingly and half seriously and that it would be impossible to realize what he said. But I felt real friendship in his words, which only Zhang Wei-hua could cherish towards me. Nobody other than Zhang Wei-hua could make such a promise for me so frankly, purely and enthusiastically.

On his return to Fusong, Zhang gave our unit all his moral and financial support. Large amounts of aid, such as cotton, shoes, socks, underwear, medicines, foods and photographic apparatus, which he had procured of his own accord, flowed ceaselessly into the secret camps of our unit, and provided strong economic support to the activities of the revolutionary army in the Fusong area.

With the 3,000 *yuan* he sent us, we were able to provide each of Children's Corps members and the main force unit soldiers with a new uniform and obtain other materials.

Tang Zhen-dong, head of the police substation in Daying, was our close acquaintance. I had met him in Fusong, when we went to south Manchuria for cooperation with Ryang Se Bong. When we travelled to Daying again, he sent a secret messenger to us requesting that we openly send him a threatening letter: then he would send the required materials, on the pretext of acting under the threat of the revolutionary army.

After receiving the letter, he sent on numerous occasions supplies of pork, wheat flour, bean oil, knitwear and other goods by cart. In those days our guards lived fairly well for about 20 days thanks to the goods sent by him.

In the autumn of that year, Zhang Wei-hua was arrested unexpectedly by the military police and imprisoned. The police had been informed by Jong Hak Hae, who was my classmate in primary school and once worked as chairman of the Fusong county branch organization of the Paeksan Youth League. In his early days he adhered to the revolutionary spirit and then turned his coat, before entering the appeasement squad under the manipulation of the Linjiang military police. The appeasement squad was a synonym for the "submission work corps." As I advanced at the head of my unit to the Fusong area, the enemy dispatched many turncoats here and there to find us.

One day Jong Hak Hae called on Zhang Wei-hua and said, "I am going to see Kim Il Sung. Surely you know where he is?" Zhang replied with confidence, "I know. A short time ago I met Kim Song Ju." As Jong had taken part in the youth movement under my guidance, Zhang never suspected him. A few days later Zhang was arrested by the police. As he

was used to approaching people in a friendly way, he was too innocent to be vigilant as head of a Party group who shouldered the destiny of underground organizations. He was arrested, owing to his illusions about people and lack of vigilance. The enemy tortured him cruelly in order to learn clues of the whereabouts of our Headquarters and all the underground organizations in the Fusong area and thereby demolish them.

But he faced their torture in silence. He was afraid of revealing my whereabouts and the network of underground organizations against his will, if the enemy torture intensified. He resolved to kill himself and requested that his father help him receive parole for a few days. His father asked the police to parole his son on the pretext of illness, by bribing the police with money and gifts.

On granting his parole, the enemy spies watched his house day and night to learn the network of secret organizations and underground activity of our unit.

Zhang Wei-hua said to his wife, as he faced death.

“I regret and lament that I cannot continue the anti-Japanese struggle together with General Kim Il Sung. I decided to guarantee the safety of my comrades with my death and prove worthy of the trust and friendship of General Kim Il Sung. Don’t grieve too much.”

He wrote to me: “The enemy sent out spies to discover the Headquarters of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army. Please move your Headquarters as quickly as possible.” He subsequently committed suicide by swallowing a doze of corrosive sublimate used in film development. This grievous event occurred on the 2nd day of the tenth month, 1937, by the lunar calendar. At that time Zhang Wei-hua had not reached 25 years of age.

An internationalist fighter, my close friend and faithful revolutionary comrade-in-arms, left us in this way.

He died a heroic death at an early age for me, for the Headquarters of the Korean revolution and the common cause of the Korean and Chinese peoples, forsaking his dear parents, wife and children, as well as his long-cherished dreams, which were as beautiful as glowing clouds, in the land of China, where the roar of guns rent the air. His son Zhang Jin-quan, whom he had loved more than himself, was four years old and his daughter, Zhang Jin-lu, was born just before his death.

Nothing is more grievous for a man than to die before his time. Although imprisoned by mistake, Zhang Wei-hua might have survived, instead of committing suicide. If his family had bribed the military police with more money and gifts, the enemy might have shut their eyes to this “crime” or punished him leniently after beating him on the buttocks. However, he surrendered the next chapter of his life of his own accord, by committing suicide.

Life is not easy: nor is death. A suicide is the most painful kind of deaths. The suicide of a young man, who has a greater world before him than past requires extraordinarily grim resolve. There were numerous cases of suicide mostly for self-centred reasons. We can hardly find a man, who committed suicide for the sake of others as Zhang Wei-hua did.

I assure you that this was the noblest and most beautiful self-sacrifice of all sacrifices made for fellow people. That is why his death was more heroic and solemn than any other self-sacrifice.

On learning the tragic news of his death, I could not sleep or eat for several days. I felt an aching void and shock in my heart; my soul seemed to tumble into an abyss, as if a part of the world had collapsed

near me. In those grievous days the melody of a dirge rang many times in my mind.

I was full of remorse for refusing to accept his request to join the army. I felt that if he had served in the people's revolutionary army, he would have lived longer. This thought made my heart ache.

When he asked to join the army, we should have deliberated his request and enlisted him to our unit. Such an act would have accorded with our principles. It was unnatural that a young man's sincere application was turned down. But I did not act on principle and assigned him to the second line, rather than the first. I declined his enlistment, even in violation of the principles, because I loved him too much. I did not want him to suffer all the trials in mountains, a man who had lived comfortably in a rich family, who had never known what hardships meant. I thought that, even though I could endure such hardships, he would not. This feeling was motivated by my unprincipled love for him. Even if anyone blames me, I have no excuse to make.

As tens of thousands of Korean communists and patriots including Sin Kyu Sik, Pak Yong, Yang Rim, Han Wi Gon, Jang Ji Rak, Kim Song Ho, Jong Ryul Song and Han Ak Yon devoted their lives to the Chinese revolution, so a large number of sons and daughters of the Chinese people laid down their priceless lives for the Korean revolution.

Just as love and science have no national boundaries, revolution knows no boundaries, as proved by the examples of Zhang Wei-hua, Novichenko, Che Guevara and Norman Bethune. Zhang Wei-hua and Novichenko are worldwide models of internationalists, and the support of the communists of different countries for the Popular Front movement in Spain and the movement to resist America and aid Korea initiated by the Chinese Volunteers Army, are worldwide examples of

internationalism. Zhang Wei-hua's name shines as a great star among these models.

Today Zhang Wei-hua is recognized by the Korean people as a symbol of friendship between Korea and China. Our people, men and women, young and old, remember in reverence the distinguished services he rendered for the Korean revolution.

4. Revolutionary Comrade-in-Arms Zhang Wei-Hua (2)

Can a friendship continue between a living person and a dead friend? If it can, how?

This question was put to me by Kim Pong Sok shortly after my orderly Kim Jong Dok, his bosom friend, died at the battle of Jiguanlazi. Kim Pong Sok was my orderly in the guerrilla army. He grieved over the death of his friend for a long time.

At that time I replied that a friendship could continue between a living person and his dead friend: the former remembered the latter, while the latter lived on in the memory of the former. By way of illustration I took the example of my friendship with Zhang Wei-hua.

It reflected personal experience. Several years had passed since Zhang Wei-hua's death, but I had not forgotten him. He appeared occasionally in my dreams and shared a friendship with me as he had during his lifetime. On such occasions I had a very strange feeling.

Kim Pong Sok asked me again, "Comrade Commander, what can the living do for the dead?"

Apparently my orderly wanted profound advice, which could act as a lifelong motto for him. But I was not prepared to give him such an answer. In fact, the matter of friendship between the living and the dead

occupied a certain place in my mind, but my view on this matter was as simple and commonplace as that offered by woodcutters in remote mountains.

“In my opinion, first and foremost a living person should strive to remain loyal to the will left behind by his dead friend.”

This was the only reply I gave Kim Pong Sok at the time. I believe that other people would also have replied in similar vein if they were in such a situation. My answer was so simple that it could have been given not only by woodcutters, but also by primary schoolchildren, but Kim Pong Sok took it very seriously. Kim Jong Dok’s last wish was that Kim Pong Sok attend to his commander with all his care until the liberation of the country. Kim Pong Sok remained true to his last wish, supporting me wholeheartedly until the day of liberation. He also fell in battle.

During the anti-Japanese war, all my comrades-in-arms held the common view that loyalty to the last wishes of the fallen comrades constituted the highest moral toward them.

“Let’s avenge the enemy of our fallen comrades!” “Remember the company commander’s last wish and capture that height!” “Let’s liberate the country at any cost, as the fallen comrades had wished!”

Such slogans, declaimed by guerrilla fighters on numerous occasions on battlefields, in camps and on their marches, reflected their aspirations and desire to accomplish the cause, which their fallen comrades had failed to complete. The Korean communists tried to be loyal to their fallen comrades by faithfully carrying out their revolutionary task. I did the same, fighting bloody battles to accomplish their unfinished cause and prove myself worthy of their deep trust and great expectations from me, expressed during their lifetime. From this point of view, I am still

doing my best to carry out the revolutionary task entrusted by the Party and my people.

Can I claim, however, that this is all I can do to fulfil my moral obligations to fallen comrades? When the country was liberated, the concept of such obligations acquired an incomparably rich meaning, in keeping with the requirements and conditions of the new times. People, who had previously believed that the accomplishment of the unfinished cause of their fallen comrades marked all they should do to be loyal to them, no longer held this view. They wished to bring to the homeland the remains of their comrades-in-arms which were scattered all over a foreign land, and make their distinguished services, buried in the events of history, known to coming generations. As the country became prosperous, they also wanted to erect bronze statues and name new cities and streets after their fallen comrades.

Their loyalty to fallen comrades was fully demonstrated by their love for the children of the martyrs. As soon as we returned to the homeland, we sent officials to bring home the bereaved children of revolutionaries scattered in foreign lands. We discovered them one by one, as if picking up tiny treasures on sand fields and enrolled them in the Mangyongdae School for the Bereaved Families of Revolutionaries. We also enrolled the children of the martyrs, who had fought in the homeland in this school and transformed them into able builders of the new Korea.

In the 1970s we built the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on the Jujak Peak of Mt. Taesong, in a bid to pass on the images of our comrades-in-arms to posterity. We also built the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery, or the second revolutionary martyrs cemetery, on a hill in Sinmi-ri, Hyongjesan District.

All these policies and measures represented an expression of the noble comradeship and unchanging purity of the Korean communists in their efforts to fulfil their moral obligations to the revolutionary martyrs as best as possible. Throughout more than half a century of revolutionary practice, the Korean communists set an example in their relations with their fallen comrades-in-arms, to say nothing of their living comrades. This example deserves universal praise.

The unprecedented history of human relations and comradeship, created by the Korean revolutionaries, indicates that friendship can continue between the living and dead. One need only recall my friendship with Zhang Wei-hua, to prove my case.

It would not be correct to think that my friendship with Zhang Wei-hua ended with his death. If a man's friendship ends with his friend's death, can such a bond be considered a sign of real friendship? If a living man remembers his dead friend, the friendship remains alive and vibrant.

My friendship with Zhang Wei-hua has continued even after his death. Zhang passed away, but I have never forgotten him even for one moment. The fragrance of his personality penetrated my mind more deeply as the days went by. When the anti-Japanese war ended in the victory of the Korean and Chinese communists, Zhang Wei-hua was the first man I recalled from countless Chinese comrades and benefactors. In the liberated homeland, I recollected with deep emotion each of my Chinese benefactors, who helped me and my family and supported the Korean revolution with all their hearts. When good times arrived, I missed them all the more.

Whenever I recalled Zhang Wei-hua, I always remembered his bereaved family. I recalled his family, in particular when the democratic reforms were under way, centring on the agrarian revolution in northeast

China, following the unconditional surrender of Japan, when the whole of Manchuria was subjected to the civil war between the Kuomintang army of Jiang Jie-shi and the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The liquidation of the evil landlords and comprador capitalists and the overthrow of pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation everywhere led me to worry about Zhang's family, who might have been regarded as a target of dictatorship and unfairly punished. Whenever the neighbouring country launched a campaign of social upheaval or movement to destroy some aspect, I worried about the fate of Zhang's bereaved family. Although Zhang Wei-hua was a martyr, who had rendered distinguished services for the revolution, he had worked mostly underground, so I wondered if the masses would recognize him, a rich man's son, as a communist, not as a reactionary or traitor to the nation. I eagerly waited for a chance to meet his family. However, the complicated process of building a new country, the great war against the Americans and the work carried out to lay the foundations of socialism led me to postpone many plans. I wanted to find and meet many people, but resisted such temptations and concentrated on state affairs.

The first news of Zhang's family reached me in 1959. That year a visitors' group from our country had been to old anti-Japanese battlefields in Manchuria.

Prior to their departure, I met the group and told Pak Yong Sun, the head of the group:

“Comrade Pak, do you remember Zhang Wei-hua, the owner of the Xiongdi Photo Studio, who supplied cloth and money to us when the children were suffering from illness and shivering with cold in the secret camp in Maanshan? Over twenty years has passed since he died, but I have not even sent my regards to his family. When you drop in at

Fusong, remember me to his bereaved family and give my best regards to them on my behalf.”

“I will keep your words in mind. I also thought that I am under moral obligation to see his family when we arrive in Fusong. We owed a great deal to him.”

Pak Yong Sun wiped his tearful eyes, apparently wet from deep emotion.

“Zhang Wei-hua was Chinese, but he was virtually Korean or a Korean revolutionary. His distinguished services occupy an honourable place both in the history of the Chinese communist movement and in the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution of our country. Even if his family moved to another place from Fusong, you must discover where they are, with the aid of the Chinese public security organs.”

“Yes, I will find them, even if I have to search all over China.”

After the visitors’ group left for China, I waited anxiously for news from Fusong. As war wounds healed and the cities and countryside were transformed along socialist lines, I could afford to devote my mental efforts to my fallen comrades-in-arms and their bereaved families.

A few months after leaving the homeland, Pak Yong Sun sent me a telegram with the news about Fusong I had been awaiting so eagerly. The telegram said:

“Today I met Zhang’s family in Fusong. I conveyed your greetings to them as you, Premier, so desired. Zhang’s wife expressed many thanks in tears. She gave us a photograph. We are doing our best to collect materials about the joint struggle of you Premier and Zhang Wei-hua. I will report all the details when we are back home.”

Later Pak Yong Sun reported to me that Zhang Wan-cheng died in 1954 and that after his death, Zhang Wei-hua’s wife lived a frugal life in

the old house in Fusong with her son Zhang Jin-quan and daughter Zhang Jin-lu.

When Pak Yong Sun conveyed my greetings to her, Zhang's wife was deeply touched and overcome with emotion.

“There is a saying that the sky changes every hour and a man changes throughout his life, but General Kim Il Sung's friendship has always been constant. Twenty years have passed since my husband's death, but the General still remembers him. I can't find words to express all my thanks to him.”

As a token of courtesy, she offered a photograph she had kept for several decades and requested that Pak deliver it to me. This was the picture, where Zhang Wei-hua and my brother Chol Ju posed together.

This photo was displayed in the then museum of national liberation struggle with other materials collected by the visitors' group in autumn that year. Ever since then Zhang Wei-hua's face has become known to our people. When I visited the museum I paused for a long time before his picture. It touched me so deeply that I felt that Zhang, who I last saw at Daying twenty years previously, had come to Pyongyang alive.

In those days few of our people knew about Zhang Wei-hua. The flunkeyists at important propaganda posts had failed to publicize the revolutionary history and revolutionary traditions of our Party, consequently only a few people knew about Zhang's aid to me and the distinguished services he had performed for the Korean revolution. Only a few anti-Japanese veterans knew of my relations with him. I wanted to tell my entourage proudly what a good man, excellent revolutionary and faithful internationalist he was. My affection for him and pent-up feelings over his death, which I had quelled for 20 long years, gushed out:

“Comrades, this is Zhang Wei-hua, my classmate in Fusong Senior Primary School No. 1. He was my friend and faithful revolutionary comrade-in-arms. His comrades-in-arms included many Korean communists. Zhang Wei-hua was a great internationalist fighter who understood Korea through us, sympathized with and supported the anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean people through our friendly relations. He could have lived in luxury by forsaking the revolution; he instead volunteered for the struggle. He dedicated his life to this cause and protected me. This picture strengthens my yearning for him. The happier we become, the more we must remember such benefactors as Zhang Wei-hua and other Chinese friends who helped us in our revolutionary cause with their blood.”

Since then, our publications have given wide publicity to Zhang’s merits. Zhang Wei-hua, along with Luo Sheng-jiao and Huang Ji-guang, is now well known to all our people as a famous internationalist martyr. Our younger generation remember Zhang Wei-hua with boundless affection and reverence, as they recall Kim Jin and Ma Tong Hui.

The day after our visitors’ group arrived in Fusong, Zhang’s wife said to her children:

“General Kim Il Sung and your father were on intimate terms like real brothers since the days of primary school. They were so friendly towards each other that all their schoolmates in Fusong envied them. Thanks to the influence and guidance of General Kim Il Sung, your father fought resolutely against the Japanese imperialists. That was why your grandmother used to say that you should call him uncle. The General always keeps your father and our family in mind. Jin-quan, you must write to your uncle, thanking him and wishing him good health.”

Excited by his mother's reminiscences, Zhang Jin-quan, a vivacious young man in his twenties, passed a sleepless night. In 1959, Zhang Jin-quan was a handsome young man, who was two years older than his father at the time of his suicide. He sent me a long letter on behalf of his family.

After receiving his letter, I spent several sleepless nights recalling Zhang Wei-hua.

My friendship with Zhang Wei-hua surfaced in my mind again, owing to my greetings to his family and Zhang Jin-quan's letter to me.

We can say that a living man's friendship with his dead comrade continues, thanks to the former's love for and concern about the latter's children. My friendship with Zhang Wei-hua was deepened and developed in a new way, thanks to my frequent meetings with his children.

After receiving the letter from Zhang Jin-quan, I became deeply concerned about this young man, whose face or character I had never known. His handwriting closely resembled his father's. I deeply hoped that he would resemble his father, and even thought that it would be wonderful to see him in person, rather than his photograph.

However, it was a mere dream. To realize this dream, I had to overcome various difficulties: it required unflagging enthusiasm and patience on my part. There is a stiff barrier, a border, between Zhang's bereaved family and me. The border is very strict with everyone; it does not understand old friends or their loyalty.

In May 1984, twenty years after receiving the letter from Zhang Jin-quan, I was lucky enough to pass through northeast China by train on my way to visit the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in east Europe. In the mountains and fields of northeast China I had experienced all

kinds of hardships during the anti-Japanese armed struggle, living there for over 20 years. This place, which remained as dear to me as my own home town, was full of events, which stirred up my emotions in recollection. This was the land I had yearned so strongly to see again in my lifetime that I had trodden it in my dreams until my ankles ached. Probably for this reason, Organizing Secretary Kim Jong Il chose the route to the Soviet Union via Tumen, Mudanjiang, Harbin, Qiqihar and Manzhouli.

Familiar mountain ridges caught my eyes for a long time. How many people fell in this land shedding blood! I could not turn away from the carriage window, seeing in my mind's eye, after decades, the vivid images of my old comrades-in-arms who used to snatch a light sleep together by campfires, share grass gruel and would during battles get covered in powder fumes together.

When our special train made for Dunhua after leaving Tumen, my memory of Zhang Wei-hua's wife and children in Fusong evoked the desire to call my entourage to me. I said to them:

“This is the place I have yearned to visit for a long time. If time permits, I want to call on my old comrades-in-arms in the days of the guerrilla army and other friends and acquaintances, visit the old battlefield, where fallen comrades lie buried. It's such a shame that I can't! Zhang Wei-hua's family are said to be still living in Fusong, which is only a hundred miles from here. I want to send them a gift as a token of my best wishes.”

A few days later the Chinese officials concerned conveyed my gift to Zhang's family.

On returning home from my visit to Europe, I received a second letter from Zhang Jin-quan and invited him to Pyongyang. I requested General Secretary Hu Yao-bang to help Zhang Jin-quan's visit to our country.

In April 1985 Zhang finally paid a historic visit to Korea, together with his sister Zhang Jin-lu and his eldest son Zhang Qi. On a spring day, when all trees and plants were shooting and blooming, I received the distinguished guests from Fusong at the Hungbu Guest House.

As soon as I caught sight of Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang Jin-lu, leaving the car, I became so excited that I could say nothing for a moment. Zhang Jin-quan resembled his father, Zhang Jin-lu was the spitting image of her mother and Zhang Qi had all the good points of his grandparents. The close resemblance to their parents, must have been a joy for them; it also made me happy. I felt as if the late Zhang Wei-hua and his wife had returned and appeared before me. I gazed at them in a bid to find a resemblance to Zhang Wei-hua in their demeanour. And I held them together in my arms, as I had done when I met Zhang Wei-hua in Miaoling and Daying.

“I welcome you!”

I greeted them in Chinese. Although my knowledge of Chinese had been affected by lack of practice for decades, I still said “I welcome you” in fluent Chinese. Some people say that it is a breach of conventions for a Head of State to speak in a foreign language in a diplomatic conversation, but I didn't care. Zhang's party was not on a diplomatic visit, and I hadn't invited them for diplomatic reasons. What was the use of diplomatic conversation or conventions, when I was receiving the children of my comrade-in-arms?

Consequently I did not propose a toast at the luncheon given in their honour that afternoon. It was also a breach from convention.

“I need not make such a speech, as we are one family members, aren’t we? Let’s raise our glasses to the health of the people sitting here and friendship between Korea and China.”

Zhang Jin-quan was pleased with my words.

Like his father, Zhang Jin-quan did not drink much. I did not offer many glasses to him. Each of us drank three glasses of mild blueberry wine. When President Mitterrand visited our country, I also offered him blueberry wine. It is a famous wine, which only the Japanese Emperor apparently drank during his rule of our country. Three glasses of wine had a profound symbolic meaning. In June 1932 when I bid farewell to Zhang Wei-hua in the Dongshaoguo distillery in the north of the crossroad of Fusong county town, we also drank three glasses of wine.

The luncheon in honour of our precious guests from Fusong lasted three hours. It proceeded in a family atmosphere without any formalities or conventions. After luncheon we talked a lot in the garden.

We focussed on the theme of loyalty. I recalled the loyalty shown by Zhang Wan-cheng and Zhang Wei-hua to my family, based on my experience in Fusong. The guests expressed their thanks for my loyalty to their family.

“Your grandfather helped the independence movement of Korea and your father helped the communist movement of Korea.” I spoke highly of their distinguished services in this manner.

That day I talked a great deal about the loyalty of Zhang Wan-cheng and Zhang Wei-hua, not only because I wanted to praise them, but also because I hoped Zhang Jin-quan, Zhang Jin-lu, Zhang Qi and all the other descendants of Zhang Wei-hua would become real men and women who would value loyalty and become iron-willed revolutionaries.

Moral obligations exist between sovereign and subject and father and son, as advocated by feudal morality, and also between friends and comrades. I think that the phrase “confidence among friends” carries such a meaning. To encourage morality and loyalty, the old sages said that virtue disarms opposition. They said: where there is virtue, there is man, where there is man, there is land, where there is land there is wealth and where there is wealth there is use. The tenet of this Oriental philosophy, expressed concisely in five words—virtue, man, land, wealth and use—is a profound and valuable reference for contemporary life.

We do not reject unconditionally “the three fundamental principles and five moral disciplines in human relations”. At the same time we do not tolerate a radical view of those who willfully consider this stand against the communist ideal and criticize it as contrary to communist morality. How can it be wrong for a person to serve and support his country? Why should a son’s respect for his parents be considered as contrary to law and morality? We oppose the abuse of such morality to rationalize the feudal state and feudal system and preach to the people non-resistance and blind obedience; we do not deny the tenet of “the three principles and five moral disciplines in human relations”, which emphasizes the moral foundations of man.

The relation between Zhang Wei-hua and myself was neither a relation between sovereign and subject, nor a relation between father and son. In my opinion, Zhang was not motivated to protect me at the cost of his life by the moral principle of relationship between sovereign and subject. He merely demonstrated the noblest communist loyalty to his revolutionary comrade and the revolution. Zhang Wei-hua’s self-

sacrifice was so great and valuable owing to its purity and noble character.

At that time Zhang Jin-quan and his company presented me, on behalf of the Fusong people and his family, with a wooden-decorated clock, which bore the inscription, “Two dragons play with a pearl” and a Chinese painting “A long life”, where a child was holding a basket full of peaches at a farmhouse. Zhang Jin-quan explained that it indicated their wish for my long life and good health.

In return I gave gold watches, bearing an inscription of my name, to Zhang Jin-quan, Zhang Jin-lu and Zhang Qi.

Zhang Jin-quan had a check-up in Pyongyang and had his ruined molar teeth replaced by gold false teeth.

I met Zhang Jin-quan and his company again at a guest house in Sinuiju, a frontier city. I gave a luncheon again in their honour on their way back home and talked with them for three hours.

When I gave them each a camera before saying farewell, they were deeply moved. I had chosen these gifts after a great deal of consideration. When he was running the Xiongdi Photo Studio in Fusong, Zhang Wei-hua sent us a camera. The cameras I gave constituted a return gift for Zhang Wei-hua’s present, as well as an expression of my wish, that they follow the example of their father, who had devoted his all to the revolution, running a photo studio. At that time Zhang Jin-quan said that he was also working as a photographer in Fusong.

Bidding farewell to them, I said:

“Tomorrow I will leave Sinuiju for Pyongyang. Back home, you must work well and become excellent Communist Party members. Don’t covet

high positions and don't make mistakes. You grew up as fatherless children. From now on I am your father.”

In 1987 Zhang Jin-quan visited our country again with his wife Wang Feng-lan, second son Zhang Yao and granddaughter Zhang Meng-meng. During their stay in our country I met them seven times. This also marked a breach from convention or standards. Five-year-old Zhang Meng-meng was the youngest of all foreign guests to come to our country to congratulate me on my 75th birthday. She represented the fifth generation of Zhang's family.

On April 13, together with her grandparents, and uncle, Zhang Meng-meng enjoyed the joint performance of artists from different countries, who took part in the April Spring Friendship Art Festival in Ponghwa Art Theatre. That evening I met Zhang Meng-meng for the first time in the theatre. As I made for the seat by the aisle from the lobby, I exchanged greetings with Zhang Jin-quan's couple standing at the first row beside the aisle and embraced Zhang Meng-meng and lifted her high in the air. She smiled brightly, nestling her cheek against mine, without displaying the slightest shyness.

At that moment the audience of thousands applauded us in unison. The foreign guests who had not known of our relations also clapped their hands for a long time, experiencing the joy of witnessing this happy scene.

At the moment of thunderous applause I thought,

“Meng-meng, I am the elder brother of your great-grandfather. Holding you in my arms, I feel a lump in my throat as I yearn for your great-grandfather. He greatly loved children. If he were alive, how much he would love you! But he sacrificed himself for my sake, before he had reached the age of thirty. I don't know how I should repay him. You are

the fifth generation flower of the friendship between Korea and China. Your great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather, my father and I devoted all their lives for this friendship. You are a flower, which has thrived on the blood they shed and efforts they made. For the sake of the friendship between Korea and China, you must bloom beautifully, so that the world may see you.”

I held Zhang Meng-meng tightly in my arms. The small heart of the young girl throbbed rapidly close against my heart. I considered the moment when her vigorous heartbeat reached my heart, a meaningful moment, when my friendship with Zhang Wei-hua was linked to the fifth generation—from Zhang Wan-cheng, through Zhang Wei-hua, Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang Qi to Zhang Meng-meng.... Despite the flow of stormy years, the friendship of our two families continued right up to the fifth generation, crossing long rivers and streams. This is the friendship between our two families, as well as two peoples and two countries—Korea and China. Consequently Zhang Jin-quan subsequently named our friendship the “Traditional Friendship”.

On seeing Zhang Meng-meng in my embrace, the people became convinced that the friendship between Korea and China would last through generations.

That day I wrote my name on the picture of Zhang Wei-hua and my brother Chol Ju and presented it to Jin-quan as a souvenir. He said that he would keep it as a family treasure.

During his company’s sojourn in our country, we provided them with a plane for their exclusive use and a special train, as well as many attendants. They were provided with the hospitality accorded to state guests as Zhang Wei-hua’s descendants.

In April 1992 Zhang Wei-hua's children came to our country again to congratulate me on my 80th birthday. It was their third visit to our country. Zhang Jin-quan and his wife, Zhang Qi and his wife, Zhang Yao, Zhang Meng-meng, Zhang Jin-lu and her husband Yue Yu-bin who were living in Beijing, their daughter Yue Zhi-yun and their son Yue Zhi-xiang and so on—a company of twelve gathered in Pyongyang. The more frequent their visits became, the deeper and warmer the friendship between Zhang Wei-hua's descendants and me grew. In memory of his third visit, Zhang Jin-quan presented me with his long memoir the *Traditional Friendship*. This book was written in a simple style, bereft of exaggeration or artistic touches, about the friendship of our two families, which originated from my father and Zhang Wan-cheng. For all its simplicity, every line of his writing was fluent and vibrant with the unsophisticated feelings of friendship. This book touched me deeply. When I praised his writing, he blushed like a child and said that he was afraid that he might not have described truthfully my benevolence to them.

In return I presented them with the Chinese edition of my reminiscences *With the Century*, Volumes 1 and 2.

“Two foreigners, Zhang Wei-hua and Novichenko, protected me with their lives. Novichenko is still alive, but he would not have displayed such a self-sacrificial spirit, unless he had been ready to risk his life. It is not easy to make such sacrifice, when there is no time to think.”

I made this comment on their third visit to our country.

Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang Jin-lu replied sincerely, “In a sense Novichenko's exploit is several times greater than our father's. What might have happened without him?”

“During my life I have met many people who helped me. Many benefactors saved me from the death which shadowed me, including the late Reverend Son Jong Do, the father of Son Won Thae, one of your fellow visitors. Consequently I sometimes think that Heaven looks after a patriot and that a saviour always appears to rescue him. This is not merely wishful thinking. Everywhere the people help individuals who are ready to dedicate their lives for the people. This is a truth and dialectic.”

I said earnestly that they should serve as an excellent son and daughter of the nation, serving the people and dedicating all their lives for the people just as their father had done.

Zhang Jin-lu presented me with a dark-red woolen sweater she had herself made. She said that she had crafted a gift which I could wear. Feeling that I would not use any other present, which would end up on display in the International Friendship Exhibition, she knitted a sweater I could wear every day. She had thought deeply. Consequently I accepted her present with gratitude and put it on before them as they wanted and posed for a photograph.

When I talked to them, Zhang Jin-quan said that they planned to set up a new tombstone on the 55th anniversary of his father’s death and requested that I write an epitaph for the tombstone. I was grateful to him for the suggestion. This proved that they sincerely regarded me as their uncle and were following me wholeheartedly.

“Fifty-fifth anniversary already! I believe that your father passed away in the tenth month by the lunar calendar....”

I recalled solemnly the dreary autumn day of 1937.

“Yes, uncle. It was the second day of the tenth month of 1937 by the lunar calendar. It is October 27 this year by the solar calendar.”

“Well, let me erect a monument in my own name rather than write a monumental inscription. What do you think?”

Surprised by my unexpected suggestion, Zhang Jin-quan and Zhang Jin-lu looked at each other without uttering a reply. They had not requested that much from me. They had merely expressed unabashedly their opinion, regarding me as head of their family. Consequently they were apparently embarrassed at my own suggestion for the monument.

Zhang Jin-quan said in a hurry, “I am afraid that is too much. I should not lay such a burden on you, uncle. Please draft the epitaph and we will have it inscribed on the tombstone.”

“That may be good. But as the saying goes, all things being equal, choose the better one. I will prepare an inscribed monument, replete with epitaph and send it by my people. You merely need to be prepared to receive and erect it. What time would suit you?”

“I am awfully grateful. But I am sorry to have burdened you with an additional worry when you are so busy. I feel I have been impertinent to make such a request....”

They were perplexed.

“It will not take long to prepare a monument. As we have decided to erect it, it would be a good idea to hold the function on the anniversary of your father’s death.”

Zhang Jin-quan and his party accepted my proposal with pleasure. He said that on their return to Fusong they would prepare for the occasion and report thereon to the Chinese authorities concerned.

Consequently we agreed to erect the monument on the grave of my old revolutionary comrade-in-arms Zhang Wei-hua on my own behalf.

The workers of the Party History Institute in our country transported the monument from Pyongyang to Fusong. The Chinese Party and

Government sent their people as far as the head of the Linjiang Bridge to greet our representatives warmly and organized a grand unveiling ceremony on Zhang Wei-hua's grave in Fusong on October 27. China's mass media attached great importance to the function and widely reported the occasion.

The revolutionary exploits of the martyr Zhang Wei-hua constitute a bright symbol of the friendship between the Korean and Chinese peoples. His noble revolutionary spirit and services to the revolution will live on for ever in the people's minds.

Kim Il Sung

October 27, 1992

This is the epitaph I wrote for the monument.

On our representatives' return to Pyongyang, I saw the video recording of the unveiling ceremony and admired the grandeur of the function. It represented a vivid picture of friendship and loyalty, which could be only created by the Korean and Chinese peoples and the Korean and Chinese fighters.

Can a friendship continue between a living man and his dead friend? Whenever confronted by such a question, I replied that it could. I still give the same answer. My friendship with the third, fourth and fifth generations of Zhang's family, as well as the unveiling ceremony of Zhang Wei-hua's monument held in Fusong, suffice to prove the validity of my reply.

A living man must not forget the dead. Only then can their friendship be lasting, true and immortal. If the former forgets the latter, such friendship will die out there and then. Frequent remembrance of dead

friends, wide publicity of their distinguished services, good care of their children and loyalty to their last wishes: these are the moral obligations of living men to their predecessors, martyrs and deceased revolutionary comrades. Without this loyalty, there would be no true continuation of history and traditions.

My mind was somewhat lightened, on sending the monument. But how can I fulfil all my obligations to Zhang Wei-hua, who sacrificed his life for me, by setting up even thousands of monuments to him?

His grandson Zhang Yao and granddaughter Yue Zhi-yun now study in Pyongyang University of International Affairs, as their parents wished.

Whenever I miss Zhang Wei-hua, I visit their lodging house. It is not easy to fit in free time for foreign students, owing to the tight daily schedule of the President, who has to split seconds. But my assistants are liberal in arranging the President's hours for Zhang Wei-hua's descendants. I do not grudge any time to meet them.

When Zhang Yao and Yue Zhi-yun greeted me in Korean on New Year's Day, I was extremely satisfied. They spoke fluent Korean. I hope that they will have a better command of Korean and become accustomed to Korean food and become familiar with the Korean people as soon as possible.

The political situation in the world, which is about to see in the 21st century, is very grave and complicated, but the old friendship between Zhang Wei-hua's family and me remains unchanged.

I have expressed for a long time now my wish to visit Fusong. This wish remains. I want to visit Zhang Wei-hua's grave in Nandianzi, Fusong, but I am afraid that it may remain a mere desire. If I fail to accomplish this desire, I hope that I manage to visit him in my dreams.

5. The Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland

Thanks to the new division, which consolidated and enhanced the main units of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, we had the opportunity to make, in greater breadth and depth, the anti-Japanese national united front movement and the requisite organizational and ideological preparations for the founding of the Party. The new division served as a powerful driving force, supporting militarily and politically, attempts by the Korean communists to expand the armed struggle deep into the homeland and bring together patriotic forces from all walks of life; it opened up broad opportunities to bring about a turning-point in the united front movement, which we had continued indefatigably ever since the Kalun meeting.

Since the Nanhutou meeting, our united front movement concentrated on activities to organize a nationwide united front. The establishment of a permanent united front organization and unification of wide sections of the anti-Japanese patriotic forces constituted urgent tasks, which brooked no further delay, in the light of our revolutionary progress and domestic and international requirements. Ever since the early years of our activity we had maintained that the surest way to our independence and sovereignty involved a mass resistance campaign based on great national

unity, and that great national unity was the key to achieving independence solely by our own efforts. The united front constituted, together with the establishment of Juche, one of the most important ideals we had adhered to, since the early days of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

On the basis of the ideal of great national unity and a united front, we had made tireless efforts to achieve the coalition with various nationalist forces and anti-Japanese patriotic forces; we also intensively developed our joint struggle with wide sections of the Chinese anti-Japanese forces and communists, as we were fighting in China. The remarkable successes and experiences we had achieved during this struggle marked a valuable foundation for the large-scale development of the united front movement. We created a postulate for continuing the united front movement on a nationwide scale on the basis of these successes and experiences and also made every possible effort to train as quickly as possible the nucleus and form our own forces, who would be able to take charge in future.

Attempts to rally together all the forces of the nation were also made before the 1930s.

In Korea's modern history, the unity of the nation, transcending ideas and doctrines, began to be debated for the first time after the mid-1920s. In those days, our national liberation struggle was marked by two forces representing nationalism and communism. The greater the tyranny and expropriation of the Japanese imperialists, the greater the far-sighted leaders of the national liberation movement felt the need for the solidarity of patriotic forces and great national unity. Proceeding from this necessity, the communists of the early days sought to engineer a

coalition with the nationalists, while the nationalists attempted to cooperate with the communist camp.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the leaders of both camps, who were equally interested in national liberation and the restoration of national sovereignty, the Singan Association, the first united front organization in our country's history, was founded in Seoul in February 1927. The expectations and trust of the popular masses in this organization were so great that the patriotic figures and historians of those days called the Singan Association the single national party. The masses, demoralized by the antagonism and opposition of the two forces of communism and nationalism, shouted with joy at the formation of the Singan Association.

It was a great happy event, meeting the desire of the popular masses and the demands of the time, when the champions of the communist and nationalist movements, who had been estranged from one another owing to a difference of ideas and doctrines, realized, albeit belatedly, the need for unity and solidarity and established a united front organization.

The Singan Association, which could be termed the first creation of the national cooperative front in our country, was patriotic and anti-Japanese in its goals and aims.

Following the realization of the common front of the two great forces, which could be said to represent the nation, the Singan Association became after its inauguration a nationwide single organization, representing all the people. The purport of the inauguration of this organization is mirrored in the name of the Singan Association itself, provided by its sponsors in the meaning of "Komok Singan". "Komok Singan" implies that a new trunk grows from an old tree. As the name indicates, the Singan Association aspired to the general assembly of national forces on a new basis.

The movement of the Singan Association, which was sponsored, promoted and managed by such progressive patriots as Ri Sang Jae, Hong Myong Hui and Ho Hon, who enjoyed a high reputation among the popular masses, was innovative and revolutionary in terms of the content of its programme. It aimed to accelerate the political and economic revival of the nation, consolidate national unity and deny all forms of opportunism; the professional composition of its members was also diverse and wide-ranging. The Singan Association was joined by more than 37,000 people from all sorts of profession, such as workers, peasants, hotel managers, photographers, journalists, traders, doctors, company employees, teachers, scribes, stock-farmers, printing workers, fishermen, transport workers, weavers, tailors, students, lawyers, writers, bank clerks and religious workers.

The Singan Association ended its existence in May 1931, despite its excellent goals and aims to unite all the nation's efforts through the collaboration of the right and left groups.

Various rumours have circulated about the reasons behind the dissolution of the Singan Association. The champions of the communist movement blamed its collapse on the nationalists, while the nationalists attempted to shift the responsibility to the communists. At one time some historians attempted to negate the patriotic character of the Singan Association and its significance for the nation's history, trying to seek the main cause of the dissolution of this organization in the dissension and reformist tendencies of the people at the top.

I cannot accept such a nihilistic view. It is good to analyze the cause of its dissolution scientifically and learn a lesson from it, but one should not shift responsibility onto others. We should not deny the Singan

Association or belittle its significance to the nation's history, because there were some reformists in the upper strata of this organization.

The dissolution of the Singan Association was above all caused by divisive attempts by the Japanese imperialists, who feared a merger of the anti-Japanese resistance forces of the Korean nation. The imperialists drove a wedge between them and bribed the reformist upper strata. The Singan Association also collapsed, owing to lack of a pivotal leading force, which could have frustrated the sabotage and destructive operations of the enemy and skilfully managed and led this association.

On learning a severe lesson from the disintegration of the Singan Association, we raised the problem of the anti-Japanese national united front as an important policy, displaying firm resolve and determination to seize the initiative and unify the patriotic national forces, and made tireless efforts to join all the forces of the nation, under the banner of the cause of anti-Japanese national salvation. During this process, we trained a nucleus capable of leading this movement on their own initiative and also accumulated useful experience.

The Nanhutou meeting constituted a new historic turning-point in the united front movement of our country, as it had adopted decisions on the inauguration of a national united front.

It was a time when a popular front movement also came to the fore on the international scene to check imperialist aggression and confronted fascism.

Greatly stimulated by the seizure of power by the Nazis in Germany, the French working class keenly felt the need to form an anti-fascist united front, aware of the increasing threat of fascism in their own country. In response to the passionate wishes of the masses for unity, the Socialist Party accepted the proposals of the French Communist Party

and signed an agreement for concerted action against war and fascism in July 1934. The trade unions, formerly divided by the two parties, also merged. This wave led to the creation of the “popular front for labour, freedom and peace”. The trend required an expansion and development of this front right up to unity with the middle class. The participation of the Radical Socialist Party, a petty-bourgeois party, in the coalition of Socialist and Communist Parties at the end of June 1935 led to the creation of the so-called “popular assembly”. A grand demonstration of the popular front was held in Paris on July 14, involving hundreds of thousands of people. Maurice Thorez, Leon Blum and Edouard Daladier, the leaders of the three parties, stood in the vanguard of the demonstration shoulder to shoulder. In January 1936, the popular front programme based on the unity of progressive groups, who had stood up in the anti-war, anti-fascist struggle centring around the three parties, was formally announced, and the popular front won a landslide victory in the general elections of the Chamber of Deputies, held in April and May of the same year. Consequently, the Sarraut Cabinet resigned en masse and the popular front Cabinet, headed by Leon Blum was born. In actual fact, the popular front government tried to overcome the crisis by increasing the purchasing power of the masses, but failed to do so; although it supported the Spanish popular front government, it could not offer active assistance, as it pursued a so-called non-interventionist policy. In the end, the popular front also disintegrated. However, it checked the establishment of an overt fascist regime in France and served as a useful experience in the international communist movement and the anti-fascist struggle.

Influenced by the development of the popular front movement in France, the Comintern set the formation of a popular front as an important goal for communists all over the world.

The international communist movement consequently set itself the immediate task of acting as the advocate of peace and democracy and opponent of war and fascism, rather than instigator of a world revolution aimed at immediately overthrowing capitalism. This could be considered a new political line in the international communist movement. Although many political parties at the Second International refused the Comintern's proposal for a united front, the popular movement in France, Spain and Latin America made considerable progress.

The appearance of the Azaña Popular Front Government in Spain in February 1936 is a typical example.

The Spanish popular front was placed in a difficult position, confronted as it was by the revolt of Franco and the military intervention of Germany and Italy.

The so-called non-interventionist policy, promoted by the United States, Britain and France, proved fatal to the Spanish popular front. The unfair non-interventionist policy which advocated strict neutrality and an embargo on weapons' exports and imports, in the end merely helped the rebel army. The Soviet Union also adopted a non-interventionist stance at first. However, when it became clear that such a stance was unfavourable to the popular front government, it changed its attitude and dispatched planes, tanks and the like to the government. The difficulties experienced by the Spanish popular front aroused the sympathy of the intellectuals and working masses in many countries. Numerous volunteers rushed to Spain from various countries. Consequently Spain became the international field of hostilities between the fascist and

progressive forces supporting the popular front. The hostilities were reminiscent of a small-scale world war. This was exactly the situation of the international anti-fascist movement at the time when we founded the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in Donggang. We were also greatly encouraged by the heroic resistance war efforts of the Ethiopian patriots, who rose up against the Italian aggressors.

The Comintern quickly grasped the rapidly changing world situation and set as an immediate strategic task the unification of the working class and other toiling people of various countries behind the anti-war, anti-fascist struggle to prevent war, defend peace, oppose fascism and maintain democracy. It thereby fulfilled the role befitting of its duty as the leading organ of the world revolution. It can also be said that this constituted the basis of the historic exploits of the Comintern, regarding the anti-fascist popular front movement.

Fascism was not a new enemy for us. The object of our revolution and its character did not change because international fascism had reared its head. Prior to the Comintern's advance of the line of anti-fascist popular front movement, we put forward our own line of the anti-Japanese national united front and vigorously advanced our revolution on the basis of this line.

The foundation work of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland as a nationwide united front body began after the Nanhutou meeting. Until then I had on the whole been trying on my own to mature my meditation as regards the foundation of this association. Now and then Kim San Ho, Choe Hyon, Pak Yong Sun and some others provided the necessary advice, but generally they adopted an attitude of "Do as you please, Comrade Commander". I once met an elderly scholar in a mountainous village in the neighbourhood of Yushuichuan in the

Dunhua area. He became a good adviser and match I could discuss matters with.

In that village there were two houses of Koreans. I was staying at one of them. At that time a small unit operating in the Helong area came to see us. On seeing me, they reported that they had brought a strange man with them. They said that they had met him in a remote village in Helong and that he had followed, insisting on a meeting with General Kim Il Sung, on learning that the small unit was coming to the Headquarters. Feeling that they should not bring an unidentified individual to the Headquarters, the members of the small unit repeatedly advised him to return home.

However, the man merely replied, "You go yourselves, I'll go myself. Don't worry about me. Let's not interfere in each other's affairs." He then calmly followed the small unit at a certain distance.

This individual, who attracted my curiosity before I had even met him, behaved strangely at our first meeting. Some comrades from the small unit introduced me to him as the Commander. However, the strange guest did not listen and requested that he be introduced to the real General Kim Il Sung, taking into consideration his age and earnestness. I received him, chopping firewood for the master of the house; apparently my clothes did not satisfy him. He scrutinized me for some time, asserting that General Kim could not be so young and that a general could not chop firewood and wear rough clothes like a farmhand.

Once when we were bivouacking in the neighbourhood of Guandi, north Manchuria, my trousers burnt because the new orderly standing guard at the campfire dozed off. In actual fact, my padded clothes inevitably appeared poor quality, as they were old and also were patched up.

He was a strange fellow. His goatee resembled Ho Chi Minh's. Although he was no more than forty-four or forty-five, he looked older than fifty.

He said that he had heard many rumours about me and had come to see the kind of man I was, as there were too many rumours about me. When I told him, "Much ado about nothing," he shook his head and said that he could guess my pains merely from my clothes.

Despite the great age difference, we somehow immediately found a common language and mind. His introduction was very strange and daring. He said:

"I'm an opportunist who has not accomplished anything in life. I have only wavered, currying favour with different parties."

I have met thousands and tens of thousands of people in all my life: I now saw for the first time a man, who unhesitatingly introduced himself as an opportunist.

Only an infinitely conscientious man is infinitely honest. Honesty is the mirror of our conscience, which is as pure as white snow; it resembles a beacon which cannot be concealed. He immediately fascinated me with the few words he had uttered owing to their frankness, which amazed us all. I could see his moral height in the unaffected manner he used to personally belittle himself.

We could not stay any longer in that village, as we had to go to Mihunzhen shortly. I consequently decided to part with him as soon as I had conversed sufficiently to ensure that he did not leave upset.

However, when we started on our way, he indicated his intention to follow us rather than return home. He said that after meeting General Kim, he did not feel like parting so soon and requested that he be allowed to follow us for some hours at least and exchange conversation

with us. For some reason I also did not feel like parting from him. So we started on our way, taking him with us.

I did not find the march tiresome, as I talked to him all the time. I was so engrossed in our talk that at times I continued on the march oblivious to my men's need to rest as they pleased.

In these cases Kim San Ho approached us and hinted that we should take a rest.

This individual was Ri Tong Baek, the old man “tobacco pipe”, recorded in the history of our Party as sponsor of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. “Tobacco pipe” was Ri Tong Baek's nickname.

In my opinion, many people know that Tanchon of South Hamgyong Province is the home of Ri Tong Hui, a *chamryong* (field grade officer—Tr.) at the close of the Ri dynasty, a famous leader of the Righteous Volunteers' Army and an advocate of the communist movement. Few people, however, know that it is the native town of Ri Tong Baek.

During our talk on the march, we discovered that Ri Tong Hui had exerted a considerable influence on Ri Tong Baek, who studied the Chinese classics. We learned that Ri Tong Hui had persuaded the old man “tobacco pipe” to join the independence movement. He belonged to the War Fund-Raising Association, located in the Changbai area.

As the topic of our conversation concerned the War Fund-Raising Association and Kang Jin Gon, it became more animated. Ri Tong Baek knew about Kang Jin Gon as well as I. He said that he had frequented Badaogou and Linjiang and had on each visit there maintained close contacts with Kang Jin Gon. He worked in the association as correspondence director.

However, when the great “clean-up” in the year of Kyongsin (1920—Tr.) reached Changbai, the awe-inspiring War Fund-Raising Association rapidly dispersed. A disappointed Ri Tong Baek went to Russia in search of Ri Tong Hui.

He met Ri Tong Hui in Chita and soon joined the Koryo Communist Party. The erstwhile independence fighter rapidly became a champion of the communist movement. Consequently he was soon involved in factional strife.

As Ri Tong Baek mentioned the Koryo Communist Party, I asked him whether he knew Pyon Tae U; I recalled that I had once seen the so-called membership card of this party in my Wujiazi days. He replied that Pyon Tae U and he had been intimate friends since their early years.

When I told him that I had once seen the membership card of the Koryo Communist Party from Pyon Tae U in Wujiazi, Ri Tong Baek asked me whether I had also seen the potato stamp certificate of one delegation. When I said that this was news to me, he recounted the following story.

In November 1922 a conference of the Shanghai and Irkutsk groups was due to be held in Verkhne-Udinsk, in the east central part of Russia. Believing that they would only be able to control the party after the merger if they enjoyed a majority at the conference, each group waged a fierce undercover struggle to increase the number of its own delegates.

The Irkutsk group issued a lot of false delegate certificates, even forging a potato stamp and sent sham delegates to the conference. The Shanghai group also engaged in similar fraudulent practices. In the end the conference disintegrated into chaos owing to the wrangling. Disillusioned, Pyon Tae U went to Linjiang, intending to return to the

nationalist movement, while Ri Tong Baek was dispatched by Ri Tong Hui to Hunchun.

The old man “tobacco pipe” had been teaching in Hunchun before his journey to Seoul in spring 1925. He attended an inaugural meeting of the Communist Party of Korea under a pseudonym, and also participated in the June Tenth Independence Movement, held in the following year.

Ri Tong Baek’s stay in Seoul, the rendezvous of the factions, led to his involuntary involvement in the whirlwind of new factional strife. He spent busy, boisterous days playing the role of two or three individuals, dragged into the Tuesday group first and then plunging into the M-L group.

The despicable undercover struggle of various groups to seize control of the party involved disgraceful behaviours: a member of the central committee was put in a sack and clubbed; his head was knocked with a wooden pillow; sometimes such a deplorable tragicomedy was also staged to inform the police of opponents so that they were arrested and detained. If he had stayed on in Seoul, he would not have known when and where he would have been secretly handcuffed or had his head clubbed. Consequently Ri Tong Baek returned to Jiandao.

Ri Tong Baek was like a wrecked ship without a sail, helm or oar; he had been running in confusion depending on the wind and the waves, spat at factional strife and steadfastly remained on land. He worked as a newspaper reporter in Longjing, rejecting both the movement of the Independence Army and the communist movement.

However, the anti-Japanese movement of the 1930s, flaring up in Jiandao, stimulated Ri Tong Baek to become involved in the storm once more. Drawn to a confused party belonging to the Tuesday group, Ri Tong Baek worked as secretary of district No. 3 of the Helong County

for some time; after a narrow escape from death during the great “clean-up” in Jiandao he went to a remote place in Helong with his family, determined to turn his back on the world for ever. He said that he had led a quiet life there for the past several years, teaching at a private village school.

“So, what else am I if not an opportunist? I am an out-and-out opportunist, involved in all the factions excluding the Seoul-Shanghai group.”

Ri Tong Baek put the tobacco in his pipe bowl as if he was ending his topsy-turvy past. He was a heavy smoker. Sometimes he put his pipe into his mouth even when he was riding on horseback and would be rebuked by young orderlies. Instead of taking offence, he muttered as if in excuse, “Oh, I’m so forgetful. Smoking on the march may even invite far-off running dogs.” He put his pipe in the pouch of his extra coat. He never rolled tobacco on paper. He only smoked a pipe. This led to his nickname—“tobacco pipe”.

“Thank you for your frankness. But I don’t regard you as an opportunist. You have merely peeped here and there in order to seek out the right path to be followed by the Korean society. Participation in various groups in the search for truth does not mark you out as an opportunist.”

Ri Tong Baek was greatly surprised by my reply.

“You mean I am not an opportunist to have been involved in so many factions?”

“No—this much is clear from the fact that after living the life of a recluse in the remote mountain area of Helong for several years, you disregarded your decision and made a long journey to see us, although

you are no longer that young. Can this really be regarded as the realization of an opportunist's original intention?"

"Now that you have seen into the bottom of my heart so thoroughly, I'll gladly agree. I also left home owing to my insistent ambition to find, prior to my death and at all costs, the 'treasure' I have not found for many years."

"I am extremely delighted to meet someone who is seeking truth with a righteous intention. I think that there used to be many investigators of truth like yourself and champions of righteous movements in our country; however, some have been arrested and imprisoned, some have turned renegade and others have suffered various losses so that they are very rare nowadays. It is very fortunate that you are still alive."

My highly interesting talk with the "tobacco pipe" continued until we reached Mihunzhen.

During that time I became attached to Ri Tong Baek.

Ri Tong Baek also grew close to us. One saying goes: "Meet in haste, part in haste." It was not easy to say goodbye. However, we could not allow an elderly man to go any further along the long and dangerous march, which was likely to involve continuous battles with the enemy.

Before leaving Mihunzhen, I advised Ri Tong Baek again to go back home. Instead of replying, he rummaged the inside of his coat before taking out a sheet of paper folded into four and handed it to me. It was an application for his enrollment written in a mixture of Korean and Chinese.

Even the sudden rising of the sun in the west could not have surprised us as much as that time.

"How on earth can you follow us at your age?"

“Don’t worry about that. Under the command of Ulji Mun Dok¹⁹ and Ri Sun Sin,²⁰ there were a number of soldiers who were one and a half times older than me. So you have no reason to reject my request because of my age.”

“Who’ll take care of your wife and children, who no doubt impatiently await you in the backwoods of Helong?”

“According to one saying, You feel sorry if you cannot go into scheduled exile. Furthermore, you are now telling me to go back home, when I have already left it owing to my desire to devote myself to the great cause of national salvation. General, you have embarked on the liberation struggle for the country: no one else could take care of your ailing mother and your younger brothers, could they?”

Whatever I said, I could not persuade the “tobacco pipe”. I yielded. To commemorate his enlistment, I gave him the pistol I had treasured for two years.

When we had decided to enlist him, Ri Tong Baek excitedly explained what had made him decide to remain by our side instead of going back home.

“Do you know what held me by your side, General?”

“In actual fact, first of all your ennobling cause. Secondly your patched trousers and the cry of all those suffering from fever in Mihunzhen.... I thought a lot when I saw you visit without a moment’s hesitation the isolated feverish victims and take care of them. It is not as easy as it seems to take care of one’s subordinates and shoulder responsibility for their destiny, regardless of one’s own danger. I have met all the eminent bigwigs, but they pale in comparison with you.

“On the whole I decided to remain here, because I have discovered the true master of the Korean revolution, the genuine master and leader

who shoulders all the responsibility for Korea's destiny. You General keep clear of armchair arguments and empty theories and talks. For this merit alone, you managed to persuade a rural scholar like me."

"Is your decision motivated by a third reason?"

"Why not! Of course. Your creative and practical way of thinking and your firm belief in the victory of the revolution."

One day, during a break on the march, "tobacco pipe" and I exchanged our views on the national united front. He expressed his opinion that, although France, Spain and China could form a popular front by merging political parties and organizations thanks to parties like the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Nationalist Party as well as labour movement organizations, our country could not do the same, because we had virtually no political parties or lawful organizations.

I gave him two snowballs and told him to roll them into one; I myself rolled a small snowball on the snow and made it as large as the snowball he had merged.

I said: "Well now, look. You made one ball by merging two political parties; I have made one larger than yours by rolling a small ball. Will you claim even now that the organization of a united front is only possible when there are political parties?"

Gazing fixedly at the snowball in my hand, as if he were looking into a magic glass, Ri Tong Baek muttered to himself:

"Really that is a profound principle. However, a snowball is a snowball and a political party is a political party, isn't it?"

"To our great surprise, however, many natural phenomena we have experienced conform to social phenomena, as far as principles are concerned."

I told him in detail about the united front policy we had consistently adhered to since our days in Jilin and about the experience accumulated by new generation young communists in rallying anti-Japanese patriotic forces from all areas of society. I said:

“A united front is not only formed by merging political parties and organizations. If the theory of political parties and organizations becomes absolute, it resembles dogma. We can easily form a united front, if we are backed by the masses and leadership nucleus. I believed in this case that we should rally people, be they ten or a hundred, using the identity of their purposes and aspirations as the criterion. With this aim in mind, we have been promoting the united front movement for a long time now.”

Beating his nape, Ri Tong Baek said, “Dogma really is a problem,” and laughed loudly.

After explaining why he remained by our side, “tobacco pipe” added:

“By your side, General, I have found a task to dedicate the concluding years of my life to. In the final analysis, I have discovered the worth of my existence. It can be said that one is happy when one feels useful in this world. Now I am such a happy man.”

“What kind of task have you found to make you feel happy?”

“My task resembles the one performed by Louis David who followed Napoleon. I am going to transfer to my diary what David transferred to his pictures. Not the historic achievements of Napoleon’s army, but rather those of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army.”

Ri Tong Baek kept his diary every day as he had planned. There was not a single day when he did not keep his diary, although there were occasions when he skipped his meals once or twice or sometimes for several days. Until his very last moments, he carried out his mission as

narrator of the history of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. After his enlistment, he worked at the secretariat of the Headquarters and later on as the chief editor of the *Monthly Samil*, an organ of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, and was also in charge of the printing office. He had collected so many documents and photographs that whenever the secretariat moved somewhere, several combatants had to be assigned, in order to move ten knapsacks containing documents, as well as mimeographing implements.

One day Kim Ju Hyon advised him to arrange the packages in order, so that they could be halved, but was severely reproached by him.

“Well, do you think these documents are like those of the ‘Minsaengdan’? Although you are a commander, you do not enjoy a sweeping judgement. These packages constitute a treasure, which cannot be exchanged even for the lives of ten or one hundred people like me. Although you are a regimental commander by rank, you are tantamount to a private before these packages. Do you know how the national treasure is formed?”

From then on, the commanders obediently attached a transport party; they did not dare say anything superfluous, no matter how many packages “tobacco pipe” held.

If the many documents, diaries and photos he had recorded, collected and kept had not been lost, they would indeed now be eternal national treasures just as “tobacco pipe” had asserted.

On one occasion Ri Tong Baek accidentally fired his gun. As Napoleon was frequently on his lips, a bodyguard nicknamed him once “old worshiper of Napoleon”. At that time Ri Tong Baek was holding in his hand a pistol, which he had just finished disassembling and assembling and cleaning.

“You stupid fool. This pistol will tell you whom I worship. You listen.” With these words Ri Tong Baek held up his pistol with a fully loaded magazine and pulled the trigger towards the empty air.

Owing to that accidental shot, commotion followed at the Laomudingzi bivouac and soldiers rushed out. The other commanders strongly demanded that he should be given a warning and not be allowed to carry a weapon with him for one month. I proposed that he be pardoned just this once, but military discipline was rigorous. The pistol was taken back by Kim San Ho.

The arrival of the wonderful old man “tobacco pipe” at our unit was another stroke of fortune for me. I always had kind friends. It was as if a noble man had descended from the sky and helped us.

When we resolved the problems with over 100 suspects of the “Minsaengdan”, organized a new division and improved the living conditions of the Maanshan Children’s Corps members, I concentrated all my efforts on the preparatory work for the foundation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. Although this was an arduous task, all sorts of troubles were resolved smoothly just as we had intended; consequently, we made brisk headway.

As well as Kim San Ho, Ri Tong Baek became an irreplaceably honest and prudent assistant. As soon as he was enlisted, we elected him a member of the preparatory committee for the foundation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. In this preparatory committee, Kim San Ho and Ri Tong Baek played the key roles. Kim San Ho chiefly worked outside the unit, as he was in charge of liaison with external organizations; Ri Tong Baek headed the preparatory work within the unit.

Ri Tong Baek also greatly helped me work out the Programme, Rules and Inaugural Declaration of the ARF. At that time I discussed every item with him and advised him to write the draft. However, he declined my proposal, saying that his literary style was old and that he was not confident of his ability to write down my intentions correctly. Consequently I made the draft and he added something, thereby perfecting the inaugural documents one by one.

Our greatest differences emerged over the first item of the programme. The first item defined, in a few words, the ideal, fighting goal and character of the ARF as a political organization. Consequently the debate was very heated.

When I proposed to put down, in accordance with my meditations, as the content of the first item, the overthrow of the colonial rule of the piratical Japanese imperialists via the general mobilization of the 20 million-strong Korean nation and the establishment of a genuinely popular government, Ri Tong Baek shook his head and became engrossed in thought before saying “No”.

He added: “It is a pity that there is not a single phrase about the building of a society for the proletariat. If the first item of the programme does not reflect communism at all, will the numerous proponents of communism like it? The words ‘a genuinely popular government’ are vague in class character and somehow reek of nationalism.”

Later on, when I met Pak Tal²¹ for the first time and talked to him in the secret camp of Mt. Paektu, he replied in a similar manner as Ri Tong Baek on the first item of the Programme of the ARF.

This was a time when pseudo-Marxist views were widespread in our country.

Almost all the so-called communists asserted emphatically that communists would only free the working class and all mankind from exploitation and oppression, when they had got rid of a narrow national ideal and strictly adhered to the class principle and the internationalist stance, as if communism ran counter to the national ideal.

Many proponents of communism insisted on this fact, because they accepted very simply the proposition “The proletariat has no fatherland”, made by Marx in *The Communist Manifesto*.

Marx and Engels lived in a historic period, when the possibility of a socialist revolution in one country had not fully matured. They predicted that a socialist revolution would occur simultaneously in a number of countries, where capitalism was highly developed. In conditions where the bourgeoisie of every country, who were to be overthrown by the working class, posed as defenders of national interests, the revolutionary cause of the proletariat throughout the world might have been spoiled, if the proletariat of all countries had been deceived by the honeyed words of “nationalism” or “patriotism” advocated by the bourgeois class of their own country. For the proletariat of every country, their homeland under bourgeois rule can never be their fatherland; therefore, the proletariat had to back unfailingly internationalism and socialism in the choice between chauvinism and internationalism and nationalism and socialism. Proceeding from this point of view, the classics of Marxism warned the working class against so-called patriotic illusions and instructed them to discard at all times the nationalist bias between patriotism and socialism and defend socialism. Analyzing the causes behind the failure of the Paris Commune, Marx asserted that the participants of the Commune had not attacked Versailles, the den of reactionaries, as they thought mistakenly that the launch of a civil war

would constitute an anti-patriotic act, when the foreign enemy, the Prussian army, was encircling Paris. Lenin branded it a treachery to the socialist cause that, following the outbreak of the World War I, the revisionists of the Second International abandoned the revolutionary principle of the working class and sided with the bourgeoisie of their own country, under the slogan of “defence of the fatherland”.

To help, under the pretext of “defence of the fatherland”, the bourgeoisie obtain colonies, who madly display a readiness to increase their own wealth at the cost of their whole nation, constitutes a betrayal of one’s own nation and, at the same time, of socialism. Therefore, if the proletariat of an imperialist country are loyal to the socialist cause, they should not hold up the sign of “defence of the fatherland” but instead should hoist the banner of “opposing war” and launch a campaign to boycott war.

However, the situation is completely different in colonial and dependent countries. For the communists of these countries, raising the banner of national liberation and patriotism is tantamount to opposing the bourgeoisie in the suzerain states; by doing so, they make an equal contribution to the national and class revolution, as well as to the international revolutionary cause.

Pseudo-communists and would-be Marxists made a theoretical and practical mistake: failing to understand this plain truth, they regarded patriotism and nationalism as the enemy of communism and rejected them unconditionally, absolutizing the proposition “The proletariat has no fatherland”.

In the new historical situation in which the socialist revolution takes place with the nation-state as a unit, there can be said to be no major difference between genuine nationalism and genuine communism in

colonies. The former lays a little more stress on the national character, the latter on the class character. Their patriotic stands should be regarded as the same in that they both champion the nation's interests against foreign forces.

My invariable belief is that a true communist is a true patriot and that a true nationalist, too, is a true patriot.

Therefore, we consistently attached great importance to cooperation with true, patriotic nationalists and devoted all our efforts to strengthening our alliance with them.

We had to devote a considerable amount of time and energy to make people understand that the Korean communists had a national right to fight for the liberation of their country and convince them that it did not run counter to proletarian internationalism. Moreover, our own thorough patriotism and practical struggle for national liberation demonstrated to the whole nation that communists were patriots, who truly loved their country and fellow people; in the end we came to proudly be in the vanguard of the national liberation struggle.

The inauguration of the ARF will be the fruitful result of this protracted self-sacrificing struggle we waged.

Therefore, we should openly use the name "The Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland", and also make clear in the first item of its programme that we intend to liberate the country thanks to the efforts of all the members of our nation and establish a genuinely popular government like the one, which was set up at one time in the guerrilla base in east Manchuria.

Ri Tong Baek, who had been listening to me attentively, slapped his knee and shouted in joy;

“That’s right! I have been a blind fool. Now I can get rid of my deformity following my discussion with you, General. I fully agree with you.”

We agreed on all the other items of the programme.

In the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF we established that a resolution to the power problem constituted the primary task of the Korean nation, and also put forward various political tasks, such as the provision of the people with democratic freedom and rights, the democratic development of society and protection of the national rights of overseas compatriots.

This programme also set the task of building a revolutionary army and elucidated the economic tasks to be solved at the stage of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, such as unindemnified confiscation of land from the Japanese imperialists and treacherous pro-Japanese landlords, expropriation of all enterprises, railways, banks, vessels, farms, irrigation facilities owned by the Japanese state and Japanese individuals and all the properties of the treacherous pro-Japanese elements, support for the poor, the natural development of national industry, agriculture and commerce and the construction of a national economy.

The natural development of national industry, agriculture and commerce and the construction of a national economy were based on our consistent line and policy to rally national capitalists in the anti-Japanese united front by strictly distinguishing between national capital and comprador capital and encouraging patriotic national capitalists and actively defending and supporting them. This marked the difference between pseudo-communists, who asserted that all capitalists, including even anti-Japanese national capitalists, should be tarred with the same

brush, and genuine communists who regarded all national capitalists as the motive force of the revolution. These capitalists, though branded as bourgeoisie, were patriotic in their aspirations and anti-Japanese in practice.

The Ten-Point Programme of the ARF also set social and cultural tasks as well as other ones concerning external activities.

I anticipated some friction on the religionists or national capitalists and patriotic landowners. However, Ri Tong Baek, who came to share the same world outlook as me through the argument on the first item of the programme, surprisingly shared my view straight away. On the contrary, such people as Kim San Ho and O Paek Ryong were narrow-minded on this question.

While I was making drafts of the programme, rules and inaugural declaration, the others were preparing letters and propaganda materials in the name of the preparatory committee for the inauguration of the association. Indeed, that spring we were so busy that we worked every minute and second.

The programme, rules and inaugural declaration were submitted for final discussion of the preparatory committee in the house of Ho Rak Yo, head of Manjiang village.

“Tobacco pipe” deplored that in the past the factionalists, who had been engaged in the so-called communist movement, had been engrossed only in a scramble for power with bloodshot eyes, despite the fact that they could not put together a good programme, but was extremely delighted that we now had a new beacon-light, which would light up more brightly the path ahead of the Korean revolution, which had been gloomy.

After finishing all the preparations at the end of April, we decided to hold the inaugural meeting in the forests of Donggang and moved there. Almost all the delegates who had received letters of invitation gathered there in one way or another; however, Ri Tong Gwang and Jon Kwang (O Song Ryun) from south Manchuria, who had even sent us reply letters, saying that they would take part in the meeting without fail, for some reason did not come until the meeting was over. As delegates from the homeland, a delegate of Chondoists and a peasant delegate came from Pyoktong backed by Kang Je Ha's organization, and one teachers' delegate and one workers' delegate came from the Party organization of the Onsong area.

The historic inaugural meeting of the ARF was held on May 1. Although the flowers were not yet in full bloom, the whole mountain was in the thick of spring.

As the meeting lay ahead, the hearts of all the delegates throbbed with strong emotion and excitement.

The Donggang meeting lasted for 15 days.

First Ri Tong Baek read out messages of congratulations sent to the meeting, and then I delivered the report.

In my report I referred to the need to rally the entire nation as one political force under the banner of national liberation and establish in the border area a new base which the Korean People's Revolutionary Army could rely on, in order to conduct the anti-Japanese national united front movement dynamically and further expand and develop the anti-Japanese armed struggle by advancing into the border area and the homeland. Subsequently this report was published in book form under the title, *Let Us Further Expand and Develop the Anti-Japanese National*

United Front Movement and Take the Korean Revolution as a Whole to a New Upsurge .

I also submitted the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF and its Inaugural Declaration to the meeting for consideration.

In the ten-point programme we defined the character and task of the Korean revolution, as well as its strategic and tactical principles, on the basis of a correct analysis of the revolutionary situation in the 1930s, the socio-economic conditions of our country and mutual relations between different classes, and also elucidated the prospects of the Korean revolution, taking into strict consideration the interests of the workers, peasants and other working masses, as well as the common interests of the patriotic people of all walks of life.

The participants of the meeting expressed full support and approval for the programme and expressed their joy that they could now advance confidently for the victory of the Korean revolution with a clear fighting goal; they also firmly resolved to work hard to implement the tasks set forth in the programme.

The discussion about the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF also stirred the hearts of the delegates.

The paragraphs of the inaugural declaration gripped their hearts from the start. In particular, the participants of the meeting were greatly taken by the part of the declaration, which expressed confidence that Korea's independence would succeed if the whole nation—20 million people—were rallied into one, each contributing his or her all; money, provisions, skill and wisdom; and took part in the anti-Japanese national liberation front. They were taken by the earnest appeal to everyone to fight, encompassed in the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

After the adoption of the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF, we discussed the name it should be published under.

All the participants in the meeting suggested that it should be published in my name. They said that this problem admitted no room for debate and that, as a matter of course, the declaration should be published in my name, as I had been the first to propose the establishment of the ARF and had been in charge of the work of the preparatory committee for its formation and also as I had worked out its programme and inaugural declaration.

However, I held a different opinion. The ARF had to assume a national form in order to rally all the anti-Japanese forces of the entire Korean people. Consequently I thought it correct to use as sponsor a well-known elderly patriot, who had taken an active part in the Korean independence movement since the Righteous Volunteers' Army movement and the March First Movement.

I thought that our existence was not generally known to wide sections of the people at home, because until then the Korean People's Revolutionary Army had mainly fought with the Manchurian area as the scene of operations. Following the establishment of new secret bases in Mt. Paektu and the expansion of the armed struggle deep into the homeland, my name became widely known to the people at home. I think that probably one of the issues of the *Maeil Sinbo* (Daily News—Tr.) for September 1936 was the first newspaper at home to report on the movement and the struggle of our main unit. At the time this newspaper noted artfully: A unit consisting of 150-160 soldiers has advanced to Changbai County, end "the head of the unit is said to be Kim Il Sung". Using this as a start, home publications frequently published our activities.

I said to the delegates at the meeting straightforwardly: All of you insist that the inaugural declaration should be published in the name of a certain man, because he was the first to initiate the inauguration of the association, was in charge of the preparatory committee for its inauguration and also worked out its programme and rules. There is no real point in offering prominence to one man, to me, only taking this fact into consideration. It will be much more effective to appeal to the people to join the ARF, by using the names of people who are known to all our 20 million compatriots. It will be sufficient if you regard me as a son of our people and suppose that I have suffered greatly for the masses. Then I appealed to them to make as co-sponsors of the inaugural declaration elderly and well-reputed patriots, referring to the need to give up small matters in view of the great cause, and proposed the publication of the inaugural declaration with Ri Tong Baek and Ryo Un Hyong as co-sponsors.

Ri Tong Baek was the first to oppose my proposal. He said that such things as age and former reputations were irrelevant and that there was only one leader, representing the entire nation and guiding the great cause of national liberation: General Kim known at home and abroad. Therefore, he added, a man like him could not be sponsor, despite this stark fact, and persisted that, as a matter of course, General Kim should be both president of the ARF and its sponsor. Taking my suggestion into consideration, he proposed that Ryo Un Hyong be made co-sponsor along with me.

After heated discussion I agreed to become one of the sponsors on condition that the alias Kim Tong Myong was used. When he obtained my concession, Ri Tong Baek also consented to be sponsor.

Thus, the names of three people—Kim Tong Myong, Ri Tong Baek and Ryo Un Hyong—were put down as co-sponsors in the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF published on May 5.

Ri Tong Baek supplied me with the alias of Kim Tong Myong. When I said that I would agree to become sponsor, only on condition that an alias be used, he could not insist on his own suggestion any more and became engrossed in his thoughts for some time, before adding that it would be a good idea to keep Kim as it was as the surname of my alias and name me Tong Myong, Tong meaning the east and Myong implying brightness.

He said that if the name “Kim Tong Myong” was used for me, it would constitute a significant name in various aspects, in the sense of representing the nation. Everyone expressed their approval with warm applause. Thus, the alias “Kim Tong Myong”, like the name “Kim Il Sung”, was provided by other people.

The declaration of the ARF published by us was subsequently sent to various places at home and abroad. In some places it was reprinted and made public, with the names of the sponsors replaced by those of influential figures and famous people in their own area. We allowed them free rein depending on their own situation. The ARF itself was called the East Manchurian Koreans’ Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in east Manchuria and in south Manchuria it was named the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland of the Koreans Residing in Manchuria. For this reason the names of such people as O Song Ryun, Om Su Myong, Ri Sang Jun (Ri Tong Gwang) and An Kwang Hun appear in some declarations of the ARF discovered by the Party History Institute.

In accordance with the unanimous will of the participants, I took office as president of the ARF at its inaugural meeting.

This is how a standing anti-Japanese national united front body, the first of its kind in the history of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle in our country, came to be born.

The founding of the ARF as the first anti-Japanese national united front body in our country, constituted a milestone, strengthening the mass foundation of the revolution. Following the founding of the ARF, the anti-Japanese national united front movement developed rapidly in a more organized and systematic way on a nationwide scale, closely combined with the anti-Japanese armed struggle; it was able to dynamically organize and mobilize all the anti-Japanese forces to the struggle for national liberation.

Unification of all the efforts of the nation for the liberation front marked the supreme task we had set ourselves since we started out on our struggle. We had spent many years to ensure that we achieved this aim.

The foundation of the ARF represented the fruit of the active efforts of our young communists, who had tirelessly trained our revolutionary forces. It marked a historic moment, when our people again solemnly declared their will to fight more dauntlessly against the Japanese imperialists with their own efforts: it also marked a turning-point in taking the general Korean revolution, with the anti-Japanese armed struggle as the keystone, to a new upsurge.

The foundation of the ARF enjoyed active backing at home and abroad, as it met the requirements of the development of the Korean revolution itself and the currents of the time. In various parts of the

homeland and abroad loud voices were raised in its support. The units of the Independence Army responded first.

Immediately after the proclamation of the foundation of the ARF, Yun Il Pha, chief of staff of the government of the Korean Revolutionary Army, sent us a letter congratulating us on the foundation of the association and expressing his hope that he would be able to maintain close ties with us on the anti-Japanese front in future. Moreover, Pak, a nationalist fighter who was active in Shanghai, made a long journey to Manchuria and met the south Manchurian delegates of the ARF. He had exercised a considerable influence on nationalist fighters as a patriot who had been engaged in the independence movement for many years in China proper such as in Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin. Pak promised to carry out extensive work for the ARF, embracing the homeland and abroad; he also discussed ways of forming the “Revolutionary Army for Independence” as nationwide armed forces.

As Ri Tong Baek wrote in his article entitled “Mr. X, a leader of the Chondoist religion, personally visits the delegate of our restoration association” in the first issue of the *Monthly Samil*, Pak In Jin, who was a patriarch of the Chondoist religion, also visited the secret camp in Mt. Paektu to see us on learning the happy news of the foundation of the ARF. He promised to persuade the one million members of the Chondogyo Youth Party to join the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

Ri Chang Son, Ri Je Sun, Pak Tal and many others came to see us successively and made an active contribution to the expansion of the organizations of the ARF.

It will probably be difficult to contain even in several thick volumes the history of the development of the ARF, which expanded in a short

space of time, into a nationwide organization, embracing hundreds of thousands of members.

The birth of the ARF at the northern foot of Mt. Paektu in May 1936 constituted a historic event, which ensured a new turning-point in the development of the Korean revolution and heralded the dawn of national liberation. Thus, the new brighter era of the Korean revolution began to dawn at the foot of Mt. Paektu.

NOTES

1. **Ryo Un Hyong** (1886-1947)—Korean independence campaigner. From Yangphyong, Kyonggi Province. He participated in the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai at its early days and the Koryo Communist Party, fighting for Korea's independence. In Seoul, he worked as general director of *Joson Jungang Ilbo*, chairman of the Nation-Building Union of Korea and head of the Toiling People's Party. After the liberation of the country, he met President Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang and returned to Seoul, where he advocated an independent political line and national reunification in alliance with the communists, before being assassinated by the enemy.

2. **Paek Nam Un** (1894-1979)—From Kochang, North Jolla Province. He was a teacher in Seoul and worked as deputy chairman of the Toiling People's Party in south Korea, opposing the colonial policy of the US imperialists. He attended the Joint Conference of Representatives of Political Parties and Public Organizations in North and South Korea held in April 1948. He took the posts of the first Minister of Education, President of the Academy of Sciences, Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other posts in succession, contributing to the development of national education and science and national reunification.

3. **Kang Yong Chang** (1912-65)—A scientist who was faithful to the Party and people, enjoying the trust and love of President Kim Il Sung. During the Japanese occupation of Korea, he graduated from Lushun University of Technology in China and was employed by the Japanese Mitsubishi Electric Corporation as an engineer. After the liberation of the country, he came to the northern half of the Republic from south Korea and worked as chief engineer in Songjin Steel Works, Minister of Metal Industry and President of the Academy of Sciences. He always believed in the Party and remained faithful to its aims, withstanding all reactionary plots, and contributed to the establishment of Juche in metallurgical and machine industries of the country.

4. **Peace maintenance corps**—A reactionary organization formed by the US imperialists and south Korean puppet regime in the areas of the northern half of the Republic, which they occupied temporarily during the Fatherland Liberation War (June 1950-July 1953).

5. **“13 bullets”** (nickname)—One guerrilla was called “13 bullets” instead of his real name, because he was shot by 13 bullets in the fight to defend the guard post of Ssukpatgol from attack by the Japanese “punitive” force during the battle in defence of Xiaowangqing guerrilla base (1933-34).

6. **Kim Jin** (1912-39)—A commanding officer of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army and the first war hero in world history to block the enemy’s pillbox with his body. He participated in the anti-Japanese armed struggle organized and led by President Kim Il Sung, and died at the battle in Dashahe, Antu County, where he silenced the pillbox of the enemy with his breast to open up the route of charge for his unit.

7. **Ri Su Bok** (1933-51)—A hero of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and a soldier of the Korean People’s Army, from Sunchon, South Phyongan Province. During the Korean War, provoked by the US imperialists and south Korean puppet regime, he died at the age of 18 after blocking an enemy pillbox with his breast in the battle to retake the nameless height adjoining Height 1211 and paving the way for his unit’s advance.

8. **Kim Kwang Chol** (1965-90)—A hero of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and an officer of the Korean People’s Army. In January 1990, during field training, he was killed when he saved at least ten soldiers by covering a hand grenade with his own body prior to its explosion.

9. **Han Yong Chol**—A hero of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and soldier of the Korean People’s Army. In February 1992 (21 years old), during preparations for combat training, he died after throwing himself on a grenade, prior to its explosion and saving the lives of his comrades.

10. **Great defeat at Fengwudong and Qingshanli**—A disaster suffered by the Japanese aggressor forces in June and October 1920, in battles with the Korean Independence Army commanded by Hong Pom Do and the Korean Independence Army units operating in Jiandao, at Fengwudong in Wangqing County and Qingshanli in Helong County, Jilin Province, China.

11. **Fur-lined shoes**—A kind of shoe made from animal hides. It has two forms; one is knee-high, the other involves shoes laced to wrap heels. The former is worn in winter, the latter during ploughing season for field work.

12. **Ho Hon** (1885-1951)—A patriotic martyr, from Myongchon, North Hamgyong Province. During the Japanese occupation of Korea, he worked as a lawyer in Seoul and once spoke in defence of an anti-Japanese fighter. After the liberation of the country, he founded the Workers' Party of South Korea and worked as its chairman, before coming over to the northern half of the Republic. He took the posts of the Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly, chairman of the Bills Committee of the SPA, President of Kim Il Sung University, etc. During the Korean War he contributed to the development of national education until his death.

13. **Kim Ku** (1876-1949)—A Korean independence campaigner. From Haeju, Hwanghae Province. He participated in the anti-Japanese Righteous Volunteers struggle at an early age. After the March First Popular Uprising he went to Shanghai, China, where he occupied the post of President of the Korean Provisional Government and other posts in succession and founded the Independence Party of Korea. After the defeat of Japan, he returned to the homeland and combatted in south Korea against enslavement by the United States. He participated in the Joint Conference of Representatives of Political Parties and Public Organizations in North and South Korea held in Pyongyang in 1948; he returned to Seoul and fought for national reunification in alliance with the communists before his assassination.

14. **The April North-South Joint Conference**—A conference held in April 1948 in Pyongyang to discuss the problem of national reunification involving 695 representatives of 56 political parties and social organizations, as well as the representatives of overseas Koreans. The conference was held when the US

imperialists and their lackeys plotted the May 10 separate elections aimed at national ruin, in a bid to perpetuate the bisection of the territory and national division and make south Korea their permanent colony. President Kim Il Sung delivered a speech on *The Political Situation in North Korea*, illuminating national salvation measures to ensure an independent reunification of the fatherland.

15. **Choe Tok Sin** (1914-90)—A son of Choe Tong O who was the headmaster of Hwasong Uisuk School attended by President Kim Il Sung. Following the occupation of Korea by Japan he took refuge in China and served in the Liberation Corps as an officer. After the liberation of the country, he became Minister of Foreign Affairs of the south Korean government, a corps commander of the south Korean army and the south Korean ambassador to West Germany. During Park Chung Hee's rule he sought asylum in the United States. He subsequently obtained his permanent residence in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and worked as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland and the Chairman of the Chondoist Chongu Party.

16. **Kyonu and Jiknyo**—A cowboy called Kyonu and weaving girl named Jiknyo, who loved each other, lived in Heaven. The King made sure that they were separated from one another between the Milky Way and allowed to meet each other once on the evening of July 7 every year, saying that they would not work a lot if they were together. As they were allowed to meet only once a year on the Ojak Bridge formed by crows and magpies on the Milky Way, they held each other and shed tears before recounting their lives. According to the legend, rain on July 7 represents the tears shed by Kyonu and Jiknyo.

17. **Hong Kil Tong**—Hero of the novel *Tale of Hong Kil Tong* written in the Middle Ages in our country. Hong Kil Tong is portrayed as an "extraordinary" man who works for a just cause, as if by magic of a protean and mysterious quality.

18. **The 38th parallel**—The demarcation line drawn by the USSR and the USA to divide liberated Korea (August 1945) into north and south along the 38th parallel by the Northern latitude, on the pretext of a "fixed line of charge" to "disarm" the defeated Japanese army after World War II.

19. **Ulji Mun Dok**—A famous patriotic general of Koguryo from Pyongyang. In 612 during the Koguryo-Sui War he delivered a telling blow to the enemy at the battle on the Sal-su River and performed a great service, by leading the army and people to military victory.

20. **Ri Sun Sin** (1545-98)—A famous patriotic admiral of Korea who commanded the naval force of three provinces at the time of the Ri dynasty. He built Turtle Boats, the first kind of iron-clad warships in the world, and during the Imjin Patriotic War (1592-98) crushed hundreds of warships of the Japanese aggressor forces, annihilated tens of thousands of enemy forces, safeguarded the sea and thereby frustrated the enemy's plan for a "joint advance of its land and naval forces", rendering distinguished service in the victorious war. He was killed in the last battle on the sea off Roryang.

21. **Pak Tal** (1910-60)—An anti-Japanese veteran. From Kilju, North Hamgyong Province. He worked, during the Japanese occupation of Korea, as the chief of the National Liberation Union of Korea under the leadership of President Kim Il Sung. In September 1938, he was arrested by the Japanese police on the information of a pro-Japanese informant and imprisoned. Following the liberation of the country (August 1945), he was released from Sodaemun prison in Seoul. He was unable to move and wrote from his bed.