



KIM IL SUNG

*REMINISCENCES*

*With the Century*

(Continuing Edition)

Excerpt (15)

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김 정 일

*Translation from the preceding page:*

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung devoted his whole life solely to the motherland and to his people, and to the revolutionary cause of the working class, bearing the destinies of the country and nation on his shoulders, since he embarked on the revolutionary struggle in his early years.

Kim Jong Il

This book is a selection from *Let Us Keep the Revolutionary Flag Flying for Ever*, Chapter 22, and, *In Alliance with the International Anti-Imperialist Forces*, Chapter 23, of President Kim Il Sung's reminiscences *With the Century* (Continuing Edition).

## CONTENTS

1. AT XIAOHAERBALING.....	1
2. LOOKING FORWARD TO A BRIGHT FUTURE.....	20
3. ON RECEIVING A MESSAGE FROM THE COMINTERN.....	39
4. THE REVOLUTIONARY KIM CHAEK .....	58
5. GREETING THE SPRING IN A FOREIGN LAND .....	85
6. THE DAYS OF SMALL-UNIT ACTIONS.....	104
7. TRUST AND TREACHERY .....	129
8. FORMATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIED FORCES .....	152



# 1. At Xiaohaerbaling

The meeting at Xiaohaerbaling was a historic conference that adopted a new strategic policy of hastening the ultimate victory of the anti-Japanese revolution and making full preparations to take the initiative to greet the momentous occasion of national liberation.

This conference was the culmination of the unremitting efforts and unquenchable enthusiasm the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung had devoted to overcoming difficulties in the national liberation struggle and the communist movement in Korea, and to turning misfortune into blessings, at a time when the anti-Japanese revolution was undergoing trials.

Here, we recollect what the great leader said on many occasions about the preparations for and the proceedings of the conference.

After destroying the “Maeda punitive force” at Hongqihe, we gathered in the forest of Hualazi to sum up the lessons and experience of the struggle of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army (KPRA). We called it a review of a march of 200 000 *ri*. We had, in actual fact, made a march of 50 000 miles.

In order to consolidate the successes we had achieved on the long march and open up a new phase in the revolutionary struggle, we had to do much more work and tread still further along a thorny path. So I stressed, “The basic factor in our success on the long march lies in our political and ideological superiority and our

tactics of guerrilla warfare. This is the core significance of our march of 50 000 miles. The present situation is more threatening than ever. Let us apply a variety of guerrilla tactics and techniques with the utmost efficiency in keeping with the prevailing situation and terrain conditions. We must go deep among the people and step up political work among them. We must be resolved to make a longer march than we have already made for the ultimate triumph of the revolution. Let us keep the revolutionary flag flying with a strong determination and unshakable confidence in the victory of the revolution. In future, too, as in the past, we must take the initiative and strike the enemy hard.”

In the spring of 1940, the “Nozoe Punitive Command” was mounting an even more frantic offensive against the KPRA than ever before, deploying more troops and planning “punitive” operations down to every last detail to destroy the revolutionary army.

Nevertheless, we were determined to take the initiative. We had pressed upon the enemy always with the initiative in our own hands, and we were set on maintaining the initiative no matter what changes took place in the situation.

What did we rely on in our determination to maintain the initiative? Our mental power and tactics. In terms of manpower reserves and weapons and equipment, we were inferior to the enemy, but we were far superior in terms of mental power and tactics. The point in question was which side had the advantage in tactics; and we had it.

Until we moved into the valley of Hualazi, the “Nozoe punitive force” had been occupying the local mountains. All the paths that might be taken by the revolutionary army were guarded tenaciously by the enemy.

Although we emphasized the initiative, our situation was extremely unfavourable. Suspecting that his forces in eastern

Manchuria were not strong enough, Nozoe was said to be bringing reinforcements from Tonghua. According to O Paek Ryong, the reinforcements had already arrived in the vicinity of Liangbingtai on the border of Yanji and Dunhua counties. It was also reported that a fresh contingent of reinforcements in the name of a working party had come from the direction of Changbai.

What was to be done to counter the enemy's attempt at stepped-up "punitive" operations?

The enemy's initial, large-scale "punitive" operations, staged in the name of the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area," had been foiled by our large-unit circling operations. How should the enemy's more frenzied and more tenacious new offensive be thwarted? Should we repeat the large-unit circling operations because these had been effective? Or should we adopt some other tactics? The flames of war unleashed by Japan and Germany in the East and West, respectively, would envelop the whole world sooner or later, and involve all the major powers and small nations in the conflagration. In anticipation of these developments, we had to rack our brains for a new strategy.

We were faced with the challenge of working out tactical measures to defeat the enemy's "punitive" operations now under way, and also evolving a new strategic line capable of coping with the rapidly-changing situation.

I got down to working out a tactical scheme for overcoming the difficulty that had been created after the Battle of Hongqihe, and also decided to elaborate a new strategic plan.

At that time the enemy had massed all his forces in mountainous areas. The only way to take the initiative in these circumstances was to disperse our forces and slip away into the foothills.



Because the enemy forces were massed in mountainous areas, leaving walled towns and internment villages to be guarded by police forces and Self-defence Corps units, it would be most advantageous for us to harass the enemy behind his lines and compel him to disperse his “punitive” forces.

On the basis of this tactical calculation, the main force of the KPRA slipped away from the secret camp at Hualazi in mid-April 1940, and launched a final campaign to smash the enemy’s “special clean-up campaign.” We first made simultaneous raids on Dongnancha and Yangcaogou, large internment villages by the Xiaosha River, destroyed the pursuing enemy in the valley of Shujiefeng, and then vanished in the direction of Chechangzi.

The units that had been operating under the command of An Kil and Choe Hyon in the Yanji and Wangqing areas began to harass the enemy in these county centres in response to the movement of the main force.

We fired on several villages, but the enemy showed no tangible reaction.

It was necessary to tempt the enemy with bigger bait to make him disperse his forces. We launched a simultaneous attack on three villages to the east of the Antu County town—Nanerdaogou, Beierdaogou and Xinchengtun.

This time the enemy took the bait. The units of the Kwantung Army, which had been staying put on the southern border of Antu and Helong counties, rushed to the Antu County town, fearing its immediate fall. The Korean-Manchurian border guards joined them.

Our efforts to lure the enemy forces into the heart of Antu County were aimed at scattering them and spreading the flames of the armed struggle into the homeland, taking advantage of the movement of the Japanese forces encamped along the Tuman River.

At that time Kim Il's 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment was on a mission to advance into the homeland. I ordered the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment to move slowly to the border area, in dispersed formation, and moved the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the Guard Company to the northern part of Antu County. From that time on, we struck at the enemy every day.

Kim Il, in command of a small unit, infiltrated the homeland. He moved to Samjang Sub-county, Musan County, in mid-May, launched a surprise attack on the enemy's border guards and did political work among the local people for two days.

The daring combat action of the small unit of the KPRA and its audacious political work among the people in the homeland at a time when Governor-General Minami was ordering the border guards to prevent the intrusion of even a single guerrilla into Korea were notable successes in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle in the first half of the 1940s.

In support of the successful advance into the homeland, we intensified strikes on the Tuman River and in central and northern Antu County, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

Thus, the new "punitive" operations of the "Nozoe Command" suffered heavily at the outset. His "Punitive Command" had its subordinates—the "area punitive force" and "small-area punitive force"—on the carpet almost every day, and the subordinates were swift to clamour that the blame lay with their neighbouring units. Nozoe was busy constantly issuing new guidelines for the "punitive" operations.

When we were making preparations for new operations, Han In Hwa came to us from southern Manchuria, bringing with him 50 or 60 men, the survivors of the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army. He said they had been sent by Wei Zheng-min and wanted to join our unit. He was a staff officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army and political commissar of the Guard Brigade.

We decided to boost their morale through joint operations with them.

In June the same year we attacked Dongjingping and Shangdadong, only to find that Dongjingping was in a defenceless state. Its defence had been neglected because it had been raided only ten days before, and the enemy thought that we would not attack it again so soon. In the subsequent days, we launched simultaneous attacks on a few other villages.

On the day following the raid on the lumber mill at Gudonghe, we had a sumptuous feast with the comrades from southern Manchuria in celebration of the *Tano* festival, using food supplies we had captured from the enemy in the battle.

When he had drunk a few cups of liquor, Han In Hwa squeezed my hand, saying, "Commander Kim, I now understand why Wei Zheng-min sent me to you. The situation in Jiandao is much more threatening than in southern Manchuria, and the enemy's 'punitive' forces seem to be moving as if on your orders, not on the orders of Nozoe or Umezu."

He had got so strong an impression from our operations that he exclaimed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Directional Army was Number One, and that Commander Kim's army was invincible! He said he was now confident about the future of the struggle, and would go to visit Chen Han-zhang in Emu or in Dunhua and Zhou Bao-zhong in Ningan and then fight in high spirits.

The daring actions of the main force of the KPRA threw the Japanese completely off their balance.

While the enemy was on full alert throughout Jiandao to turn the tide of the unsuccessful "special clean-up campaign" in his favour, an unexpected incident took place in our ranks. Lu Boqi, political chief of the directional army, who had been receiving medical treatment in a secret camp near Damalugou, was captured by the enemy and forced to spill all the secrets of our unit.



We decided to cope with the difficulty caused by his capture and surrender by ceaselessly attacking and by adopting a variety of tactical changes.

In the first place, I made up my mind to divide my unit into a number of small units, and to regroup the directional army into many small units to fight an audacious and elusive war of attrition. The small units would be mobile in action, capable of slipping through the enemy's tight network of outposts with ease and throwing him again into confusion.

The small units would be able to hide quickly even after they had been discovered by the enemy.

Therefore, we regrouped the directional army into many small units without delay, and started a war of attrition.

As you can see, we did not flinch from the Japanese offensive, but faced up to it and countered it.

What would have become of us if we had cowered in the face of the enemy's massive offensive and avoided the enemy, looking for safe places? Needless to say, we would have suffered a heavy loss. We were able to triumph because we maintained the initiative and struck the enemy time and time again, throwing him into confusion.

Even the enemy admitted that the KPRA had been victorious in the spring and summer campaigns in Juche 29 (1940).

"The bandits, who skilfully parried the spearhead of the spring and autumn punitive offensives, have been operating in full swing everywhere on the strength of the thriving season. Especially over the past few months, they have been audacious enough to raid villages behind the second and third lines, inflicting heavy losses upon us. This is a matter of great chagrin for us all. We have tens of thousands of troops, namely, the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, gendarmerie, police forces, railway guards, members of the Concordia Association, and so on. No matter how unfavourable the season and terrain conditions may be, it cannot be denied that we

all, particularly I, the commander of the punitive forces, should be held responsible for permitting the bandits to demonstrate such power. A detailed analysis of the recent situation, however, impels me to feel acute pain and regret at the realization that many glaring weaknesses and defects in the harmony and unity of the punitive forces in particular, and the other related organizations, and in their activities have impeded the clean-up campaigns and resulted in allowing the bandits to run rampant.” (Documents concerning the Clean-up Campaigns, Nozoe Punitive Command, Showa 15 (1940).)

We gained a lot of experience in the small-unit actions during the spring and summer operations in 1940. Previously, we had engaged mainly in large-unit operations, although the situation occasionally required small-unit actions.

During the summer of 1940, however, we frequently employed versatile tactics of continuous strikes, repeated strikes and simultaneous strikes by small units. In the course of this, we acquired new and valuable experience, learning that the more the enemy reinforces his strength and the tighter the network of encirclement, the smaller should be the combat units employed in guerrilla warfare. This helped greatly towards establishing the strategic task for the next stage and evolving the fighting methods to implement the task.

If I had not gained this experience, I would have been unable to propose the switch from large-unit operations to small-unit actions at the conference held at Xiaohaerbaling in August that year. Because we were experienced in this tactic and convinced of its advantage, we adopted small-unit actions as the major form of fighting in the first half of the 1940s, and in consequence, were able to maintain the initiative.

Some people think that we engaged in only large-unit operations in the years before that conference, and only small-unit

actions after the meeting. But that is not true.

Guerrilla warfare is characterized by adapting the tactics to the prevailing military and political situations and other circumstances. Small-unit actions had been considered important and employed, when necessary, during the latter half of the 1930s, when large-unit operations were the main form of fighting.

The dispersed small-unit action that was prevalent in the experimental stage in the first half of 1940 was adopted by all the guerrilla units after the conference at Xiaohaerbaling.

What I have said above is the story of the events that took place after the large-unit circling operations. Today I have taken time to explain this because historians have said they felt there were many blanks in the study of this period.

If we view the conference at Xiaohaerbaling as a landmark, our activities in the spring and summer of 1940 may be regarded as preparations for the conference.

It was when the war that had broken out in Europe was spreading quickly that we came to think of changing our strategy in keeping with the trend of the developments.

The Japanese imperialists were making frantic efforts to spread the flames of war to Southeast Asia in order to realize their ambition of creating the “Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere,” even though they were still engaged in aggression on the mainland of China. They were making every effort for the “security of the home front.”

Their tenacious, large-scale “punitive” offensive I mentioned above, and their unprecedentedly brutal fascist oppression and plunder of our people were products of the furtherance of their aggressive policy.

We considered, however, that with the expansion of their aggressive war the Japanese imperialists would be further isolated at home and abroad and find themselves in a deeper political,



economic and military predicament.

The general situation indicated that the downfall of Japanese imperialism was certain and imminent, and that the day of our national liberation, the historic cause of our people, was near at hand.

That was why I summed up the successes and experiences in the ten years of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, and evolved a new line of preserving and expanding our forces in order to deal with the great occasion of national liberation on our own initiative, in keeping with the rapidly-changing situation.

Making full preparations for the momentous occasion of national liberation was the logical requirement for the development of our revolution at that time.

The transition to a new strategic stage did not permit us to see only the change in the objective situation one-sidedly and follow it in a passive way, but required us to take the lead in the struggle at all times on the basis of the calculation of the motive force capable of speeding up the ultimate victory, as well as the analysis of the past course of the struggle.

I first went over the strategic tasks of the preceding stage to see whether they had been carried out.

I examined the strategic tasks that had been defined at the Nanhutou conference, and found none of them outstanding. I came to the conclusion that these tasks—the laying of the organizational and ideological foundations for Party building, the formation and expansion of the anti-Japanese national united front, the advance to the border area, and the extension of the armed struggle into the homeland—had all been carried out.

Another important matter that must not be overlooked in defining the strategic stage of armed struggle is the change in the balance of forces between friend and foe.

In terms of numerical strength, the enemy was far superior to

us. In those days, they said that we were a “drop in the ocean.” In these circumstances common sense undermined the validity of the traditional military term “estimate of the balance of forces.”

Our estimate of the balance of forces was not arithmetical. I calculated that one of my men was a match for a hundred or even a thousand foes.

After the Nanhutou conference, the KPRA quickly developed politically, ideologically and militarily. This army, though smaller than the enemy in number, had always taken the initiative, and always triumphed over the enemy that was scores of times or even a hundred times superior in terms of numerical strength. In the course of this, it had grown up into a strong army that had acquired the tactical and strategic skills capable of coping with whatever situation cropped up.

The KPRA was a special, new-type revolutionary army that carried out both military and political missions at the same time.

In retrospect, the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists, the established leadership position of the KPRA in the overall Korean revolution and its increasing role as the hard-core force patently proved that we were absolutely correct in adhering to the principle of concentrating on the building of the revolutionary armed force by giving it priority over all other matters.

In general, in the struggle of the communists to seize power, the principle was to organize the party as the political leadership first and then build the revolutionary armed force.

However, in view of the decisive role of the revolutionary armed force and violence in the revolutionary struggle, in the national liberation struggle in the colonies in particular, and in consideration of the specific situation in our country, I chose the method of giving priority to building the armed force, and then building the party.

We organized the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, the first revolutionary armed force, in April 1932 and developed it into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. By relying on this army we not only ignited the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists and led the overall national liberation struggle to a fresh upsurge, but also successfully pushed forward the laying of the organizational and ideological foundations for party building, the formation of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland (ARF), the development of the united-front movement and the preparations for all-out national resistance under the leadership of the KPRA and its armed support.

We can say that the KPRA, which played the role of the backbone and hard core during the revolutionary struggle against the Japanese imperialist aggressors, gave the struggle political leadership and provided an armed guarantee for the national interests, was, in fact, our Party and our government as well as our armed force.

All this meant that our own hard-core force capable of carrying out the tasks of the new strategic stage had been prepared.

Many successes had been achieved in awakening the masses to ideological awareness and organizing them to get them prepared politically and ideologically. In those days the membership of the ARF amounted to 200 000.

In the homeland there were many paramilitary organizations, such as workers' shock brigades and production guerrillas. These organizations served as parent bodies for the formation of armed units for all-out national resistance.

The political climate among the unorganized masses also was very good.

Around that time Kim Il's small unit was on a march towards the Tuman River, on their way back from the homeland after giving the enemy hard blows.

Suddenly, they spied a lame peasant hobbling after them. The man warned the guerrillas not to cross the river at the point to which they were heading. He said that the area was crawling with the enemy.

Kim Il was not sure whether he should believe this man or not, because he was a stranger.

Seeing that the guerrillas were hesitating, the peasant produced a newspaper report of the battle in the Musan area in May 1939. The man was so proud of his countrymen's feat that he had been carrying the clipping with him ever since. Kim Il decided to trust him.

The peasant said he would guide them, adding that although there were guards on the route, these people would help the revolutionary army.

The small unit crossed the river in safety that night, with the help of local villagers who had been forced to stand guard, who guided the guerrillas to a safe crossing.

The growing politico-ideological awareness of the people and their invariable support for the KPRA gave a strong impetus to the development of the armed struggle against the Japanese.

Changes in the enemy's strategic aims are another question that has to be taken into consideration in defining the strategic stage of armed struggle.

In the summer of 1940, we captured a Japanese engineer officer at a road construction site in Huanggouling. Through interrogation we got to know that the enemy was undertaking a large project to form a road network in the wide area of Jiandao and southern Manchuria. The prisoner said that roads were under construction not only in Helong, Yanji, Dunhua, Huadian and Fusong, centring on Antu County, but also in the homeland and in the steep, inaccessible valleys in the area northeast of Mt Paektu.

The progress of military road construction was reported

every day to Kwantung Army headquarters through the “Nozoe Punitive Command.” The prisoner said that Commander Nozoe would soon inspect the roads, which were being built to increase the mobility of the “punitive” forces in the campaign against the KPRA. These roads would be used by the enemy to mass forces in the theatre of our operations from various parts of Korea and Northeast China.

In addition, many aeroplane landing-strips had been constructed around us. The prisoner said that more landing-strips would be constructed in the three provinces in the southeast on Nozoe’s top-secret orders. He revealed the locations of the landing-strips that he knew, saying that the aircraft would be attached to the “area punitive forces” and even “small-area punitive forces.”

If the prisoner’s statement was true, we would be as good as surrounded by the enemy’s landing-strips.

About that time, the “Nozoe Punitive Command” was going to be moved from Jilin to Yanji, and the headquarters of the “east-area punitive force” from Yanji to Tumen.

Our Headquarters continually received information from reconnaissance parties and other sources that enemy reinforcements were ceaselessly moving towards the theatre of our activities. It seemed that the enemy was seeking a final showdown before long at any cost.

It seemed impossible to deal with the rapid change in the enemy’s situation using the previous strategic measures. A drastic change in our strategy was imperative.

For this reason, I put forward the strategic task of preserving and increasing our revolutionary force through actions on our own initiative while avoiding losses from inadvertent combat, regarding this task as most important for the revolution.

The strategic policy of taking the initiative to greet the momentous occasion of national liberation was adopted at the

conference held in Xiaohaerbaling in August 1940.

When we reached the border between Antu and Dunhua counties, Ri Ryong Un, the commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and Company Commander Im Chol came to see us with several bodyguards.

I explained to Ju Jae Il the purpose of calling the conference of military and political cadres in Xiaohaerbaling, and told him to summon company commanders, company political instructors and higher officers to the meeting. They were to arrive by August 9, or the 7<sup>th</sup> of the seventh month by the lunar calendar. An Kil and Choe Hyon, who were operating around Wangqing and Dongning, were to be informed of the results of the conference later, and the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Regiments were to send only their company delegates who were fighting not far from us. Since Ri Ryong Un and Im Chol were already with us, there was no need to notify the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

The conference lasted two days, from the tenth to the eleventh of August.

The major issue at the conference was whether to define the next strategic stage as the period of a great revolutionary event, in other words, whether we could liberate the country in the next stage.

I said, in short, that we could. I explained that the Japanese army was crumbling, though it still was strong, that the outbreak of mutiny in the air corps of the Kwantung Army, its crack unit, foreboded its imminent collapse, that the enemy was hard pressed to stop his men deserting and surrendering time and again on the battlefield in China, that there was no need for further explanation, and that the day of Japan's defeat was not far off.

Some time earlier, Japan had issued what it called the "special volunteers" decree to force Korean youths to serve as its cannon-



fodder. This decree was being enforced in Taiwan and Manchuria as well.

For Japan to have to resort to procuring cannon-fodder even from among the young people of her colonies who hated her, her shortage of military manpower must have been serious indeed.

During the period from the September 18 incident to the July 7 incident, the Japanese army lost nearly 200 000 troops in Manchuria alone. In the Sino-Japanese War, Japan was said to have suffered even greater manpower loss in a single year.

Japan's strategic material reserves were nearing a critical point.

In the days immediately before the conference at Xiaohaerbaling, the Japanese used ammunition that had been produced later than 1939, whereas at the time of the Battle of Jiansanfang they had used ammunition produced in the 1920s. This meant that their ammunition reserves were exhausted.

Meanwhile, Japan's political situation was very complex. The Cabinet changed once almost every three days, and polemics raged ceaselessly. The military also was full of contradictions. Because the senior officers were divided into different factions and wrangled with each other, they could not ensure the unity of operations and cooperation. On top of that, the contradictions between capital and labour, between the military and civilian sectors of the population, and between suzerain and colonies were reaching the point of explosion. Secret agents had to be planted even in the villages of Japan itself to gag her own people.

At the conference, therefore, I summed up Japan's state policy as an overt indication of her attempt to occupy Southeast Asia, taking advantage of the outbreak of war in Europe, and laid special emphasis on my consideration of the prospect that if Japan advanced into Southeast Asia, it would amount to digging her own grave.

To proceed, the conference discussed the strategic task that should be carried out pending the great event of national liberation.

At the time, we defined a new strategic task of preserving and accumulating the force of the KPRA, the backbone of the Korean revolution, and training its officers and men to be able political and military cadres in preparation for greeting the great event of national liberation on our own initiative.

The great event meant a final decision into which the opposing sides would throw all their political and military capabilities. To win the decisive battle, each of our men should be prepared to perform the duties of ranks several grades higher than his present one. After the country was liberated, these men were to play the pivotal role in the building of a new Korea.

The decisive battle and the building of a new country were a strategic challenge that would mean the making of a new history of our country and bringing about a dramatic change in the fate of our people. It was a task that could not be carried out by any foreigners. The KPRA and the Korean people had to carry it out themselves.

We had to rely on the force we ourselves had prepared through many years of revolutionary struggle against the Japanese. It would be welcome if other people helped us in the decisive battle, but we must fight in our own right. So I asked my men if they could raise their qualifications by a few grades, and they answered yes with confidence. I again asked if they could arm all the people and mobilize them in resistance, and again they answered in the affirmative.

In order to ensure the success of the strategic task, we put forward a new fighting policy on switching over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions.

Certainly, there was some argument about this idea. Some comrades were apprehensive of the possibility of small units being

defeated piecemeal in an encounter with large enemy forces, which would attack us from all quarters.

“The heyday of large units is gone,” I said to these comrades. “This is no time for noisily moving about in large units. If we continued with large-unit operations when the enemy is trying to surround us with large forces and destroy us at one stroke, it would mean falling into the enemy’s trap and ending in self-destruction. Figuratively, it would amount to covering our heads with pumpkins and crawling into a pigsty. If we move and fight in small units and conduct political work among the masses, it will be easy to obtain food supplies and manoeuvre with freedom. How many comrades have been killed by the enemy on missions to get food! Even the food supplies that had cost their lives soon ran out because they had to be shared out among large units. Small-unit actions will scatter the enemy forces to the maximum. This was proved in the whole course of the small-unit actions carried out during this spring and summer. Our intention should be to minimize the enemy’s targets.”

We re-emphasized the need to develop elusive small-unit military actions in the wide areas of Korea and Manchuria, conduct intensive political work among the masses, quickly organize the work of improving the military and political qualifications of every soldier and officer, and strengthen solidarity with the anti-imperialist forces throughout the world, in order to carry out the new strategic task. We reached agreement on specific measures, and then closed the meeting.

The Xiaohaerbaling conference was a historic meeting that decided to change our strategic line at a new turning point of our revolution, like the Mingyuegou conference in December 1931 and the Nanhutou conference in February 1936 that also set forth important strategic lines for the armed struggle against the Japanese.

If we had continued with large-unit operations in pursuit of only immediate successes, unable to see the trend of developments at the opportune moments, it would have been impossible to preserve our force and we would have been wiped out, to be remembered by history as mere martyrs.

Xiaohaerbaling is the tail of the Haerba mountain range that stretches along the border between Dunhua and Antu counties. The meeting was held on the northern slope of the range. There was a grassy area in front of the site of the conference.

Mention of the conference reminds me of that grassy area. No one came to cut the grass, probably because the place was far from any village. Seeing the grass, I thought that Kim Chaek, Ho Hyong Sik and Pak Kil Song, who were said to be riding about on horseback in northern Manchuria, would like to have their horses graze there. I met those comrades in the Soviet Far East.

## **2. Looking Forward to a Bright Future**

I remember that in the spring of 1940 the main force of the KPRA was engaged in intensive military operations and political activity around Antu and Helong, in the area northeast of Mt Paektu.

To tell the truth, we underwent a severe trial that spring. As we were set on taking the initiative with small forces, we naturally had to face many hardships.

The most difficult challenge was the enemy's successive waves of "punitive" attacks on the Headquarters of the KPRA. The hundreds and even thousands of enemy troops that fell upon us with raucous battle cries from all sides drove me almost out of my wits.

Nozoe seemed to be determined to fight to the death at that time. He was furious with us, as well he might be, because he had bragged that he would wipe out "banditry" by riding his war-horse as far as Mt Paektu itself, only to encounter humiliation, being hit hard throughout the winter by the KPRA in large-unit circling operations. Not only the Kwantung Army Commander but also the top hierarchy of the Japanese military took him to task.

Depressed by the loss of the initiative in battle, and angry with himself to the point of frenzy, Nozoe brought in reinforcements from the Fengtian and Tonghua areas, and even the Soviet-Manchurian border guards, and hurled them into "punitive" actions.

To make matters worse, there were traitors like Rim Su San,

who surrendered to the enemy and led them to track down the Headquarters of the KPRA.

On top of this, the enemy's secret agents, lurking in mountain huts that had been put up by hunters, mushroom raisers and illicit opium growers, were watching the movements of the guerrillas. Groups of traitors, in the name of what they called "working parties," appeared in places where we were active and openly shouted that the situation was in favour of the Empire of Japan and that we should surrender, instead of spilling blood in vain for a revolution that had no future.

But the shortage of food was the hardest nut to crack.

The enemy did everything conceivable to prevent even a handful of grain leaking into our hands. Whenever we stored food reserves underground in the mountains, they quickly sniffed them out and destroyed them.

The enemy also strictly controlled the food supplies to the inhabitants in internment villages. When the peasants went out to their fields, the sentries at the gates of these villages ransacked even their lunch pails. In many internment villages, the food rations, clothing and ammunition for the army and policemen stationed there were kept in secret stores outside the walled villages, and the locations of these stores were known only to the men who dealt with them. The store-keepers were the only ones who had keys to the stores and, only when necessary, opened the stores in secret and transported the supplies little by little to the villages. The enemy took such countermeasures because we had frequently attacked fortified towns and villages, and carried away all the supplies that we could get hold of.

The same situation prevailed in mining and lumbering areas. They kept food rations only for a couple of days, or for three or four days at the most, in those places.

When we were in the vicinity of Chechangzi, we ran out of

food and salt. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Regiments roamed around in the Antu area looking for food, but in vain. So the whole unit had to go hungry.

We were so hard up that we had to eat frog meat on May Day that year. In some countries, fashionable restaurants serve frog meat as a choice dish, but in our country no restaurant cooks frog meat. Occasionally, children can be seen catching frogs on the edges of rice fields or in brooks and broiling them skewered on sticks. But they do this not for the taste of the meat but mostly as a pastime.

Although guerrilla life was arduous, we had never fasted on May Day before. On May Day in 1939, which we celebrated on the Xiaodeshui plateau, we were even able to provide the men with bottles of liquor.

On May Day in 1940, however, liquor was out of the question. We had nothing at all to eat. So we caught frogs in brooks to allay our hunger. That was how we spent the festival, so there is no need to talk about how we got along on ordinary days.

We suffered severely from hunger in the vicinity of Chechangzi, and also on the outskirts of Yangcaogou.

The whole unit had to survive on boiled grass near Yangcaogou; I'll never forget the name of that place.

One day I looked around the mess for the machine-gun platoon, and admonished them: "The thaw set in a long time ago," I said. "You could have picked wild vegetables and at least made soup with them, which would have been tasty and made up for the shortage of food." Kang Wi Ryong, the platoon leader, answered that he was short of men to stand guard, so he had not sent any men to pick edible herbs.

His answer annoyed me. Things like that could be picked on the way to and from the guard posts. If he had organized his work properly, they could have obtained stuff for soup in no time at all.

I rebuked him, saying that a unit leader must know that he was responsible for his men's lives. I told him that if he was short of men, he should take even my orderlies with him to gather wild vegetables.

The next day, the platoon leader took Jon Mun Sop and Ri Ul Sol, two of my orderlies, and Han Chang Bong to gather wild vegetables. The four men came back in the evening with a basket which was far from full of edible herbs. I asked why they had picked so few, and they said they had spent a long time, wrestling! I asked why they had wasted time wrestling instead of picking vegetables. They answered that the rustle of the spring breeze, the fragrance of the flowers and the sight of a soft lawn had awakened in them the memory of their home villages and their childhood, when they had frolicked on spring hillsides, so they spent the whole morning wrestling, in spite of themselves.

Jon Mun Sop and Han Chang Bong were nearly of the same age and same strength. So it took a long time to decide the winner of the contest. Kang Wi Ryong, a man of unusually large build, acted as referee and encouraged the wrestlers, shouting, "Well done! Well done! Go on! Again!" clapping his hands at the end of each round. Encouraged by the platoon leader, the two men grew enthusiastic and continued wrestling.

I was dumbfounded at their account of the incident. For the four men to return, having not even filled a basket and having wasted their precious time wrestling—when we were suffering a food shortage at that and when I had sent even my orderlies with them to pick wild vegetables!

I criticized them severely and gave them the penalty of a warning.

I could have meted out a heavier punishment in view of the graveness of their mistake. None of my men had ever slighted his commander's orders as they had done. The irony of the incident



was that it involved four men of whom each had had a strong sense of responsibility and had been more faithful to his duties than anybody else. They were in the habit of carrying out any assignment, light or heavy, with credit. To be honest, they were worthy of being held up as model guerrillas in our unit.

When I lay down in my bed that night, the basket with its light load swam before my eyes. Although I had given them the penalty of a warning at the sight of the basket, I pictured them in my mind, enjoying wrestling, forgetting everything, and I found myself beaming with delight at the thought of their optimistic way of life that found expression in the wrestling bout, unconcerned with the awful situation at that time.

A man without mental composure or without an optimistic view of life cannot think of wrestling in that threatening situation. Only men of strong faith and strong will like the men of our guerrilla army can live with optimism, dreaming of the future, singing songs and wrestling even when they are surrounded by the enemy.

The KPRA was a body of optimistic people, the like of which has never been known in all history, Eastern or Western. Although there have been many renowned armies and guerrillas in the world, probably none has been as vivacious and full of revolutionary optimism and ardour for a great future as the KPRA was. The KPRA was a collective of optimistic people who overcame difficulties with laughter, changed misfortunes into blessings, and firmly believed that there would be a way out even if the whole world crumbled.

Jon Mun Sop, though diffident, was very optimistic. Taking leave of his parents to join the revolutionary army, he had said, "Please wait for me. When the proletarian revolution has triumphed and the country has become independent, I will return in a car." To return to the embrace of his parents in a car after destroying

Japanese imperialism! How extraordinary and optimistic he was as he voiced his determination.

An Kil was also optimistic. I especially loved him because he was not only loyal to the revolution, but extremely optimistic, which I set great store by. He was a cheerful revolutionary who knew no pessimism.

Most of the anti-Japanese guerrillas were optimistic. In effect, all the men and women who took up arms to fight battles to the death against the Japanese imperialists lived with revolutionary optimism, knowing no pessimism.

Although I considered the mistake committed by the four men serious, I refrained from meting out heavier punishment than a warning because I valued their innocent cheerfulness and the courage that lay behind their behaviour.

This minor incident convinced me that even if we had to make arduous marches ten times or even a hundred times, those men would follow me to the end.

In my experience, optimistic people fighting for the revolution with unshakable faith will never be swayed, no matter what wind blows. Even if they were to mount the gallows tomorrow, they would stay firm. By contrast, those who drift into the revolution with the wind of the general trend, without their own faith, just to have a try at it, seeing that everyone else does, will run away to a more comfortable place sooner or later.

You comrades must have read about the way we caught crayfish during a march. That is a vivid example that shows how important optimism is in the lives and struggles of revolutionaries. That was an event that took place during the expedition to Dunhua, the first stage of the large-unit circling operations in the autumn of 1939.

In those days, too, we went through severe hardships because of a shortage of food. To procure food supplies, it was necessary

to throw off the pursuing enemy. But the enemy's "punitive" force was close on our tail, so it was impossible to obtain food. Not even a rabbit was to be found on our way, for some reason, and as we were marching through a vast expanse of wilderness, there were no local people we could turn to for rations.

The men were so exhausted that they found it difficult to step over fallen trees, and had to go around them. When a break was ordered once in a long while, they sank to the ground or lay down anywhere they happened to be to allay their fatigue. Some of them were still fast asleep even when orders were given to resume the march. Toudaobaihe, Erdaobaihe, Sandaobaihe and Sidaobaihe on the upper reaches of the Songhua River were full of marshes and primeval forests, so that even hunters were reluctant to go there. So the march was sluggish.

"Comrades, shape up!" I used to shout, encouraging and helping the fallen comrades to rise. "We must keep our chins up in a situation like this. We'll take a rest and have plenty to eat when we reach Liangjiangkou."

I myself was hungry and tired, but, as their commander, I knew I should not reveal any sign of hunger or fatigue. One day, at noon, I ordered a break on the flat side of a gently-sloping ridge and sent scouts to a nearby valley to reconnoitre the place. They came back with a report that there was a small stream there and no sign of danger. I took a few of my men with me to the brook, rolled up my trousers to the knees and stepped into the water. I began to grope about in the stream, lifting stones noiselessly. Before long, I had caught a big crayfish. When I threw it onto the bank of the stream, the others cheered and dashed into the water to try to catch some more.

The men vied with one another to jump into the water. They caught crayfish in high spirits, as if forgetting their days of starvation. When their feet became too cold, they came out and

stood for a while, and then jumped back into the water. All the men spent a pleasant time catching crayfish. Even the men who had been plodding on the march with great difficulty did the same.

We went back to the spot on the ridge and built a fire and broiled the catch. Eating the reddish, fragrant broiled fish, the men joked and laughed. A short while catching crayfish had made a complete change in the atmosphere of the unit.

Of course, a few crayfish could not fill the men's stomachs. But the joy of fishing had dispelled all feelings of hunger and fatigue. After that, the speed of the march doubled.

Looking at their merry countenances that day, I wondered, how the men could become cheerful so suddenly, as only a short while before they had been unable to stride over fallen trees, and had sunk to the ground as soon as a break was ordered.

I believed that the catching of crayfish had enlivened the men to be optimistic. While concentrating on catching crayfish, they forgot their tiredness, became refreshed, and gained new strength and grew cheerful as if they had not gone hungry for many days.

The unit acquired a cheerful atmosphere because the sport of fishing aroused romantic emotions in the men.

As I said previously, we arranged a joint entertainment for our soldiers and the local people. At Yushidong on May Day in 1939 we held a spectacular football match. As they had not played football for many years, the men were so inept that the spectators split their sides laughing.

The players made many slips, but the spectators did not blame them at all. Such mistakes provoked louder laughter among the people.

It sounds easy, but it was not a simple matter to celebrate the *Tano* festival with a football game in the heart of Helong, when the enemy was concentrating all his forces on the main force of the KPRA to destroy it after the battle in the Musan area.

It was a venture that was possible only for the men and officers of the KPRA, who used diverse tactics and had bold hearts bubbling over with revolutionary optimism.

Revolutionaries are optimistic about the future. The revolution itself originates from a dream of the future or from the craving for a new life. Revolutionaries have a noble ideal for the future, and devote all their minds and bodies to the struggle to realize this ideal. If they had no optimistic view of the future nor a firm faith in the victory of the revolution, they would not embark on the road of revolutionary struggle; and even though they threw themselves into the revolution, they would be unable to endure the severe trials and hardships that stand in their way.

A revolutionary's view of life, his personality, and his creed and way of life differ from those of others, not only in his unshakable faith or his unbreakable will, but more importantly in the greatness of his ideal and ambition, and in his unwavering optimistic view of the future when his ideal and ambition will be realized. It may be said that revolutionary belief, will and optimism constitute the three special qualities of a revolutionary, or the three major elements of his ideological and moral qualities.

Some foreign journalists once asked me what the secret was of maintaining my health at 80 years of age just as if I were in my fifties.

I answered that the secret was my optimistic attitude to life. Hearing my answer, they all applauded. A man's physiological age is affected by the degree of his optimistic attitude to life. Likewise, the success or vitality of a revolution in a country depends on the revolutionary optimism of its people. This is my firmly held view.

An optimistic man can feel the worth of life even if he is to live only a single day. An army that lives in low spirits can neither unite nor fight well.

Revolutionary faith and will can endure until the ultimate victory of the revolution when these are based on an optimistic view of the future.

What is meant by becoming a revolutionary? It means taking the road of struggle, ready to face prison, the gallows and death. It means, in other words, committing oneself to the cause of national liberation, class emancipation and human freedom, with a firm and optimistic view of the future, with a resolve and determination to dedicate oneself single-heartedly to the victory of the revolution. We talk much about living in a revolutionary way, implying living like revolutionaries. Revolutionaries beat an untrodden path without hesitation for a bright future. On this path, they endure whatever trials crop up with a belief in eventual happiness, and throw themselves into fire and water, with a noble awareness that it is a matter of honour whether they live or die on the road of struggle for the party and the leader, for their country and fellows.

This is the very reason why the lives of revolutionaries are valuable and worthwhile.

The deserters from our ranks were, without exception, pessimists who lost confidence in the future. They were weak-kneed people who had drifted into the revolutionary ranks with the wind of a revolutionary upsurge and ran away to save their own skins, afraid of manifold hardships and unfavourable situations, without caring a straw about the revolution.

The 1940s was a period when revolutionary romanticism and optimism were more valuable than anything else. These were the touchstones that tested the real value of each of my men and his loyalty to the revolution. Those who believed that we would emerge victorious followed me on the road of revolution to the end, and those who did not believe, gave up the revolution and left our ranks.

Revolutionary optimism does not come about of its own

accord. It is acquired only through ceaseless education and continuous ideological training. Frankly speaking, it is not easy to take an optimistic view of the future when the enemy is strong and there is no knowing exactly when the revolution will triumph. That is why we need unremitting efforts for ideological education and ideological training. The KPRA was a strong army that was not swayed by any storm because we put great efforts into ideological education from the outset.

We consistently educated the guerrillas in unfailing loyalty to the revolution, and inspired them with an unbreakable fighting spirit, revolutionary optimism, the justice of our cause and unshakable confidence in the victory of the revolution.

I made use of every odd moment to inspire my men with optimism. I used to say, "When the country is independent, let us go to Pyongyang and eat mullet soup and cold noodles and then climb Moran Hill to view the Taedong River!" Then, the men would exclaim, "Oh, let us hasten the coming of that day!" giving clenched-fist salutes. They then used to fight with redoubled courage.

On May Day in 1940, too, when we ate frog meat in celebration of the festival, I encouraged them to have revolutionary optimism and a firm conviction of victory.

On the evening of that day, we sat up around the campfire deep into the night. We had a pleasant time, talking about the revolution, about the motherland, about our parents, brothers and sisters at home, and about the coming day of victory.

"Comrades," I said to the men, "although we celebrated May Day by eating frog meat today, we will defeat Japanese imperialism and celebrate the liberation of our homeland in Pyongyang by feasting on the soup of mullet caught in the Taedong River. The enemy is now making frantic efforts to destroy us, but we will never be brought to our knees. Let us all

fight more determinedly to destroy the Japanese imperialist aggressors and liberate our motherland, with a firm confidence in the future and with the lofty pride of the Korean nation and Korean communists.”

The men’s faces, reflected in the light of the campfire, looked all cheerful and lively. They were full of confidence and determined to endure whatever hardships faced them bravely and optimistically, and win back their lost country, at any cost.

If I had kept my eyes on a distant mountain with folded arms in the face of difficulties, or if I had told the men to break up and go to bed in the tents now that they had eased their hunger with frog meat, it would have been impossible to create such a cheerful and lively atmosphere in the unit. Many of them would have been unable to sleep, worrying about what was in store for them to eat the following day, although they had managed to eat frog meat that day.

When they were told to catch frogs to prepare festival food, all the comrades turned out, raising cheers and rolling up their sleeves. When I was talking about the future of the revolution deep into the night, they sat by my side, and drank in my words. They did so because they had sensed in the looks of their commander unshakable confidence in the victory of the revolution and solid determination that no peril could shake.

I was convinced that, although the enemy was sticking to us like a tick so as not to allow us to eat, rest and sleep, the KPRA would never yield to them, nor would it be defeated by them.

As you see, a commander’s mental state is important. If the commander is courageous, his men will be courageous; if the commander’s belief is unshakable, so will be his men’s. Just as soldiers’ optimism is affected by their commander’s faith, so the people’s optimism depends on their leader’s faith and determination. This is the reason why the masses look up at the



faces of their leaders in times of difficulty.

When I said we would emerge victorious, the guerrillas believed that they would triumph; when I smiled, they saw a bright future for the revolution in the smile. When I hummed a little while angling, they judged that the next operation would result in victory.

Not only I, but also all the commanding officers, inspired the men with an optimistic spirit. Choe Kyong Hwa and Kang Ton talked a lot even on the march to boost the men's morale.

Artistic and literary activities served as major means of inspiring faith and optimism in the minds of the men. There is no talking about the lives of the guerrillas without revolutionary entertainment; and it was inconceivable to talk about the victorious struggle of the KPRA apart from revolutionary songs and dances.

Comrade Kim Jong Il was right when he said that the Korean revolution had begun with songs, advanced to the strains of singing and emerged victorious with songs. Probably no revolution in the world was so closely linked to songs or woven with songs as the Korean revolution was.

The revolution itself was a heroic symphony as well as a source of songs. There can be no revolution that is separated from songs. Can you imagine the development of the international working-class movement, separately from the *Internationale*?

It was our songs that won over the people on our expedition to northern Manchuria, the people who had been giving us a wide berth; it was the *Song of Su Wu*, which the Chinese were fond of, that attracted to us the people who were avoiding us.

Songs have had a great effect on my own life. It may be said that my life began with the Lullaby and that my revolutionary struggle started with the *Song of the Amnok River*. When I was crossing the Amnok River at the Phophyong ferry, I made up my

mind while singing the song to win back my motherland. Whenever I sang this song in subsequent years I speeded up the struggle, recollecting the pledge I had made on the river.

In my middle-school days I myself wrote the texts of songs and composed the melodies. Thus the *Song of Korea*, the *Song of War against the Japanese*, and the *Song of the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF* were produced. Whenever I was in difficulty I derived strength from singing. When food supplies ran out, I used to pass the crisis by drinking only water and singing. In the course of this, I grew up and the revolution advanced.

When hungry, the melodies of songs allayed my hunger; and when exhausted, the sounds of songs braced me up.

Once on the Arduous March, some guardsmen were buried in an avalanche and could not get up. They struggled, but their limbs failed them because they had eaten nothing for days and were completely exhausted. I myself was hardly able to keep steady on my feet at that time. I approached the men lying in the snow like mummies and sang in a low voice the *Song of Red Flag*. The men came to themselves at the sounds of the song, stood up and resumed the march.

Once, the enemy blockaded the Chechangzi guerrilla base with thousands of troops, so that many people there died of hunger. It was the revolutionary song sung by the Children's Corps that roused to a life-and-death battle the people in the guerrilla base who had been at the end of their tethers because of starvation and repeated "punitive" attacks by the enemy.

In those days, we had neither professional artist troupes nor professional creative workers and actors. Nevertheless, the anti-Japanese guerrillas wrote and composed songs—excellent revolutionary songs like the *Guerrilla March*—and produced a large number of revolutionary dramas, operas and dances.

In our days in the guerrilla zones, as in the days of the youth-and-

student movement, we frequently organized artistic performances. Also, in the days of large-unit mobile operations in a wide area after the dissolution of the guerrilla zones we had cultural and emotional lives as part of our daily routine. Artistic performances were given both in mountains and in villages.

Artistic performances were given under the protection of machine-guns that had been posted in the surrounding area. In this way security was provided for the performances even when the enemy came to attack.

Performances took place on festivals, in the wake of major battles, and when many recruits had joined us. All these performances were aimed at equipping the soldiers and people with an unbreakable revolutionary spirit to destroy the enemy, unafraid of death, and at training all of them to be indomitable revolutionary fighters.

The announcement of the performance programmes was made in an optimistic way to meet the purpose.

Comrades from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment gave a performance in the form of army-civilian joint entertainment at Taoquanli, and this event was advertised as a “guffaw meeting.” A notice was put up to the effect that a guffaw meeting would be held and that everyone would be welcome to the meeting. Large crowds gathered in the yard of a villager and in the vicinity.

How witty and humorous the “guffaw meeting” was! People smiled even at the sight of the notice.

Guerrillas gave artistic performances not only on happy occasions. Even on sad occasions, they held entertainments to change the atmosphere.

After O Jung Hup and Kang Hung Sok fell in battle, we gave two big concerts. The officers and men of my unit had never been so mournful and indignant as they were when those comrades were killed in action. On the day of O’s funeral, an evening meal

of rice and salted, roasted mackerel was served in the camp, but nobody touched it. Whenever she saw mackerel after liberation, Kim Jong Suk used to tearfully recollect O Jung Hup. You can imagine how sorrowful my men were when they had lost him.

That was why we took time off during our marches for entertainment. Songs, dances and juggling somewhat dispelled the gloom that had enveloped the ranks.

A few days later, we attacked Jiaxinzi and staged a concert on a large scale in a forest near the Songhua River. Some veterans and historians said that the performance was given to welcome recruits, but that was not the only purpose. It was necessary to create an optimistic atmosphere by shaking off the grief and bitterness over the loss of O Jung Hup.

The performance was an unusual one.

Poplars were cut down to improvise a stage, and a large tent was made by patching up several small ones. The floor of the stage was covered with blankets, for the frozen logs were slippery. The programme, with a variety of items, such as choral singing, vocal solos, dances, juggling, a harmonica ensemble, and so on, was announced in advance. The curtain was to be opened and closed at the sound of a whistle.

After the evening meal, the veterans and recruits, and the workers who had helped us carrying away the spoils gathered to see the performance.

I still remember that Kim Jong Suk sang the *Song of Women's Emancipation* and then danced. When she was dancing, somebody behind the folded curtain sang a song for the dancer.

Comical interludes were also interesting.

A lanky recruit from Diyangxi and another from Yanji who voiced narratives like a silent film interpreter moved the audience to tears.

*Conjuring Up the Spirit of Paeabaengi* was quite spectacular, but

I don't remember who performed it.

A Chinese man danced on stilts like an acrobat playing in the interlude nowadays. That was exceptional. When necessary, he used to walk on stilts to rub out the footprints of men on the march in the snow.

The repertoire contained juggling by Jo To On and a song accompanied on a *hogung* (a Korean stringed instrument—Tr.) by a recruit, which was novel.

The last item was a sketch showing the life of the guerrillas. The script had been written by me at odd moments on the march.

The performance lasted four to five hours that night, but the audience was not bored at all. At the end of the performance, more people joined the army.

The entertainments during the years of the anti-Japanese revolution proved the great importance of art and literature in inspiring people with optimism.

Ideas, will and discipline are not all that is required for a revolution. Romantic emotions, in addition to ideology and morality, are also essential. Patriotism cannot sprout where there is no tangible love for one's homeland, parents, wife and children. It would be naive to assume that such a profound thought as communism could be accepted as an eternal truth by a person who has no attachment to his fellows and no feelings of devotion to them.

The whole course of the revolution against the Japanese proves that the guerrillas, with optimism and rich emotions, were unfailingly loyal to their leader and his ideas, and, with firm confidence in the victory of the revolution and with all devotion, performed heroic exploits to be remembered for ever by their country and people.

What did Pak Kil Song say at the last moment of his life? He said, "Motherland! I am proud of you. ... Communism means the

youth of the world ..., is the cradle that raises a bright future for the country. ... We know this so clearly that we face death with smiles.”

What did Choe Hui Suk say when she lost her eyes, tortured by the enemy? She shouted that she could see the victory of the revolution, that she could see our people cheering on the day of liberation.

The Japanese hangmen said to Ri Kye Sun, who was bound in chains, that if she made a speech of repentance, they would not only spare her life, but let her live in clover for the rest of her days. But she told the enemy not to defile her ears, censured them for their ignorance of what the Korean communists were like, and then shouted on the gallows that the day of national liberation was not far off.

All the fighters who laid down their lives on the road of the revolution against the Japanese were optimists, with rich emotions and unshakable confidence in the triumph of the revolution.

Revolutionaries have an optimistic view of the future. They set greater store by tomorrow than today, and give their lives when in full bloom for the good of tomorrow without hesitation. They are indomitable fighters.

I speak to you here today with special emphasis on revolutionary optimism because the situation at home and abroad now requires it more urgently than ever before.

Because of the imperialists' clamour for sanctions since the collapse of socialism in several countries, our people are undergoing serious difficulties in many ways. We are faced with grave challenges in all fields of political, military, economic and cultural life. It may be said that we are in a hair-trigger confrontation with the enemy, in a situation more strained than in a war.

These difficulties, however, cannot last a hundred or two hundred years or indefinitely. These are temporary difficulties, and are bound to be overcome.

You comrades must work hard with an optimistic view of the future and in the spirit of self-reliance and fortitude to resolve today's difficulties as soon as possible and promote the country's advance.

The core of today's optimism is a strong belief that we can emerge victorious as long as we have younger people like Comrade Kim Jong Il. We are perfectly optimistic about the future because Comrade Kim Jong Il is giving leadership to the revolution.

I would like to emphasize again: Believe in Comrade Kim Jong Il, and everything will be all right. The future of Korea and the 21<sup>st</sup> century exists in the mettle of Comrade Kim Jong Il. History will prove this without fail.

### **3. On Receiving a Message from the Comintern**

The great leader devoted much effort to cooperation with international revolutionary forces during the years of the anti-Japanese revolution, while giving independent leadership to the Korean revolution.

He recollected the events in the period from the late 1930s to the early 1940s, when the Korean revolution was broadening its scope on an international scale with the deepening of relations with the Comintern and the Soviet Union, and when the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples against the Japanese was developing onto a higher stage of struggle that involved Korea, China and the Soviet Union. His recollections are as follows:

In 1939 we restored contact with the Comintern that had been interrupted for several years. It was when we had changed into new cotton-padded uniforms for large-unit circling operations.

The main force of the KPRA was then undergoing military and political training in the secret camp at Hualazi.

One day Kim Il, who had been on a small-unit operation, returned to Headquarters with three prisoners in dark dabushanzi. He said that he had captured the men because their appearances and behaviour were suspicious. They did not look like mountain peasants, and so he thought they might be special agents of the Japanese.

They had pistols, pans and roasted soy beans with them.

When I questioned them, and when they found out that we



were the 2<sup>nd</sup> Directional Army and that I was Kim Il Sung, they said they were messengers from the Comintern. They produced a match-box, in which the match sticks were longer than those produced in Manchuria or Korea. They said that they were made in the Soviet Union. At that time, however, none of us could recognize them as being Soviet-made.

I asked for more proof of their identity.

They then produced a pocket knife. It was the one I had sent to the Comintern through Wei Zheng-min. It had been intended for use as a secret sign of identification when making contact with us. Many stormy years had passed, but I remembered that knife well. I had told Wei Zheng-min to leave it in the care of the Comintern in Moscow to be used by its messengers to us as their credentials.

The knife dispelled our suspicions about the three messengers. It was very pleasing to us that the Comintern had sent us messengers, and had not forgotten us, though we had not yet heard their mission.

Contact with the Comintern that had been severed after the Nanhutou conference was re-established in this manner. The messengers' arrival was a great encouragement to us as we were preparing for new operations, decisive battles, against an enemy force of more than 200 000 troops.

The messengers said that six men had been sent originally, but three of them, including a Korean, had fallen ill while searching for us and returned.

The Comintern, unable to pinpoint where we were, had instructed them to look for Kim Il Sung's army around Yanji. They had searched for us here and there, guessing at our whereabouts, wasting much time and suffering many hardships. Although they had a map, it was useless because we were on mobile operations at the time.

To make matters worse, the local people shunned them, and they were going to give up trying to contact us and return to the Soviet Union when a man in the village of Sandaogou hinted to them that they should search for us around Hualazi, and that was how they found us.

They said that their clothes had been burned in an accidental fire while they were sleeping in a mountain hut. Their food rations had run out and they had had to survive on roasted soy beans. If they had failed to find us at Hualazi, they would have abandoned their mission and gone back. They said that from the moment they set foot on the soil of Manchuria, they had felt as if they were on a ship in distress in a raging sea.

I provided them with new clothes and articles of daily use. Then, after a meal, they took a good rest in comfort in the Headquarters tent.

An official record of the Japanese imperialists about the Comintern's dispatch of messengers to the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army (NAJAA) in late Juche 28 (1939) goes as follows:

“On October 11, in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Kangde (1939), eight Russians wearing pistols and dressed like bandits, accompanied by two Korean interpreters, came and had an important interview with Kim Il Sung, who was in the forest of Zhenfeng, northwest of Sandaogou, Helong County. They stayed there for approximately ten days, allowing nobody except high-ranking officers to approach them, and then left there taking with them 12 infirm persons from the group of Kim Il Sung's bandits. It is said that the Russians were messengers from the Soviet Union. ... Although nothing is known in detail, they must have been on an important mission directly from the Soviet Union.” (Report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi, July 26, Showa 15 (1940).)

“Next, about the line of party leadership. In December last year (1939),

four messengers came to the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army directly from the Soviet Union, but nothing is known about the content of the message or its purpose. Only the fact is clearly stated in Wei Zheng-min's letter to Yang Jing-yu, a letter that was obtained in Fusong on January 22 this year (1940). It is clear ... that they took the route via Dunhua, Dapuchaihe, and then Liangjiangkou." (The Movements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA, *Thought Monthly*, No. 77, Criminal Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, November Showa 15 (1940).)

The message for us from the Comintern at that time was brief, and concerned two matters. One was the invitation of the delegates of the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army to the conference of commanders of the guerrilla forces in Manchuria to be convened by the Comintern. The other was the Comintern's opinion about the desirability for the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces in Northeast China to refrain from large-unit operations for the time being.

In those days, the Comintern and the Soviet Union were taking a new approach to the trend of development of guerrilla warfare in Northeast China. In the late 1930s, the internal affairs of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army movement were somewhat complicated. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Route armies operating in northern Manchuria and in the Jidong area differed in their opinions about leadership, cooperation and some other problems.

To settle these differences, the Comintern discussed the matters in the Soviet Union with the delegates from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Route armies. In the course of discussion, they thought of inviting delegates from the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army in southern Manchuria for a wider-ranging discussion, availing themselves of the meeting of the delegates from the Anti-Japanese Allied Army operating in northern Manchuria and in the Jidong area, in order to work out measures to effect an upsurge in the anti-Japanese

revolution in the whole area of Northeast China and to coordinate the guerrilla warfare in Manchuria with Soviet Far East policy.

Of course, the messengers from the Comintern did not explain to us these details, but such an inference was fully possible from the military and political situation in the Far East region and from the policies pursued by the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

However, neither Yang Jing-yu and Wei Zheng-min nor I were in a position to leave the theatre of operations. Our absence from our units for a trip to the Soviet Union at a time when the enemy's large-scale "punitive" offensive was imminent might involve serious consequences in carrying out our new operations and badly affect the men's morale.

The Comintern's advice to reconsider the advisability of large-unit operations, too, was not to be accepted without reservation. Whether or not the suspension of large-unit operations might end in a passive, evasive dispersion needed prudent consideration.

After explaining our views about the two issues to the messengers, I sent one of them to Wei Zheng-min. Our Headquarters' correspondent code-named Mangang guided him.

I sent the records and photographs about the struggle of the KPRA to the Comintern through its messengers when they left the Hualazi secret camp. These documents would be safe in the Soviet Union, and we would be relieved of the burden of carrying them about.

There were about enough documents to fill a knapsack. The photograph of me wearing spectacles, taken at a secret camp at Wudaogou, Linjiang County, was among them.

Unfortunately, the messengers were said to have been captured by Self-defence Corps men at a railway crossing in Helong County on their way back to the Soviet Union. In consequence, all the documents fell into the enemy's hands. Judging from the fact that our photographs appeared in the official records of the

Japanese imperialists, it is evident that they suffered misfortune on their way back to the Soviet Union.

There was a Chinese named Ning among the messengers. A letter Wei Zheng-min sent to the Comintern mentioned that Ning had been wounded in a clash with the enemy.

Wei Zheng-min held the same opinions as we did about the two issues raised by the Comintern.

It was in the early 1930s that we first got in touch with the Comintern. It may be said that we were in fairly close contact with the Comintern during the first half of the 1930s.

From early 1936 to the autumn of 1939, however, we had almost no contact with the Comintern. Wei Zheng-min had been to Moscow in early 1936 to settle the differences about the anti-“Minsaengdan” struggle, an issue that had not been resolved at the Yaoyinggou conference. After that, we did not send any messenger to the Comintern, nor the Comintern to us.

Frankly speaking, we felt no need to contact the Comintern. Since the question of the strategic line that would affect the future of the Korean revolution had been settled in a reasonable way, we believed that all that we needed was to continue with the revolution in line with the decision adopted at the Nanhutou conference.

We advanced the revolution in keeping with this clearly-defined strategic line, and expanded the armed struggle into the homeland from the base on Mt Paektu. It was our consistent attitude and part of our fighting spirit to lay down all our lines and policies independently, and carry them out in the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance. The Korean communists were short of many things and had many difficulties, but managed to overcome all these obstacles by their own efforts. We didn't beg for anything from anybody.

Because we have the historical tradition and experience of

firmly maintaining an independent revolutionary line ever since the years of the struggle against the Japanese, we are still the Party with the strongest spirit of independence, the nation with the strongest spirit of independence, and the country with the strongest spirit of independence, in the world.

There are many nations in the world that have fought guerrilla wars or modern wars using regular armed forces, to drive out foreign forces from their lands. But one can hardly find another example of armed resistance that has been carried out in such arduous conditions as in our country. We often say that we fought for 15-long years without our own home front and without any support from a regular army, and there is no exaggeration in this expression. When we say this, we are referring to the arduousness of the Korean revolution.

We are well aware that the Yugoslav guerrillas fought well during the Second World War. Considering, however, that Yugoslavia was occupied by the German army in April 1941, their guerrilla warfare covered only a few years. When Tito began his guerrilla campaign, a considerable part of the Yugoslav regular army remained in existence.

Moreover, the Yugoslav guerrillas received much aid from the Soviet people. According to Zhukov's memoirs, the Soviet Union sent hundreds of thousands of rifles and machine-guns alone to that country. The Yugoslav guerrillas were said to have received even tanks and artillery pieces from the Soviet people.

The Chinese people's war against the Japanese can also be explained in a similar way.

Chiang Kai-shek had several million troops under his command. You cannot say that his large army fought only against the communists. In fact, they had engagements with the Japanese, though in a passive and lukewarm way. If Chiang Kai-shek's army contained the Japanese even a little, that should be considered

support for the Chinese people's guerrilla war. The expression, Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation, should be understood as meaning joint resistance against the Japanese.

In Korea, on the other hand, the regular army ceased to exist in 1907, and we began the armed struggle more than 20 years after that. When we started the armed struggle, there was no remnant of the regular army.

Because the country had gone to ruin, a home front was totally inconceivable.

There were some rifles that had been left over from the Righteous Volunteers and Independence Army, but these were all outdated and so rusty that they were useless. We had to obtain every single rifle at the risk of our lives.

There would be no end to it if we were to dwell on all the hardships we suffered during the armed struggle and the bitter trials our guerrillas underwent in the mountains for nearly a decade.

Still, we never turned to others for help.

As I have said on many occasions, the Comintern paid great attention to the revolution in large countries like China and India, but not much to the Korean revolution. Some people in the Comintern regarded the Korean revolution as an appendage to the revolution in China or Japan.

Even in its relation to the Chinese revolution, the Comintern showed great interest in the revolutionary struggle in the heartland of China, but it may be said that it cast only a glance at the revolution in Northeast China. The world knows that the Comintern sent Borodin and Blucher to the Kuomintang as advisers, and it sent Voitinsky, Maring and Otto Braun to the Communist Party of China (CPC).

By contrast, it sent no advisers to help the revolution in Northeast China.

If it gave any support to the revolution in Northeast China, it

was only for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Route armies. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Comintern was almost indifferent to the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army, which were fighting far away from the Soviet-Manchurian border.

The Comintern's slighting of the revolution in Northeast China can be seen clearly from the fact that it brought commanding officers from Manchuria to the Soviet Union to give them training, but it sent most of them to China proper, not back to Northeast China, after their training. Liu Han-xing, chief of staff of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army, and Li Jingpu of the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, with whom we had waged joint struggles in the guerrilla zones in Jiandao, were assigned to Yanan after their training in the Soviet Union, instead of returning to the place of their origin. Only after Japan's defeat did they return to Northeast China.

Records left by the Japanese say that the revolution in Northeast China was carried out with the support of the Soviet Union or the Comintern. That is not true.

At one time, the Japanese claimed that I had been trained in the communist university in Moscow and that I had come to Manchuria in command of a crack unit from the Soviet Union in the summer of 1938. Some Japanese official records also said that I had trained my men in the Soviet Union with its support for quite a long time before I came back to Manchuria, or that I had returned to Manchuria after the Zhanggufeng incident and exerted great influence in Dongbiandao.

This kind of propaganda was aimed at describing us as people acting under the instigation and control of the Soviet Union, or of foreign forces, in order to weaken and obliterate our influence upon the people in our country.

To tell you the truth, we owed nothing in particular to the Soviet Union or the Comintern in those days. When we were



in Wangqing, we wrote to the Soviet Union asking for the construction of a factory to supply us with grenades, but they did not even answer. So we made “Yanji bombs” on our own and used them.

So how was it that the Comintern, which had been somewhat cool and indifferent to the revolution in Northeast China and in Korea, took the unusual step of sending messengers to us and inviting us to the Soviet Union in 1939?

It may be explained that the change in its attitude was, in short, the requirement of the military and political situation in the Soviet Union in those days, when an invasion by Japan seemed imminent. The Soviet Union, which became wide awake to the Japanese imperialists’ wild ambition for territorial expansion and their piratical nature through the Lake Khasan incident and the Khalkhin-Gol incident, was fully aware of the danger of Japan’s imminent northern expedition and, in cooperation with the Comintern, was seeking every way to cope with such an invasion.

At this point, the Comintern attached special importance to finding potential allies capable of giving armed support to the Soviet Union on its flanks and behind enemy lines, and to realizing military and political link-ups with these allies. The KPRA and the NAJAA were the only forces capable of providing armed support for the eastern flank of the Soviet Union. The Comintern regarded the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China as one wing of the Soviet Far East forces, as their outer-line forces, and tried to make them a detachment of the Far East forces. The Soviet Union was of the same opinion on this matter.

It seems that the Soviet people, who had paid no particular attention to the anti-Japanese resistance movement in Northeast China in the first half of the 1930s, realized that the guerrillas in Manchuria were not to be slighted only when they saw the KPRA and the NAJAA taking powerful offensives behind the enemy lines

in support of their country at the time of the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol incidents. From that time, they made every effort to strengthen ties with us.

The Comintern also made concerted efforts with the Soviet Union. Subordinating everything to the support of the Soviet Union was the basic mission and a consistent policy of the Comintern.

This does not mean, however, that the Comintern and the Soviet Far East military authorities were in complete agreement in their views on the anti-Japanese forces in Northeast China. The Comintern considered that the guerrilla forces in Manchuria should place emphasis on preserving themselves intact until a war broke out. But the Far East military authorities insisted that a powerful military offensive to prevent the Japanese troops from moving deeper into the Chinese hinterland was imperative, because the whole of China was now already in a state of war and sacrifice was unavoidable.

Anyhow, it was a notable change in its policy for the Comintern to take more interest in the anti-Japanese movement in Northeast China and invite us to the Soviet Union to discuss important strategic and tactical problems. This meant that we had grown into a powerful force that could provide armed support for the Soviet Union behind enemy lines.

However, we reserved judgement on the Comintern's proposal. We did not suspend large-unit operations, nor did we visit the Soviet Union. We stayed in Manchuria instead, and resolutely carried out our large-unit circling operations as planned and foiled the enemy's offensive.

As a result of the victorious large-unit circling operations, we were able to map out a new fighting policy on our own initiative. If we had paid a visit to Khabarovsk at the invitation of the Comintern at that time or had immediately switched over to small-

unit actions, we would not have been able to carry out the large-unit operations.

In the autumn of Juche 29 (1940) the great leader received another invitation to a conference convened by the Comintern. Its messengers braved all sorts of perils to reach his Headquarters. Looking back on the event, he said as follows:

I received a second message from the Comintern in mid-October 1940. At that time, all the units of the KPRA were engaged in small-unit actions everywhere, in line with the policy adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference.

Two messengers from the Comintern came to see us. They said that they had been sent by General Lyushenko working in the Headquarters of the Soviet Far East Forces, and that the general had given them a message in the name of the Comintern to the effect that I was invited to a conference to be convened by the Comintern at Khabarovsk in December. They also conveyed to me the Comintern's instructions that all the anti-Japanese armed forces in Manchuria should switch over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions, and that they should move as soon as possible into the Soviet Far East area to establish bases there and regroup.

While working in the Headquarters of the Far East Forces, Lyushenko dealt with the Comintern's affairs. Later, I went to Khabarovsk and met him there.

"Hello, Comrade Kim Il Sung. It's very difficult to get to shake hands with you," he said and explained how he had sent small groups of men to get in touch with me. I got the first impression that he was an attractive man of ardour and friendship.

Lyushenko often used the alias Wang Xin-lin, doing a lot of work to establish contact mainly between the Comintern or the Soviet Union and us.

According to the messengers, the Khabarovsk conference of the commanders of the guerrilla forces in Manchuria convened by the Comintern in early 1940 had ended in a meeting of only the delegates from the guerrilla units in northern Manchuria and in the Jidong area because of the absence of the delegates from the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army.

However, the Comintern did not abandon the original plan, and was set on holding the conference of the commanders of all the armed forces in Northeast China to discuss the direction of the development of the anti-Japanese resistance movement in Northeast China and straighten out the difficult situation facing the Soviet Union.

The messengers arrived in October 1940, but the Comintern had issued the notice on the convocation of the conference in September that year. Telegraph messages had been sent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Route armies, but we received the message through the messengers because we had no wireless communication system. The Comintern invited the commander-in-chief, political commissar, Party secretary and other major military and political cadres of each route army to the Khabarovsk conference.

I notified Wei Zheng-min of the arrival of the Comintern's messengers, and proposed to him to take joint measures for the event.

Wei Zheng-min said that he ought to attend the conference to be held on the authority of the Comintern, but that ill-health did not permit it. He asked me to represent not only the KPRA but also the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA and the South Manchuria Provincial Party Committee.

The Comintern's idea of small-unit actions was in agreement with the policy we had adopted in this regard at the Xiaohaerbaling conference.

The military and political situation in this period was much

more difficult than in late 1939 and early 1940, when we were engaged in large-unit operations. In other words, it became difficult to move about in large units.

In the first place, the enemy had completed setting up a network of internment villages, which obstructed our procurement of food supplies for large units. We often obtained a handful of food grains or a piece of maize cake only at the cost of our blood, the blood of our comrades.

The enemy in those days were putting special efforts into what they called eradicating the basic roots and ideological work.

The enemy's policy of internment villages in this period was much more vicious than the one they had pursued against us in West Jiandao. They burned down houses located outside the fortified villages to "keep the people away from the bandits," tightened the control of food grain, ammunition and other supplies, were bent on searching for and arresting people "in secret touch with the bandits," and strictly guarded ferries and other river crossings. The control of illicit opium cultivation was unusually severe at this time.

At the same time, they clamoured about "relief for the poor" and "working for the people's livelihood" in order to demoralize the revolutionary masses and other sections of the population.

Our experience proved that small units in action found it relatively easier to obtain food than large units. The food problem was a vital consideration in working out strategy and tactics. Food took priority over tactics. Can you fight without eating? I use the expression, "food, clothing and housing," instead of "clothing, food and housing" from my experience of many hardships due to food shortages in the years of guerrilla warfare.

If we operated in small units, moving in and out of the Soviet Far East region, it would be convenient to do political work among the people and to train the cadres of our units. We should also be

able to engage in military actions in the summer season, and military and political training in the winter season in places recommended by the Soviet Union, with ample time and space. It would also provide favourable conditions for preserving and developing our forces.

In the late 1930s and the early 1940s we lost many cadres because of the enemy's large-scale "punitive" operations.

We informed the messengers from the Comintern of the fact that in view of the requirement for the development of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we had adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference the policy of preserving our forces and undertaking small-unit actions, and said that we would take into consideration the invitation to move into the Soviet Union.

Securing a breathing space as well as geographical space for regrouping in a situation in which the enemy was making frantic efforts to destroy us would be beneficial to us not only for the armed struggle at that time but also for its future development. In addition, a base for us to settle down in was needed to preserve and consolidate our forces.

At that particular moment we paid a lot of attention to the need to preserve our forces, because we were convinced that the day of ultimate victory of the Korean revolution was near at hand.

In the latter half of 1940, the conflagration of the Second World War enveloped the whole of Europe. Everyone had a foreboding that a war would break out between the Soviet Union and Germany. Japan was planning another war in the southern hemisphere, even before it had been able to crush China. It was as clear as day what the outcome would be if Japan were to unleash a war against the United States and Britain.

The best thing to do in this situation was to avoid a frontal clash and preserve and build up our forces. This view of ours was in

basic agreement with that of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

It was welcome news that the Soviet Union was ready to provide us with a base in its territory where we could assemble, regroup, and preserve and build up our strength, and to give us the military and material support we needed.

However, I did not make a hasty decision about our move to the Soviet Union, because it was an important matter that required prudence. The first problem was how long we would be staying there: Would we be there for a short time or for a long time? If we were to establish our base there and remain there for a long time, how could we continue with the armed struggle? Would we be able to move back when necessary into our homeland or into Manchuria? How could we give leadership to the movement in the homeland if we were in the Soviet Far East region? These were questions that required answers.

In these circumstances, I contemplated a number of choices.

The first option was for the commanders to go to participate in the conference, leaving behind the main force where it was at the moment, and then continue the struggle in the original theatre of operations on the return of the commanders. The second option was for the commanders to go first to attend the conference, and then take our unit into the Soviet Union at an appropriate time, after sizing up the situation there. The third option was to make our participation in the conference and our unit's entry into the Soviet Union coincide, and take further measures while in temporary residence there.

I settled the matter on the principle of reinforcing our secret base in the Mt Paektu area even in case of our entry into the Far East region and, on this premise, of establishing a new base in the Soviet Union. So I needed time and detailed information regarding the situation.

My original intention had been to develop small-unit actions in the area under our control during the winter, in line with the policy

adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference. So we had been making preparations for the winter operations, and it was not advisable to abandon these preparations.

On the basis of this analysis and judgement, I put off giving my answer to the request of the Comintern. We continued with our winter preparations while waiting for the persons we had sent to the Soviet Union to investigate the situation in detail and return to inform us of the results.

We gave Ri Ryong Un an assignment to open a new route to the Soviet Union and report on the feasibility and safety of the route we had been using.

Ri Ryong Un was a regimental commander who was renowned for his fighting skills in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Directional Army. He became regimental commander as successor to Jon Tong Gyu when the latter fell in the battle of Dashahe-Dajianggang in Antu County in August 1939.

Ri Ryong Un was to go to the Soviet Union carrying Wei Zheng-min's letter to the Comintern. But he did not go for some reason.

He was a man of large build and looked much older than he actually was. He was reticent and prudent. Usually he was quiet, but on the battlefield he was courageous and swift in action.

Once his unit raided an internment village in Dunhua County because the unit had run out of food on the march. The reconnaissance party had reported that there were only three enemy soldiers in the village. The original plan was to send a machine-gun squad to destroy the enemy, but Ri Ryong Un said that there was no need to send a machine-gun squad against only three enemy soldiers, and that he would go with his orderly to deal with them and then give a signal for the rest of the unit to move into the village. His orderly was Thae Pyong Ryol.

When darkness fell, Ri Ryong Un and his orderly went down to the internment village and walked straight into the barracks



without being challenged. In the main office, however, there were approximately 30 officers being given a briefing.

The orderly, who followed him into the room, said in subsequent days in recollection of the event that at that time he thought that he would never get out of there alive.

Ri Ryong Un, taking out his revolver, said in a calm and composed manner: "You are surrounded. Stick your hands up!"

The senior officer grabbed Ri's revolver. Ri Ryong Un pulled the trigger, but the gun misfired. He pulled it back so hard that the Japanese officer let go of the barrel.

Ri Ryong Un reloaded his revolver and shot the officer down, kicked off the resisting officers, and overwhelmed them single-handed. Many officers were shot to death.

All this time, Thae Pyong Ryol stood by the door, without firing a single shot. Only when he heard Ri Ryong Un shouting, "Pyong Ryol, guard the wall!" did he notice scores of pistols hanging on the wall.

Ri told his orderly to collect the pistols, and took the officers in the room prisoner. That night he and his orderly captured all the enemy soldiers returning from a "punitive" action.

Ri Ryong Un became renowned as a peerlessly courageous, audacious and talented commanding officer in the raid on the Emu County town and in the battles at Dashahe-Dajianggang, Yaocha and in many other battles.

I think I gave him the mission on the outskirts of Xiaohaerbaling. I met him and Im Chol at the same place. When I told him to open a safe route to the Soviet Union, he said that I need not worry about that.

When he and Im Chol were opening the route on the Soviet-Manchurian border, Rim Chun Chu and Han Ik Su left for the Soviet Union, escorting the wounded and infirm.

The wounded and infirm comrades reached their destination in

safety, but Ri Ryong Un, who had departed with the mission of an envoy, died a heroic death in an encounter with the Japanese. He had carried out his assignment to open the route and succeeded in sending the wounded to the Soviet Union by that route. The other part of his mission was to go to the Soviet Union and inform us of the situation there. While proceeding to the border to carry out the mission he thought of providing new clothing for his companions, who were in rags, saying that the delegates from Headquarters to the Soviet Union should be decent in appearance. He decided to obtain clothes with the help of a charcoal burner with whom he had been in touch.

But the charcoal burner was a turncoat, who had once worked for the revolution but had become a secret agent of the enemy. He said he would go to buy clothes for Ri Ryong Un, but brought back with him a hundred enemy soldiers. Ri fought against heavy odds and died heroically after mowing down scores of the enemy.

Contact with the Comintern, which had been interrupted for several years, was re-established in this manner.

In subsequent years, I maintained close touch with the Comintern and worked hard to strengthen solidarity with international revolutionary forces.

## 4. The Revolutionary Kim Chaek

One day several months after the demise of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, Comrade Kim Jong Il said to some officials:

“In the Kumsusan Assembly Hall there was a safe used by the leader. No one, including his aides, knew what he kept in the safe.

“After his death we wanted to open it but we could not find the key. Some days ago we found the key and opened the safe to find... a photo of him posing with Comrade Kim Chaek.

“He usually kept all his photos in the Party History Institute. But he was keeping in his safe a photo he had had taken with Comrade Kim Chaek. This shows how dearly he cherished the memory of his comrade-in-arms Kim Chaek.”

To be immortal in the memory of his leader—this is the greatest glory a man can win in his lifetime and the greatest happiness a revolutionary can feel. Kim Chaek was the loyalist of loyalists, standing on the peak of such glory and happiness.

How could he live for ever in the memory of his leader?

I met Kim Chaek for the first time at the conference the Comintern convoked in Khabarovsk. I also met Choe Yong Gon there. For this I will never forget Khabarovsk. Kim Chaek was representing the North Manchuria Provincial Party Committee and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA at the meeting.

As we stayed there for several months, not just a day or two, Kim Chaek and I frequently met each other. I shared board and lodging with An Kil and So Chol, and Kim Chaek would visit us

and talk with us for a few hours before returning to his lodgings.

I was so impressed by my meetings with him that I still vividly remember the very first meeting.

He had a calm demeanour, and he was going bald even though he was not yet 40. Strangely enough, even though I had not met him before, I had the strong feeling that he was an old friend of mine. I think it was because I had heard so much about him and had looked forward to seeing him.

After the usual exchange of greetings, I told him I felt that he was an old friend in spite of the fact that it was our first meeting. Kim Chaek replied that he also felt that Kim Il Sung was not in the least a new acquaintance.

The fact that Kim Chaek and I felt that way means we thought about, and missed, each other equally.

I had wanted to meet Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon so much that I had made special trips to northern Manchuria. Kim Chaek wanted to see me so much that he had visited Jilin in 1930. Choe Yong Gon yearned for a joint struggle with me so much that he had dispatched a liaison man to Jiandao four times.

Whether the theatre of our struggle was northern Manchuria or eastern Manchuria, we all thought at that time about the Korean revolution and never forgot that we were Koreans, revolutionaries and sons of Korea, who should devote their life to the liberation of their motherland irrespective of organizational affiliation and theatres of struggle.

This community of like minds can be said to have made the Korean revolutionaries in eastern and northern Manchuria continually miss and long for each other.

Why did Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon cast a covetous glance all the more at eastern Manchuria? It was precisely because they missed Koreans. While the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in eastern Manchuria was composed exclusively of Koreans, Chinese were

in the majority in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Corps. Living among the Chinese whose language and customs were different from theirs, they could not but grow envious of eastern Manchuria, where hundreds of thousands of Koreans swarmed, and miss our units where Koreans were in the majority.

“Why did it take so long to meet Commander Kim?” Kim Chaek muttered to himself after we had exchanged greetings at our first meeting.

I did not know why, but his soliloquy went straight to my heart.

He did not let go of my hands for a long time, even after we had greeted each other. I looked at him, and saw that tears were brimming in his eyes. For a man of few words to show tears, how sorely must he have missed the Koreans in Jiandao and the units of Koreans?

That day I also shed tears.

Immediately after Korea was seized by the Japanese, Kim Chaek’s father moved to Jiandao with his family. He had probably heard that Jiandao was a fertile land where a farmer could make a good living. The Haksong area, where they came from, was also fertile. But they could not escape poverty in their native land, however diligently they farmed.

Who does not cherish his native land? But people joined the northward exodus one after another to eke out a living.

Kim Chaek’s parents thought that once they were in Jiandao, their troubles would be over. As they had three sons, they did not worry about labour. Nevertheless, the sons whom they had pinned such great hopes on abandoned the household and joined the revolution.

It was Kim Chaek’s elder brother, Kim Hong Son, who let the wind of revolution into this household. During the March First Popular Uprising he cheered for independence on the street, fought in the Battle of Qingshanli as a soldier of the Independence

Army and joined the communist movement. In the Tonghung Middle School in Longjing, where he was a teacher, there were many students who had come from Russia. He was apparently introduced to the socialist ideology during contacts with these students. He worked as a district committee member of the Communist Party in Ningan County before being assassinated.

Kim Chaek's younger brother was also a prominent revolutionary. Kim Chaek told me that he had once come across an article in a newspaper about his younger brother being held in Seoul's Sodaemun Prison, but that he did not know what became of him later.

While tending the fields by day, Kim Chaek diligently attended night school.

At that time he threw himself into the revolutionary movement.

The organization he first affiliated himself with was the General Federation of Korean Youth in Eastern Manchuria (GFKYEM). Subsequently he was admitted to the Korean Communist Party. The Party cell he belonged to was under the influence of the Tuesday group. Though he knew that the Korean Communist Party which had been organized in 1925 had been disbanded owing to factional strife, he did not hide the fact that he had been a member of a cell of that Party.

In those days there were two general bureaus of political groups in Manchuria, one being the general bureau of the Korean Communist Party, controlled by the Tuesday group, and the other being the general bureau of the M-L group, formed in opposition to the former.

Learning the inside story of factional strife filled with feuds for hegemony, Kim Chaek felt disillusioned with the hierarchy of the Communist Party. A turning point in his thinking came about at this time. Writhing in mental agony over the debacle in

the communist movement resulting from factional strife, he heard the news that the Comintern had disbanded the Korean Communist Party while he was languishing in a prison cell. Though the Party had been stained with factional strife, its disbandment rend his heart.

Then, which path should Korean communists follow from now on? And what should I do? Kim Chaek thought when in prison and out of it, he told me. He could do nothing by relying on the existing generation of Party members, but there seemed to be no new force that could replace them. However hard he thought, the way ahead was bleak. In these circumstances, not knowing which way to turn and penniless, he decided to say thanks to his benefactor Mr. Ho Hon.

When Kim Chaek had faced trial, Ho Hon had defended him in the court. From the outset Kim Chaek had not asked for a lawyer. He had neither money to engage a lawyer nor did he want someone to speak for him. Then Ho Hon had volunteered to plead for him free of charge. This lawyer had undertaken to defend many revolutionaries and independence fighters in court, getting them released or their sentences reduced.

Kim Chaek stayed at Ho Hon's house for some days. When he was leaving Seoul, Ho Hon gave him an overcoat and travel expenses. With the 3 or 4 won he bought the train ticket and meals on the way.

The two men established relationship in this way. It was out of pure patriotism that Ho Hon defended Kim Chaek in the court. He did it free of charge as he was mortified to see a Korean patriot facing a penalty for doing what he, as a Korean, ought to do. Sympathy, solidarity and the obligation of an elder patriot—three feelings influenced him, I would say. All considered, Mr. Ho Hon was truly an excellent man.

After liberation, when Kim Chaek was Vice-Premier and

concurrently Minister of Industry in the Cabinet, Ho Hon served as the first Speaker of the Supreme People's Assembly. How strange their relationship was, as a man who had stood in the dock in the past and a man who had spoken in defence of him became senior cadres of a state!

The day he was appointed Vice-Premier, Kim Chaek said to Ho Hon: "In the bygone days, sir, you spoke for me in the court; now you have the duty to criticize me. If I make mistakes, whether as Vice-Premier or as a private citizen, please take me to task without mercy."

Though good-natured, Ho Hon was a man of principle. He really would have criticized Kim Chaek severely had the latter made mistakes in his work. But he had no opportunity to do so, for Kim Chaek did nothing deserving scolding as Vice-Premier or as a private citizen.

Instead, Pak Hon Yong was always hated by him when Pak was Vice-Premier. Ho Hon advised me to be watchful of Pak, apparently because he felt some foreboding about him.

I can never forget how loudly Ho Hon wept over the news of Kim Chaek's death. He deeply grieved over his death, saying that my right-hand man whom no one could replace had passed away so early.

Kim Chaek told me that he was embarrassed to receive such kind treatment from Ho Hon and his family. He had done nothing particular for the nation, he said, but had been a tool in the hands of factionalists before serving a prison term. Yet Ho Hon's family took care of him as if he had been an outstanding revolutionary, and he felt as though he was sitting on needles.

Even if I have to die one hundred times and come back to life one hundred times, I will live up to the people's expectations—this was what Kim Chaek determined when leaving Ho Hon's household for Jiandao.



Entering Jiandao, he heard the heartbreaking news that his father and wife had died of illness during his absence. Only his two infant sons were left in the house.

Nevertheless, he had no time to care about private affairs. He was informed that secret agents of the Japanese imperialists had been sent to arrest him. How cunning the Japanese imperialists were! They arrested revolutionaries, gave them a good beating and released them through the front door as if showing great generosity, before taking them in again through the back door. They were masters of such tricks.

Kim Chaek left the village, leaving his sons in the care of his wife's brother. In peasant's attire and with a shabby reed-hat on his head he went past the entrance to the village driving a cow belonging to his wife's brother. Reaching a hill the cow lowed ceaselessly for its calf left behind in the stable. The calf also bleated plaintively for its mother. Disguising himself was crucial, but he could not go further in this way. Hearing the mother and her young calling to each other so pitifully, he thought of the sons he had left in his wife's brother's house and wept in spite of himself. He felt sorry for the calf as well as for his sons, he told me. So he let the cow go. For the next 16 years he did not see his sons. Only a revolutionary like Kim Chaek could endure such an experience.

I asked him if he knew how his sons were getting on.

He replied he did not, saying, "If my wife's brother is still alive, they will keep body and soul together. If something bad has happened to his family, then my sons will be beggars. For all that, I hope that they remain alive. Then they will see the day of liberation sooner or later and meet their good-for-nothing father."

In Ning'an, Kim Chaek heard rumours about us. After taking leave of his sons, he proceeded to Ning'an County, where he met his colleagues from his days in the GFKYEM and the

Manchurian general bureau. They told him that a new force quite different from the ones of the preceding generations had appeared in Jilin, and that the leader of that force was Kim Song Ju, who, though young, enjoyed great popularity because of his affability. They added that they had heard Kim Song Ju had been arrested by the warlords and released, but they had not known where he was and what he was doing.

When I was in Jilin, I had contacts in the GFKYEM, so they must have had inside information about our activities. Many students from the area of Ningan County were studying in Jilin at that time.

Soon after this, Kim Chaek went in search of me. But by that time I had already left the city. He instead happened to meet in an inn some of my comrades, who had apparently been tailing him.

After confirming his identity and hearing the purpose of his visit to Jilin, my comrades said to him, “Kim Song Ju is not here at the moment. You seem to be in Jilin for the first time. Don’t hang around here. Please get away. In the aftermath of ‘Red May’, the warlords are hell-bent on picking on revolutionaries. You can meet Kim Song Ju later. Please get away from Jilin before the police can lay their hands on you.”

They then gave him travel expenses and saw him off. He went to northern Manchuria, where he was again arrested, this time by the Kuomintang army. While he was behind bars, the September 18 incident took place.

As soon as he was released, he was again detained by the warlord police and sentenced to death. It was quite nonsensical to give the death penalty to a man who, though a communist in name, had not yet been engaged in a movement worth mentioning and who had not harmed the warlords at all. Manchuria in those days was literally a land of lawlessness.

He escaped death by the skin of his teeth on the execution ground. An officer appeared and ordered that he not be shot. He seemed to be a progressive officer with strong anti-Japanese sentiments. Leaving the execution ground Kim Chaek thought the world was not so hard-hearted after all.

What lesson did he learn while undergoing all these trials? He told me that, though he had tried to wage the revolution from the days of his youth, he had been on the run, doing nothing worth mentioning and wasting most of his time in prisons and on the roads, and that he had given the enemy blows on his own initiative only after taking up arms.

“The enemy regards revolutionaries fighting empty-handed as scarecrows,” he said, laughing.

He meant that unless one armed oneself, one was a powerless and defenseless being, like a scarecrow, in front of the armed brigands. He said that this was the most important lesson of his life.

Hearing what he had to say, I thought he had learned a correct lesson. It was not only a lesson Kim Chaek learned through half his lifetime; it was also the general law-governed nature of the revolutionary struggle.

Revolution must be waged with the force of arms, and the end of all forms of struggle for national independence and social liberation is decided generally by the armed struggle. The basic factor of our victory in the anti-Japanese revolution was that we had our own independent revolutionary armed forces.

In the theatre of the national liberation struggle of our country there were various forces, like Kim Ku’s, Syngman Rhee’s and Ryo Un Hyong’s, but the force that the Japanese imperialists saw as their most fearful enemy was our KPRA. And why? It was precisely because we fought against them tenaciously by the method of armed struggle, the highest form of national liberation movement, not through petitions, strikes, writings or speeches.

The victory of the anti-Japanese revolution convinced us of the correctness of the truth that revolution must be waged with the force of arms, and after liberation it induced us to hold fast to the line of building a revolutionary army and channel all our efforts into building powerful revolutionary armed forces throughout the whole course of building a new Korea and accomplishing the cause of socialism.

The power of a nation and its pride rest on arms. A strong army ensures a reviving nation and a prospering country. Independence is inconceivable apart from arms. If arms get rusty, the people become slaves.

That Comrade Kim Jong Il is today training the Korean People's Army to be an unrivalled, ever-victorious army and scoring marvellous successes in army building at the helm of the revolutionary armed forces is the most brilliant, historical achievement he has made in inheriting and consummating the revolutionary cause of Juche pioneered on Mt Paektu.

Kim Chaek spoke a lot about the harmfulness of factions. He told me that it was because of factions that he had been thrown behind bars after doing nothing special, and went on:

“After experiencing prison life I keenly realized that the communist movement could not be waged through conventional methods and that unless factions were eliminated, nothing, let alone national liberation and class emancipation, could be achieved. I wanted to meet you, as I thought that if it was true that the force that had appeared in Jilin was a collection of people of a fresh generation separate from the Korean Communist Party and unrelated to any factions, I could join hands with them without hesitation.”

He said that what could be called proper life for him started when he organized a guerrilla unit in Zhuhe and began an armed struggle. His life before then was one of roaming and groping, he

said. It was true. From the time he organized the guerrilla unit in Zhuhe, he played a conspicuous part in the revolutions of Korea and China at important posts in the North Manchuria Party Committee and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA. The Korean and Chinese revolutionaries and peoples in northern Manchuria unanimously respected him and loved him as a veteran revolutionary.

“I have long looked forward to meeting you,” he said. “Do you know how earnestly the Korean revolutionaries in northern Manchuria wished to see you? We fought always looking up at Mt Paektu where your unit was fighting. Had I met you in Jilin, Commander Kim, I would not have experienced mental agony all this while.”

He continued that when we had organized an expedition to the motherland and attacked Pochonbo, he had earnestly wished to shake my hands and extend words of gratitude to me in the name of the Korean revolutionaries in northern Manchuria.

Kim Chaek, known as a stern man, was surprisingly sentimental in front of me.

Saying that he had heard a lot of the news about eastern Manchuria and West Jiandao from the people I had dispatched to northern Manchuria, he told me that what he regarded as a model to follow in the activities of the main-force unit of the KPRA was the trait of unity between officers and men, between superiors and subordinates, and between the army and the people. In addition, he said, he admired the spirit of independence with which I had justifiably insisted on the Korean people's fighting for the liberation of Korea, holding aloft national liberation as the fighting programme, though fighting in an alien land.

Kim Chaek was well-acquainted with the course of my struggle. He even knew the story of how I had repaired a rifle stock for one of my men. He said that he had regarded me as a

model in his revolutionary struggle and everyday life. He was such a modest man.

Though he held me up as a model, frankly speaking, he himself was a paragon of revolutionaries.

He had earned the reputation of being a fierce man, but he was a political worker who loved his men more than anybody else. Though he said he had been impressed by my anecdote about the rifle stock, there were as many uplifting anecdotes about his relationship with his men.

What is the combat power of a revolutionary army? It is love between comrades. Value and love your comrades. When you love, love them as you would do your own heart. No one is more precious than revolutionary comrades in this world—this is what he stressed to his men.

Once a guerrilla from another contingent came to him with a document. Kim Chaek ordered him to sleep in his own quarters while he himself studied the document. At night he went to the quarters, taking with him a needle and thread, and patched up the messenger's clothes and underwear. When he was accepting the document, he had noticed that the messenger's clothes were torn, and decided to mend them. The messenger belonged to another unit, but he took care of him as his own father or brother would do.

After every battle he would congratulate his men. He did this not to them as a group, but meeting them one by one. He praised each in concrete ways—You did this and that well when breaking through the gate; you did such-and-such well when attacking the puppet Manchukuo army barracks; you did this and that well and this and that wrong when shouting to demoralize the enemy. According to those who had fought in northern Manchuria, the soldiers fought more bravely after getting this kind of review.

Kim Chaek worked in quite an experienced way with

soldiers who were criticized or punished. When a soldier was criticized by his commander, Kim Chaek would meet him and examine him as to whether he had realized his mistake; if the man had not, he would talk to him persistently until he saw what he had done wrong.

The following happened when Kim Tae Hong was a platoon leader:

He once hurled severe abuse at an assistant machine-gunner. Under a hail of enemy fire, the assistant, who had joined the guerrillas only a short time before and had not been tempered in battle, fired in the air. Incensed, Kim Tae Hong shouted, "You, coward! If your life is so dear to you, put down the gun and go back to your parents!"

After the battle, Kim Chaek sent for Kim Tae Hong and said to him: "You mustn't treat your men in that way. He is a raw recruit, isn't he? How can you hurl abuse at a man who is in battle for the first time? Instead of abusing him, you should first set a personal example."

Thereafter, Kim Tae Hong never hurled abuse at his men.

For all that, Kim Chaek did not show only affection for his men. He was a commander of principle; he persuaded, criticized or punished his men according to the situation. When someone made a serious mistake, he would subject him to a severe rebuke.

This is what Jang Sang Ryong said in recollection of Kim Chaek after his death:

In the winter of 1942—i.e. when Kim Chaek was fighting with a small unit in Manchuria after the Khabarovsk conference—his unit suffered greatly from a shortage of food.

One day Jang went hunting outside the secret camp. Finally, at dusk he shot a bear and a wild boar. After burying the animals, he hurried off, but he could not reach the camp before dark, for he was exhausted and the way was rugged. He stayed overnight in a

hunter's hut not far from the camp and returned the next morning. Kim Chaek had ordered his men not to use the hut, saying it could be used by enemy spies.

Learning that Jang had stayed overnight in this hut, Kim Chaek summoned Jon Chang Chol and ordered him to call Jang to account for it, saying Jang was not fit to be a guerrilla.

Jon Chang Chol asked him to forgive Jang this once, as Jang had thus far fought faithfully for the revolution.

Kim Chaek said, "No, I can't. Make him stand outside in the cold for three hours."

Jon Chang Chol took Jang outside as ordered. But before two hours had passed Jang was in such a pitiable state that Jon Chang Chol asked Kim Chaek to call Jang in, as he must have fully repented of his mistake by that time. Saying that attempting to commute the penalty given to a wrongdoer was an equal violation of discipline, Kim Chaek ordered his orderly to stand Jon outside as a penalty. He called Jang into the tent only after the passage of three full hours. He told him to take a meal first. Jang sat at the table, but he could not eat the food put before him. He realized to the marrow of his bones what he had done wrong.

Kim Chaek sat near him and said in a gentle voice: "You might think your mistake was not so serious. That's wrong. Why do I take it seriously? It is because your mistake might reveal the whereabouts of our small unit and consequently ruin our revolutionary task, not to mention our safety. This is why I ordered the men not to use that hut. However, you neglected the order of your superior and risked your life overnight. What would have happened if there had been spies there?"

Jang engraved every one of these words on his heart, he told me.

Kim Chaek was a man of few words, but each word he spoke was so weighty that it was as inviolable as an article of the law.



Once the enemy, to dishearten the anti-Japanese guerrillas, spread the rumours that Kim Chack had been arrested, Pak Kil Song had surrendered, such-and-such a contingent had defected and some calamity had overtaken Ho Hyong Sik.

The commanders and guerrillas, who were well aware that these were sheer lies, were enraged. Disgusted by the false rumours, the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent decided to teach the enemy a good lesson, and drew up a plan to make the enemy pay dearly. He lured an enemy spy who was roaming about his camp and asked him to go down the mountain and negotiate with the military police for the surrender of his contingent.

The military police informed him, through the spy, of the place and time of surrender, promising the contingent commander a generous reward. The police, guided by the spy, appeared at the promised place at the set time. Grinning at the contingent standing in lines in the forest, the police even waved their hands to them.

At that moment the guerrillas aimed their rifles at them, shouting, "Stay where you are!"

The contingent commander said, "You fools! We came here not to surrender, but to capture you. Hands up!"

The enemy leader protested.

"I have heard that the communist army does not tell lies. How can you go against your promise? An army must keep faith."

"Shame on you," the contingent commander replied. "How dare you talk about faith when you spread false rumours and tell lies every time you have a chance? As you tell so many lies, we also told a lie."

The contingent returned with the captured police. All praised its commander, saying he had done a great meritorious deed and a successful operation. It was similar to the incident of Pak Tuk Bom who had been criticized for advertizing his "surrender" in order to capture food.

Kim Chaek gathered the officers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent and criticized them severely, saying, “To think that the guerrilla army could lie like the enemy do! What on earth is this way of thinking? However false the game was, how could you use the surrender of guerrillas as a trick? You are not entitled to be officers of a revolutionary army.”

He then demoted all the officers, including the contingent commander.

Perhaps this makes you think that Kim Chaek knew nothing besides punishment. But he was not an officer to give punishment at random.

Let me tell you another anecdote.

In a battle a guerrilla was so flustered that he retreated, carrying only his grenade-launcher, and leaving his knapsack full of grenades behind on the battlefield.

His unit assembled and criticized him. Criticizing or punishing a guerrilla who had lost his rifle happened occasionally in the units of the revolutionary army. The guerrilla thought he deserved the criticism of his comrades-in-arms, and made up his mind not to repeat such a mistake. Then, a senior political cadre suggested that a severe penalty be given him, making the atmosphere of the meeting threatening.

Finding out that the guerrilla was a new recruit, Kim Chaek concluded that his officers were responsible for not training him properly and that the recruit should be given assistance, not a penalty. He dismissed the suggestion of the senior political cadre.

Had the issue finished there, everything would have been all right. But, as the political worker insisted that the man be executed, the new recruit fled in the night. Thus, a problem that could have been settled without a hitch developed in an unforeseen direction. The political officer became an object of hatred. All denounced him as an inhumane man. Some

condemned him as a counterrevolutionary and others urged that he be punished.

Receiving a report about this, Kim Chaek said that he and none other was responsible for it, and it was a fault in his own work, the work of the chief political officer, that there was a political officer who did not treasure the political integrity of his men. That day he enrolled the political officer in his guard unit, and took him with him to give him individual education.

At every opportunity Kim Chaek stressed to his officers and men the need to establish a good relationship between the army and the people and between superiors and subordinates.

He spoke highly of my holding aloft, though in a foreign land, the banner of the Korean revolution, relating it to the spirit of independence. He told his Korean guerrillas that though they were fighting in a Chinese unit, they should bear in mind the Korean revolution at all times, that the revolution must be carried out by Koreans, not by others, and that they should always remember their motherland.

Kim Chaek and I had many things in common—from the aspect of the revolution, the approach to the people, the stand on the spirit of independence, to the issue of the method and style of work, not to mention the issue of building the Party, the state and the army.

To Kim Chaek, who was surprised to find that I knew every detail of his life, I said I also had long observed his progress.

Smiling, he said, “If men who have neither seen nor met each other pay attention to and miss each other, then it is a predestined relationship.”

I agreed.

As it was in the summer of 1930 that he had gone to Jilin to see me, our friendship may be said to have started thereafter.

In consideration of his age and the course of his revolutionary

struggle, Kim Chaek, ranking high in the north Manchurian unit, could be called a senior among the Korean military and political cadres of the guerrilla army from Manchuria.

As for me, I was not yet the Head of State nor the General Secretary of the Party.

For all this, Kim Chaek gave prominence to me as the representative and leader of the Korean revolution in front of the Soviet and Chinese people.

Why did he so absolutely trust and give prominence to me, a man nine years his junior? This can be explained in various ways. His heart was full of the idea that there should be a centre of leadership for the revolution, and all should be firmly rallied as one around the centre. His yearning for and missing of the centre were expressed finally in his special concern and affection for me.

After he met me, he became one of my closest comrades, and followed and helped me consistently. Regardless of changes in circumstances, he entrusted himself wholly to me and worked faithfully.

Returning to the motherland after its liberation, he never relaxed for a single day, as he was constantly on the move to build the Party, the state, the armed forces and industry.

It was the same during the Korean war. In those days he went wherever he was wanted. When he was the Front Commander he went as far as Chungchong Province. He was in the frontline area, but when I went to the front to inspect it, he rebuked my aides, saying, "How could you bring the Comrade Supreme Commander here of all places?"

The people who accompanied me to Suanbo were scolded sharply by Kim Chaek at that time.

While young communists of the new generation upheld me as the centre of leadership in the days in Jilin, in the 1930s and in the first half of the 1940s, Kim Chaek and other anti-Japanese

revolutionary fighters put me at the centre of unity and cohesion, and strove to carry out the Juche-orientated line of the Korean revolution. In this way the centre of leadership was formed in our revolution. In this undertaking Kim Chaek rendered distinguished service. This is precisely the contribution he made to the communist movement and to the history of the national liberation struggle in our country.

At the training base in the Soviet Far East region in those days were guerrillas who had fought in northern Manchuria as well as in southern Manchuria. There were also Koreans who had grown up there. Had each of them given pride of place to his unit and stubbornly stuck to his own opinion, the revolutionary ranks could not have been united, and the centre would not have been formed. But nothing like provincialism or scrambling for hegemony took place among the Korean communists at the training base. And such things could not take place, as they were all pure-hearted. Moreover, such veterans as Kim Chaek and Choe Yong Gon gave prominence to me from the outset, confirming the centre of leadership.

I will give you an example that shows how Kim Chaek followed and trusted me.

After participating in the Khabarovsk conference Kim Chaek spent most of 1942 and 1943 in Manchuria. He went there in order to guide the small units fighting in northern Manchuria. He did not come back to the base even after he finished his work. By that time, Ho Hyong Sik and Pak Kil Song, commanders of the units in northern Manchuria, had died in action, and Kim Chaek was loath to leave the land soaked with the blood of his comrades-in-arms. When the IAF were organized, its Headquarters wired him several times to withdraw, but each time he replied that he would only return after finishing his work. His small unit was carrying a wireless set at that time. And each time they received his reply,

the commanding personnel of the IAF were displeased with his conduct.

I sent a telegram to him in my name, judging that he was not well aware of the fact that we had formed the IAF in view of the changed situation, and were expediting the final victory of the anti-Japanese revolution.

He returned to the base only after receiving my telegram. Why did he come back as soon as he received my message, a man who had remained unmoved even by the order of the IAF Headquarters? It was because he followed and trusted me so much. He regarded my words and requests as absolute, thinking that it was proper for him to return when I ordered him to do so, and without any conditions.

From the days at the base in the Far East region he not only gave prominence to me, he sincerely protected me.

When I was leaving with a small unit in the spring of 1941 he showed concern for each man of the company which was to guard me.

When we were making preparations for the final operations against the Japanese troops, he called a meeting of Korean commanders in the IAF without giving me notice. The meeting discussed the issue of ensuring my personal safety. He told the meeting: "Everyone must ensure the personal safety of Comrade Kim Il Sung with a high sense of vigilance. Comrade Kim Il Sung is the leader representing the people and revolutionaries of Korea, so we must defend him at the risk of our lives."

After the triumphal return of the soldiers of the KPRA to their motherland, he called another meeting on guarding me.

"Returning to the motherland," he said at this time, "we can see that the situation is more complicated than we heard. The manoeuvrings of terrorists are quite threatening. We must be on the highest alert, or else I'm not sure what might happen. The

chief secretary of the South Phyongan Provincial Party Committee, Hyon Jun Hyok, was assassinated by terrorists. You must never allow the news of General Kim Il Sung's triumphal return to escape your lips. The time will come when the news will be made public, so until then you must keep it a secret. We must ensure General Kim's safety particularly well, as we are his personal bodyguards."

Later he took the initiative of organizing my Guard Unit.

If I were to recount all the details of how faithful he was to me, it would take more than a day.

As I still do today, I channelled great efforts into working with the people after liberation. I really had a busy time working with the people, the revolutionaries from south Korea and with foreigners at that time. Nosaka Sanjo went to Japan via our country.

Though we had distinguished guests, we had no system of entertaining them. We had not even a guest house where we could provide them with board and lodging. Most of them were accommodated in my house, where only boiled rice and soup were served. Everyone regarded this as normal, as it could not be helped just after liberation. But Kim Chack showed considerable concern over it. He worried about the fact that not even good liquor was available in my house.

It is true that the country is in a pitiful state and we have no money. But how can we go to the market to buy liquor each time a guest visits the General? When the Republic is founded, guests will come to see the General in droves. We have to build a distillery with our own hands and make liquor for entertainment purposes. Besides, for the safety of the General we should make it ourselves—this was what Kim Chack thought.

Without my knowledge, he began to inquire into which liquor was the most famous across the country and who was its distiller.

The liquor made in Ryonggang was said to be the best soon after liberation. A distiller and his daughter made it, and senior Japanese and well-to-do people enjoyed drinking it before liberation. Kim Chaek went to Ryonggang to meet them. Moved by his words, the distiller asked Kim Chaek to take his daughter with him if a specialist in making liquor was needed by the country. She was Kang Jong Suk. After that, Kang Jong Suk cooked meals for Kim Chaek and made liquor in her spare time. When she laid out a place for distilling, Kim Chaek went to the market with another man and bought rice. Soon his house became a distillery.

After several days Kim Chaek came to me with the first bottle of the new liquor.

Filling a glass to the brim, he said, "This is the first Ryonggang liquor Kang Jong Suk has made for you."

Kim Chaek was delighted when I praised the taste.

From then on, the Ryonggang liquor Kang Jong Suk made was served at state banquets, and as another happy ending to this episode, Kim Chaek and Kang Jong Suk became man and wife.

To what degree he considered his leader's authority absolute can also be known from the fact that whenever I called him over the phone, he stood up, adjusted his dress and buttoned up his jacket before speaking on the phone. When he was ill in bed, he would still rise to his feet to receive a call from me, whether there was anybody nearby or not. A man who does not respect his leader from the bottom of his heart cannot do as he did.

He thought he could not exist without me.

The severest of times during the Fatherland Liberation War were the days of retreat. Though it was announced that it was a temporary and strategic retreat, some timorous people even thought the Republic was coming to an end. When the enemy advanced to Sariwon, Kim Chaek, the Front Commander, built a line for defending Pyongyang covering the areas of Junghwa,



Sangwon and Kangdong. Reporting on the situation at the front to me, he said that he would reinforce the defences with the retreating units and defend the frontline to the last, requesting that I leave Pyongyang with the staff of the Supreme Headquarters. A few days later he again phoned me to ask me to move the Supreme Headquarters to another place. I answered that he should also retreat before the enemy attacked.

But instead of retreating he sent me his Party membership card. Apparently he was resolved to fight a do-or-die battle.

I called him on the phone, and said I would not leave Pyongyang unless he retreated. Only then did he come to Pyongyang with the defence units. He took back his Party membership card when the Korean People's Army began the counteroffensive.

Some people said he was a very stern, truculent man. But, frankly speaking, he acted severely only in front of idlers, sycophants, the discontented, the selfish, careerists and factionalists; he was boundlessly kind-hearted and modest in front of his subordinates and the people. As he so hated those who played a double game, Pak Hon Yong was mindful of his behaviour in front of Kim Chaek. Kim Tu Bong, though himself Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, avoided encountering him.

Kim Chaek was completely free from affectation and hypocrisy.

Immediately after liberation, his son, who had been wandering in Manchuria, was reunited with him. The young man was wearing shabby clothes and straw sandals. Nevertheless, Kim Chaek wanted to introduce him to me without first dressing him up in new clothes and shoes, as other parents would have done.

He said to his son: "Don't feel ashamed of your straw sandals. You seem not to know what kind of man General Kim Il Sung

is. Don't worry. You have so far lived barefooted, and you can't imitate a wealthy son all of a sudden. The General will be happier to see you in straw sandals and those clothes. If you were in a Western suit and leather shoes, he would not be happy."

When he appeared in my office with his son in straw sandals, the son he had met after 16 years of separation, I could not hold back tears. That day I shed more tears than Kim Chaek did. How copiously he must have shed tears in his mind!

But his family reunion lasted only for four years.

Kim Chaek died because he overtaxed himself. He carried too large a burden.

It was on January 30, 1951 that I saw him last. At the time the Supreme Headquarters was in Konji-ri. That evening he came to me without prior notice. He said that the 24<sup>th</sup> of the previous month had been Comrade Kim Jong Suk's birthday but he had failed to come to see me because he had been busy, although he knew I would feel lonely. He apologized, continuing that the end of this month was approaching and he had come now as the more he had thought the more he had felt he had been remiss and he could not stand it any longer.

I said to him: "In December last year we were in quite a hurry to drive out the Americans from the north of Korea. We didn't have time to visit each other, did we? Please don't worry about it."

That day he was not like himself. I did not know why, but he was strangely sentimental.

He asked me to take a stroll, so I went outside with him. He told me that he did not know before the war that there was such a scenic place there, and we should build an excellent rest house there after the war. I agreed. To be candid, we had been so busy after liberation building a new country that we failed to inquire into where valleys suitable for building rest houses and scenic places were situated. As for our own recreation, all we could do

was go to the Maekjon Ferry or the Jangsuwon Bridge and wash our feet before returning.

I still remember Kim Chaek trying to hide from my eyes his socks ripped open at the heels.

I gave him a pair of my socks, saying, “Don’t overtax yourself with work. Take care of yourself. How can you stand the winter cold wearing torn socks? Please take care of yourself for my sake.”

That evening he wanted to dine with me. But Ho Ka I unexpectedly appeared to report about Party work. He took a great deal of time over this report, without coming straight to the point. So Kim Chaek left Konji-ri without taking a meal.

Leaving the Supreme Headquarters, he said to me: “We will be victorious over the Americans, General. Please don’t work too hard, and look after your health.”

This was the last request he made to me. The request moved my heart in a special way on that day.

That day Kim Chaek burned the midnight oil in his office before dying of heart failure.

When the Minister of Public Health and Director of the Medical Bureau, Ri Pyong Nam, reported the news, I could not believe it. I could not believe that a man, who had talked with me just a few hours before, had died so suddenly. Disregarding my bodyguards’ dissuasion, I went by car during the daylight hours, despite the danger from enemy bombers, to the place where the Cabinet was situated. Only there did I realize that Ri Pyong Nam had told the truth.

I regretted having failed to make Kim Chaek stay with me the previous night. Had he done so, he would not have worked late into the night and he would not have had a heart attack.

Another thing I regretted was that on the evening when he called on me I saw him off without having a meal with him. Even if I had had a meal with him that evening, my grief would not

have been relieved, and it still weighs on my heart.

I cannot remember most of the things that happened on the day when I bade him my last farewell. The only thing I remember clearly is touching his hands for the last time before the departure of the hearse, the hands I had shaken for the first time in Khabarovsk 10 years before. I had not forgotten the warmth of his hands at that time, but on the day of the funeral they were icy cold, the hands of Kim Chaek who would rush to me before any one else and clasp my hands whenever I returned from a field tour!

Kim Chaek lived all his life as my faithful comrade-in-arms. That is all the more reason why I cannot forget him. After his death, I looked after his sons as he would have done. I sent them abroad for study and arranged marriages for them. When his granddaughter was born, I congratulated them on her birth. I often invited them to my house and dined with them. Nonetheless, I could find no relief from sorrow, as I felt I had failed to do enough for them for Kim Chaek's sake.

Whenever our revolution encounters trials and difficulties, I yearn for Kim Chaek.

As I said before, I did not go to his grave by car. Whenever I went to his grave, I felt guilty about riding in a car, so I got off at the foot of Mt Taesong and walked up to his grave.

Even if he is now in the world beyond, how can my love and respect for him change?

I have experienced a lot while waging the revolution, and what I cherish most deeply is the experience of comrades.

For a person who has embarked on the road of revolution with a determination to dedicate his life to the freedom and liberation of his fellows, the most precious things are comrades and *camaraderie*. A faithful comrade can be said to be one's alter ego. I do not betray myself. If faithful and obliging comrades unite, they can prevail against Heaven itself. This is why I always say if

one gains comrades, he can win the world, and if one is forsaken by one's comrades, one will lose the world. The word "comrade" means a like-minded man. The mind is inseparable from ideology. The relationship between comrades formed through temporary interests or mental calculation cannot be solid; it breaks up easily, depending on the circumstances. But the relationship of comrades based on ideology and will is eternal; even bullets or the gallows cannot break it.

The Korean revolution has produced many comrades who showed noble examples of fidelity. They constitute a galaxy around us.

After Kim Chaek's death, we named Songjin, a city near his home village, the Chongjin Iron Works, an enterprise associated with his devoted life, and Pyongyang University of Technology after him—namely, Kim Chaek City, Kim Chaek Iron Works and Kim Chaek University of Technology. A military academy was also named after him. A statue to him stands in Kim Chaek City.

I hope that the city, the enterprise and the university named after him will always take the lead in socialist construction.

Kim Chaek hated following in the wake of others. He always stood in the van. He performed significant things in the building of our industry. When I see factories and enterprises that fail to manage themselves efficiently, I say to myself, "If Kim Chaek knew this. ... If Kim Chaek knew this. ..."

In the days when Kim Chaek was Minister of Industry, the industry of our country operated smoothly. Some of our officials who are still active once worked with him. I hope they will not make his service to the building of our industry come to naught.

## **5. Greeting the Spring in a Foreign Land**

Visitors to the Korean Revolution Museum find themselves attracted to a photograph, which bears an inscription by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung: “Greeting the spring in a foreign land.”

On a visit to the museum, he stopped in front of the photo and said that he valued it the most.

When he recollected the anti-Japanese revolution, he often spoke about his memories of Comrade Kim Jong Suk. She was cherished in the great leader’s heart as his dearest comrade, a never-to-be-forgotten comrade-in-arms.

I posed for this photo when I was in Camp South. It was a temporary base near the town of Voroshilov for the units of the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA in their early days in the Soviet Union. It was also called Camp B.

We spent a winter there and, then moved into Manchuria and the homeland for small-unit actions. In the summer of 1942 we settled down in Camp North after forming the IAF along with the NAJAA and units of the Soviet army to cope with the rapidly-changing situation in which the Soviet-German War and the Pacific War had broken out.

Camp North was located near Khabarovsk. It was also called Camp A by the anti-Japanese fighters.

After the Khabarovsk conference I went to Camp South.

Choe Hyon, who had arrived there earlier, came out a long way to receive us. He looked wide-eyed at me, as I was wearing

a fur cap and fur overcoat. He burst out laughing, saying, "I was wondering who this gentleman was, and it turns out to be you, General Kim."

I still remember that occasion. He hugged me so tightly, I felt like choking. He said jokingly that he had heard that I was in a conference at Khabarovsk, and asked why the meeting had taken so long.

A short way from Camp South to the east there was a small railway station on the line between Khabarovsk and Vladivostok.

The soldiers of the KPRA assembled in the camp built more barracks, houses, stores, kitchens and ablutions. The barracks were of the dug-out type, with bunk beds like those in the present barracks of the Korean People's Army. My men worked hard to construct them. They laid out a wide sports ground in front of the barracks.

In Camp South we studied political affairs a lot, while making preparations for small-unit actions in the homeland and Manchuria. In those days most of my men saw films for the first time in their lives.

There we had no need to worry about food supplies. We were each served with about 200 grammes of sliced bread at every meal. At first, the meals were not to our taste, as we were not accustomed to Western food and the side dishes were not very good.

There was a truck in the camp which brought supplies to us from a nearby farm. Its driver was a Russian. Ri O Song followed him like a shadow to learn how to drive. Sometimes he followed him to the farm. In the course of this, he learned how to drive, and also how to drink. Apparently the driver was very fond of drinking. With this experience, Ri O Song worked as a driver for some time after liberation. He was mad about driving. But one day he ran into a fence while driving my car. After that, he was banned from driving.

Once after liberation the Soviet comrades who had been in

Camp South visited our country. The driver was among them and met his old friend, Ri O Song, in Pyongyang.

I will never forget the year when we spent the winter and greeted spring in the Far East region of the Soviet Union.

The year 1941 witnessed a great change in our revolution and great events breaking out all across the world. In June the Nazi army invaded the Soviet Union, and in December the Pacific War broke out with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour. Indeed, in 1941 mankind was plunged into innumerable sufferings and calamities. It was a year of misery, a year of conflagration, when human civilization that had been built up for thousands of years was crushed under armour and artillery fire.

Viewed from the spring of that year, however, the Soviet-German War and the Pacific War were still in the future. We greeted 1941 full of optimism and confidence in the future. The time for the Korean revolutionaries to carry out the sacred mission they had assumed for the times and history, for their motherland and nation, was near at hand.

That spring I thought a lot about our small-unit activities and future joint operations, and exchanged opinions with my comrades. At that time Kim Chack and Zhou Bao-zhong stayed at Camp South for some time, and I frequently consulted them.

After the Khabarovsk conference we decided to form small units and dispatch them to the motherland and Manchuria. I made preparations to leave in command of a small unit.

Pending our departure, Kim Jong Suk helped us in our preparations. By that time she and I were married.

Fighting for the revolution, we had got to know each other, and while sharing life and death on Mt Paektu, we had become friends, comrades, and life companions.

It was around the time of the Dahuangwai conference that I first saw her. I am not sure whether it was during the meeting



or after it, but I went to Sandaowan in Yanji County. The Party secretariat was located in Nengzhiying, Sandaowan. I met her at a meeting of the officials of the secretariat held in Nengzhiying. She was working with the secretariat at that time.

Later, I met her again in Maanshan, as she had been enrolled in my unit. She, along with Kim Myong Hwa, greeted me in Manjiang, and I was very impressed with her appearance. That day I talked a lot with her. Through our conversation I learned that she had no one to rely on except her comrades-in-arms.

From that time on, she fought shoulder to shoulder with us.

In my unit she took part in the Battle of the Fusong County Town, and fully demonstrated her audacity and intelligence.

I should say that I owe my survival in that fierce battle to her. With seven or eight other women soldiers, she was preparing the morning meal on a col not far from the battle site. In the depression was a house in which they could cook, as the smoke from the chimney could not be seen by enemy observers. But the enemy pounced upon the col all of a sudden. If this strategic spot were to be occupied by them, we could be attacked from both sides. Sensing the critical nature of the situation, Kim Jong Suk drew her Mauser and, with the other women soldiers, delivered heavy fire at the enemy, mowed many of them down and beat the rest back.

The battle made her the favourite of her comrades-in-arms.

That year (1936–Tr.) we operated in Changbai. Then in March the next year we set out on an expedition to Fusong. I have often mentioned this arduous expedition. Frankly speaking, everyone, including myself, was tired out. Every night most of the exhausted men fell fast asleep. But Kim Jong Suk would sit up all night by the campfire, mending the torn clothes of her comrades. As they marched through rugged mountains, their clothes were easily torn. Ma Tong Hui, a recruit at that time, had a hole burnt in his cap

from a campfire spark. Kim Jong Suk mended it neatly. As I learned later, she made everything tidy with the utmost care. That night I was moved by her kind heart, by the fact that she could not sleep in peace before she had helped others. This fact gave me a deep understanding of the woman.

That was why I readily agreed to the proposal of some commanding officers to assign her to an underground workers' group to be sent to Taoquanli. She did a lot of work in Taoquanli and Sinpha. And it was at this time that I found in her uncommon skill and ability as a revolutionary. She had an unusual ability to motivate the masses, awakening them to consciousness and enlisting them in action. The "testimonial for a good citizen" which hundreds of people in Taoquanli and its vicinity are said to have submitted to the police with their signatures when she was arrested by the Jingan army soldiers showed their affection for her.

How could she enjoy such trust from the people?

Because she had worked with her full devotion. Whatever she did, she threw herself into it heart and soul, unafraid of death. And this was why she could survive any danger.

She was afire with love for the people. She thought her sacrifice for others was not in the least wasteful. It was her nature to go through even fire and water if it was for the sake of her comrades.

In April 1938 we had an encounter at Shuangshanzi on our way back from attacking the enemy in Liudaogou. The battle was so fierce, I myself took a machine-gun on the firing line and mowed down the enemy. As the enemy was closing upon us from all sides, we had no way out, nor even a chance to take a meal.

Then I felt something warm at my side. I felt in my pocket, and found dumplings in it. Glancing round, I could see Kim Jong Suk running about the battlefield, putting dumplings in the hands of the comrades. We continued fighting while eating the dumplings. The food was cooked by a spring at the foot of a cliff. There was no

knowing how she had climbed up the perpendicular cliff carrying a pan full of dumplings.

She carried food to her comrades even running about the battlefield like that, lest they should go hungry, but she herself always went hungry.

Once the unit ran out of cereals, and had only potatoes to eat. If a man eats potatoes for several meals in a row, he gets tired of them and loses his appetite. Kim Jong Suk was sorry to see her comrades-in-arms with nothing but potatoes to eat for several days, and racked her brains about how to stimulate their appetites. She ground up potatoes and cooked pancakes out of them, or made cakes out of them stuffed with stewed edible herbs. From that time on, her comrades ate the potatoes with relish.

Kim Jong Suk lived all her life not for herself, but for her comrades. Her life started with love for her comrades, and developed on the basis of that feeling. In the course of this, she became a prominent revolutionary who displayed communist moral qualities to the fullest extent. All that she did throughout her life was for her comrades, her fellows and for the revolution. She did nothing for her own benefit. She never thought of herself at all.

“I can endure hunger, cold and pain. I am satisfied if my comrades do not feel hunger, cold or pain. If I can save my comrades from danger at the cost of my own life, I will face death with a smile, with no regrets.”—This was her outlook on life.

The story about a blanket is sufficient to illustrate how sincere and ardent her love for her comrades was.

Some time ago, So Sun Ok, one of her comrades-in-arms, came to Pyongyang from Yanji, China, to see me. She brought with her a blanket and a pair of binoculars. She had been a cook for the Headquarters of the main force of the KPRA. Her husband, Kim Myong Ju, had also fought in the main force as an officer for some time. He had been widely known for his nickname “Yanji

prison.” He had been in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment when we were operating in the Fusong area.

Choe Hui Suk, on her way back from underground work in Yaofangzi, brought with her So Sun Ok. So Sun Ok, only 15 or 16 years old at that time, joined the KPRA. Choe also took with her So’s nephew. The recruit whom Om Kwang Ho branded as an enemy spy in the Qingfeng secret camp was this very nephew.

Kim Jong Suk loved So Sun Ok dearly. When camping, she would sleep with So Sun Ok, some years junior to her, under the same blanket. Kim Jong Suk and So Sun Ok were the only women guerrillas near Headquarters.

The blanket So Sun Ok brought with her to Pyongyang was the very blanket Kim Jong Suk had used with much affection. The blanket had always been on her knapsack. When it was difficult to recognize her because she was hidden by her large knapsack, I could tell who it was by the sight of the blanket. When So Sun Ok was leaving for a base for small-unit actions, Kim Jong Suk gave her the blanket as a memento. At the base were Kim Myong Ju and Hyon Chol. She must have married Kim Myong Ju at the camp.

On the day of her leave-taking So Sun Ok hugged Kim Jong Suk and wept without ceasing. Her departure was full of tears as the two women had slept under the same blanket. Kim Jong Suk was worried at that time over what to give her as a memento. Putting the blanket in her knapsack, Kim Jong Suk said, “Well, please take this as a memento. It’s not a new one, but don’t forget that it carries my warmth, the warmth of your elder sister, who has loved you so much.”

The blanket came to me after half a century. Despite the passage of time, I could recognize the favourite blanket of Kim Jong Suk. The pair of binoculars was the one I had given to Kim Myong Ju.

Had she had a thing dearer to her than the blanket, Kim Jong Suk would have given it to So Sun Ok without hesitation. She always

said she was happier to give than to receive. It was her philosophy of life that she was much happier giving her tender feelings to others than receiving others' tender feelings, although the latter was also good.

Her love for her comrades found a most distinct expression in her efforts to help me, with unstinted devotion. Loyalty to one's commander is in essence an expression of one's love for one's comrades.

One year we fought many battles in which we had to skip meals, as we had run out of food supplies. When I was commanding a battle someone put something in my pocket. I turned to find that it was Kim Jong Suk. After the battle I looked in my pocket. There were cracked pine nuts wrapped in paper. I asked her where she had got them. She only smiled. Later, the women soldiers told me that she had climbed pine trees to pick the cones.

She snatched me from the jaws of death on several occasions. She was always prepared to become a shield herself to protect me from enemy fire.

During the battle on the outskirts of Dashahe, a critical situation arose around me. A group of enemy troops were approaching me stealthily, yet I was not aware of the situation for I was commanding the battle. But for Kim Jong Suk's help, I would have been killed. She shielded me with her own body and shot all the enemy soldiers. So I was saved miraculously. Similar things happened on several occasions.

The padded coat I wore in the mountains for several years was also made by her. Apparently she had heard somewhere that floss-silk was bullet-proof. So she gathered floss whenever it was available and made a padded coat for me. As the coat she had made, stitch after stitch with the utmost care, sitting up late for several nights, fitted me perfectly, she was overjoyed.

When I sat up all night or went to sleep at bivouacs, I would

spread on the ground the deer skin I was carrying with me and lie on it, covering my body with the padded coat. Then I would feel warm enough.

Nowadays, women do not do much knitting, I was told. They do not take the trouble, because machines do the job nowadays. Whenever I see knitwear, I am reminded of Kim Jong Suk. She did a lot of knitting for me. I wondered how she could manage to find time from her cooking duties to knit, and where she obtained knitting wool. Anyhow she read books or did knitting whenever she had time.

It was not easy to obtain knitting wool in the mountains. In those days we had to fight a battle just to obtain a packet of needles. Nevertheless, Kim Jong Suk made padded overcoats and waistbands, because she worried about my health, as I had to eat, sleep and march in the open in all seasons, fighting the enemy. She knitted woolen stockings for me every year until the country's liberation.

I was sorry she took so much trouble for me, and I once asked her where and how she obtained knitting wool. She only smiled. I asked her again if she had woolen stockings of her own. She again did not answer. As I pressed her for an answer, she only said, "You are engaged in a great work, General, and you needn't worry your head about such trivial things."

After liberation she again did knitting for me. If my socks were worn out, instead of patching them, she would unravel them, wind the yarn on a spool and knit new socks for me. She would work all night and put them by my bed in the morning. She could of course buy socks better than those in shops and markets, but she did not buy new ones. If a pair of new socks she had bought was worn out, she would unravel them and knit them again for me until the yarn wore out. She wanted to knit my socks herself. That was truly a womanly heart.

I once could not help becoming annoyed at her exceptional devotion to me. It was one winter—I cannot remember which year it was—when she gave me my clothes she had washed and then dried against her own body. She had tried to do it unnoticed by others, but the other women soldiers' high praise for her deed reached my ears.

Dumbfounded at this unheard-of episode, I called her to Headquarters. I was near tears when I saw her face so pale from the cold. To think that she had done for me what my mother dared not do in her lifetime, I did not know what to say to her.

The devotion with which Kim Jong Suk undertook of her own accord the thing even my mother had not done, to sacrifice herself! I thought it must have been her warm feeling towards the man Kim Il Sung, as well as her revolutionary devotion to her Commander.

“Comrade Jong Suk, I respect your devotion to me,” I said to her. “I am always grateful to you for it. But why on earth did you do this? What if you catch pneumonia? If I bask in your self-sacrificing devotion, do you think I will feel at ease? Don’t do it again.”

Smiling, she said, “It is nothing at all if only I can see you, General, in good health. ...”

Though I was angry in front of her, I shed tears after sending her back. I don’t know why, but I was reminded of my mother at that time. I felt as if Kim Jong Suk’s kindness for me contained that portion of love my mother could not give me in her lifetime.

I can never forget the look of Kim Jong Suk trying, biting her lips, not to reveal the chill she was feeling as she had been deprived of the warmth of her body by the wet clothes.

In the subsequent years, too, she would dry my clothes with her body. All in all, she protected me from bullets, rain and snow, and from fits of cold with her body.

Our contemporary historians call the road of anti-Japanese revolution we trod an unprecedented path. They are right. The

anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans blazed a trail not only in the revolution but in love. Their life was trying beyond imagination, but love blossomed on the hard rocks of Mt Paektu.

I believe that an important thing in human love—love between parents and their children, love between husband and wife, love between sweethearts, love between teacher and his pupils, and love between comrades—is the spirit of devotion. Throwing oneself into fire, facing the gallows or jumping into a hole in the ice if necessary in order to relieve the person one loves of hunger, pain and cold, even though one feels hungry, cold and painful oneself—only this self-sacrificing spirit of devotion can create the most beautiful, ennobling and sincere love.

When I visited Mangyongdae on my return to the motherland after liberation, my family and relatives said that they had heard that I had married a good woman when fighting in the mountains. They asked where we had had the wedding ceremony, how it had been arranged, who had been the best man and who had provided the wedding feast.

I could not answer. I was suddenly choked, and found myself at a loss for words to answer these questions. Telling the truth would grieve my grandparents and make my kinsfolk feel sorry for me.

When we were fighting in the mountains, we could not afford to think of things like wedding feasts. Life was arduous and trying, and, worse still, we had not won back the country and were ashamed of being a ruined nation. So how could we think of things like wedding ceremonies or birthday parties? None of us wished for such extravagance.

A wedding ceremony in the guerrilla army was very simple. All that had to be done was just to announce that such and such comrades were married. We could never imagine such a ceremony as giving a party in wedding gowns as the young men and women do now. When we enjoyed fairly good conditions, a bowl of cooked



rice was all that was served. If rice was not available, gruel was served, and, if even gruel could not be served, potato or maize was shared. For all that, no one complained. On the contrary, we took it for granted and regarded it as natural.

After the announcement of the wedding we went on with our usual life in the companies and platoons we belonged to. There was no exception even for commanding officers. Some couples went into battle immediately after their weddings and fell in action, and other couples lived apart, as they were given different missions.

On the day I married Kim Jong Suk, our comrades-in-arms tried to obtain something special for us, but to no avail. Where could they obtain anything when the whole unit had run out of food supplies and were going hungry?

There was no wedding dress, no wedding cake, no master of ceremonies and no best man, but I will never forget that event. Kim Jong Suk, too, often recalled the day.

If they hear this, younger people may wonder how it could be so. But it could not be otherwise in the circumstances of those days.

The anti-Japanese guerrillas felt the worth of life in gladly accepting and enduring today's hardships for the sake of tomorrow's happiness. That was their joy of life. They lived in that way for the coming generation, for their motherland as we see it today.

In the days in the Paektusan secret camp and the training base in the Soviet Far East region, I thought of arranging proper wedding ceremonies for my comrades-in-arms after the liberation of the country. But I found that I could not do as I had wished because, though the country was liberated, the people were not well-off and the food problem was acute.

One day immediately after liberation Jang Si U called on me and protested that a veteran guerrilla intended to spend money belonging to the Party committee of South Phyongan Province on a

man's wedding. When I asked him who the veteran was, he said it was Kim Song Guk.

I called Kim Song Guk to my office and ordered Ri Ul Sol to disarm him. I then reprimanded him, asking who had authorized him to meddle with the finances of the provincial Party committee.

Almost in tears, he said, "I wanted to prepare a wedding suit, quilts and a party for Son Jong Jun. As he has no relatives, what can he do if we do not help him?"

Nevertheless, I criticized him severely.

"I know full well that it would be nice to prepare these things for Son's wedding. But are we in a position to do so? If you had recalled even once the days when we held weddings without proper food, you would not have asked the Party for money. The country is in dire circumstances, so observe with care and be prudent in your behaviour, as befits a veteran guerrilla."

Though I reprimanded him, I felt my heart ache. Frankly speaking, how laudable it was for Kim Song Guk to try to arrange a proper wedding ceremony for a comrade with whom he had shared weal and woe, joy and sorrow!

Many of the veteran guerrillas got married in the liberated motherland, but they all held their weddings in a simple way. This always weighed on my heart. This is why Comrade Kim Jong Il arranges parties for their 60<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays, and sends gifts to them.

Kim Jong Suk, however, did not enjoy such things and passed away in her early 30s, leaving behind her this photo. It was by mere chance that she and I posed for it. But for the care of our revolutionary comrades-in-arms, she would not have been able to leave behind even this photo.

When I was making preparations to leave in command of a small unit, my comrades called on me one day and suggested having photos taken. They said that as there was no knowing when we would meet again, we should leave photos as souvenirs. They

added that all that I needed to do was to pose, because they had borrowed a camera.

Going outside in my uniform, I found Choe Hyon waiting for me. It was still chilly, but spring air could be distinctly felt everywhere.

Leaning on a tree on which spring tints were emerging, I posed with my comrades-in-arms for photo, as souvenir of our meeting in Camp South after a long separation as well as on the occasion of departing on small-unit actions.

Others posed in groups of twos or threes.

At that time, some women guerrillas, getting wind of our photography session, ran to me and said they also would like to get their photos taken. So I posed for a few photos with them. They then suggested to me that I should have a photo taken with Kim Jong Suk. Hearing this, she grew shy and hid herself behind the backs of the women guerrillas. They pushed her forward to my side, smiling all the way. In order not to miss the moment, a comrade clicked the shutter.

That was probably the first time in my life that I had posed with a woman comrade individually. For Kim Jong Suk and me, it was as good as a wedding photo.

In those days we were still young and vivacious. We had many dreams of a bright future. Though we greeted the spring in a foreign land, we were full of confidence and in high spirits.

For both of us, it was an unforgettable first spring that we greeted after our wedding.

As I wanted to remember that spring forever, I jotted down on the back of the photo: "Greeting the spring in a foreign land, March 1, 1941. At Camp B."

I never imagined that this photo would remain in history to be displayed in such a large museum as the Korean Revolution Museum. We fought for the anti-Japanese revolution for 20 years, and it is regrettable that not many photos of this period remain. So,

I am grateful to those comrades who suggested photo-taking to me.

Kim Jong Suk wore her hair bobbed, like the other women guerrillas did. But you cannot see her hair style in this photo, for all her hair is covered by her cap. There was a reason for this.

That spring I went to Manchuria and the homeland with a small unit. As I was passing Hunchun across the Soviet-Manchurian border, I felt my feet growing warm. At first I took no notice, thinking that it was the result of the long march. But at each step I felt something warm and soft on my soles. So I pulled off my shoes, to find in them liners made with hair. Only then did I remember that Kim Jong Suk had been wearing her cap even indoors, and I realized that she had cut her hair to make the liners. She must have worn her cap because she was too shy to show her short hair.

Those who posed for the photos with me that day are now all gone—An Kil, Choe Hyon, Kim Jong Suk. There were many of them, but they have gone, leaving me behind.

The young tree which An Kil, Choe Hyon and I leaned against to pose for a photo must have become a giant tree by now.

I don't know how Camp South has changed. I should like to take time off to visit it some day.

Even after liberation, Kim Jong Suk attended me with all her heart.

How meticulous she was in taking care of me! She would change my collars once every few days. She starched them and smoothed them by pounding them with a club. This was because only pounded collars became soft and did not feel stiff to the neck. If starched collars are ironed, they become stiff, injuring the skin of the nape and restraining the free movement of the neck. She would pound the collars with a club only when I was not around. She did not do it even once when I was at home, lest it disturb my thinking.

I will tell you one more anecdote related with her faithfulness.

On the eve of national liberation I went to Moscow to participate

in a meeting to discuss the campaign against Japan. One night, sleeping in a guest house, I had a dream: Kim Jong Suk carried armfuls of books into a spacious room and told me to read them as I liked, adding that I would not be able to read them all in my lifetime. I awoke from the dream and told my comrades about it. They interpreted it as meaning that I would be President. Interpreting the dream in this grand way, joking, for some minutes, they said I would be very lucky in the future, and congratulated me.

On my return from Moscow I told Kim Jong Suk about the dream. Smiling, she said it was a good omen.

As the months passed, the memory of the dream grew dim.

However, Kim Jong Suk did not forget it. When we were living in a house at the foot of Mt Haebang after the liberation of the country, she filled the shelves of my study with books and asked me to read them to my heart's content now that the country had been liberated. At her request, she and I posed for a souvenir photograph. The photo still exists.

It may be said that Kim Jong Suk devoted all her life to me. Even after marrying me, she considered me as Commander, Premier and as the foremost leader. The relationship between her and me was that between the leader and the led, between comrades. She always said she was a soldier of the leader. She never addressed me in familiar terms; she only said "General" or "Comrade Premier."

One day after liberation, some women journalists called on her to introduce her to the public.

She only said to them: "A fighter's life is enshrined in the history of his leader. Please write more about General Kim Il Sung."

I think one can detect her exceptional personality in these words.

She passed away after experiencing nothing but hardships all her life. I felt so heartbroken at this, I strapped a watch to her wrist when bidding my last farewell to her. Could I repay her lifelong devotion to me with a watch? Or could I assuage the grief of losing

her by such an action? Nonetheless, I would not have thought of doing it had the watch been an ordinary one with no story to it. It was a watch which had endured remarkable events.

One year my grandmother said to me that she needed a ladies' watch and asked me if I could buy her a good one even though it was expensive.

I was puzzled at my grandmother, who had lived all her life without even a wall clock, all of a sudden wanting a ladies' watch, and a good one at that.

I bought such a watch, and took it to my grandmother. I asked her what she needed it for.

"I heard," she said, "that you got married in the mountains without any fine presents or a feast. This weighs heavily on my heart. A long time has passed since you returned from the mountains, but I haven't arranged a party for you nor have I had clothes made for you. So I want to have Jong Suk wear a watch. I would be happy if she wore a watch."

The watch Kim Jong Suk took with her when departing this world was the very same one.

My grandmother's affection for her grandson's wife was really deep. This affection also represented that of my father and mother, who had died long before.

However, I did nothing for her. She had arranged a birthday party for me, though simple, every year, but while living with her for nearly ten years after our marriage, I had not arranged one for her. She had not even allowed me to mention her birthday.

As I felt sorry about having done nothing for her, I offered her a glass of wine when I dropped in at my old house for lunch on the day the Republic was founded, saying, "All these years you have taken so much trouble to look after me, but so far I have done nothing for you; I have only given you trouble. Today I wish to offer you a glass of wine."

She said, “What do you mean by saying that you have done nothing for me? You gave me wonderful presents by founding the Party, the armed forces and the Republic! You have made my lifelong wishes come true. I have nothing more to wish for.”

In the year after Kim Jong Suk’s death, women veterans collected money and presented it to the Party, asking that her grave be renovated. When the project started, I visited her grave on Moran Hill, and found that a steel fence, stone facing and granite steps were being built.

I said to the women veterans working at the construction site: “Please don’t take offence, but look at those houses over there. People are still living in those small houses. They lived shedding bitter tears in the past, suffering hardships, but they are not yet leading decent lives. We have not yet reunified the country. If Jong Suk knew you were decorating her grave with granite slabs in these circumstances, how sorry she would be for the people! If you really want to pay tribute to her, you can plant trees and flowers around her grave and, when you recollect her, bring your children here to have a rest and look after her grave. This is the way to express your true feelings for her. Stop the project at once, and send those granite slabs to other construction sites.”

Though she dedicated her all to the well-being of her comrades and fellows all her life, she did not leave a single penny or any property for her son and daughter. The money she spent came out of my salary and the house and furniture she used all belonged to the state.

If there is any heritage she left with us, it is that she brought up Comrade Kim Jong Il to be the leader of the future, and presented him to the motherland and the Party. You say I brought him up to be my successor, but in actual fact the foundation was laid by Kim Jong Suk. This is the greatest service she rendered for the revolution.

On her last day she sat Kim Jong Il by her side and told him to support his father loyally and inherit and consummate his cause. This was her last will. Three hours later, she breathed her last.

I still frequently recollect her. She wore *chima* (the traditional Korean skirt) and *jogori* (the traditional Korean jacket for women) for several years. For some reason, however, it is more often in military uniform than civilian attire that she appears in my mind's eye, mostly shivering from cold, as she did when she came to me with my clothes she had dried in her bosom.

It is still heartrending for me to remember how she looked.



## 6. The Days of Small-Unit Actions

At times the publications on the payroll of Japanese imperialism gave wide publicity to the effect that the units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army had been routed if their commanding personnel fell in action. Even though they knew full well that large forces of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army were putting up resistance as ever, the army and police of Japan and Manchukuo, including the headquarters of the Kwantung Army, too, said that the guerrillas had been wiped out in the early 1940s.

If their claim that the anti-Japanese armed units had been routed and an end had been put to our resistance was true, then why did Nozoe move his headquarters from Jilin to Yanji, the theatre of operations of the KPRA, and mass his troops northeast of Mt Paektu, the troops that had been enlisted to attacking Yang Jing-yu? And why did he throw into “punitive” actions against the guerrillas not only the forces of the Kwantung Army and the puppet Manchukuo army and police, but also the rabble of the railway guards and Concordia Association?

Even in the days of small-unit actions, we fought continually. While avoiding meaningless clashes, we struck the enemy hard when necessary. Of course, we avoided fighting large battles. We instead channelled great efforts into political work with the masses and reconnoitring. We also sent a great number of small units, groups and political workers to the homeland to make preparations for an all-people resistance.

The sizes of small units and groups were different according

to the situations, but usually small units consisted of 10 to dozens of men as well as groups of only several men. They were armed lightly to suit their missions and duties. After their formation, we defined their tasks and their areas of operation. According to the tasks assigned, some small units and groups conducted mainly political work, some performed military actions and some were engaged in reconnaissance. But the tasks were not immutable. They executed other tasks than their own as well, according to the circumstances. For instance, the reconnaissance groups would sometimes conduct political work or the groups engaged mainly in military actions might do political work and reconnoitring at the same time.

As they were being formed, we directed efforts to building temporary secret bases on which they could rely. The typical ones built after the conference at Xiaohaerbaling were those situated near Daomugou in Yanji County, near Mengshancun in Helong County, Huanggouling in Antu County, and Jiapigou in Wangqing County. A large number of such bases were built in the homeland—from Undok, Sonbong, Musan and Rajin to deep into the peninsula. There were secret camps in which small units could stay, and places where communications could be exchanged, where secret meetings could be held and where supply goods could be stored.

After the conference at Xiaohaerbaling the great leader, in command of some men from the Guards Company, fought a successful battle at a swamp near Huanghuadianzi, Antu County, setting an example for small-unit actions. He recollected the battle as follows:

The battle fought near Huanghuadianzi was the first one after our switchover to small-unit actions after the Xiaohaerbaling conference. After the conference I went to Hancongou with about a squad of my guards. On our return, we came across the enemy near Huanghuadianzi and fought a battle there. Every scene

of the battle still remains vividly in my memory.

The name of Huanghuadianzi, like those of Matanggou and Nanpaizi, has a story attached to it. When we asked the local inhabitants what the name of their locality meant, they gave different answers. Some said that it meant a swamp full of chrysanthemums, others replied that it meant a swamp full of day lilies, and still others said it originated from the love of a boy and a girl. We did not know which interpretation was right.

We had passed through the place several times, and found that there were not many chrysanthemums or day lilies there. But there was a swamp. The battle was fought in the swamp.

Hwang Sun Hui was one of our company. I had given her the task of conveying the policies discussed and decided at the Xiaohaerbaling conference to Choe Hyon. Though small in build, she was agile and had a lofty sense of responsibility. She knew well where Choe Hyon's unit was.

As dusk was falling, we took a break on the mountainside behind Huanghuadianzi.

I thought about how to pass through the swamp. There was a wide ditch across it and a log bridge across the ditch. Foul water of uncertain depth was flowing along the ditch. If we crossed the log bridge and then a couple of mountains, we could go straight to Daomugou in Yanji County, that we had decided upon as a temporary secret base beforehand.

Nevertheless, over the bridge the enemy could have been lying in ambush. As I was gazing at the far end of the bridge, I spotted, as I had expected, a flashing light on the other side. I wondered if it was a firefly at first, but it was without doubt an enemy flashlight, I decided. We could get to Daomugou only by crossing the log bridge, but we were in a fine fix as the enemy soldiers were entrenched in darkness. The situation could be likened to the Korean proverb that "You will meet your enemy on a narrow bridge."

In the days of armed struggle I was surrounded by the enemy and placed in the jaws of death on several occasions, but I think this was the first time that I felt so hemmed in that I could not find a way out.

If we could not cross the bridge, we would have to make a troublesome detour of several miles. We had to continue our march straight ahead at all costs. As I stood there silently sizing up the circumstances, my men were holding their breath in suspense.

After a while, I decided to dash across the bridge before the enemy could notice us, and gave my men the order to start marching. We all crossed the bridge safely, but as soon as I, bringing up the rear, entered the bushes on the other side of the bridge, enemy machine-gun fire rang out.

I ordered my machine-gunner to return the fire, and diverted the column to the high road. Jon Mun Sop and Hwang Sun Hui guarded me at the risk of their lives. It was quite a critical moment. One false step and we might fall into the unfathomable marsh, and in the meantime enemy bullets were raining all around us. But we escaped the trap with no casualties. It was really a godsend.

Had we been thrown into confusion by the prevailing situation or failed to make a decision in time, we would not have been able to escape from the enemy's trap, and suffered great losses.

When we were marching towards the high road, I got the report from the scout that the enemy had appeared in front of us. No doubt the main force of the enemy, which had been standing by, had been alerted by the shots at the bridge.

I ordered my men to rush back to the bridge. Firing at the enemy soldiers at the bridge and those on our tail, we slipped away to one side, to a mountain. I then gave an order to take a break.

We took a short rest on the ridge of the mountain. Meanwhile, the enemy forces from the bridge and from the high road fell into an exchange of heavy fire.

The people in Antu told us later that the enemy suffered many casualties in the exchange of fire between themselves. The two enemy contingents accused each other of firing first, and wondered whether they had seen ghosts cross the bridge.

Later we killed many enemy soldiers at Facaitun, Yanji County, and near Wudaoyangcha, Antu County. In the battle fought at Facaitun we employed, unlike at Huanghuadianzi, a combination of raids by three parties and telescoping tactics. In this battle, too, the enemy suffered heavy casualties by shooting at each other.

We fought such battles almost every day. Some days a number of small units pooled their forces to attack a large target. As we fought large battles now and then, with the main emphasis on small-unit actions, the enemy did not realize that the People's Revolutionary Army had switched over from large-unit operations to small-unit actions.

After being informed through Hwang Sun Hui about the policies adopted at the Xiaohaerbaling conference, Choe Hyon and his men conducted efficient small-unit activities. His unit first attacked the enemy at Guangshengtun and Xiaochengzi in Wangqing County in a large combined force and then dispersed into small units to strike the enemy here and there.

Small units led by O Paek Ryong fought in Yanji, Helong and Antu; those led by Kim Il and Sun Chang-xiang in Hunchun and Dongning; and those led by Han In Hwa, Pak Song Chol and Yun Thae Hong in Dongning, Ning'an, Muling and Wuchang.

The whole region of Northeast China and the northern border area of Korea seethed with the activities of the small units and groups.

On the small-unit actions he personally commanded after the Khabarovsk conference, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung recollected as follows:

In the days before the conference, the small units and groups operated mainly in the northern border area of Korea and Northeast China. After the conference, they made their way into the depths of Korea, expanding their activities as far as the points of military importance on the southern tip of Korea and even in Japan proper.

The contents of their activities were varied. They built Party organizations and underground revolutionary organizations or rebuilt those that had been destroyed in the homeland and Northeast China, put in order or reformed the remaining armed units, and set up a systematic and unified leadership over the organizations for an all-people resistance. In addition they reinforced the secret bases in the different parts of the homeland, built new temporary secret bases as required by the situation, and recruited in the homeland and Northeast China patriotic young and middle-aged people to expand the ranks of the KPRA and train military stalwarts. At the same time they conducted on a wide scale a struggle to harass the enemy in the rear and weaken their war capabilities by raids, ambushes and subversive actions. They reconnoitred the enemy's military establishments, bases and strategic points, and strove to cause chaos in the enemy ruling system and military forces.

The units of the NAJAA also took part in the small-unit actions in those days. The theatres of these actions were allocated as follows: The units of the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army and some units under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Route Army were to operate in Korea and southeastern Manchuria; the remaining main units of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Route Army were to operate in the area from north of Lake Xingkai to Donggang; and the units under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Route Army, in such counties as Qingcheng, Tieli and Hailun.

Going to Mt Paektu and back to the temporary base in the Soviet Far East region, I guided the small-unit actions in Korea and

southeastern Manchuria, and at the same time promoted military and political studies.

We ensured that those who had returned to the base from small-unit actions participated compulsorily and without exception in political studies and modern-warfare training.

In Camp South it was decided that I should first go to the area northeast of Mt Paektu and to the homeland in command of a small unit consisting of a relatively large force of men. It would be followed, depending on the circumstances, by the small units led by Choe Hyon and An Kil. We defined the theatres of our actions and tasks.

In April 1941 I left the base with a small unit. Our task was to establish contact with the small units and groups operating in southeastern Manchuria and provide them with unified guidance. Another important task was to rebuild the revolutionary organizations that had been destroyed, build new ones, expand the armed ranks with young people recommended by secret organizations, and train these young people to be cadres needed for the final campaign for the liberation of the country and for the construction of a new country.

We also decided to find out the whereabouts of Wei Zheng-min.

The situation in the homeland and Manchuria in those days was threatening. From the early spring of 1941, the Japanese imperialists set out on new “punitive” operations. The “Nozoe Punitive Command” was disbanded and its authority was transferred to the headquarters of the Kwantung Army. Then the main units of the Kwantung Army and all the “punitive” units under the headquarters of the military districts of the puppet Manchukuo army and the headquarters of the Kwantung military police went on a rampage of “punitive” actions against the People’s Revolutionary Army.

That was why some commanding personnel counselled me to take all precautions, as they were worried about my going to the

enemy area in command of a small unit. Kim Chaek, too, was apprehensive about my safety at first.

Before leaving, I appointed Ryu Kyong Su company commander and Kim Il political instructor. Jon Mun Sop was appointed my orderly. When Jon's appointment was announced, Kim Chaek gave him strict instructions never to be as much as an inch away from me.

An Yong was chosen as wireless operator of the small unit.

An Yong had operated in eastern and northern Manchuria. As a teacher for several years, he had educated children in the spirit of patriotism. While working in eastern Manchuria, he had organized an itinerant troupe and conducted mass enlightenment work. He was a man of wide knowledge and rich life experience. At the time he worked with the masses in northern Manchuria, he worked both as a kitchen helper and as a day labourer in an opium field.

We chose him as our radio operator because when he had been fighting in the unit in northern Manchuria he had taken a six-month radio-operating course in the Soviet Union.

He sported a bushy moustache, about which he was often teased.

The number of men in the small unit would have been about 30. We wore Japanese-style uniforms, so that we looked like Japanese.

In the dead of night in early April we crossed the border. Then we marched to the northeast of Mt Paektu through the sites of our former bases.

We had lots of things to do northeast of Mt Paektu.

After we had abandoned our guerrilla bases in eastern Manchuria and moved to West Jiandao, the enemy had committed full-scale destruction in eastern Manchuria and northeast of Mt Paektu. In order to repair the damage, we had again gone to the area northeast of Mt Paektu after the operation in the Musan area, and exerted a positive revolutionary influence in the area.

Availing themselves of our temporary stay in the Soviet Union the enemy had again massed regular troops northeast of Mt Paektu



and raised a whirlwind of wholesale destruction. They then cried, "Peace has been secured in eastern Manchuria."

For the revolution northeast of Mt Paektu to be brought to an upswing once more, the KPRA had to make its presence felt through the audacious activities of its small units and groups. By demonstrating that the KPRA was still active, we were fully able to arouse the masses again.

We planned to raise a revolutionary upsurge in Antu, Wangqing, Yanji, Hunchun and Dunhua, and then proceed to Mt Paektu to build more revolutionary organizations in West Jiandao and in the homeland while strengthening the forces for all-people resistance and selecting hundreds of patriotic young people for training in the Paektusan secret camp and the base in the Soviet Far East region as military and political cadres.

After a forced march lasting several days after crossing the border, we arrived at a valley not far from Daheixiazigou.

Once some Koreans living in Yanbian brought me a video tape they had recorded, saying that while exploring an area bordering three counties—Wangqing, Dongning and Hunchun—they had discovered a camping site of the guerrillas. I watched the video tape and recognized the area as the one our small unit had used as a temporary secret base.

When we arrived at the valley we had run out of food.

I sent Kim Il and some other men to raid the gold mine near Jincang, Wangqing County, obtain food and conduct work with the masses there.

In the vicinity of the base, Jon Mun Sop caught a big bear. Several men had to carry it to the base on a pole. We extracted a pailful of grease from the bear.

Some days later, Kim Il returned with food. Crestfallen, he reported to me that Jang Hung Ryong had been killed on the mission. It had been because of Ji Kap Ryong that Jang had been killed. Ji

had stubbornly insisted on having a meal on the way back from the raid on the gold mine, and the party was delayed for about an hour, during which the pursuing enemy surprised them.

Regretting that he had not refused Ji's request to take a meal, Kim Il said he was ashamed to face me.

Jang's death tore our hearts apart. We felt even sadder as we looked back on how he had made painstaking efforts to make up for his mistake when he had been given a penalty concerning an incident involving an ox.

Coinciding with Jang's death, a guerrilla of Chinese nationality was captured by the enemy. The result was that the whereabouts of our unit was revealed. The enemy pursued us tenaciously, saying that Kim Il Sung had reappeared.

I thought that the news of our reappearance would rather serve our purpose. If the enemy made a commotion about this, then it would be known to the people, and in the long run it would be tantamount to making public the struggle of the KPRA. In fact, the enemy was giving publicity to our struggle!

To cover our traces, we crossed a pass and marched towards Taipinggou. In early May we arrived at Jiapigou, Wangqing County.

There I parted with Kim Il. He was to operate with a group which had a temporary secret base at Jiapigou. In the areas of Luozigou and Tumen-Jiamusi, the theatre of the group's operations, there were many organization members we had trained with great efforts in the days of the guerrilla bases. Telling Kim Il that Choe Chun Guk's family would be living somewhere around there, I asked him to establish contact with them.

An Yong, the radio operator, was to remain at the Jiapigou base with two of his assistants. The base played the role of an intermediary liaison centre.

I left Jiapigou with about 20 men for the wide areas on the Tuman northeast of Mt Paektu. We planned to operate circling

around Dunhua, Antu, Fusong, Helong, Yanji and several other counties in eastern Manchuria.

Passing through Dunhua County, we built a base at Hancongou, Antu County, and set up a liaison centre. I had met Wei Zheng-min last at Hancongou.

By the time we arrived at Hancongou the season had changed. The forests were thick and it was hot at midday.

From there I dispatched groups for political work to Changbai, Dunhua and Chechangzi, as well as to the homeland and Mt Paektu.

Han Chang Bong and Han Thae Ryong were dispatched to the Changbai area. Their task was to guide the activities of the secret organizations there and to locate the families and relatives of guerrillas, link them to organizations and send them to the homeland. Changbai was home to many of the soldiers of my unit. If their families and relatives were all affiliated with organizations and planted in the homeland, they could play an important role in forming organizations for the all-people resistance movement. I gave the two men the task of selecting excellent young people and sending them to our base in the Soviet Far East region. I told them in detail whom they should contact in Taoquanli and Changbai, and in other places. I ordered them to make inroads into the homeland after building up underground organizations there and entrench themselves among the working class.

Jon Mun Sop and Kim Hong Su went to the head of a valley in Chechangzi and dug up the weapons and maps we had buried there previously and returned with them.

Those who had been to Dunhua brought an old man with the surname of Pak from a forest near Dahuangou. He had been eking out a living by hunting wild animals. He had in the past been affiliated with the Anti-Japanese Association, an underground organization, in Huadian County.

I had a long talk with the old man. He said that the mountains

were crawling with the Japanese “punitive” troops and their stooges. He added that we should take care as the huts of charcoal burners and opium growers, as well as the huts where biers had been kept and caves were all occupied by enemy spies. Complaining that underground work was quite difficult as the enemy had locked up all the local people in internment villages, controlling their travel and making them keep watch on one another, he said he would, for all that, do his best for the benefit of the guerrillas.

Frequenting the Dunhua County town and the internment villages, the old man brought us a list of those connected with our organizations, and the food and goods we needed. On the basis of the materials he obtained, we rebuilt the organizations in this area rapidly.

Later, the old man was arrested by the enemy and executed.

In this way, we enjoyed the active support and cooperation of the people in the days of small-unit actions. This support proved to be a great encouragement for us in our difficult struggle in the enemy area. This was clear testimony to the fact that the people had already been aroused to engage in all-people resistance.

While expanding the network of underground organizations, we endeavoured to find the whereabouts of the remaining units under the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army and Wei Zheng-min. First we reorganized ourselves into three teams and operated in the counties of Dunhua and Huadian, the Antu area, the area north of Helong County and the area of Fusong County.

In those days Ryu Kyong Su did his work faithfully, despite many hardships.

In order to get to Jiapigou in Huadian County, he had to cross the swollen Fuer River. But the river was impassable. Finally, he ran out of food and he had to return. Going hungry for several days and worried about his failure to perform his task, he fell ill.

But someone had to go to Jiapigou, come what may.

I decided to go there personally, leading a small unit.

On hearing this, Ryu Kyong Su, who had been bed-ridden in a corner of the tent, struggled to his feet and approached me, saying, “You mustn’t go. I’ll try again.”

My efforts to dissuade him proved futile, and eventually I could not but accede to his request.

In every man’s life there is a moment when his character is tested. Each second and each minute of our do-or-die guerrilla struggle was such a moment. We experienced scores of times a day the moment when we had to make a decision whether we would dedicate our lives to the struggle or abandon it.

Whenever he was faced with a critical situation, Ryu Kyong Su threw himself into it as if he were a human bomb. So I always sent him to the tightest corner.

Assigning simple tasks to his comrades-in-arms and shouldering difficult tasks himself, giving others the credit for successes and trying to discover the cause of any mistake within himself when anybody had to be called to account, and willingly receiving reprimands or penalties—this was Ryu Kyong Su’s personal appeal and an important reason why he was loved by all.

When he was leaving for Jiapigou, I ordered that he be given all the food we had. Behind my back, he asked Jon Mun Sop whether there was any food left for me. As Jon Mun Sop, at a loss what to say, was hesitant, Ryu reprimanded him for his failure to do his duty as my orderly, and poured out grain back from his knapsack.

Having performed his task, Ryu Kyong Su returned after several days. He had apparently undergone such great hardships that he fell unconscious as soon as he saw me. I pulled off his shoes. Gangrene had already set in in his feet, and bloody puss was oozing out. As I spooned thin gruel into his mouth, he managed to open his eyes and gave me the report of his work.

In the vicinity of Jiapigou they had met a peasant who had had

contacts with the guerrillas. But the peasant had given them a wide berth. Failing to meet Kwak Ji San and others, they had roamed about and only heard the rumour that Wei Zheng-min had died.

Though he had done his best, Ryu Kyong Su was very sorry that he had not performed his tasks to the full.

Ji Kap Ryong, who had been to Wangbabozi with another group, surrendered to the enemy.

The trials of 1941 were a touchstone that distinguished once again who was a true revolutionary and who was a sham revolutionary.

These trials and examinations continued without interruption until the day of the country's liberation. The anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans who returned to the liberated motherland are precious men and women tested in trials one hundred times, nay, one thousand times.

Soon after Ji Kap Ryong's betrayal, the enemy, aware of our whereabouts, swarmed into our base like wolves. In command of the unit, I broke through the enemy's encirclement and headed for Antu via Dashahe and Xiaoshahe.

Working in the large area of Antu and Fusong, we concentrated on the work of expanding the organizations we had formed previously.

Through the members of the organizations we came to know that Wei Zheng-min had died of illness and a rumour was circulating that a notice carrying his photo was put up even in the town of Mingyuegou. We also obtained the information that 30 or so guerrillas were operating in the areas of Nanhamatang and Beihamatang, and in the vicinities of Mingyuegou and Yanji.

So we decided to do more work in this region. I dispatched a team to the areas of Shahezhang, Nanhutou, Dahuangwai and Beihamatang. I myself headed for Mt Paektu with the remaining men.

In the Kanbaeksan secret camp I called together the heads of small

units, groups for political work and revolutionary organizations, and gave them the task of holding fast to the Juche-oriented stand as required by the prevailing situation and of briskly conducting ideological education to consummate the Korean revolution by our own efforts. I also told them to make preparations for selecting excellent young people in the homeland and West Jiandao and giving them training in our base in the Soviet Far East region, and organize the work of the all-people resistance by training many men in the Paektusan secret camp and in the area of Mt Kanbaek.

Following the meeting, we went to Onsong and guided the work of organizations in the homeland in this direction.

Our way back after operating in the area of Mt Paektu was not smooth, either. Startled by the gunshots raised by our small units, the enemy were making desperate efforts to trace us. In those days the enemy “punitive” troops were everywhere to be seen—on high roads, on mountain tops, in valleys, and so on.

Laotougou in Yanji County was an enemy stronghold. As the military police and special units of the Kwantung Army, the puppet Manchukuo army and police were entrenched there, it was difficult to pass through it.

Nevertheless, without passing through it, we could neither reach the mountain that led to the forest in Sifangtai nor go to the assembly place of our small unit.

We decided to try to pass through it by night in our Japanese military uniforms. But to our regret, the day broke before we could cross the railway line at Laotougou. We had to stop marching in the daytime and hide ourselves in a safe place. We looked down from a mountainside at some houses along a main road, and a railway station not far away. We made up our minds to enter the houses and wait for dusk to fall.

I quartered my men in the houses, and I myself stayed in a house on the road. One man, disguised as a Chinese peasant, kept watch

while weeding in a nearby field with a hoe, while the others all rested.

At noon, men in yellow clothing flung open the door of the house I was staying in. They were surprised to find several men in military uniform in the house. When the man leading them attempted to turn back, one of my men poked a rifle into his back.

I told the man to come inside. Apparently they had taken us for Japanese soldiers. I asked him who he was. He said he was head of the Concordia Association and had come to the village on receiving a report that Kim Il Sung's unit had appeared there.

I told him point-blank that we were the KPRA. Hearing this, the man trembled.

I learned valuable information from him.

From a newspaper he had brought with him I learned for the first time that the Soviet-German War had broken out.

He told me that the Japanese had become agitated all of a sudden and were massing their troops in the Soviet-Manchurian border area, and a rumour had it that a Soviet-Japanese War would break out before long.

I told him to go to the police after we left the village and report that Kim Il Sung's unit had passed through Laotougou in broad daylight.

Receiving the report, the enemy were said to have made a great fuss, crying how could it happen that Kim Il Sung's unit had taken a meal and had a siesta under their very noses.

Without suffering any loss, we arrived at Jiapigou, Wangqing County, the assembly point. Kim Il and his men, who had returned after completing their mission, joined us there.

Following a meeting in June, I called another meeting of the heads of small units at the end of July in Jiapigou. The aim of the meeting was to conduct ideological education among all the officers and men and members of small units of the KPRA in relation to the



situation that had changed rapidly in the international arena with the conclusion of a neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan and the outbreak of the Soviet-German War.

A heated discussion arose among the members of small units about the outbreak of the Soviet-German conflict. Some said the conflict would open a bright vista for our revolution; some judged that if the Soviet Union had to sustain a pincer attack in the east and in the west by two powers, it would exert a negative influence on our revolution; and still others were of the opinion that the impact of the world situation on us should be judged only when the Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union became a reality.

It was in order to unify these opinions as soon as possible, instil in my men confidence in the victory of the revolution and rouse them to make better preparations for meeting the great event of national liberation on our own initiative that I convened the meeting.

At the meeting we reviewed the activities of the small units and groups that had been dispatched to different places, and discussed the course of our future activities.

Throughout the meeting, I stood by my principle:

“We must not vacillate whatever the change in the general trend. Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union is just digging its own grave. If Japan invades the Soviet Union, it will also be tantamount to digging its own grave. But Japan has no strength to do so. Look at the balance of forces between the powers. Even if the earth changes to whatever form, fascism will go to ruin, and democracy will emerge victorious. A bright vista will be opened for our revolution. So we must not vacillate or be hesitant in the face of temporary difficulties. We must hold fast to the banner of the revolution. We must cherish our convictions and the confidence that we will liberate the country and consummate the Korean revolution by our own efforts.”

At the meeting I indicated the course of our future small-unit

actions. I said that we had to harass the enemy continually in their rear while avoiding reckless frontal confrontation and engagement with the enemy, whose forces were stronger than ours, so as to preserve our forces. I stressed that we should raid and destroy the enemy's convoys and supply bases, and that we should also intensify reconnoitring and political work with the masses for the campaign for liberating the country.

In early August we raided a road construction site between Wangqing and Luozigou.

In those days the Japanese imperialists were massing large numbers of troops in this area, which was close to the Soviet-Manchurian border area. We thought that if we raised gunshots in this area where the enemy soldiers thronged, the echo would be a great one. If we were to raise gunshots, we would raise them in the heart of the enemy area—this was our intention.

I sent two parties in two directions to cut off the enemy's retreat. Then we, disguised as Japanese soldiers, made an appearance at the construction site in fine array, disarming the road guards in an instant and bringing the enemy soldiers in the barracks under our control. We finished the battle so quickly that the road builders, perplexed, gazed at us vacantly. Only after Ryu Kyong Su shouted, "We are Kim Il Sung's guerrillas," did they rush to us from all sides and hug us.

After doing political work with them, we passed through the area north of Wangqing County and reached a mountain top overlooking the village of Taipinggou.

I was told that many rumours about us circulated in Wangqing after the battle.

From the top of the mountain I looked down on the village through binoculars. I could see the houses of Ri Kwang, O Jung Hup and Pak Kil Song. I could even see O Jung Hup's father walking up and down in his yard.

I gave Kim Il the task of establishing relations with them, and building secret organizations in this area.

Later Kim Il formed an underground organization keeping contact with O Chang Hui, O Jung Hup's father, and Pak Tok Sim, Pak Kil Song's father. He also planted secret organizations among the peasants in Nanbeidadong, and among the workers at the Xiaowangqing railway station. O Jung Hup's father told Kim Il that, with the rumour that Kim Il Sung's unit had now advanced to Mt Paektu circulating, the local people were highly elated and full of confidence in the victory of the revolution.

The small units of the KPRA conducted on a considerable scale military and political activities to foil the enemy's operations in the border area between the Soviet Union and Manchuria, where the unit-train transportation and mobility of the enemy troops were brisk. It was in those days that our small units made the enemy military trains collide with one another in the yard of the railway station in Tumen and raided the enemy troops on the move in Toudaogou, Helong County, and in Wangqing County.

Concluding with success the small-unit actions in the homeland and Northeast China, we returned in August to the base in the Soviet Far East region.

In order to consolidate these successes, I came to Manchuria once again and even to the homeland in command of a small unit in mid-September 1941. The important mission at this time was to establish relations with the small units led by An Kil, Kim Il and Choe Hyon, analyze what they had reconnoitred, give on-the-spot guidance to the small units and groups active in the areas on the Tuman and different parts of the homeland, and instil in them the conviction of sure victory. This was of great importance in expanding the theatres of activities of small units and groups deep into the homeland, preparing for the great event of national liberation and getting forewarning of Japan's plan to invade the Soviet Union.

Before departure, I saw to it that An Yong met his wife. Ri Yong Suk, An Yong's wife, was in Camp North. She had married him, the night school teacher of her village, on the advice of her parents and fought together with him in Choe Yong Gon's unit. After her husband had gone to the Soviet Union to learn radio operation, she had not heard from him. How eagerly he must have wanted to see her, as he had heard she was in Camp North! So I told him to meet his wife. In the heart of a man who goes on a difficult mission there must be no clouds. After seeing her he seemed to have been further encouraged; he was all smiles.

Near the camp site we had set up in Wangqing there was a river. Ri Tu Ik and Jon Mun Sop caught fish there. They were both good at angling. The river was swollen after heavy rain. While angling, they caught a bear that was licking up red ants on a rotten stump.

We dismembered the bear and put some of its meat in the river. Mountain water is so cold that it preserves any meat put in it. Wheat flour kept in a deep pool does not degenerate, either. If it is put under the water in bag, it looks as if it would be soaked with water, but this is not true. Only the outer surface gets wet, by about one centimetre, and its inside remains intact. Life in the mountains is, as a matter of course, inconvenient, but there are knacks and methods peculiar to this sort of life, making it more comfortable.

One day I called the commanding personnel of the small units together and analyzed what they had reconnoitred so as to discuss the situation. They produced much interesting material. They were unanimous in their opinion that we should wait and see whether Japan would invade the Soviet Union or not, and it seemed that it would not happen in the foreseeable future.

As evidence, An Kil reported about railway wagons. According to him, the Japanese police had gathered local people together and told them that a war against the Soviet Union would break out sooner or later, and so they must build dugouts and roads. But investigation

of railway goods wagons revealed that the open wagons transported guns, tanks and the like, but most of the covered wagons were empty.

The information Choe Kwang's small unit had gathered in the area of Mudanjiang was also interesting. From a mountain near a railway station they monitored through binoculars how many enemy troops were being massed in the border area every day.

Whenever a train pulled into the station, Choe Kwang counted how many soldiers disembarked from each coach. One day he spotted an officer stepping down onto the platform with a cigarette between his lips. He engraved the officer's face in his memory, apparently because he was especially arrogant in his behaviour or he gave himself airs with a cigarette.

The next day, Choe Kwang saw the officer again on the platform. He had been doubtful at first, as he wondered how could a man who had got off the train the previous day get off again today. But he was the same officer. That day too the officer was smoking a cigarette. Only then did Choe Kwang realize that the enemy was carrying the same troops in covered wagons back and forth every day to fool the guerrillas. It was a valuable information.

On his return to the base my men said, jokingly, that he could gather such information only because he was a heavy smoker. They said he could pay attention to the officer because he could not keep his eyes off the cigarette between the officer's lips, and so he easily realized he was the man he had seen the previous day.

Thanks to cigarettes, he gathered good information. He was once punished also because of cigarettes.

He became the leader of a platoon of the Young Volunteers' Corps at the age of 16. Because of his lack of years his men treated him as a neophyte. In order to show that he was a grown-up, not a novice, he began to smoke. After a few years he became addicted to cigarettes, and if he had no cigarettes in hand, he would get sick.

Once he returned to his unit after a battle carrying a case of cigarettes on top of a sack of wheat flour. The unit called a meeting of Party members and punished him. The meeting decided he deserved punishment as he had brought cigarettes, which could not be eaten, when he could have brought one more sack of wheat flour at a time when food was running short.

Through summing up all the information we had gathered in those days we came to the conclusion that Japan was not ready to invade the Soviet Union, and its endeavour to pretend to be massing its troops on the Soviet-Manchurian border region was a trick to hide its plan of southward military expansion. We could guess that Japan was making preparations for a southern attack, not a northern one. This proved a great help to the Soviet Union in its formulation of a military strategy against Japan.

On the way back to the base in mid-November, we dropped in at Yonbong, Saeppeyol County.

After my venture, several small units pushed into the homeland and Manchuria.

At the end of 1941 a small unit led by Kang Kon staged a large-scale ambush on an enemy train near Xinjiadian on the Mudanjiang-Jiamusi line, destroying the passenger cars carrying Japanese officers and freight cars carrying armoured vehicles and gasoline.

In the early spring of 1942 Pak Song Chol's small unit operated in the areas of Dongning, Ning'an and Jiaohe counties. Contacting guerrillas fighting in Laosongling, Ning'an County, in Qinggouzi, Jiaohe, and in Wuchang County, they expanded their ranks and conducted small-unit actions until September, fighting battles continually, before returning to the base.

The small unit led by Chai Shi-rong of the NAJAA achieved great results in Ning'an and Muling counties and along the Mudan River.

Reviewing the success achieved in the first stage of small-unit

actions, I thought that our making sorties into the homeland and Manchuria from the temporary base in the Far East region of the Soviet Union was a correct strategy.

Above all, we experienced in person that the switchover from large-unit actions to small-unit actions in the new situation was a timely measure and that we could deal heavy political and military blows to the enemy, and inspire the people to anti-Japanese resistance through small-unit activities no less effectively than we could through large-unit actions.

These successes inspired all our commanding personnel and rank-and-file soldiers with a firm conviction in the final victory.

Our small-unit actions demonstrated to our fellows in the homeland and abroad that the revolutionary army was as hale and hearty as ever, defeating the enemy and winning one victory after another, and that, if all people were united around the revolutionary army and conducted nationwide resistance, they were fully able to defeat Japanese imperialism and greet the day of national liberation.

The army and police of Japan and Manchukuo that had been assuming an air of triumph as if they had annihilated the guerrillas to the last man through the “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area” and large-scale “punitive” actions were hemmed into a tight corner by our adroit small-unit operations.

Around the time when the IAF were formed, the small-unit actions of the soldiers of the KPRA became more brisk.

With an eye to the pending final campaign against Japan, we directed our main efforts to military reconnoitring and preparations for an all-people resistance campaign, and at the same time expanded the small-unit actions in breadth and depth.

The small-unit actions were conducted by putting the main emphasis on the actions of the small units comprised of soldiers of the main unit of the KPRA and combining them with military

reconnoitring by the KPRA soldiers attached to the detachment of the IAF. This method of operation—acting independently and when necessary supporting and cooperating with each other—proceeded from the conditions on the ground and the requirements of the political and military situation that prevailed in those days. It enabled us to consolidate and further expand the political and military successes of the activities of the small units.

The small-unit actions conducted after the formation of the IAF were characterized by sticking to the principle of giving priority to group activities while combining them with the activities of larger small units. In accordance with this principle, in military operations we directed our main effort to the activities of groups and combined them, as appropriate, with raids and ambushes by small units.

Following are documents on the intensification of the activities of small units and groups of the KPRA:

“Kim Il Sung, Choe Hyon, Chai Shi-rong and others who found their way into Manchuria again have realized the disadvantages of armed resistance and strongly show the tendency of mainly conducting strategic activities involving the destruction of important military, industrial and economic installations, turning the masses into Reds or inspiring them to revolt, and subverting our soldiers.” (Report from Mudanjiang acting consul Furuya, June 23, Showa 16 (1941).)

“In early 1942 the Korean guerrillas performed some combat operations in northern Korea, destroying 22 Japanese planes and two hangars, and sinking two oil-tankers and 92 fishing boats.” (V. Yarovoy, *Korea*, p. 44, September 1945, the Soviet Naval Forces Press.)

The small units dispatched to the homeland and Manchuria also worked to demoralize the enemy forces. Through their energetic activities, war-weariness grew rampant among the Japanese soldiers, and many young Korean people drafted into the army deserted with



their weapons and joined our groups one after another. Some pilots of the enemy air corps rose in revolt and defected to the People's Revolutionary Army.

The greatest success we achieved through small-unit actions was foiling the enemy's attempt to annihilate us and making ample preparations for greeting the great event of national liberation while preserving and accumulating our forces.

These political and military successes proved a great asset for expediting the dawn of the liberation of the country.

## 7. Trust and Treachery

Recently our newspapers have been again carrying the reminiscences of the anti-Japanese guerrillas. This is a very good thing.

The reminiscences are precious treasures of our Party, each with a high educational value. How fine *The Conviction of Victory* is! In the 1960s our people read these reminiscences a lot. They had a strong impact on our postwar economic reconstruction and industrialization.

The more difficult the situation and our struggle, the more reminiscences like *The Conviction of Victory* we must read, because vacillators tend to crop up in such circumstances.

When our revolution was faced with severe trials like the Arduous March, stragglers, deserters and capitulators began to appear among those whose confidence in the victory of the revolution was shaky.

Vacillators and deserters also appeared in our ranks when a neutrality pact was signed between the Soviet Union and Japan. Ji Kap Ryong, who appears in *The Conviction of Victory*, was one of those deserters.

The neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan was signed in April 1941, in the days when I was operating with a small unit. On his way back from a visit to Germany, Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka dropped in at Moscow and concluded the neutrality pact. Its repercussions reached our People's Revolutionary Army.

The gist of the treaty was that the signatories should maintain

peaceful relations, respect the integrity and inviolability of each other's territory, and observe neutrality when either party engaged in hostilities with a third country.

As you can see, the treaty had no article that dealt with the Korean question. So there was no reason for the treaty to upset Koreans in particular. Nevertheless, a considerable number of Korean revolutionaries were disappointed on hearing the news of the treaty. They had been considering the Soviet Union as their most reliable ally and, as the ally had joined hands with Japan, their mortal enemy, they thought that everything was hopeless. They became disheartened, as they had interpreted the clauses on respect for each other's territory and maintenance of peaceful relations in the treaty as a declaration that the Soviet Union and Japan would not engage in a war against each other.

This judgment produced, in the long run, pessimism, defeatism and capitulationism in corners of our ranks.

After signing the treaty with the Soviets, the Japanese gave wide publicity to it. They carried in their newspapers a photo of Stalin meeting Matsuoka. This photo had a strong psychological impact on waverers among us.

However, could the basic revolutionary stand of Korean communists change because their neighbouring countries had signed a treaty? Did we rely on a big country when we were starting the revolution? No. We started it with belief in ourselves. After starting the armed struggle, we received no aid, not even a single hand-grenade, from our neighbours. We waged the armed struggle, carried on Party building and conducted the united front movement by solving everything by our own efforts and by believing in the strength of our own people.

In the course of this we entered into a joint struggle with the Chinese people and formed an allied front with the Soviet people. An ally would be welcome, but it wouldn't matter if there were no

ally. That was our consistent stand. That was why, from the first day of the armed struggle, we educated the army and the people in the spirit of independence and equipped them with the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance. We stressed time and again that independence meant life, that dependence on foreign forces meant the lot of slaves, that self-reliance would lead us to prosperity, and that we could neither liberate the country nor build a new country without relying on ourselves.

But some commanding officers paid little attention to education in the spirit of liberating the country by our own efforts and the spirit of self-reliance; they only stressed the contradictions between the Soviet Union and Japan, and the greatness of the Soviet Union. This permitted the germs of worship of great powers to infiltrate the minds of men like Ji Kap Ryong—the idea that only a war between the Soviet Union and Japan would create a decisive opportunity for liberating Korea and that we could defeat Japan only with the help of such a great power as the Soviet Union.

The Japanese foreign minister's visit to Moscow to sign the neutrality pact with the Soviet Union was no more than a smokescreen. The Japanese were always looking for a chance to push north, in other words, to attack the Soviet Union. Japan and Germany had agreed in secret to cooperate in an attack on the Soviet Union, and planned to divide the vast territory of the Soviet Union into two parts, with the Urals as the demarcation line to be occupied by each from the east and west, respectively.

However, Japan was not yet strong enough to invade the Soviet Union. So the southward policy got the upper hand. It was Japan's intention to occupy Southeast Asia, store up sufficient strategic reserves and then march into the Soviet Far East and swallow up the region as far as the line of the Urals only after Nazi Germany had inflicted fatal wounds on the Soviet Union. The strategy could be likened to the proverb, "waiting for a persimmon to ripen and fall

of its own accord.” Japan’s signing of the neutrality pact with the Soviet Union was a contortion in her timetable.

As German forces invaded the Soviet Union two months after the signing of the pact, Japan immediately ordered her Kwantung Army to stage “special exercises.” This was as good as a preliminary order for a war against the Soviet Union. During these exercises the strength of the Kwantung Army on the Soviet-Manchurian border doubled. This revealed what the Japanese really had in mind.

The mere fact that Matsuoka, the mastermind of the neutrality pact, asserted that a war against the Soviet Union was imminent shows how cunning and brazen-faced the Japanese ruling circles were.

Was the Soviet Union fooled by this trick of the Japanese? It knew Japan’s strategy too well for that. Seeing, however, that Japan was taking the initiative in proposing to maintain peaceful relations and respect each other’s territorial integrity, the Soviet Union, that had been guarding against a possible pincer attack from the east and west by Japan and Germany, felt that this was a lucky chance. In those days the Soviet Union was faced with an unprecedented threat of invasion by Nazi Germany. The large German forces massed on its western frontier might attack at any time. Japan’s professed neutrality in this situation, in spite of her covetous eye on Siberia, gave the Soviet Union the respite of a possible delay in having to fight a two-front war.

When Matsuoka was leaving Moscow, Stalin was said to have seen him off at the railway station. This fact eloquently spoke of the mental state of the Soviet leadership on the eve of the Soviet-German War.

So how ignorant it was to think that the Soviet Union had become a friend of Japan by signing the neutrality pact!

The more tense the situation is, the soberer must be the estimate and judgment of it. If you take a phenomenon at its face value,

failing to see through its essence, you are liable to make a fatal mistake. Ji Kap Ryong made such a mistake.

Ji Kap Ryong's defection was also called the Wangbabozi incident.

The incident took place in the spring of 1941, when I was operating in the Antu area in command of a small unit. From a base in Hancongou, I was directing small units and groups operating in different areas. The greatest difficulty we had at that time was the fact that all the local people were confined in internment villages. We had to get in touch with them, but it was not easy.

The only way was to obtain help from the hunters, charcoal burners and medicinal-herb collectors who used to roam the mountains. Hunters caught deer from early spring to autumn. They caught them by digging pits, in which they placed metal-tipped stakes, and then covering them with thin twigs and grass before spreading salt on top. Deer which stepped on the grass to lick the salt would fall into the pit and get pierced by the stakes.

If we dealt with these hunters tactfully, we could get in touch with secret organizations and learn the enemy's movements.

I divided the small unit into several groups, which I dispatched on missions to different places. Ji Kap Ryong and Kim Pong Rok were sent to Wangbabozi to work among the local inhabitants and obtain food.

Headquarters ordered the leaders of these small groups to report the results of their work once every five days. But no report came from Ji's group. This was unusual. I had to send a responsible man to find out the situation with Ji's group, but I had no one. At that very moment Ryu Kyong Su's group returned to Headquarters. Kim Ik Hyon and Xu Bao-ren, a soldier of Chinese nationality, were the other members of Ryu's group. The three of them were tough men, as hard as birch trees, but their appearance was appalling.

They said they had experienced manifold hardships; they had

run out of food; they had had to make a detour twice as long as planned, because the Fuerhe River was swollen; and one of them had suffered from cramp in his stomach. To make matters worse, they had encountered an armed band of immigrants from the Ryukyu Islands in Japan disguised as peasants when they were passing Dapuchaihe or somewhere. They had had a hard time of it pursued by these people.

On hearing about this armed band, I thought the Japanese imperialists were really nasty and cunning.

Ryu Kyong Su and Kim Ik Hyon told me the story in turn.

The band numbered about 100. As they wore peasant clothes and were sowing seeds, our men thought they might obtain food with their help. This got them into trouble.

Hiding by the roadside, our men watched for a chance. When they saw a man walking to the edge of the field, they told him that they were anti-Japanese guerrillas, and asked him if he could help them buy food. But the peasant did not understand them. Perceiving that he understood neither Korean nor Chinese, they thought he must be deaf. So they tried gestures. Only then did he understand.

The peasant walked slowly back into the field, and then all of a sudden shouted something. Immediately, the men in the field scattered here and there and took up rifles from behind piles of stones and bushes. They pounced upon our men, firing and shouting. Simultaneously, two machine-guns began to fire.

They were almost trapped. They ran for more than a mile, and sank down exhausted as soon as they had thrown off their pursuers. By chance they found some potatoes in a field, boiled them and ate them. They could not find the owner of the field, so they wrapped in oil paper 50 *yuan* to pay for the potatoes, fastened it on a pole and set the pole at the edge of the field so that the owner would notice it. In those days a draught ox cost about 50 *yuan*, and they left 50 *yuan* as the price of a few potatoes!

The fact that they encountered a band of Ryukyuan immigrants armed even with machine-guns speaks volumes about how trying the circumstances were in the days of small-unit actions. In order to disintegrate the revolutionary ranks the enemy enlisted every means and method conceivable.

When he knew that somebody had to go to see what was the matter with Ji Kap Ryong's group, Kim Ik Hyon, though utterly exhausted, volunteered for the mission.

The next day, I dispatched him to Wangbabozi.

Kim Ik Hyon found that Ji Kap Ryong, out of defeatism, had totally neglected the assignments entrusted to him by Headquarters. Ji was spending most of his time, from morning till evening, looking down at a village from the top of a mountain.

Having gone hungry for four days, Kim Pong Rok was lying in a lean-to. He told Kim Ik Hyon that he had not performed his mission, and felt too listless to go to Headquarters to make a report.

When Ji Kap Ryong returned to the hut, Kim Ik Hyon reasoned with him: "Nearly ten days have passed since you came here on a mission. Is it right just to hang around here without making a report to Headquarters? Let's meet hunters this very evening and set to work."

Ji Kap Ryong said the situation was dangerous so they had to wait. However hard Kim Ik Hyon tried to persuade him, it fell on deaf ears.

The next morning, when Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok went to wash their faces, Ji Kap Ryong took their rifles away from them. He said to them: "I have followed the armed ranks for nearly ten years. In the course of this I have tasted all possible hardships, but I have endured them with the hope that the day of Korea's independence would come after the hardships. Now this dream has come to naught. You know that the Soviet Union and Japan have concluded a neutrality pact. I used to believe that deep-rooted



hostile contradictions exist between them, and a war will break out between them before long. I had hoped that in the event of such a war we could defeat the Japanese army in cooperation with the Soviet forces and liberate the country. But this is now out of the question. I can't engage in this absurd struggle any longer. Worse still, I have had a relapse of a disease. So I'm going home."

Kim Ik Hyon asked him if he really meant what he said.

"Yes. I have made my mind up after thinking it over carefully for several days. Follow me if you also want to go," was his reply.

"If you want to go," retorted Kim Pong Rok in tears, "go alone. If I have to die, I'll die at the side of the Comrade Commander. The future of the revolution may seem gloomy, but how can you desert him?"

Ji said, "Though I desert, I'll never commit foul crimes like Rim Su San. Believe me, wherever I go, I will live like a man."

Kim Ik Hyon berated him: "However gloomy the future of the revolution is, we can't follow you and desert the Comrade Commander. How immoral it is to follow a man when the times are good and desert him when the times are bad! You say you will live like a man. But you will see after going down the mountain that you will not be able to live a manly life however hard you may try. From the moment you lay down your arms, your life will be worth no more than a pebble. Look what became of Rim Su San, Choe Yong Bin and Kim Paek San. So don't go over to the enemy on any account. Give us our rifles back."

Saying that his mind was made up, Ji told them he would not give them their rifles back until he had descended the mountain safely and that he would hang the rifles on a bridge not far away from the hut before going on his way.

After Ji went away, Kim Pong Rok went to the bridge and returned with the rifles.

Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok left for the rendezvous. As they

had not eaten anything for days and encountered enemy soldiers on their way, they arrived at the rendezvous much later than the set date. So they could not meet the messenger I had sent there. It was a rule in our guerrilla army that Headquarters would move to another place after a small unit had been dispatched and a messenger had been sent to the former site of Headquarters.

Though they failed to meet the messenger, the two men did not leave the place. Eating grass boiled in water, they waited for the opportunity to get in touch with Headquarters. When grass is boiled in water with salt in a pail, the water becomes green. They lived on that water. One time they boiled an ox bone discarded several months previously. Something like rice was floating in the soup. They were maggots, not grains of rice. After eating the soup with the maggots, they swooned.

On the verge of death from hunger after some days, they wrote a message on a tree after scraping some of the bark away. They wrote with a piece of charcoal they had found at the site of the campfire that Ji Kap Ryong had deserted, and Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok had died of hunger. They then lay in the bushes side by side, waiting for death. Had we not sent Jon Mun Sop there at that time, the two men would have died right there.

Reading what was written on the tree, Jon Mun Sop called out their names as he searched for them. But the two men had no strength to respond. Jon Mun Sop found them only after hearing a faint groan.

Jon Mun Sop took a great deal of trouble to bring the two comrades-in-arms to Headquarters. In the end he grew so worn out he could hardly move his legs. With all his strength he brought the two men to Headquarters. Only after we poured some spoonfuls of thin gruel into their mouths did Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok gain consciousness.

This is the story of the Wangbabozi incident.

We learned serious lessons from this incident.

The most serious lesson was that we should teach our men to refrain from worshipping great powers, and believe in their own strength.

Ji Kap Ryong's desertion was the consequence of his lack of confidence in the victory of the revolution as well as the result of his worship of the Soviet Union. Some commanding officers inculcated in their men illusions about the Soviet Union, telling them that a war would inevitably break out between the Soviet Union and Japan owing to the contradictions between them, and that Japan would then be defeated. Such talk led to this nasty incident.

It is true that some of our men entertained illusions about the Soviet Union. Around a big power there are always people who follow it meekly or who idolize it. That was why some people thought that the prospects for our revolution were dim when they saw the photo of Stalin meeting Matsuoka, and in the end thought of deserting.

In order to ensure that such an incident as Ji Kap Ryong's desertion would not occur again, we put forward the slogan, "Let us carry out the Korean revolution by our own efforts!" and strongly promoted the struggle to eliminate the worship of great powers.

The other important lesson we learned from the Wangbabozi incident was that a revolutionary's faith was his lifeblood, and that his life would come to an end when his faith withered away.

Ji Kap Ryong deserted because he had lost confidence in the victory of the revolution; Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok returned to Headquarters without defecting because they continued to cherish their faith even though they almost starved to death, believed even when waiting for their end lying in the bushes that though they might die, the revolution would emerge victorious.

Faith is the lifeblood of revolutionaries.

Where does confidence in the victory of the revolution

come from? It comes from one's belief in one's own strength. A revolutionary can stick to his faith only when he firmly believes in his leader, in his own strength, and in the strength of his collective, his fellows and his Party.

A man embarks on the road of revolution with a definite faith. How long he holds fast to this faith depends on how it is tempered. Faith tempered lackadaisically will soon degenerate. Political and ideological training through organizational and ideological life and revolutionary practice is the way to temper one's faith.

Some people think that a man with many years of revolutionary activity has naturally a strong faith, but this is not true. A man who does not cultivate himself well may be weak in his faith despite the long period of his revolutionary career; and a man who persistently cultivates himself can be strong in his faith despite the short period of his revolutionary service.

In regard to the length of his revolutionary career, Ji Kap Ryong was quite senior to Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok. He had fought in the guerrilla army for nearly ten years. By that time, Kim Ik Hyon had served in the People's Revolutionary Army for four years. Kim Pong Rok was no more than a new recruit, with two years of service.

Who, then, became a turncoat? Ji Kap Ryong, with many years of service, deserted, but his juniors, Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok, remained faithful. This means a man who has forsaken his faith becomes degenerate no matter how many years of service he has and no matter how great his achievements.

Having fought in the guerrilla army from its early years, Ji Kap Ryong had been appointed company commander for his exploits. But when days of trial arrived, he began to vacillate. At first he did not perform his revolutionary duty faithfully, on the pretext of having a stomachache. So women guerrillas made a waistband for him. Sympathetic to the supposedly ailing man, we took special care of him. But in the end he ran away, unable to endure hardships.

He had fought bravely when he had faith, but when he lost the faith, he became a straggler and betrayed the cause.

Rim Su San became a renegade, not because he had a short record of revolutionary struggle; he could even be called a veteran in view of his years of revolutionary struggle. In 1933 when Pak Song Chol, who had been working at a mine in Badaogou, went to Cangcaicun to join the guerrillas, Rim Su San was already the political instructor of the 2<sup>nd</sup> company of the Yanji guerrilla unit there. He scolded Pak Song Chol for not coming through the proper organizational channel, and told him to go back.

Before becoming a guerrilla, Rim Su San had finished the middle-school course and taught at a school. He was very tall, taller than Kim Il. For his good looks, knowledge and eloquence, he won the favour of his comrades-in-arms in his early days in the guerrilla army.

But his true nature gradually began to show itself. Guerrillas whispered behind his back that, for all his oratorical skill, he was a coward.

In one month in the spring of 1938 we raided Liudaogou twice. Why? It was because the first odds-on battle commanded by Rim Su San had ended in a debacle.

Liudaogou was a walled town with about 1,000 houses. On receiving a report that there were not many enemy troops there, Rim Su San immediately attacked the town with his regiment. As soon as the battle began, they encountered an unexpected force of enemy troops, who had arrived at the town after our scouts had reconnoitred it.

When Rim's regiment entered the walled town, the enemy soldiers were having a party. They could have been wiped out without much effort. But Rim Su San was intimidated by the numerical superiority of the enemy force, and quickly ordered the regiment to retreat. This order threw the regiment on the defensive.

Bewildered, our men stopped fighting, and the enemy,

taking advantage of this opportunity, soon switched over to the counteroffensive, firing machine-guns. In the end the regiment withdrew from the town in failure.

After this battle, the enemy gave wide publicity to the effect that they had repulsed the guerrillas' attack. On hearing this, the people became dispirited. Rim Su San's error in the first battle at Liudaogou damaged the reputation of the People's Revolutionary Army, so I organized another attack on the town. Under my command, the unit attacked the walled town and occupied it at a stroke. Thenceforth, the enemy ceased their propaganda.

At a meeting of the commanding officers, we criticized Rim Su San for his mistake. When analyzed ideologically, cowardice was the basic cause of his mistake.

However, Rim Su San did not rectify his shortcoming even after he was criticized. At the time of the Arduous March he lived in indolence in a service camp without executing the tasks Headquarters had assigned to him. At a meeting held in Beidadingzi, he was again criticized for not reforming himself. Some suggested demoting him from the post of chief of staff.

But I gave him another chance.

He betrayed our confidence. Wearying of the protracted armed struggle and alarmed at the appearance of the "Nozoe Punitive Command" and its unprecedented size, he trembled with fear. Then taking the opportunity of performing a mission solo at the secret camp in Dongpaizi, he defected to the enemy. Not only did he run away alone, but in collaboration with the enemy he helped the "punitive" force to set up an ambush around the secret camp and capture many of our comrades. He even led a "punitive" force to our Headquarters in an attempt to capture me.

I don't remember seeing much of him firing on the battle line. On the plea of doing political work, he always sought shelter from bullets.

When he surrendered, the enemy were as triumphant as if they had caught a tiger alive, saying that a very important person had defected with many of his subordinates from Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army to the Empire of Japan.

To be frank, his surrender did send a certain shock through our ranks. Their faces serious, all my men were sullen for days. His surrender actually did our unit a considerable amount of harm.

For all this, I did not become alarmed or disheartened.

Rim Su San was a degenerate. By a degenerate I mean a man who is ideologically rotten. Such a man does only harm to the ranks.

The appearance of traitors in the course of the revolution is a universal phenomenon that can be seen at any time. The history of the international communist movement not only celebrates men like Stalin, Zhou En-lai, Thalmann and Che Guevara, it is also stained by traitors to their leaders and their cause.

Bernstein and Kautsky worshipped Marx and Engels, but they are recorded in history as traitors. They betrayed Marxism as well as Marx and Engels, their mentors and seniors in the revolution. Trotsky, who once held an important post in the Bolshevik Party, became an enemy of the Soviet state. Zhang Guo-tao defected from Mao Ze-dong and the CPC to Chiang Kai-shek. All these traitors ended their days in misery. But did those revolutions get frustrated or retreat because of their betrayals? Each time the turncoats were removed, the revolution developed and surged up with fresh vitality. After the removal of Trotsky, how remarkably socialist construction was promoted in the Soviet Union! Trotsky thought that without him, everything Stalin did would fail, and the Soviet state would go to ruin. But the Soviet people built their country up to be the leading socialist power in the world, as well as a global power. After Zhang Guo-tao deserted the CPC and became a Kuomintang parasite, the Chinese revolution did not wane; on the contrary it continued its upward spiral and achieved nation-wide victory.

Though Rim Su San, after defecting to the enemy, divulged the secrets of our Headquarters and did us harm as a guide for the enemy “punitive” forces, the KPRA became neither weakened nor disrupted. Our ranks united more solidly and our revolution, preserving its own purity, made a strong dash towards its ultimate victory.

Traitors to the revolution also appeared during socialist construction in our country after the war. Choe Chang Ik, Yun Kong Hum, Ri Phil Gyu and others attempted to place obstacles in the way of our people’s forward movement. Having failed to realize their factional scheme, they chose to betray the Party and their motherland. As they dropped away, our revolution made a fresh upsurge and ushered in the era of Chollima. Since then the world has called our country Chollima Korea.

There were traitors also in the ranks of the nationalist movement.

Choe Nam Son was one of them. It is well-known that he was one of the drafters of the Declaration of Independence at the time of the March First Popular Uprising. I once read his travelogue of Mt Paektu, and found that every word and every sentence were filled with his patriotic spirit.

However, this famous patriot suddenly abandoned his conscience and faith, and followed the road of betrayal. In the early 1940s, when the anti-Japanese armed struggle was undergoing most severe trials, he wrote pamphlets with our names in big letters, urging us to surrender, which the Japanese dropped from the air.

A typical pamphlet written by him and few other pro-Japanese elements reads in part:

“You young men who are eating and sleeping in the open, roaming about desolate mountains and fields aimlessly!

“You wretches who are unable to see the light of modern civilization in the wilderness of the primeval forests, throwing your precious lives away



as if they were worthy of nothing, all because of a blind belief! The day has come at last when you have to put an end to your lives of misery. Which do you want, to live or to die?

“Oh, young men who are wandering in the forest,

“Read this letter and make up your minds right now. Rush to the road of revival. Feel shame at your shameful deeds, and repent of actions that need repenting of. Break with your unstable lives, unprecedented in the world, right now and return to the warm embrace of your compatriots. In this way you can devote your valour and chivalry to the sacred cause of building a new East Asia. It is not too late.

... ..

Headquarters of the Association for Supporting  
the Special Operations in the Southeast Area

Adviser Choe Nam Son

Director Pak Sok Yun

... ..”

(Magazine *Samcholli*, No. 1, pp. 206-09, Showa 16 (1941).)

In the KPRA there was a physician in his fifties. He was called the “Chungchong Province doctor.” His real name was Ryu Han Jong. While following my unit for some months, he treated wounded guerrillas in various places. Associating with him at this time, I found him to be an upright man. By means of a few gold needles and a scalpel, he treated every type of wound. As he was so skilful and, moreover, as he was so sincere, he was respected and loved by all the guerrillas. I also respected and loved him. Once I obtained a bear skin for him because he often slept in the open. I made sure that when my men captured booty after attacking towns, they took medicines and medical instruments needed by the doctor.

As his health broke down, we sent him back to his home in early 1940. Frankly speaking, to live the life of a guerrilla in the mountains at his age was difficult to do with mere will or determination.

Three months later he came to us again. With tears in his eyes, he said, “These past months I have lived a comfortable life, eating the food my wife cooked. But I could hardly swallow it. If I were to stoop to keeping myself safe and sound at home, how could I call it a proper life?”

It was a noble way of thinking, peculiar to men with unstained consciences. But it was not suitable for him to stay with us because of his health. I still remember how hard I tried to persuade him to go back home. He finally did go back, but reluctantly.

Immediately after liberation, he called on me with his daughter. My happy reunion with him is still fresh in my memory. Squeezing my hands, he said in tears that he had nothing to regret now that he had seen me in good health. I told him that as the Japanese had been driven out, he should participate in the building of a new country with me.

He settled down in Pyongyang, working for the association for supporting revolutionaries and at the Pyongyang Institute as a surgeon. His daughter became a typist in the clerical section of the Provisional People’s Committee of North Korea. His two sons joined the Korean People’s Army, and fell in action.

As you can see, how remarkable the contrast is between him and men like Choe Nam Son, Rim Su San and Ji Kap Ryong! When Rim Su San, devoid of faith, was thinking of deserting, the doctor joined the guerrillas. When Choe Nam Son was scattering over Manchuria and Mt Paektu leaflets he had written urging us to surrender, the doctor came to us again and volunteered to rejoin the guerrillas whom he had taken leave of a few months before, with a yearning for the life of guerrillas, the life which Choe Nam Son described as “unstable” in the “primeval forests.”

An ordinary doctor as he was, how noble he is in contrast to Choe Nam Son, Rim Su San and Ji Kap Ryong! He appears noble because of his pure conscience.

According to my experience, those who betrayed the revolution without any regret were those who moved with the trend of the times without any faith—grumblers, chance elements, careerists, the feeble-hearted, and those who participated in campaigns because they thought that it was the popular thing to do.

Those who neglect their duty, those who are irresponsible in their work, those who are always complaining of one thing or another, pulling faces when given tasks, those who are glib in talking about revolution in front of others, but busy feathering their own nests behind the scenes, those who take credit for work done by others without any hesitation, and those who tell lies, feeling no prick of conscience, will also abandon the red flag and defect to the enemy's camp as soon as they have a chance to do so.

A common feature of these types of men is that they are without exception devoid of conscience.

If a revolutionary abandons his conscience, what remains in him? Nothing. His ideals, ideology and moral fibre will all break up. If he forsakes his conscience, his personality will also be deformed.

That one must be a man before being a revolutionary means that one must be conscientious and faithful to morality. Only a man with conscience can be moral and loyal. A man without conscience is devoid of morality, loyalty, self-sacrificing spirit, sense of justice and sincerity. Comrade Kim Jong Il's remark that loyalty to the leader must be maintained as one's faith, conscience, morality and everyday concern is an aphorism.

Only a man with conscience can become a revolutionary. If his conscience becomes stained, his faith also becomes stained; a crack in his conscience means a crack in his faith and the paralysis of his fighting spirit. This is why from the moment he abandons conscience, a revolutionary ceases to be a revolutionary and becomes a good-for-nothing.

We cannot go the same way or eat from the same pot with

those who have lost their conscience. From the moment they have forsaken their conscience they dream different dreams from ours and play double games. We must break with them, or else we will suffer a great harm.

The moment his conscience began to deteriorate, Ji Kap Ryong lost the qualities of a revolutionary.

It was during the battle at Liukesong that I found something insidious in him.

The target of the main attack in that battle was the enemy barracks, and O Jung Hup's 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit were to perform the mission. When the battle started, thunderous gunshots rang out from the barracks, and after some minutes suddenly stopped. This meant that the barracks had fallen. But a few minutes later a machine-gun started firing from there. I wondered what that meant, and immediately sent Ji Kap Ryong to ascertain the situation. But turning back halfway, he rushed back and plumped himself down, wailing that he had been wounded. I found that the wooden stock of his Mauser had been shattered by a bullet, but there was no wound on his body. He might have got a bruise when he fell down from the shock of the bullet hitting the wooden stock.

I realized that he was scared, so I sent Ji Pong Son and Kim Hak Song on that mission.

Braving a hail of bullets, the two men dashed there and returned with a report that the remaining enemy soldiers entrenched in a secret passage under the barracks were putting up resistance. Without delay, I sent an order to withdraw our men from the barracks and put down the enemy in the underground passage by flame tactics.

But O Jung Hup fell before my order reached him. On his own judgment he employed the flame-throwing tactic, but he was fatally wounded while searching the passage in haste, without withdrawing his men.

Had Ji Kap Ryong not turned back halfway, but run to the enemy barracks and confirmed the situation, my order would have been conveyed to O Jung Hup without delay, and the accident might not have happened. Every minute and even every second counts in a combat situation. It was because Kim Hak Song and Ji Pong Son were late in carrying out the mission Ji Kap Ryong had failed to perform that O Jung Hup was hit by enemy fire from the underground passage.

At that time Ji Kap Ryong had already lost the conscience of a soldier. If another man had been on that mission, he would not have turned back, even if he had received a serious wound.

What a great disaster the irresponsible and cowardly conduct of a man with a guilty conscience caused!

Those who abandoned their conscience and betrayed the revolution ended their days in misery, without exception. History has passed a stern judgment on those fellows. Even those who were pardoned for minor offences did not hold their heads up again as long as they lived.

In contrast, the people bestowed their highest acclamations on the fighters who cherished revolutionary consciences and held fast to their faith till the day of victory, and crowned them with laurels.

Pak Song Chol, who had been rebuked by Rim Su San for volunteering to join the guerrillas without going through the proper organizational channel when he came to the guerrilla zone from a mine in Badaogou, followed the thorny path of struggle to the end and returned to the motherland. Today he continues to work for the revolution in an important government post.

One year, while on a march, Pak Song Chol, after receiving permission from his commander, dropped in at his house. For several years after joining the army he had been anxious to know how his family were getting on. As his unit was marching past his home village, he just wanted to see his kinsfolk.

On entering his house, however, he found himself in a fix. Taking their child on her back, his wife insisted on following him to the guerrilla army.

He tried to dissuade her, saying, "Are you mad? How on earth can a woman with a child go with the guerrillas?"

But she would not let go of his belt.

It seemed that persuasion was no use, and she might burst into tears if he went his way, pushing her away violently. If she did so, the whole village would soon know all about it, and then the enemy would learn of it and arrest her and the child because they were the family members of a guerrilla.

As he was at a loss what to do, his mother reasoned with her daughter-in-law.

"If you don't behave yourself, you may have your husband killed," she said. "Suppose he fails to catch up with his unit by the appointed time, then he will be branded as a deserter. That would mean that he would become a traitor. Do you want that?"

His wife only shed silent tears. For all that, she would not release her grip on his belt.

This time Pak Song Chol's mother scolded him.

"If a man leaves his house for a great cause, then he must do so resolutely. Why did you creep into the house at night, only to raise a fuss? Don't show your face again in this house. If you come again before the country's liberation, I'll break your legs."

Only then did his wife let go of his belt.

He was so moved by his mother's words that he left the house there and then.

In terms of their knowledge of affairs, can Pak's mother and wife be compared to Rim Su San? But in terms of their view of and attitude to the revolution, they were teachers incomparably superior to Rim Su San. How beautiful was his wife's aspiration to fight as a guerrilla carrying their child on her back, and how ennobling and

sublime was the will of his mother who threatened his son that she would break his legs if he appeared in the house again before the country was liberated!

On the day Kim Ik Hyon was awarded the title of Vice Marshal of the Korean People's Army, I recalled the day when he had come to the Diyangxi plateau at a tender age to volunteer for the guerrilla army, and the day when he had written his will on a tree after scraping some of the bark away and waited for the moment of his death from hunger in some bushes while coming back to Headquarters, spurning Ji Kap Ryong's urgings to desert.

It was because Kim Ik Hyon was prepared for death and was not afraid of it that he could survive and become known to posterity.

Kim Ik Hyon was a fine guerrilla, and Jon Mun Sop, who brought Kim Ik Hyon and Kim Pong Rok back to Headquarters, supporting them all the way, was also tenacious and steadfast in his comradely loyalty. Tears were streaming down his face when he brought the two unconscious comrades-in-arms back to Headquarters. The haggard looks of the two men were too heartbreaking for him to hold back tears.

Had Jon Mun Sop been a man of feeble revolutionary conviction, devoid of loyalty and conscience, he would have deserted his comrades in order to escape hunger himself. A little way from the mountain, he could have gone anywhere he wanted. There were no wire entanglements, fences or watch-towers. If he had thrown away his rifle, descended the mountain and sealed a document with his thumb, then he could have eaten his fill and slept comfortably on a warm floor.

But Jon Mun Sop did not take that road. Carrying his comrades-in-arms pickaback in turn, he returned to Headquarters. Subsequently he followed me unwaveringly and remained faithful to the revolution.

We must bring up large numbers of men of unshakable faith

like the veteran fighters of the anti-Japanese revolution, who adorned their lives with brilliance. Revolution and the cause of socialism cannot be promoted only with desire. Only when we cherish a strong faith can we defend ourselves and safeguard socialism.

Only those who have the faith that they can survive even though they go hungry for a hundred days, those who can endure with a smile a thousand days of difficulty in order to live a single day of dignified life, those who believe that, though they become a handful of dirt in a desolate forest on a lonely island, their organization will find them and remember them, and those who are prepared to blow themselves up or to stand on the gallows without hesitation so as to remain faithful to the leader who brought them up and to their comrades, can always emerge victorious.

The more difficult the situation of the country is, the more efficiently the education in confidence in the victory of the revolution and in the cause of socialism must be conducted. I respect and love the people with strong faith.



## **8. Formation of the International Allied Forces**

In the closing period of his life, the great leader recollected his activities in the Soviet Union in the first half of the 1940s, activities which had not been dealt with extensively before in the history of our revolution.

His recollections are of great historical significance in that they clearly explain the formation of the IAF and their overall activities.

As the 1940s approached, the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle entered a new stage of development, when it became capable of opening up a decisive phase in the course of accomplishing national liberation. An important aspect of our struggle during this period is the fact that we organized the IAF in the Soviet Union with our Chinese and Soviet comrades-in-arms in the summer of 1942 and engaged in political and military preparations in every possible way in order ultimately to annihilate the Japanese imperialists.

The fact that the KPRA formed the IAF with the armed forces of the Soviet Union and China and waged a joint struggle with them can be viewed as a new stage in the development of the Korean revolution.

Our revolution set as its immediate task the driving out of the Japanese imperialists and the liberation of the country. With the formation of the IAF we were to carry out national liberation and concurrently the world-historic task of ultimately wiping out Japanese militarism.

With the organization of the IAF, a great change took place in

our armed struggle. It can be said that, with the formation of the allied forces as a turning point, we switched from the stage of our joint struggle with the Chinese people to the stage of extensive joint struggle, which meant an alliance of the armed forces of Korea, China and the Soviet Union, the stage of a new common front joining the mainstream of the worldwide anti-imperialist, anti-fascist struggle.

The first half of the 1940s can be said to have been a period when the KPRA was making final preparations for the great event of national liberation on its own initiative while consolidating its ranks and preserving and training the hard cores in areas favourable for launching decisive and final offensive operations.

We organized the IAF with our Soviet and Chinese comrades in July 1942. Following this, we strengthened our own forces for the Korean revolution in every possible way and, at the same time, made a contribution to the annihilation of the Japanese imperialists and the victory against fascism in the Second World War through a joint struggle with the international anti-imperialist forces.

It is precisely because of this that some diplomatic and military documents of the Soviet Union read that we went to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1942 and made preparations for joint military operations to rout the Japanese imperialists.

The great leader recollected as follows the historic necessity of the formation of the IAF, to be composed of some units of the KPRA, the NAJAA and the Soviet Far East Forces, as well as the process of their development.

A great change was taking place in international situation at the time when we established our temporary base in the Soviet Far East region and carried out vigorous small-unit activities in Northeast China and within the homeland.

A neutrality pact was concluded between the Soviet Union and Japan in April 1941.

There had been a deep-rooted antagonism between these two countries since the days of the Russo-Japanese War. There was ample potential danger of this antagonism leading to a new war between them. Nevertheless, they were carrying on their political and military diplomacy in the direction of avoiding an immediate clash.

Germany and Japan were the most bellicose countries in the world, and the Soviet Union was on the utmost alert against them. The Soviet Union tried in every possible way to prevent an invasion by Hitlerite Germany, that had emerged as the shock force of anti-communism, and concluded a nonaggression treaty with the latter to avoid a possible war, or at least delay it. Then it turned its attention to preventing a Japanese attack. The conclusion of a neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan was the temporary outcome of this policy.

In concluding this treaty, each of the two countries aimed at holding the other side in check. The treaty did not provide a guarantee against a war between the Soviet Union and Japan.

A war broke out between the Soviet Union and Germany in June 1941.

I summoned all the members of the small units and said, "It is not surprising that Germany, which promised nonaggression, has invaded the Soviet Union. Hitler cannot act otherwise. Shaking hands with others when they face them but surprising them behind their backs are the true colours of the imperialists. However, Hitler has made a blunder. By invading the Soviet Union, Germany is digging a grave for Hitler." Then I emphasized that, no matter how the situation changed, we should make full preparations for the final showdown in accordance with our policy.

Owing to fascist Germany's unexpected pre-emptive attack, the

military strength of the Soviet Union suffered a grave loss at the beginning of the war, and the Red Army had to retreat temporarily without having the time to reverse the unfavourable tide of war. The German army occupied Kiev, Kharkov and Minsk, one after the other, and closed in upon Moscow and Leningrad.

Later I worked out a plan for our activities to cope with the new situation created by the outbreak of the war between the Soviet Union and Germany. Following this, I went to Khabarovsk and discussed, with military cadres of the Soviet Union and China, the matter of promoting cooperation between the armed forces of the three countries.

In December 1941 the Japanese army unleashed the Pacific War, with a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, a US naval base in Hawaii.

The outbreak of war between the United States and Japan greatly inspired us because Japan, a party to the war, was an enemy that had occupied our country.

The provocation of a new war by Japan before it had finished the Sino-Japanese War was a rash venture. It was impossible to understand why Japan, an island country, which cannot subsist without bringing such strategic materials as petroleum, rubber, iron and others, from foreign countries, had launched such a strike.

It was self-evident that Japan would squander its national power in the war against the United States.

Anyway, the fact that Japan dashed into a large trap, the Pacific War, of its own accord provided a good opportunity for us Korean revolutionaries to speed up the final showdown.

We foresaw that a war would break out between the Soviet Union and Japan, too, sooner or later. If this happened, Japan would have to fight three major wars at the same time—against China, the United States and the Soviet Union.

In such a case, we would be able to carry out the final operations for national liberation against the Kwantung Army in Manchuria

and the Japanese troops stationed in Korea under more favourable circumstances.

Our thoughts were concentrated on how we could defeat the Japanese imperialists and liberate the country even a single day earlier. Needless to say, we had to strengthen our own forces for the final showdown. We could not wait, with arms folded, for others to make a gift of independence for us. The support of friendly nations is effective only when our own forces are strong.

We also made due efforts for solidarity with the international anti-imperialist and anti-fascist forces. In those days the Far East region of the Soviet Union was an important rendezvous for the anti-Japanese forces of three countries—Korea, the Soviet Union and China. In what form and how we would maintain our relations with the armed forces of the Soviet Union and China was important. This was because the main group of the KPRA was fighting, frequenting the temporary base in the Far East area in company with their comrades-in-arms of the NAJAA. Realizing an effective alliance with the armed forces of the Soviet Union and China was also an important strategic problem in creating the international circumstances needed for strengthening, expanding and consolidating the driving force of our revolution.

By the way, the form of our alliance with these armed forces had to be decided by ourselves to meet the interests of each nation as well as the common interests of the revolution in the three countries.

We had already had the experience of organizing the NAJAA together with the armed units of China and waging a joint struggle while maintaining the identity of the KPRA. The joint struggle waged by the armed forces of Korea and China against the Japanese imperialists, the common enemy of the peoples of the two countries, fully met the objective requirements of the anti-Japanese revolution, not to mention the interests of the revolutions in the two countries. The joint struggle of the communists of Korea and China was a

model of bilateral military relations.

Now that the armed forces of Korea and China had another base in the Far East region and, moreover, the Soviet Far East Forces were on our flank, we had to wage our joint anti-Japanese struggle wider and deeper, and develop it to a new stage.

This was not only necessary for the Korean revolution itself, but also conformed to the strategies of China and the Soviet Union as regards Japan.

I regarded the IAF as an ideal form of alliance between the armed forces of Korea, China and the Soviet Union. Kim Chaek, Choe Yong Gon, An Kil, Kang Kon and some other Korean comrades supported my idea of forming the IAF. They unanimously said that the sooner this idea came to fruition the better, and authorized me to discuss the matter with the Soviet and Chinese comrades.

At one time a considerable number of Chinese comrades took a negative attitude towards the suggestion of the Comintern and the Soviet military authorities to set up a new military system with some of the anti-Japanese armed units in Manchuria and the Soviet Far East Forces, and carry out joint activities, claiming that this was premature. This was due to the fact that some of those in authority on the Soviet side put forward unilateral demands.

Nevertheless, later when we worked out a fully-fledged plan for the formation of the IAF and submitted it for discussion, they broke from their former attitude and were unanimous in admitting that an alliance of the armed forces of the three countries was an urgent task.

The Soviet military authorities also supported the idea.

It was when I met high-ranking Soviet military personnel in Camp South in the spring of 1942 that I had a more detailed discussion with the Soviet side on the formation of the IAF.

That day, General Sorkin, who was in touch with us on behalf of the Comintern and the Soviet military authorities, told us in vivid

detail about those who had fought heroically in the battle to defend Moscow and the distinguished military services of the Siberian divisions that had displayed prowess in the defence of Moscow as well as in the counterattack. He also told us proudly about the history of the Soviet Far East Forces. He was extremely proud of the Far East Forces and the Siberian divisions that had taken part in the battle to defend Moscow.

When I proposed my plan for the formation of the IAF, General Sorkin expressed his agreement, saying that it was a very good idea, and that the most appropriate measure needed in the present situation was the organization of the allied forces. He went on, "To tell the truth, I also thought that such a measure would be needed sooner or later. However, I was unsure whether I would gain the understanding and support of the Korean and Chinese comrades, and whether, instead of appreciating this and supporting me, they would perhaps mistake me for a great-power chauvinist. Therefore, I have been hesitating."

I thought there was some profound meaning in what he said. So I said to him: "Winning independence by one's own efforts is our invariable principle. Nevertheless, this does not exclude international cooperation or alliances with the international revolutionary forces. Why should we oppose internationalism in the true sense of the word, something beneficial both to the revolution in one's own country and the world revolution? In order to defeat Japanese imperialism, a formidable enemy, we should combine our efforts. Even a large country like the Soviet Union should receive assistance from other countries if this is necessary. Receiving help from other countries or fighting in alliance with their revolutionary forces is not flunkeyism. I consider that flunkeyism is an ideological tendency which regards genuine internationalism to be only the idea of receiving assistance from others without believing in one's own strength or only to help the revolution in other countries, while

abandoning the revolution in one's own country.”

General Sorkin conveyed the content of his talk with me to the Soviet military authorities and the Comintern, and brought up with them the matter of forming the IAF as an urgent matter for discussion.

What situation would be created if the war between the United States and Japan were still continuing after the war between the Soviet Union and Germany ended? Our common opinion was that the Soviet Union would then participate in the war against Japan. Although the Soviet Union had concluded a neutrality pact with Japan, it had to make thoroughgoing preparations for war against that country in case of an emergency. Realizing an alliance with the international anti-Japanese forces was an important policy pursued by the Soviet Union in its preparations for this war.

Thanks to the congruence of the political and military requirements of the Comintern and the Soviet Union itself with our strategic plan, the formation of the IAF was able to proceed comparatively smoothly.

Around mid-July 1942 we held a final discussion on the alliance of the armed forces of Korea, China and the Soviet Union with the military cadres of the Soviet Union and China, and made a decision to establish the IAF on the precondition that the identity of the KPRA and the NAJAA would be preserved.

On July 22, 1942 I met General Apanasenko, Commander of the Soviet Far East Forces, together with Zhou Bao-zhong and Zhang Shou-jian.

With a roundish oval face and sharp eyes, he was a man of sturdy physique and a veteran general in his fifties. Shaking hands with me, he said he was pleased to meet the Young General of the Korean guerrilla army.

In the office of the Commander we also exchanged greetings with Lieutenant General Nichev, Chief of Staff.



Apanasenko said that the formation of the IAF through the incorporation of the revolutionary armed forces of the Soviet Union, China and Korea would be of great importance not only for the revolutionary struggles of Korea and China, but also for the security of the Soviet Union and its operations against Japan. Then he expressed his confidence that the IAF would fulfil their historic mission successfully.

He went on that the IAF, when formed, would play an important role in training a large number of military cadres needed for the national revolutionary wars in Korea and China, and that the Korean and Chinese units of these forces would constitute a decisive force for the liberation of Korea and Manchuria.

That day Apanasenko reiterated the need to make full preparations to cope with a war at any time, by heightening the intensity of the IAF's training and improving its quality.

He guided us to a room where a large operations map was hanging on the wall.

He said he would like to know about the guerrilla movement conducted by the KPRA and the NAJAA as well as about our plans for future operations, and asked us to explain the military and political situation in Manchuria and Korea.

Zhou Bao-zhong stepped towards the operations map and summed up the activities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA. He also expressed his views with regard to the future operations for the liberation of Northeast China.

At that time I explained the activities of the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA and their actual situation, as well as making clear the military and political problems that had to be taken into consideration without fail in order to annihilate the Japanese imperialists and liberate Korea.

Apanasenko asked for a detailed explanation of the deployment of the Japanese troops in Korea, the situation of the anti-Japanese

forces in Korea itself and of the prospects of their development, as well as of the possibility of joint operations with the Soviet Union.

I gave him detailed information on these points.

Zhang Shou-jian explained the situation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Route Army.

Apanasenko was kept comparatively well-informed of the military situation in northern Manchuria.

It was agreed, through our discussion with Apanasenko, that the Soviet side would provide various kinds of weapons and military equipment, clothes, provisions and other supplies for the IAF. Moreover, we decided to call the allied forces the Independent 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Soviet Far East Forces formally and agreed on calling them Infantry Special Brigade 8461 outside the ranks.

We organized the IAF on a brigade scale on the principle of reduced formation, to keep their existence and activities secret and disguise them thoroughly.

I was in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent, composed of the KPRA and the 1<sup>st</sup> Route Army of the NAJAA.

This contingent was made up mainly of the Korean section of the IAF.

In those days we symbolically fixed the military ranks of the military and political cadres of the KPRA, lower than the actual ones, to protect their personal safety from the espionage and subversive activities of the enemy.

Simultaneously with the formation of the IAF, we all gathered at Camp North.

As a result of the organization of the allied forces, the military and political situations in the Far East region changed in favour of the world revolution.

First of all, the Soviet Union benefited greatly from this. The Soviet Union secured military and political forces capable of coping with the aggressive moves of Japan on its own initiative, and came

to have new special units exclusively serving the military operations in Northeast China and Korea.

The existence of the IAF also created favourable conditions and circumstances for the Korean and Chinese revolutions.

Because it was to act in concert with the Soviet Far East Forces, the KPRA was able to have, within the framework of regular armed forces, the ability as well as the equipment to carry out the most up-to-date operations needed for liberating the country. Moreover, we could make adequate military and political preparations and acquire real power, all needed for accomplishing the task of national liberation on our own, in the Soviet Union until a great event took place.

I met Apanasenko again at the Headquarters of the IAF after their formation. At that time he came to Camp North in the company of the military commissar and other personnel of the general staff, as well as with personnel of the political and supply departments.

The same day, the IAF held a parade. The Korean Contingent stood in the van of the parading ranks. This contingent was good at marching. That day's function could be called a kind of celebration in honour of the birth of the IAF.

In company with Apanasenko, we also took part in a luncheon.

Apanasenko told us about his past life that very day.

He was a veteran fighter who, following the October Revolution, had fought against the White army to defend the Soviet power as well as against the German occupation army. During the Civil War he was already in command of a cavalry division. At one time he was Commander of the Central Asian Military District, before he became Commander of the Far East Forces.

Ever since the early days of the Far East Forces, the Soviet authorities had attached great importance to them. All the commanders of these forces were renowned men of real ability. Many of the successive Ministers of Defence and high-ranking

military cadres of the Soviet Union hailed from these forces.

At the beginning of 1943, Apanasenko was transferred to the post of Deputy Commander of the Voronezh front, one of the most important fronts during the war between the Soviet Union and Germany. In the summer of that year he fell in action.

At the news of his death, all the officers and men of the IAF gathered and looked back in grief, upon the memory of this man who had given support and help to the Korean and Chinese communists.

The love of communists for their comrades-in-arms transcends nationality.

In those days we regarded the crisis of the Soviet people as our own national crisis. I still remember how a large number of officers and men from the KPRA and the NAJAA petitioned to be allowed to go to the western front when the Soviet army was in a dire situation there. Nevertheless, each time the Comintern and the Soviet authorities turned down their petition, saying that these soldiers had an important historic task to liberate their own countries.

We ardently defended and valued the Soviet Union, the citadel of socialism and our only bastion. At that time all communists thought that if the Soviet Union collapsed, socialism would also be ruined and it would be impossible to defend world peace.

The biographical dictionaries of many countries claim that I took part in the fierce battle to defend Stalingrad, commanding a large unit composed of Koreans, and was awarded the Order of the Red Flag for my exploits in that battle. Some articles claim that my unit was active in the first line in the operation to capture Berlin.

I was awarded the Order of the Red Flag from the Soviet Government, but I did not take part either in the Battle of Stalingrad or in the capture of Berlin. I don't know where the authors of the dictionaries got such materials. But anyway, it is true that those articles reflect something of the climate in the training base, seething with enthusiasm to join the war.

The existence of the IAF struck terror into the hearts of the Japanese imperialists who were afraid of the alliance between the armed forces of Korea, the Soviet Union and China. Conversely, it gave unbounded confidence to our people.

The enemy produced numerous materials with regard to the fact that the great leader set up a training base in the Soviet Union and made preparations for the final operations against Japan. They read in part:

“Kim Il Sung’s movements:

“Kim Il Sung, now staying in the Soviet Union, left Khabarovsk last summer and went to Yanan. There he met such leaders of the CPC as Mao Ze-dong, He Long and Kang Sheng, and held a number of discussions with them on the cooperation between the Army of the CPC and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, before and after the outbreak of the war between Japan and the Soviet Union, as well as on the future activities of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. Then he met a Korean CPC member in the vicinity of Yanan, and they exchanged opinions on various matters.

“Towards the end of last year, Kim Il Sung returned to the Soviet Union from Yanan by air. He is now in the neighbourhood of Khabarovsk and devoting himself to intelligence and ideological work regarding Manchuria and Korea. Moreover, it is said that he has admitted about 300 people, including Korean and Chinese communist bandits, and Korean and Manchurian recalcitrants and captives who had entered the Soviet Union, to the training camp in the vicinity of Khabarovsk and, under the guidance and with the help of the Khabarovsk Red Army, is giving training and education to them so that they will be able to enter Manchuria all together before and after the beginning of the war between Japan and the Soviet Union, and carry out the task of harassing the rear of the Japanese army.” (Information sent by the chief of the Namyang police station to the chief of the police department of North Hamgyong Province, February 21, Showa 19 (1944).)

“Kim Il Sung is said to be in Yanan now and sending troops to Rehe Province. Moreover, there are four divisions formed entirely of Koreans in

Nikolayevski (in the Maritime Province of Siberia). When a war breaks out between Japan and the Soviet Union, these troops will land in the area of north Korea as a death-defying corps or descend on Korea by parachute.” (A file of cases (4) on seditious actions for harassing the rear and staging an armed uprising during the Great East Asia War, centring around graduates of Kyongsong University, Kowon police station, Showa 20 (1945).)

“It seems that a man who came back across Siberia has said that there is an encampment four kilometres in circumference in one place in Siberia, and that there is a Korean flag flying there, and that he has seen Korean soldiers guarding it.” (*Monthly Report by the Special Political Police*, p. 79, Security Police Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, Showa 19 (1944).)

The news of the formation of the IAF exerted a favourable influence on the anti-Japanese patriotic forces fighting in Northeast China. Many times the soldiers of the NAJAA in Manchuria crossed the river and joined the allied forces in groups of two or three. Sometimes soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army rose in revolt against the officers and joined the allied forces.

Once, I cannot remember whether it was before or after the organization of the allied forces, one company of a regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army stationed in Donganzhen, Raohe County, executed their commander and Japanese officers, and crossed the Ussuri River in a wooden boat bringing with them a large number of rifles, machine-guns, grenade throwers and other weapons. We warmly welcomed them and enlisted them.

Following the formation of the IAF, we intensified combat and political training, and accelerated preparations for our operations against Japan.

The most important task confronting us in those days was to consolidate the ranks of the KPRA politically and militarily.

It can be said that the fundamental principles of military operations are identical for any kind of war, be it an ancient war, a

mediaeval war or a modern war. What is important is how to have a command of the means of war as they develop and how to organize cooperation and joint operations between various services and arms.

We made serious efforts to master modern tactics, and our efforts were redoubled following the formation of the IAF. The capability of the soldiers of the KPRA for using modern tactics freely was raised to a considerable level through training and studying at the training base.

At the same time as perfecting the guerrilla tactics which they had practised on the wide plateau around Mt Paektu, they familiarized themselves with modern tactics to meet the requirements of a regular army. By doing so, they admirably played their political and military roles as the main force of the Korean revolution.

The Soviet Far East Forces also made great efforts for the rapid improvement of the fighting efficiency of the IAF.

Around mid-November 1942, Apanasenko organized a military exercise of a brigade of the Soviet Far East Forces stationed in the south, and invited the leading commanders of the allied forces to inspect it.

That day we went from Khabarovsk to that brigade in an armoured train. On the following day, the brigade held a winter exercise. A large number of armed forces including four infantry battalions as well as tank, artillery, mortar, signal and anti-tank gun battalions took part in the exercise.

It was the military exercise of a large scale we had ever seen, so it aroused our curiosity and interest.

The task given to the brigade was to attack and annihilate the enemy on a hill and capture the hill. The attack, which started at noon, was over only at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Later, we also inspected the military exercise of another brigade stationed on the Amur River in the suburbs of Khabarovsk.

The brigade was assigned the task of mustering the unit around a

village called Belizovka and getting ready for battle. That exercise, too, left a deep impression on us.

In Khabarovsk we also inspected a parade of the units of the Far East Forces. I quite envied the various kinds of modern military equipment and combat material that had been mobilized for the military exercises and parade. “When shall we be able to have such a modernized army?” This is what I thought of most during my inspection of the military exercises and parade. My resolve to build a regular army immediately after liberating the country was strengthened during my stay at the training base in the Far East region.

Thanks to the serious efforts of and cooperation between the military commanders of Korea, the Soviet Union and China, the IAF were able to develop, in a short time, into armed forces capable of coping with modern warfare.

Even when the Soviet Union badly needed the strength of another single regiment or a single battalion because of the extremely difficult situation at the front, it never touched the allied forces, but helped them so that they could make full preparations for the showdown against the Japanese imperialists.

Soviet military personnel frequently told us about how much Stalin valued the officers and men of the KPRA and the NAJAA. They told that Stalin had said that all the soldiers of these armies were valuable people who would make a major contribution to liberating their own motherlands and building a new country, and that, therefore, they should take care of these soldiers lest there should be a single loss.

The formation and development of the IAF in the Soviet Far East region served as a good model for uniting the resistance forces of Czechoslovakia and Poland in Europe.

Simultaneously with the conclusion of the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Cooperation between the Soviet Union and



Czechoslovakia in 1943, a unit of Czechoslovaks was organized in the territory of the Soviet Union to take part in the joint struggle against Hitlerite Germany, together with the Red Army. The Czechoslovak brigade took part in a number of military operations such as the battles to liberate Kiev and Belaya Serkovi, and made many brilliant achievements.

Poland also created, in the territory of the Soviet Union, an army to fight against fascist Germany. The Polish corps participated in a series of military operations to liberate Poland from the claws of the German fascist occupationists, beginning with the battle to liberate Lublin.

The news of the dissolution of the Comintern reached the training base in May 1943, when we were active in the Soviet Union following the formation of the IAF. People at the base wondered why the Comintern, which had existed for over 20 years as the leading organ of the world revolution, had been dissolved in the middle of the Second World War, when international solidarity and cooperation were most urgent for a showdown against fascism.

It was in 1919 that Lenin organized the Comintern. I think there were two reasons for its dissolution: One was that, while the Comintern was leading the world revolution, in various countries communist parties and revolutionary forces grew so strong that they were able to promote revolution in their own countries independently in accordance with their own line and relying on their own efforts, even without its centralist leadership and involvement.

Another reason was that the existence of the Comintern was an obstacle to realizing a more extensive, worldwide anti-fascist alliance. The anti-fascist alliance during the Second World War was a new aspect which transcended differences in ideas and social systems. The stand which transcended ideas and systems and was taken by the countries forming the alliance in the confrontation with fascism made possible the alliance between the Soviet Union, a socialist country, and the United States, Britain and France,

capitalist countries, as well as the cooperation between communists and bourgeois Right-wing politicians. This situation made them reconsider the existence of the Comintern, the mission of which was to oppose imperialism and to communize the world.

We admitted that the dissolution of the Comintern was an opportune measure which fully conformed with the requirements of the international communist movement and the development of the situation prevailing at that time.

We felt great pride in the fact that, from the outset of our struggle, we had done everything independently at every revolutionary stage, adopting our own strategy and tactics and building the revolutionary force by our own efforts instead of by relying on the strength or line of others.

The dissolution of the Comintern, however, did not imply the demise of international solidarity and cooperation among communists.

We continued to adhere to the independence of our activities within the IAF, but we still strengthened solidarity and cooperation with our foreign friends as ever.

The military and political activities conducted by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung with the Soviet Union as the stage were a matter of great international concern. The Japanese military, police and intelligence service obstinately attempted to spy on the movements, organizational structure and activities of the KPRA.

Extremely nervous over the disorganization of the Comintern, the Japanese imperialists formed various judgments and speculations concerning the future trend of the policy of the communist movement in Korea and, in particular, the activities of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Following is a paragraph from *Dissolution of the Comintern and Prospects* published by the Japanese imperialists:

“Korea is a colony of the Japanese Empire. Therefore, its immediate

strategic objective will be to defeat Japan in the current war, and win national liberation and independence above all else. With regard to the task of the armed struggle, the activities of the Korean volunteers under the leadership of communist bandit Kim Il Sung in Manchuria or the CPC are the expression of this policy. The present movement in Korea will be dependent on the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union. The situation will change suddenly and result in a head-on clash between these two countries. It is evident, from the example of the countries occupied by Germany, our ally, that in the latter case the movement will degenerate rapidly into terrorist activities or assume the form of an armed struggle.” (Continued Issue of *Thought Bulletin*, p. 131, the Ideological Department of the Criminal Bureau of the High Court, October, Showa 18 (1943).)

The Japanese imperialists could not but admit that the communist movement and the national liberation movement in Korea, being the struggles of the Korean people themselves, would display the characteristic of independence, irrespective of the existence or dissolution of the Comintern, and that the armed struggle led by the great leader would become a very great force when it was allied with the international anti-imperialist forces.

The strenuous efforts exerted by the Korean communists for the organization, strengthening and development of the IAF serve as a model of correct combination of two principles—the principle of the independence and identity of each country and that of international solidarity and cooperation in the revolutionary struggle.

The success and experience gained in those days when we organized and strengthened the IAF became a valuable asset for us in keeping and expanding the united front with the socialist countries and other international revolutionary forces maintaining the Juche stand in the complex political situation following the war, not to speak of the days of final showdown to annihilate the Japanese imperialists.

