

**KIM IL SUNG**

**WORKS**

**WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!**

# KIM IL SUNG

## WORKS

### 46

Reminiscences

*With the Century 2*

*(May 1930–February 1933)*

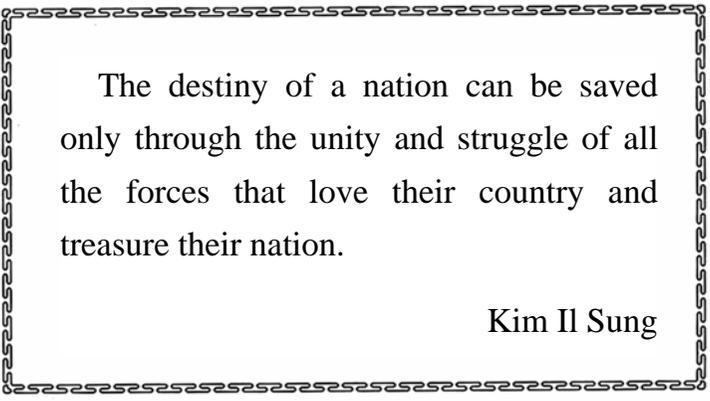
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김도성

*Translation from the preceding page:*



The destiny of a nation can be saved  
only through the unity and struggle of all  
the forces that love their country and  
treasure their nation.

Kim Il Sung

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## **CHAPTER 4. SEEKING A NEW PATH**

*(May 1930–December 1930)*

### **1. The Rev. Son Jong Do**

I was released from prison at a time when the situation in Manchuria was dangerous. In the streets of Jilin the atmosphere was tense, as if martial law had been declared, as at the time of the incident of the anti-Japanese reading circle in the autumn of 1929. At every road junction and around the government buildings, gendarmes from the military control station were stopping and searching passing people. Armed soldiers and policemen could be seen searching houses in the back streets.

Things were unimaginably dreadful with the whole of Manchuria suffering due to Li Li-san's Leftist line. At that time the May 30 Uprising was at its height in Manchuria.

The struggle which is called the May 30 Uprising by Korean historians was referred to as the "Red May struggle" by the Chinese people. We call it the May 30 Uprising because it began on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the massacre that had taken place in Shanghai on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May and also because it was at its high point on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May.

Li Li-san, who was at the helm of the Chinese Communist Party at the time, ordered the whole party to ensure that the working class, students and citizens throughout China should go on strike and, at the same time, develop the struggle in the form of an uprising and raise soviet guerrilla forces in order to mark the anniversary of the heroic

struggle of the Shanghai citizens in May 1925.

On receiving these orders from him, the revolutionary organizations under the Manchurian provincial committee convened meetings of shock forces throughout Manchuria by mobilizing the masses and encouraged them to rise in revolt under his slogan, "Victory first in one or a few provinces!" Leaflets and manifestoes calling on the people to revolt appeared in the streets of the towns and farm villages of east Manchuria.

With the outbreak of the revolt, the enemy stepped up their attack on the communists to a degree never witnessed before. The waves of the attack had already reached Jilin.

After my release, I first visited the Rev. Son Jong Do's house, which was in Niumaxiang. I thought it proper for me to express my gratitude, before I left the town, to his family for their unceasing concern for me over the seven months I was in prison.

The minister received me in delight, as if it were his own son he was welcoming home from prison.

"We were afraid that the warlords would hand you over to the Japanese. It is very fortunate for you to have been set free without being given any sentence," he said.

"Minister, my time in prison was much easier than I had expected because you gave me such strong support. I have been told that you gave the warders a lot on my behalf. I feel I must return your kindness. I shall never forget your kindness all my life, Minister."

The minister was preparing for a journey to China proper. I asked him why he was leaving Jilin so suddenly.

"Even Zhang Zuo-xiang has become powerless, so there is no influential person whom we can expect to protect and support us in Jilin," he said, heaving a deep sigh and with a sad smile on his face. "If he cannot help us Koreans, we have nothing to fall back on when the Japanese army comes to attack. I thought that once the three organizations were merged, the independence movement would advance without a problem. But when I see the unceasing tug of war among us I don't feel like staying here any longer."

In China proper he had friends from his days as the vice-chairman and chairman of the political council of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, as well as his former fellow members of Hungsadan. I imagined he had made up his mind to go there in order to get in touch with them again and work harder for independence.

He asked me what I was going to do at a time when the Japanese imperialists might invade Manchuria at any moment.

“I am going to raise a large army and fight a decisive battle with the Japanese imperialists, and that’s all,” I said.

“To fight the Japanese with guns!” he exclaimed, looking at me in surprise.

“Yes. There is no other way, is there?”

“Remember that Japan is one of the five world powers. The Righteous Volunteers and the Independence Army were nothing when confronted with Japan’s modern weapons. But if you are determined, you must be bold.”

I was very sad to experience the cold and depressed atmosphere at the minister’s house, something I had not noticed when visiting there in my early days in Jilin. Previously I had heard the sounds of a gramophone and the animated voices of the independence fighters discussing the political situation. I used to be able to see pious figures from his congregation and hear the plaintive melody of *Don’t Blow, You Wind!* sung by the members of the Children’s Association. But all these things had vanished.

The minister’s close associates who frequented his house had all gone into hiding in Liuhe, Xingjing, Shanghai or Beijing. The gramophone which had emitted the doleful songs, *The Site of the Old Palace* and *A Vagabond*, was now silent.

The minister himself went to Beijing later and stayed there for some time. Beijing was where Sin Chae Ho (alias Tanjae), a renowned historian and writer and his companion from the early days of his term of office in the Shanghai Provisional Government had been active. In that city the minister had many other comrades.

When the minister arrived in Beijing, he found that Sin Chae Ho

had been arrested while landing on Taiwan for the purpose of working with the Oriental Union and had been sent to Lushun (Port Arthur) prison. Beijing without Sin Chae Ho seemed very lonely and dreary to the minister, for they were such close friends.

With a view to making our nation's long patriotic tradition and brilliant culture known to the younger generation and inspiring them with patriotism, Sin Chae Ho had devoted enormous time and effort to describing the history of Korea. He had once applied himself to the work of publishing to enlighten the nation. While in exile in Vladivostok he had published the newspaper *Haejo Sinmun* which had become popular. Pak So Sim occasionally contributed articles to this newspaper because the editor Sin Chae Ho was renowned among the Koreans abroad and held in high esteem by them for his remarkable personality and literary style.

Sin Chae Ho was an advocate of the policy of armed resistance. He considered Syngman Rhee's diplomatic doctrine and An Chang Ho's "preparation doctrine" unrealizable and dangerous. He asserted that in the life-and-death struggle between the Korean people and the Japanese marauders, the 20 million Koreans must unite and destroy the enemy by violent means.

When some important figures nominated Syngman Rhee as head of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, Sin Chae Ho resented it and opposed it absolutely because he was against Syngman Rhee's mandate doctrine and autonomy doctrine.

He said, "Syngman Rhee is a worse traitor than Ri Wan Yong. Ri Wan Yong sold out a country that existed, but Syngman Rhee has sold it out even before we have got it back."

That was a famous and stunning declaration made by Sin Chae Ho at a meeting where the provisional government was being formed. In his "Declaration on the Korean Revolution" which he made after his withdrawal from the provisional government, he criticized Syngman Rhee severely.

Once, in an occasional recollection of those days, the Rev. Son Jong Do said, "Sin Chae Ho was a man with an incisive mind and of

unrelenting logic. I was secretly delighted when he condemned Syngman Rhee as a worse traitor than Ri Wan Yong. His criticism represented public opinion. We shared his opinion. That was why he and I broke with the provisional government.”

I think that from what he said one can judge the minister’s political view to a certain extent. He had declared both the autonomy doctrine and the mandate doctrine to be delusions. He had questioned An Chang Ho’s theory of the development of strength, but gave unqualified support to our doctrine that the independence of the country should be achieved by the resistance of the whole nation. This revolutionary inclination of his had led him to believe that it was no longer necessary to remain in the cabinet of the provisional government headed by Syngman Rhee, the flunkeyist and political imposter. So he had taken a resolute step to break with the provisional government and move to Jilin.

In Jilin the Rev. Son Jong Do got in touch with the reformists whom the Japanese police had defined as the “third force,” and took an active part in the independence movement. He mixed well with younger people and gave them wholehearted support in their struggle. The chapel which was outside the Dadong Gate and in which he was working as the minister was practically a meeting hall for us. I frequented the chapel, to play the organ there and guide the activities of the artistic information troupe. Because he complied with all our requests and gave us selfless support in our revolutionary activities, I respected the minister and followed him as I would have done my own father. The minister on his part loved me as if I were his own son. It was he who had masterminded the scheme for my release by bribing Zhang Zuo-xiang. He treated me not only as his friend’s son but also as a revolutionary with my own independent political view. He did not even hesitate to bring a family problem to me for my advice, a problem which had been discussed in vain by his fellow independence fighters.

The minister’s problem concerned his eldest daughter Son Jin Sil’s marriage to Yun Chi Chang. The independence fighters in Jilin

all objected to it. The minister himself was displeased, believing that his daughter had chosen an unsuitable husband. He thought that her marriage to the man would disgrace the family name. Yun Chi Chang was a younger brother of Yun Chi Ho, a pro-Japanese comprador capitalist. While the minister was annoyed with his daughter because he was unable to dissuade her from marrying the man, a conservative group from the Independence Army detained the man for a week in order to extract funds from him.

“So, what is to be done?” the minister asked me. I hesitated for a while because I was afraid of poking my nose into the matter of a marriage between my elders, before saying cautiously, “They have fallen in love with each other, so there is no way of separating them, is there? I think the best thing to do is to leave them to their own devices.” Then, I persuaded the conservative group from the Independence Army to release Yun Chi Chang.

The minister returned to Jilin in the year following his visit to Beijing. Some people said that he had returned at the request of the radicals such as O In Hwa and Ko Won Am, but I am not sure whether this was true or not. Judging from the fact that he then remained in Jilin until the last moment of his life, the independence movement in Beijing had not been promising. It also appeared that he was not in good health. When I met him after my release from prison, he had said that I looked haggard, but I had found signs of illness in his face and worried about him. Because of his recurrent chronic disease, he had not been eating properly.

“On top of the country’s ruin I am ill, so I sigh day and night,” the minister said. “Even the Omniscient and Omnipotent is not kind to me. My exile seems to be taking a heavy toll of me.”

While propagating his religion in Manchuria in 1912 he was arrested, suspected of being involved in the assassination of Katsura Taro, and exiled to Jin Island, where he wasted two years. Probably he had contracted the illness while in exile. I do not believe in superstition, but people who are loved and spared by the public seem to be vulnerable to attack by illness.

At Mingyuegou in the spring of the following year I heard the shocking news that the minister had died of his illness. The man who told me of his death said that he had died before his time at the Oriental Hospital in Jilin.

At first I took the news as a rumour. I could not believe that the minister had died so soon. It seemed to me impossible that the life of the minister who had been walking and talking about the future of the independence movement when I met him only six months before had been snuffed out like a candle in the wind because of a gastric ulcer. But the news, though unhappy, was true. According to information I received from an underground source he had died after vomiting blood on his first day in hospital.

Many people in the Korean community in Manchuria considered his death to have been murder. The first reason for such a conjecture was that the minister, just prior to going into hospital, had not been in such a critical condition. Another convincing reason was that the Oriental Hospital where he died belonged to a Japanese. The common view of the Koreans in Manchuria was that, since the Japanese were capable of using Koreans without hesitation as guinea-pigs in experiments on biological weapons, they could commit acts even worse than murder. The most convincing argument was that the Rev. Son Jong Do was a renowned patriot. He had been under constant and strict surveillance by the Japanese police. Apart from being suspected of involvement in the assassination of Katsura Taro, he was a thorn in the side of the Japanese police because of his life-long record in the anti-Japanese struggle as the chairman of the political council of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, its Director-General for Transport, a member of the Association for the Promotion of Political Strategy, and of Hungsadan and a councillor of the Worker-Soldier Association. How close an eye the Japanese had kept on the minister is illustrated by the fact that immediately after his sudden death the Japanese consul-general in Jilin compiled a special paper "On the Death of the Rebellious Korean Son Jong Do" and sent it to his foreign minister.

As some people said that his nickname Haesok (a submerged rock) reflected his personality clearly, so the Rev. Son Jong Do was an honourable and honest fighter who dedicated his whole life to the noble struggle against the Japanese. In Jilin, in cooperation with the radical group of Jongui-bu, he made tireless efforts to change the direction of the independence movement which had merely been swimming with the tide, and to unite the patriotic forces. At the time when we were forming the Korean Children's Association in Jilin and the Ryuji Association of Korean Students, he had proposed the formation of the peasants' mutual assistance society in Manchuria and had been working hard for its success.

The Rev. Son Jong Do had bought 50 hectares of land by Lake Jingbo in Emu County in the name of his younger brother (Son Kyong Do) and had run an agricultural company. This could be termed a part of the "ideal society" advocated by An Chang Ho. The area around Lake Jingbo had been considered by An Chang Ho to be a particularly suitable place for the building of an "ideal society." The minister had intended to use the income from his company for the independence movement.

The minister's funeral was held solemnly, according to Christian custom, at the Fengtian Public Hall. Apparently, because of obstructions by the Japanese police, only a little over 40 people attended the funeral to mourn the death of a man who had dedicated decades of his life to national independence from the days before the annexation. Considering the fact that in his lifetime the minister had been surrounded by so many people and had inspired the spirit of patriotism in them, his farewell was too quiet and lonely. Since open mourning had not been allowed even at the funeral of the father of the nation in those days, could the mourners weep at a funeral under police watch?

At Jiandao I looked up to the sky above Jilin and wept without cease, praying for the soul of the deceased minister. I grieved over the death of the Rev. Son Jong Do and of my own father. I made a firm pledge to liberate the country, come what may, in order to safeguard

their souls and take vengeance on the enemy. I believed that liberating the country would repay my benefactors' kindness, relieve them of their suffering and break the people's shackles.

Since then, the minister's family and I have travelled different paths. The tragedy of division that still continues now at the turn of the century has been cruel enough to keep the barrier of a wire fence and concrete wall, as well as wide oceans, between us. We did not hear from one another for over half a century, I living in Pyongyang, Son In Sil in Seoul and Son Won Thae in Omaha (in the United States). But I have never forgotten the Rev. Son Jong Do and his family. My memory of them has never been dimmed or stained by the passage of time and distance. The worse the national tragedy became and the higher the barrier of division grew, the greater our yearning for our benefactors and forerunners who shed their tears and blood for the sake of this land has grown in our hearts.

History has not closed its eyes to our yearning. In May 1991 Son Won Thae, the minister's youngest son, a pathologist, who lives in the city of Omaha, Nebraska, paid a visit to our country with his wife (Ri Yu Sin) at the invitation of the Ministry of Reception for Overseas Compatriots. A weak primary schoolboy in his teens who used to beg to be on my side whenever the members of the Children's Association and the Ryuji Association of Korean Students divided into the "land" and the "sea" teams to play at soldiers on the sandy beach of the River Songhua appeared before me as a grey-haired old man nearing his eighties. The persistent work of 60 years of wind and frost had not erased the distinct features clear below his white hair of his days in Jilin.

"President!" he called me, hugging me, tears streaming down his cheeks, tears that meant more than could be implied in tens of thousands of words. What had kept us apart, when our hearts had been burning with a yearning for each other for so many years until our hair had turned grey? What was it that had delayed our reunion for more than half a century? Sixty years is a man's lifetime. We had parted in our teens to meet again only when we were nearly in our

eighties in a modern civilization where aeroplanes fly at supersonic speeds! Isn't the passage of time too cruel and void, the time that had continued to push us to our old age?

"Mr. Son, how is it that you are so white-haired?" I asked him in an official tone of voice, treating him as an old scientist and as a citizen of the United States, not as a former member of the Children's Association.

He looked at me with something of the air of playing on my affection as he used to do in the old days in Jilin.

"My yearning for you, President, has turned my hair white," he replied and then begged that I should call him by his first name, reminding me that in his days in Jilin he had followed me as if I were his elder brother and that I had loved him as if he were my younger brother.

"Then I'll call you Won Thae just as I used to do in the old days," I said with a smile.

Our awkwardness vanished, and we returned to our boyhood. It seemed as if I were talking to him in my lodgings in Jilin, not in my drawing-room in Pyongyang. In those days I had often visited the Rev. Son Jong Do's house, and Son Won Thae had frequented my lodgings.

It was surprising that the reticent boy who was slight in build and used to go about with his head tilted slightly to one side just like Cha Kwang Su, the schoolboy of Provincial Primary School No. 4 who, once provoked to speak, never failed to excite the laughter of his listeners with his volley of witty jokes and humorous remarks, should appear before me as a pathologist, and it was also surprising that the boy should have become a white-haired old man in the twilight of his life. I was struck by the unbelievable change that had turned the boy into an old man who was taking me back to our remote boyhood when it seemed only yesterday that we had parted with each other in Jilin!

We talked at length about our boyhood, not only about the activities of the Children's Association but also about the happenings

in the street where toffee peddlers used to collect the pocket-money of snivelling children. Those peddlers were really cunning. If they wanted to eat some toffee themselves, those peddlers would pick some from their booths, put it into their mouths and lick it until they were tired of it and then put it back in their booths. The children who bought the toffee did not even suspect such a thing. As we talked about these things, we laughed loudly, forgetting all our worldly cares.

Having said that I looked hale and hearty, contrary to the rumour in the West, he took me by the hand, drew it to him and looked into my palm for a good while. I was perplexed.

“You have a very long lifeline, so you will enjoy a long life,” he commented with a smile. “You are held in high esteem as the leader of the country because you have a distinct leadership line.”

He was the first man ever to read my palm, and it was the first time in my life that I had heard that there was a leadership line on a man’s palm. When he said that I had a long lifeline, he must have wished me a long life; when he said that I had a distinct leadership line on my palm, he must have meant that he supported our cause.

Without the slightest sense that he was having an official interview with a head of state, he asked me, “President, when will you buy me *jiangzhi guozi*? I also want to eat the *bingtanghulu* which I used to eat with you, President, in Jilin.”

I felt my heart leap at his request, for this was a request one made only to one’s own brother. He was talking to me as if he were talking to his own brother. It occurred to me that he had no brother. His elder brother Son Won Il, once defence minister of south Korea had died some years before. No matter how I feasted him, it would have been impossible for me to give him the love with which his own brother had taken care of him.

Why can’t I meet his wish to eat *jiangzhi guozi* or *bingtanghulu*? *jiangzhi guozi* is a Chinese food resembling a doughnut which is sweetened and cooked in bean soup and oil. In Jilin I used to take him and his little sister to buy them *jiangzhi guozi* now and then. They

used to love eating it. When I thought of my indebtedness to the Rev. Son Jong Do, I had wished in those days to buy them all that my purse could buy. But I could hardly afford to pay even my school fees.

I don't think that Son Won Thae asked me to buy him *jiangzhi guozi* because he really wanted to eat some. He must have wanted to express his yearning for the friendship we had shared like real brothers and sisters in our days in Jilin.

"If you want to eat some, I will have some cooked next time," I replied, prompted by my desire to serve some to him, although he had asked as a joke. I felt an urge to serve him with some right away, instead of waiting for the next meal. I was deeply moved by his casual request. Two days later my cooks prepared *jiangzhi guozi* for Son Won Thae and his wife. Having eaten it before breakfast, he apparently said with tears in his eyes that, thanks to President Kim, he was eating the favourite food of his boyhood again.

Friendship is much stronger than the passage of time. The passage of time can make everything fade away, but not friendship. True friendship and true love neither grow weaker with age or stale. Our friendship that had been broken off temporarily because of the divergent courses of our life's journeys was linked again by bridging over a gulf of 60 years.

Having met after such a long interval, we sang together *Nostalgia* which we had used to sing in Jilin. To my surprise, I had not forgotten the words of the song and he, too, remembered it perfectly.

Son Won Thae said that he was ashamed to see me because he had done nothing in particular for the good of the nation, but this was self-effacing of him. When he was a university student in Beijing he, as the head of the inspection department of a students association, took part in the student movement and in the boycott of Japanese goods. He was a young patriot. Because of his patriotic activities he had later been arrested and thrown into Nagasaki prison.

I could perceive in this man who had remained outside politics the untainted innocence of the boy in Jilin. It is by no means easy to

preserve a clear conscience in the social climate of a battle for survival, in a world which is governed by the law of the jungle.

Son Won Thae expressed his heartfelt sympathy with all the work we had done as well as his great admiration for our country as a “beautiful and noble country, a land of construction for the well-being of the generations to come.”

I was happy to have a reunion with Son Won Thae, though belatedly, and to have an opportunity to look back upon our days in Jilin. His image overflowing with love for his country, love for the nation and love for humanity was that of the Rev. Son Jong Do and of Son In Sil. Whenever he saw me, Son Won Thae said, “President, please live for many years without growing older!” The look with which he wished me good health reminded me of the Rev. Son Jong Do whom I had seen for the last time 60 years before.

That day, bidding farewell to me, the minister said, “Don’t stay any longer in Jilin where the situation is dangerous. Things here are very frightening. Take care of yourself; the situation requires it. Even in Jiandao, you had better regain your health in an out-of-the-way spot for the time being.”

I was deeply grateful to him for his kind consideration for my safety. The timeliness of his advice was proved eloquently by the developments in Manchuria after the September 18 incident. The Japanese army and police that occupied Jilin searched for me first. Checking the list of prisoners in Jilin prison, they demanded that the warlords hand me over to them. Had it not been for the support given me by the Rev. Son Jong Do, Ko Won Am, O In Hwa, Hwang Paek Ha and other independence fighters, I would not have been released before it was too late and would have suffered some ten more years in prison in the hands of the Japanese imperialists. So many more years of imprisonment would have made it impossible for me to wage the armed struggle. It is in this sense that I call the minister the saviour of my life.

There would be no end if I were to name all the people who helped me and gave me wholehearted support in my revolutionary

activities in Jilin, among them such independence fighters of the previous generation as Choe Man Yong, O Sang Hon, Kim Ki Phung, Ri Ki Phal and Choe Il, such forerunners of my contemporaries as Choe Jung Yon, Sin Yong Gun, An Sin Yong, Hyon Suk Ja, Ri Tong Hwa, Choe Pong, Han Ju Bin, Ryu Jin Dong, Choe Jin Un, Kim Hak Sok, U Sok Yun, Kim On Sun, Ri Tok Yong, Kim Chang Sul, Choe Kwan Sil and Ryu Su Gyong, and such patriotic children as Ri Tong Son, Ri Kyong Un, Yun Son Ho, Hwang Kwi Hon, Kim Pyong Suk, Kwak Yon Bong, Jon Un Sim, An Pyong Ok, Yun Ok Chae, Pak Jong Won, Kwak Ki Se and Jong Haeng Jong.

This suggested to me that the situation did not permit me to stay in Jilin any longer. I had more or less expected this while in prison. The minister was very sorry that he could not take care of me in his house and had to send me away. Grateful to him for his advice, I had lunch at his house and then departed immediately for Xinantun.

## 2. A Spring of Trials

On my way to Xinantun I met Cha Kwang Su. The boisterous man's eyes were sparkling with joy behind his powerful glasses. I was so pleased to see him that I hailed him from afar.

Saying that he was on his way to the Rev. Son Jong Do's house to ask after me, he held me in his arms and turned me round and round. He said that as his comrades in the revolution had all been arrested he was feeling terribly lonely. He talked about the happenings in Jilin for a while and then, looking at me out of blood-shot eyes, said, "Song Ju, the labour movement in Korea is developing by leaps and bounds in all its aspects. The slogans, methods and character of the struggle—they are all fresh. I think the national liberation movement in the 30s will achieve a great change, particularly in the character of the struggle. What do you think of that? Our revolution should advance under a new banner to meet the rapidly-changing situation, shouldn't it?"

I was greatly impressed by the constancy of the man who, undaunted by and unafraid of the enemy's offensive in the alarming situation when it was difficult to save one's own skin let alone one's revolutionary ideals, was travelling in disguise, looking for his comrades and thinking of the future as a communist should.

"I agree with you, Kwang Su, that our revolution should advance under a new banner," I said and then explained what I had decided in the prison. "What, then, should that new banner be? While in prison I gave much thought to this and came to the conclusion that we young communists must now found a party of a new type and switch to an armed struggle. Only an armed struggle will save the country and liberate the nation. The struggle of the Korean people must develop into all-out national resistance, centring on the armed struggle and

under the unified leadership of the party.”

He expressed unqualified support for my opinion. We went to Xinantun and discussed the matter with Kim Hyok and Pak So Sim. They agreed with me. It was the unanimous view of the young communists that it would be impossible to save Korea without taking up arms, or to develop the revolution without being guided by a new line.

An armed struggle was a mature requirement of the specific situation in Korea. The Japanese imperialists' fascist rule was at its height in those days. The Korean people, deprived of all their rights, were living in abject poverty. The waves of the economic crisis which had begun to sweep the world in 1929 hit Japan, too. In an effort to escape the panic through aggression on the Asian Continent, the Japanese imperialists intensified their colonial oppression and plunder of Korea and speeded up their war preparations.

When the Japanese imperialists discovered the way to enrich themselves and strengthen their army in the plunder and oppression of the Korean nation, our nation discovered the way to national revival in the battle against the Japanese imperialists. It was not by chance that the mass movements, including the labour and peasant movements, which had stressed the economic struggle began to move gradually towards a violent struggle.

At that time I observed the strike at the Sinhung Coal-mine with interest, the strike which developed eventually into revolt. Hundreds of coal-miners, under the guidance of the strike committee, raided and demolished the coal-inspection office and other offices, the machine shop and the power generator of the coal-mine, as well as the house of the director of the mine. They cut all the power lines in the area of the mine and destroyed all the winches, pumps and other items of production equipment they could lay their hands on. The strikers inflicted such a great loss upon the company that the Japanese management complained that it would take two months to reconstruct the mine.

The revolt resulted in the arrest of more than 100 people,

something which was so terrible that it shook the whole country. This revolt made such an impression on me that in later years, when waging the armed struggle, I visited the Sinhung area, in spite of the danger, and met the leaders of the labour movement.

A qualitative change was taking place in the struggle of the working class of Korea in its organization, unity, persistence and solidarity.

More than 2,000 workers affiliated to the Wonsan Labour Federation under the leadership of the federation went, with their families of 10,000, on a several month-long strike. At the news of the general strike in Wonsan, the workers and peasants across the country sent them telegrams and letters of encouragement, as well as solidarity funds, and dispatched delegates to express their support for and solidarity with them.

Apart from the trade union organizations in Hongwon and Hoeryong in the homeland, the members of the Hansong Association under the Anti-Japanese Labour Union we had formed sent them funds from Jilin, thousands of miles away from Wonsan. This shows how high the ideological awareness of the working class of our country was at that time. The general strike in Wonsan was an event that marked the high tide of the labour movement in our country in the 1920s and demonstrated the militant power and revolutionary spirit of the Korean working class in the history of the world labour movement.

While in prison I followed the general strike with keen interest, believing that it was a momentous event in the history of the labour movement of our country and that the fighting experience of the strikers was valuable and should be drawn on and learnt from by all the social campaigners of Korea.

If the new leadership of the federation had not instructed the workers to return to work but pushed the strike on to the bitter end, or if the workers, peasants and intellectuals across the country had gone on a full-scale strike in response to them, the struggle of the working class of Wonsan could have succeeded.

The failure of the general strike in Wonsan again convinced me of the pressing need to found in Korea a Marxist-Leninist party capable of organizing the struggle of the working class and leading it to victory. It also gave me the strong belief that a full-scale armed struggle as the mainstream of the national liberation movement would promote the mass struggle of the workers, peasants and all other sections of the population.

It was inevitable that the Korean people's struggle should assume a violent character when the enemy was clamping down upon the national liberation movement in such a brutal way. Revolutionary violence was the most effective way of defeating the counterrevolutionary violence of the enemy who was armed to the teeth. The sabre-rattling enemy compelled the Korean nation to take up arms. Arms had to be countered with arms.

It was impossible to achieve the independence of the country merely by cultivating our strength through the development of education, culture and the economy, or by labour and tenant disputes or by diplomatic activity. The general strike in Wonsan and the revolt by the Sinhung coal-miners gave us unbounded confidence in the Korean working class as well as warm affection for and a high sense of pride in our excellent working class and our militant nation.

But the question had arisen of the policy of struggle and the leadership. I had the firm conviction that we could defeat any enemy, however powerful, if we had a correct policy that suited the trend of the times, and led the struggle properly. I was impatient with my desire to rehabilitate and consolidate the wrecked organizations and to bring the masses to consciousness and organize and prepare them as soon as possible for the decisive battle with Japanese imperialism.

Meanwhile, my comrades who had heard of my release came to see me. I met the core members of the YCLK, the AIYL, the Anti-Japanese Labour Union and the Peasants Union in the Jilin area and discussed ways to rehabilitate the organizations quickly and rally the masses against the enemy's increasing white terrorism.

The word "arms" which had so excited Cha Kwang Su also won

the support of these young people. Their support was a great encouragement to me.

We discussed ways to intensify the work of the YCLK in Jiandao and the northern border area of Korea and to make those areas revolutionary quickly, methods to make substantial preparations for the founding of the party and some other tasks to be tackled immediately, and we sent political workers to various places to implement them.

I slept overnight at Xinantun and left for Dunhua. I decided to work in Dunhua because it was a vantage-point allowing me access to all the counties of east Manchuria and because I had many friends and acquaintances there who would help me. I intended to stay there for a while, showing the organizations the direction for their activities to cope with the situation in east Manchuria where the uprising was raging, while drawing up detailed plans for effecting the idea I had conceived in prison.

When leaving Jilin, I felt very sorry that I hadn't carried out the will of my late father who had wished that I should at least finish middle school.

Pak Il Pha said he would get his father to negotiate with the authorities at Yuwen Middle School for my reinstatement, and advised me to finish my education there.

Pak Il Pha was the son of the nationalist, Pak Ki Baek, who published the magazine *Tongu* in Jilin. Pak U Chon was a pen name. When I was attending Yuwen Middle School Pak Il Pha, as a student at Jilin Law College, helped me in my work with the Ryuji Association of Korean Students. He was set on becoming a lawyer. At that time he was seeing a lot of a white Russian officer, learning Russian from him. My comrades, who regarded his behaviour as a sort of betrayal of the new Russia, advised me to break with him. I said to them, "Learning a foreign language is very useful for the revolution. I think it would be shortsighted of me to ostracize him simply because he is friendly with a white Russian officer." After liberation Pak was able to translate many literary masterpieces such

as A. Tolstoy's *The Ordeal* because he had learned Russian in his school days.

Kim Hyok and Pak So Sim, like Pak Il Pha, advised me to finish my middle school education at any cost by studying for another year if my reinstatement was possible. They said that as the headmaster, Li Guang-han, was a communist sympathizer, he would not refuse my request, if I wanted to return.

"I can teach myself," I said. "The people and the disrupted organizations are waiting for us. So I can't return to school, because it would mean turning away from the revolution when it is in difficulty."

As I left Jilin without having finished school, I was tormented with various thoughts: The thought of my late father who had sent me alone all the way to my home town in the winter cold, telling me to study in the motherland, who had taught me Korean history and geography when I returned home from school, and who, in the last moments of his life, had told my mother that he had wanted me to get middle school education, so she should follow his intention even if it meant her living on grass; the thought of my mother who would be disappointed at the news of my having left school one year before my graduation after the three years of unceasing effort she had made to earn my school fees by sewing and laundering until her fingers were sore; the thought of my brothers who would be no less disappointed; and the thought of the sorrow of my father's friends who loved me as their own son and gave me financial aid, as well as the sorrow of my school friends.

But I thought at least mother would understand me. When my father had left Sungsil Middle School and become a career revolutionary, she gave him her tacit agreement. So I believed that even though her son had left middle school, or even a university, she would not disagree if it was for the revolution and for the motherland.

I think it was a turning point in my life when I left school and went among the masses. It was at this time that my underground activities and my new life as a career revolutionary started.

Because I was leaving for Dunhua without so much as dropping a line to my family after my release, my heart was indescribably heavy. I rebuked myself for my neglect, telling myself that I had no excuse for it no matter what sacrifice the revolution required of me, but I could not write to them.

Even when I was in prison I had not written anything to my mother lest she should worry. My comrades who went to spend the winter holidays at my house in 1929 told her that I had been arrested.

Nevertheless, she had not come to Jilin to see me. Mothers would not mind travelling thousands of miles to see their children, if they were in prison, carrying bundles of things for them and imploring the warders to allow them to see their children, but my mother had not done so. She had shown great patience. When my father was in prison in Pyongyang, she had been to see him on several occasions, even taking me with her. But ten years later, she never visited her son in prison. People may wonder why. She did not explain her reason when later she saw me in Antu.

But I thought that it showed her true love for her son. She might have thought: Song Ju who is behind bars would find it painful to see me; even if I go to see him, what comfort or help can my visit give him? Will he be able to keep on the right path if he is swayed by pity at the first step when he has so many rugged passes to climb? Let him feel lonely in prison rather than seeing me, and that will be a benefit for him.

I judged this from my discovery of a revolutionary in my mother who had been a simple woman.

Being out of prison and free from my duties as a student, it occurred to me that it might be my filial duty to go home and stay with my mother for a few days. Nevertheless, I walked resolutely towards Dunhua.

Approximately 15 miles southwest of Dunhua there was the mountain village called Sidaohuanggou. I was to work there.

After my imprisonment, several families in Fusong which were affiliated with the organizations of the YCLK, the Paeksan Youth

League and the Women's Association had moved to the Antu and Dunhua areas in order to avoid the danger of the sweeping arrests in Jilin reaching Fusong. My mother, uncle Hyong Gwon and brothers had also moved to Antu one bitterly cold winter day.

Six families out of the dozens which had moved to east Manchuria at that time had settled in Sidaohuanggou. Ko Jae Bong's family was one of the six.

Ko Jae Bong, who attended Fusong Normal School as a scholarship student of Jongui-bu, had taught at Paeksan School before joining the Independence Army and serving as a leader of the Fusong area flying column. He was a core member of the anti-Japanese mass organization.

Ko Jae Ryong, his younger brother, was one of my classmates at Hwasong Uisuk School. Later he joined Yang Jing-yu's unit and was killed in action somewhere in Mengjiang or Linjiang. Ko Jae Rim, his youngest brother, went to Jilin Yuwen Middle School after leaving Paeksan School and worked as a member of the YCLK with me. From the spring of 1930 he studied at a medical college run by the Japanese Manchuria Railway Company. While in Jilin he had helped me a lot.

The Kos had been on special terms with our family from our days in Fusong. They spared nothing if it was for my parents. They helped my father and mother a lot while running their inn.

In those days a great number of patriots and independence fighters visited my house in Xiaonanmen Street at all hours. Some of them would stay at my house for a few days. My mother used to be on her feet in the kitchen all the time preparing food for them. This attracted the attention of the warlords. Knowing that the police were watching my father, Ko Jae Bong's mother (Song Kye Sim) came one day and said:

"Mr. Kim, please don't receive any more guests in your house. If your house is crowded with visitors as it is now, something evil might happen to you. We will look after the visitors from the Independence Army, so please send them to my house."

So, she was held in high trust by my father, and I became friendly with Ko Jae Bong.

When my mother was running about to find a school building after the closure of Paeksan School, the Kos offered one of their rooms without hesitation.

In less than six months after moving to Sidaohuanggou Ko Jae Bong had established Tonghung Uisuk School and was teaching children. Taking advantage of being the deputy head of 100 household units, he formed YCLK organizations and the Paeksan Youth League in Sidaohuanggou and the surrounding area and made preparations for forming the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and the Peasants Union.

Ko Jae Bong's mother was delighted to see me and recollected our days in Fusong with tears in her eyes. When I said that I had been behind bars from the previous autumn and that I had come to Sidaohuanggou directly on my release a few days before she said, looking closely into my face, that, although she recognized me, I looked so pale and puffy that my mother would be pained if she saw me.

I stayed at their house for more than one month, enjoying their kind care. Ko Jae Bong's mother went to a lot of trouble to nurse me back to health. She prepared meals of barley, millet and seasoned green herbs and served them to me at a separate table, always saying that she was very sorry that the meals were so frugal. But I could not eat with an easy mind at the thought of the family which, unable to run an inn in that strange mountain village, had begun farming only that year and also had to support the daughter's children who were staying there.

The mistress, knowing what was my favourite food from our days in Fusong, borrowed a noodle-press, the only one in the village, and made some noodles for me. Ko Jae Bong went to the walled city of Dunhua and bought some salted trout for me. His sister's husband would go to the spring at dawn every day to catch *sanggol* to reduce my swelling. Under their warm care I quickly recovered my health.

Ko Jae Bong went to visit my mother in Antu and returned. It was about 50 miles from Sidaohuanggou to Antu and he could cover this distance in a day. He told me he had walked 75 miles in a day like Hwang Chonwangdong in the novel *Rim Kkok Jong*.

On hearing that I was staying in the Dunhua area after being released from prison, Chol Ju came with Ko Jae Bong to Sidaohuanggou, bringing a letter and my underwear from mother. The letter said that my family, after leaving Fusong, had lived in a rented room at the house of Ma Chun Uk outside the west gate of Jiuantu (Songjiang) and then moved to Xinglongcun. While in Jiuantu my mother had hired a sewing machine from Ma Chun Uk and had worked hard to earn a living as a seamstress. In Xinglongcun, too, she had worked day and night to eke out a living.

Chol Ju did not feel comfortable in the new place. Until then he had lived in such towns on large rivers as Junggang, Linjiang, Badaogou and Fusong. For him Antu which was far from the railway and the lowland was too quiet and too strange a place to feel settled.

“Brother, did you go to Fusong after your release?” he asked me all of a sudden.

“I wanted to, but I didn’t. How could I visit Fusong when I came straight to Dunhua without even dropping in at my own house?” I answered.

“The people in Fusong miss you very much,” my brother said. “Zhang Wei-hua used to come to our house every day to ask after you. The people were very kind.”

What he said revealed that he was yearning for the people in Fusong.

“Yes, they were.”

“I often think of my friends in Fusong. Please remember me to them if you happen to go there.”

“Of course I will. By the way, have you made any new friends in Antu?”

“Not many. There aren’t many boys of my age in Antu.”

I realized that my brother was longing for the old days in Fusong

and that because of that, he had not settled in the new place. His sad eyes and melancholy look told me all this. His unsettled mental state, a sort of resistance to the reality that was common among boys of that age, disturbed me.

“Chol Ju, just as a good farmer does not complain of bad land, so a revolutionary should not be particular about where he finds himself. Why shouldn't there be good friends for you in Antu? You will find them if you look. As you know, father used to say that comrades do not fall from the sky of their own accord and that we should look for them, just as jewel hunters look for jewels. Find many good friends and make Antu an ideal place to work in. You are old enough to join the YCLK, aren't you?”

I stressed that he should prepare himself well for membership of the Young Communist League.

“I understand. I am sorry to have troubled you,” he said, bracing up, a serious look on his face.

Not long after that he joined the YCLK.

During my stay in Sidaohuanggou I helped Ko Jae Bong and his brother form branches of the Children's Expeditionary Corps, the Peasants Union and the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and tried to contact the members of the revolutionary organizations scattered around the east and south of Manchuria. On receiving the letters I had sent through Ko Jae Bong to the liaison offices in Longjing, Helong and Jilin, ten of my comrades including Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Su, Kye Yong Chun, Kim Jun, Chae Su Hang and Kim Jung Gwon came to Sidaohuanggou. They were all leaders of the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League.

I learned from them that the uprising sweeping the east of Manchuria had reached greater heights than I had expected.

The Korean people living in Manchuria were the main force behind the uprising; they had been instigated to revolt by Han Pin and Pak Yun Se, who claimed that in order to be admitted to the Chinese Communist Party they should be recognized by the party as having distinguished themselves in the practical struggle.

At that time the Korean communists in the northeastern region of China had abandoned the campaign to rebuild the party in accordance with the Comintern's principle of one party for one nation and were conducting brisk activities to become members of the Chinese party. The Chinese party had proclaimed that it would admit the Korean communists on an individual basis after testing them individually through a practical struggle. Worse still, officials from the Comintern went round encouraging people to start an uprising, so the Korean communists under the Manchuria general bureau, who were trying to join the Chinese party, drove the people into a reckless uprising out of their own political ambition and lust for higher positions.

They expropriated those who should not have been expropriated and even set fire to schools and power stations.

The May 30 Uprising gave the Japanese imperialists and the Chinese reactionary warlords a good excuse for suppressing the communist movement and the anti-Japanese patriotic struggle in Manchuria. The Korean communists and revolutionaries in Manchuria became the target of their ruthless white terrorism.

Having incurred tremendous losses, the masses had to retreat to rural and mountainous areas. Atrocities similar to those committed during the great cleaning-up in the year of Kyongsin (1920) were perpetrated throughout east Manchuria. The police cells and prisons were overflowing with captured rebels. A lot of them were dragged to Seoul, Korea, and condemned to severe punishment, even death.

The Fengtian warlords, tricked by the Japanese imperialists, suppressed the uprising in a brutal way. In order to drive a wedge between the Korean people and the Chinese people the Japanese started rumours that the Koreans had risen in revolt in east Manchuria in order to conquer Manchuria. The leading warlords believed these rumours and clamoured that all Koreans were communists and that the communists should be killed for they were the puppets of the Japanese imperialists. They killed the rebels right and left. The foolish warlords identified the communists with the puppets of the Japanese imperialists.

Thousands of people were arrested and killed during the uprising; most of them were Koreans. Many of those arrested were executed. The uprising caused tremendous harm to our revolutionary organizations. It aggravated the relations between the Koreans and the Chinese.

Li Li-san's line was later denounced as "a reckless line" and "petty bourgeois lunacy" by the Chinese party. Yet his line of the Soviet Red Army was an adventurous line that did not suit the situation in northeast China. The Third Plenary Meeting of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held in September that year sharply criticized the Left adventurist line of Li Li-san. The Comintern, too, criticized his error in a letter dated November 16. The provincial party committee of Manchuria convened an enlarged meeting of the committee and a joint meeting to expose his error to criticism.

We also criticized his line at a meeting held in Mingyuegou in May 1931 and adopted measures to overcome the Left adventurist errors. However, the aftereffects of his line were not eradicated and it badly affected our revolutionary struggle in northeast China for several years.

The young people who had gathered in Sidaohuanggou bitterly lamented the fact that Korean blood had been wasted and wondered how long our revolution would have to drift in confusion. In order to encourage them, I said:

"It is true that the loss in the uprising is great. However, what is the use of crying over that loss? We must stop crying and go where we are needed to rehabilitate the organizations and straighten out the situation. It is important to expose the factionalists' wild ambitions and remove the masses from their influence. To this end, we must show them the path the Korean revolution should take. The uprising ended in bloodshed, but the masses must have been trained and awakened to consciousness through that uprising. During the uprising the Korean nation displayed its militant and revolutionary spirit to the full. I was greatly encouraged by this great, self-sacrificing fighting

spirit of our nation. I am sure that when we teach them scientific fighting methods and tactics and show them the path our nation should follow, a fresh upsurge will take place in our revolution.”

My comrades were not greatly impressed by my call. They said, “You are right, Comrade Hanbyol. But where is the new line that is acceptable to the masses?” They looked at me with impatience.

I said, “It will not fall from the sky, nor will it be brought to us on a plate. We must map it out for ourselves. I gave some thought to this while I was in prison. I’d like to hear your opinions.”

So we held a discussion on the line of the Korean revolution which I had already discussed with Cha Kwang Su, Kim Hyok, Pak So Sim and others. This was the Sidaohuanggou Meeting. The meeting approved my proposal.

The appalling bloodbath that had taken place throughout the east of Manchuria caused me to feel resentment and awakened me to my sense of duty to the nation. As I pictured the people falling down with bleeding hearts in the midst of the turmoil, I racked my brains over how I should rescue the revolutionary masses of Korea from the sea of blood and how I should save the national liberation struggle of Korea from adversity and lead it to victory.

The revolution needed arms. It was awaiting a well-organized and trained revolutionary army and people, a programme that would guide the 20 million people to victory and a political general staff capable of putting the programme into effect. The situation at home and abroad required that the Korean communists effect a turn in the noble struggle to liberate the country and nation. Without a change our nation might suffer further bloodshed and tragedy.

With a determination to make a breakthrough in effecting the change and to bring about this turn, in the summer of 1930 I jotted down in my pocket-book the essence of the ideas that were floating in my mind.

I promised with the organization members and political workers as they left Sidaohuanggou to meet them again in Kalun in the second half of June after they had carried out their assignments.

Afterwards a meeting of the party committee of the eastern region of Jilin Province was held in Dunhua. The issue of the uprising was discussed at the meeting. The factionalists were planning to organize another uprising like the May 30 Uprising. I pointed out that the May 30 Uprising had been reckless, and I opposed their plan.

I had gained a lot of experience from my life behind bars and from the May 30 Uprising.

Indeed, the spring of 1930 was a spring of growth and of trial, an unforgettable spring in my life. In that spring our revolution was preparing for a fresh upsurge.

### **3. The Kalun Meeting**

In late June our comrades began to gather in Kalun as prearranged. We already had revolutionary organizations in Kalun. In 1927 we had realized the need to make a base at a traffic junction which afforded easy access to the different parts of Manchuria and began to send hardcore elements of the Young Communist League to the area to explore it.

We decided to hold a meeting in Kalun, in view of the fact that the place was easy of access and that it was a secluded base that ensured secrecy and the safety of those attending the meeting.

Kalun was frequented by the champions of the anti-Japanese movement, but it was not exposed to the enemy. The place was ideal for holding a meeting because the people there had volunteered to aid us.

On arriving at Kalun I found that Jong Haeng Jong, head of the Children's Expeditionary Corps, was waiting for me at the station. When I went to Kalun, he always came to meet me at the station and accompany me.

On my arrival I found that the atmosphere in Kalun was somewhat calmer than in Dunhua and Jilin. The May 30 Uprising having just finished, the atmosphere in Jiandao was very serious. The situation became tenser with the imminent dispatch of the Japanese troops to east Manchuria. The Japanese imperialists were intending to send their troops to Jiandao to suppress the rapidly-spreading revolutionary movement there, occupy Manchuria and Mongolia and secure a bridgehead for their invasion of the Soviet Union. With this aim Lieutenant General Kawashima, commander of the 19<sup>th</sup> Division of the Japanese army stationed in Ranam, was on a tour of inspection of the Longjing, Yanji, Baicaogou and Toudaogou areas. At the same

time the chief of staff of the Kuomintang troops in Jilin and the civil administrator were on a tour of inspection in east Manchuria.

It was during this period that the revolutionary organizations in the Jiandao area appealed to the people to drive out the lieutenant general of the Japanese army, the chief of staff of the Kuomintang troops and the civil administrator from east Manchuria.

On that visit to Kalun I stayed at the houses of Ryu Yong Son and Jang So Bong, teachers at Jinmyong School.

Jang So Bong taught the children at Jinmyong School and at the same time worked as the branch manager of the newspaper *Dong-A Ilbo*. Like Cha Kwang Su he was a well-informed, good writer and carried out his duties with credit. So he was loved by his comrades.

A blot on his character was that he often quarrelled with his wife. When his comrades offered him advice, he complained that she was too feudalistic. Time and again I tried to persuade him and I criticized him so that he would take an interest in his family life, but it was of little avail.

Jang So Bong was arrested by the police when he went to Changchun to buy weapons after the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army and became a turncoat. He is said to have undertaken “submission work” against me.

Kim Hyok and Jang So Bong had rendered particularly distinguished service in making Kalun revolutionary. Pooling their efforts with the public-spirited men of the locality, they had set up schools and evening schools, launched an enlightenment movement centred on these schools, reformed the enlightenment organizations such as the peasants association, youth league, children’s association and women’s society into revolutionary organizations such as the Peasants Union, the Anti-Japanese Youth League, the Children’s Expeditionary Corps and the Women’s Association respectively. They also trained people from all walks of life to work for the anti-Japanese revolution.

It was in Kalun that magazine *Bolshevik* had been founded under Kim Hyok’s auspices.

In Kalun I continued to speculate on the path for the Korean revolution as I had done in Sidaohuanggou. Sorting out and reviewing what I had been thinking for the past month, I wrote it down, and this became a long article.

I wrote the article with the keen realization of the urgent need of the national liberation struggle in our country for a new guiding theory.

Without a new guiding theory the revolution could not advance even a single step forward.

The revolutionary advance of the oppressed people demanding independence made further strides in the 1930s on a worldwide scale. Asia was the continent in which the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples against the imperialists was fiercest.

Asia became the central arena of the national liberation struggle in the colonies because in those years the imperialists more openly intensified their aggression to wrest concessions from the developing countries of Asia and because the people of many Asian countries fought bravely in the struggle to safeguard their national independence.

No force could check the Eastern people's just struggle to drive out the foreign forces and live in a new society which was free and democratic.

The revolutionary tide raged furiously in China, India, Vietnam, Burma, Indonesia and other Asian countries as the revolution advanced in the Soviet Union and Mongolia. Around this time weavers in India, which had attracted the attention of the world for her non-violent resistance movement, held demonstrations in the streets under a red banner.

The Chinese people greeted the 1930s in the flames of a second civil war.

The revolutionary struggle in China and many other Asian countries and the active struggle of the people in the homeland greatly excited and inspired us.

We became convinced that if a party was founded and the right

guiding theory was advanced it would be fully possible to rouse the people and emerge victorious in the struggle against the Japanese imperialists.

In this period, too, in the arena of the national liberation struggle of Korea there appeared different isms and doctrines representing the stands and interests of different parties and groups that would lead the masses this way or that. None of these theories was free from time and class limitations.

We deemed the armed struggle of the Independence Army to have been the highest form of the national liberation struggle up to that time. This struggle was participated in by the most active anti-Japanese independence champions from the Left wing of the nationalist movement and patriots. They had formed the Independence Army and launched an armed struggle because they believed that only by fighting a war of independence was it possible to win back the country.

Some people thought that it was possible to win independence only through the military action of large troops and other people maintained that the best way to drive out the Japanese imperialists was to employ terrorist tactics, while some others said that the strategy suited to the actual situation in Korea was to preserve some well-trained troops and achieve independence in cooperation with the Soviet Union, China, the United States and the like once they were at war with Japan. All these arguments presupposed a bloody fight against the Japanese imperialists.

But in its struggle the Independence Army had neither the scientific tactics and strategy for pursuing its initial aims to the end nor a strong and seasoned leadership capable of fighting the war to the end nor a firm mass foundation capable of supporting the army with manpower, materials and finance.

Among the reformist arguments An Chang Ho's "theory on preparation" called "the theory on the cultivation of strength" was much talked about by the independence champions.

We respected An Chang Ho as an honest and conscientious patriot

who devoted his life to the independence movement but we did not sympathize with his theory.

The Shanghai Provisional Government's line of a non-violent independence movement did not receive the support and sympathy of the masses. Some time after its formation the Shanghai Provisional Government disappointed people because it wasted time, constantly resorting to the diplomatic policy of non-violence which provided no hope. So, the Independence Army which held the military line to be supreme gave it the cold shoulder.

Syngman Rhee's petition asking the League of Nations to place Korea under its mandatory administration did not deserve to be called a line of any sort. The "self-government" idea advanced by the Right wing of the nationalists was a wild dream which went against the national spirit of independence.

The Korean Communist Party, founded in 1925, ended its existence without working out the scientific tactics and strategy suited to the actual situation in Korea.

Generally speaking, the common weak point of the strategies and lines of the preceding generation was that they did not believe in the strength of the masses and turned away from them.

The movement champions from the preceding generation all ignored the fact that the people are the masters of the revolution and the motive force of the revolution. Only by drawing on the organized strength of millions of people was it possible to overthrow Japanese imperialism, but the champions of our anti-Japanese movement thought that the revolution and the war of independence were conducted by a few special people alone.

Proceeding from this viewpoint, those who were allegedly engaged in the communist movement founded a party by proclaiming the party centre to be composed of a few people from the higher levels of society without laying any foundation to speak of. They were divided into groups in such a way as to form parties of three and groups of five and became involved in a scramble for hegemony over several years.

The line and strategy of the preceding generation had the serious drawback that they were not firmly rooted in the Korean reality.

I decided that in order to work out a correct guiding theory suited to the Korean reality it was necessary to take an independent view of all problems and settle them in an original way that was suited to our own specific situation, instead of holding classic works or the experiences of other countries supreme. It would not do to copy the experience of the October Revolution on the plea of providing a guiding theory or to sit back with folded arms, expecting that the Comintern would provide a recipe for success.

“We believe in the strength of the masses alone. Let us believe in the strength of our 20 million people and, uniting them, let us wage a bloody war against the Japanese imperialists!” This cry came often from the bottom of my heart.

Urged by this impulse, I tried to enunciate the idea we now call Juche in a draft report. What I intended to write in that draft report concerned the serious problems facing our revolution.

I gave a particularly great deal of thought to the question of the armed struggle.

In my draft report I put it forward as the basic line of the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle, as the foremost task for the Korean communists, to wage a comprehensive anti-Japanese war.

It took a long time to decide upon the armed struggle and to fix it as our line. Before it was adopted as a line at Kalun, we were virtually empty-handed. I proposed that if an armed struggle was to be launched, the young communists should found a new type of army.

At that time some people were of a different opinion, and said, “Since the Independence Army is already in existence, it will suffice to join it and fight. Is there any necessity to found a separate army? We fear that the anti-Japanese military forces will be divided.”

Since the Independence Army had become Rightist and reactionary, it was irrational and impossible to renovate it from within and take military action.

In 1930 the strength of the Independence Army was insufficient.

The strength of the Independence Army under Kukmin-bu was only nine companies. Even they were divided into the Kukmin-bu group and the anti-Kukmin-bu group due to a split at the higher levels.

The Kukmin-bu group was the conservative force which stuck fast to the line the Independence Army had adhered to for over ten years. The anti-Kukmin-bu group was a new force which opposed the old line and pursued a new line. People from the anti-Kukmin-bu group even attempted to join hands with the communists, claiming to sympathize with communism. The Japanese imperialists named them the “third force” in the sense that they were not nationalists or communists but a new middle-of-the-road force. The appearance of this “third force” of the anti-Kukmin-bu group within the nationalist movement proved that the trend to switch the nationalist movement to a communist movement had entered the stage of implementation. The strength of the Independence Army was reduced due to the antagonism between the Kukmin-bu group and the anti-Kukmin-bu group, and the nationalist movement was thrown into confusion.

The companies of the Independence Army were generally stationed in villages on the plain, but this did not favour guerrilla warfare. It did not have enough equipment, its discipline was loose and its training was at a low level. On top of this, its relations with the inhabitants were not very good.

The Independence Army was on a gradual decline since its golden days in the early 1920s when it had mowed down large troops of Japanese at the battle of Qingshanli and the battle of Fengwugou.

When I went to Wangqingmen to attend the conference of the General Federation of Korean Youth in South Manchuria, I talked with Hyon Muk Gwan about Kukmin-bu and asked him, “Are you sure that you can defeat Japan with the strength of Kukmin-bu?” I raised this question to goad him because he boasted a lot about Kukmin-bu.

“If we fight on like this and if the great powers help us, we will win our independence.”

I was disappointed at his reply. I wondered how an army which

was fighting blindly without confidence in victory, turning to the great powers for help, could prove its worth. So I said to him by way of a joke, “Will the people of Kukmin-bu hand all their weapons over to us? If they do we will drive out the Japanese in three or four years.”

This was before the terrorist outrages were committed against the members of the preparatory committee for the meeting, so I could afford to joke. Hyon Muk Gwan had always taken my jokes well since my Jilin days.

He made a wry smile but didn't reply. He must have thought that I was indulging in idle dreams.

It was difficult to maintain the status quo in the army of Kukmin-bu. So, we came to the conclusion that it was necessary to form a new type of army.

I was convinced that an armed struggle led by communists alone could wage a thorough anti-Japanese war of resistance and be revolutionary. This was because communists alone could rally in their armed ranks workers, peasants and other broad sections of the anti-Japanese patriotic forces and lead the Korean revolution as a whole to victory, taking charge of and waging the noble war by employing scientific tactics and strategies which would accurately reflect the interests of the masses.

The Japanese imperialists we would have to overthrow were a newly-emerging military power that had, in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, easily defeated great powers with territories tens of times larger than that of Japan.

It would be no easy matter to defeat this power and win back the country.

To overthrow Japanese imperialism meant to defeat the military power of Japan, which had received universal recognition. It meant to overpower the fanatical Japanese spirit and to emerge victorious in a war of attrition against Japan, a country which had been accumulating manpower, materials and financial power for nearly 70 years since the Meiji Restoration.

But we thought that if we waged an armed struggle for three or four years we could defeat Japan. It was an idea which no one except hot-blooded young people could conceive. If the Japanese warlords had heard of this, they would surely have thrown their heads back and burst out laughing.

If we are asked what guarantee we had for our judgment, we have nothing to say. What guarantee could we, with empty hands, have?

We had only patriotism and young blood. We said three or four years not because we made light of the strength of Japan but because we thought that our patriotism was stronger and we were righteous. Our guarantee was the strength of our twenty million people. We were convinced that if we trained the twenty million people well and induced them to rise in a struggle everywhere and beat the Japanese troops and police we could win our independence.

So, we thought that if an armed struggle was to be waged on a grand scale a firm mass foundation should be laid.

That is how the idea of the anti-Japanese national united front came into being.

I first felt the necessity for an organization in my Hwasong Uisuk School days, whereas it was at the time of the March First Popular Uprising that I first felt the strength of the nation and engraved it in my heart. It was in my Jilin days that I decided to go deep among the people, rally them and make the revolution by depending on their strength.

Without nationwide resistance through the enlistment of the twenty million people it would be impossible to shake off the yoke of colonial slavery. We maintained that in the pure class struggle the workers and the peasant masses alone could be the motive force of the revolution, but since by its nature the Korean revolution was a revolution against feudalism and imperialism not only the workers and peasants but also the young people and students, intellectuals, patriotic-minded men of religion, and non-comprador capitalists could be the motive force of the revolution. Ours was the principle of rallying and enlisting all the anti-Japanese patriotic forces

interested in national liberation.

When we advanced this line, some people shook their heads dubiously, saying that no such definition could be found in the classics. They said it was a wild dream that communists should be allied with the social classes other than the workers and peasants and that they could not join hands with religious men or the entrepreneur class. Proceeding from this point of view the Tuesday group removed Kim Chan from the post of head of the Manchuria general bureau of the Korean Communist Party simply because he had been associated with some people from Kukmin-bu.

Many nationalists gave communists the cold shoulder. Nationalism was a taboo within the communist movement, while communism was a taboo within the nationalist movement. This tendency resulted in the division of the nation's forces into the two camps of communists and nationalists.

Sensible people were all pained at this state of affairs. Through their efforts, however, a movement for collaboration between the two camps of the communists and nationalists was launched in the mid-20s, and this resulted in the founding of the Singan Association in 1927. All the people warmly welcomed it as an indication that the communists and nationalists could unite for the cause of the nation, although they had different ideas.

But the association had to proclaim its dissolution in 1931 due to the ceaseless destructive manoeuvres of the Japanese imperialists and the subversive activities of the reformists who were corrupted and used by them.

If the two forces had united firmly in the great cause of patriotism, the association would not have been so easily destroyed even if there had been subversion within and without.

We greatly regretted the end of the collaboration between the communists and nationalists with the dissolution of the Singan Association. If ideas alone were held supreme without priority being given to the nation, genuine collaboration could not be attained. It was my view in those days that if top priority was given to national

liberation it was possible to join hands with any social class.

Proceeding from this standpoint we collaborated, after liberation, with Kim Ku who had opposed communism all his life and now are appealing for great national unity. If great national unity is attained, there will remain only the foreign forces and traitors to the nation as obstacles.

When Choe Hong Hui and Choe Tok Sin visited Pyongyang, although they had passed their lives at the anti-communist front with their guns turned on us, we welcomed them out of compatriotic love without caring about their past because great national unity was our supreme task as well as our policy.

I said to Choe Tok Sin, “Whether one lives in the north or in the south, one must consider the question of reunification with top priority given to the nation. Only when the nation exists are there social classes and isms, don’t you think so? What is the use of communism, nationalism or a belief in ‘God’ without the nation?”

When we elaborated the line of the anti-Japanese national united front in Kalun over 60 years ago, we made the same appeal.

Politics must be comprehensive and statesmen, broad-minded. If politics is not comprehensive, it cannot embrace all the people. If statesmen are not broad-minded, the people turn away from them.

In my draft report I dwelt on the founding of the party, the character and tasks of the Korean revolution, and the basic standpoint for Korean communists to adhere to in struggle.

When I had prepared the draft report, I immediately submitted it for discussion to the leading cadres of the Young Communist League and the AIYL who had come from different places to attend the Kalun Meeting. In those days we held discussions at the edge of the field or in the willow grove by the River Wukai in the daytime while we worked in the field, and in the evening reviewed the opinions raised in the daytime in the night-duty room of Jinmyong School. During the mass discussions many opinions concerning interesting practical problems were offered.

At first a dispute arose as to how to define the character of the

Korean revolution. The definition of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution given in the draft report provoked a heated debate. The focus of the debate was whether a new definition of the character of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution which was not found in the classics and which had not been advanced in any other country conflicted with universal principles and the law of the revolution or not. According to the understanding of the young people of those days, bourgeois and socialist revolutions were the only revolutions which brought about a radical change in modern history. So, they were fully justified in questioning a new concept of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution which was neither a socialist nor a bourgeois revolution.

We characterised the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution on the basis of the conclusion we had formed concerning the class relations prevailing in our country and the tasks facing our revolution. The most urgent revolutionary task for the Korean nation was to overthrow Japanese imperialism, eliminate the feudal relations shackling our people and effect democracy in our country. Hence we defined the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution.

If one squeezes the definition of the revolution into another pattern, one will be guilty of dogmatism. It is not the pattern that is most important but the actual situation. Communists should accept without hesitation a scientific definition suited to the actual situation in the country even if it is not found in the classics or elsewhere. This represents a creative attitude towards Marxism-Leninism.

When I thus explained why I had defined the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, the delegates said that they understood and warmly supported it.

The question of the anti-Japanese national united front was most hotly debated. In those days it was publicly recognized as a difficult problem in both theory and practice, a problem of which an open discussion was troublesome. People around us approached the question cautiously because some people from the Comintern

indiscriminately qualified those who supported the united front policy as reformists, citing the failure of the collaboration between Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China. So those without courage could not propose the national united front policy as a line, for to do so might have been taken as a challenge to the standpoint of the Comintern.

Then the comrades raised many questions.

Should the son of a landlord support the revolution, how should he be treated?

Should a capitalist have donated a lot of money and provided a great deal of material aid to the Independence Army but wants nothing to do with communists, how should he be approached?

Should a sub-county head mix well with both the people and the Japanese, can he be enlisted in the revolution?

In reply to these questions I said, in short, that people should be judged mainly by their ideological tendency.

Our views of those days later took shape in the Ten-point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and were specified as state policy in the 20-point programme after liberation.

The validity of the anti-Japanese national united front policy we advanced in Kalun was later proved in practice.

Our comrades' opinions were a great help in perfecting the draft report.

The Kalun Meeting was formally opened in the evening of June 30, 1930.

Our comrades in Kalun prepared a meeting place in a classroom of Jinmyong School. They spread straw mats on the floor of the classroom for the delegates and hung lamps from the ceiling.

On the first day of the meeting the delegates listened to my report. The next day they began to discuss measures to carry out the tasks set in the report. The discussions took place in groups or all together on the riverside or in the willow grove, while we helped the peasants in their work. Thus the meeting was held in an original way. We held

the meeting with easy minds because the members of the revolutionary organizations in Kalun were keeping guard in the village. Members of the Children's Expeditionary Corps also did a lot to protect us during the meeting.

The Japanese imperialists, having smelled out that a large number of young communists had gathered in central Manchuria, dispatched many secret agents to the counties of Changchun, Huaide and Yitong which were the arena of our activity. Some secret agents carried a photograph of me with them and asked where I was.

Informed by the secret agents from the Japanese consulate in Manchuria and from the police affairs department of the government-general in Korea that some young communists belonging to a group different from those of the old-time communists who differed from them in the way they conducted their activities had appeared around Jilin in Manchuria and were expanding their forces, the Japanese imperialists chased us persistently in an effort to capture the leading core elements, straining their nerves from the beginning. Because we had established a wide foothold and went deep among the people without making much fuss, they seemed to take us seriously.

At that time Kim Won U was in charge of the guard at the village and commanded the members of the Children's Expeditionary Corps and the AIYL. Even when he was attending a meeting, he would leave stealthily and patrol the village to check the guard. When I sat up at night because of the pressure of work in the classroom of Jinmyong School, he kept watch outside to ensure my personal safety. Sometimes at night he roasted potatoes in the fire-place in the kitchen of the night-duty room of the school, and offered me some.

Kim Won U rendered great service in exploring Kalun, Guyushu, Wujiazi and other areas. He did a lot of work in leading the youth and student movement in Jilin.

In the spring of 1928 we dispatched him to the rural communities in the Changchun area to make them revolutionary. At the time he was teaching at Jinmyong School and educating the young people by touring the Kalun and Guyushu areas. Beginning in the spring of

1930 he took part in the preparations for the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army, helping Cha Kwang Su. As he had a handsome face we once disguised him as a woman and sent him to do underground work, “pairing” him with Hyon Gyun as wife and man.

When he went about to buy weapons after the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army, he was arrested by the enemy and imprisoned for several years. Even behind bars he fought staunchly.

When the internal and external situation was complicated after the Korean war, Kim Won U fell at the hands of the factionalists while fighting in defence of the Party’s line in the provinces. At that time factionalists plotted in various ways to harm those who were faithful to the Party. His original name was Pyon Muk Song.

Kalun became a reliable base for our activities and a revolutionary village for realizing our ideas due to the persistent efforts Kim Won U, Kim Ri Gap, Cha Kwang Su, Kim Hyok and other young communists made earlier to explore the village.

Before we arrived the people there were divided into the southern provinces group and the northern provinces group and lived with their backs turned on each other. Once the two groups had a gang fight over water from the River Wukai. When people from the southern provinces group blocked the irrigation ditch to reclaim their field, the people from the northern provinces group came rushing out with their shovels and reopened the ditch, shouting that their paddy fields were drying up. Even their children were divided into two groups and would not play together, which was very sad.

Kim Hyok, Kim Won U, Kim Ri Gap, Jang So Bong and others made a great deal of effort to straighten out the situation. They put an end to the gang fight through persuasion and formed various mass organizations, set up a school in Kalun and provided free education.

In the evening on the second of July the delegates again gathered in the classroom of the school and resumed the meeting. That evening the meeting was concluded with the announcement of an assignment plan.

Towards the close of the meeting Cha Kwang Su who was

presiding over the meeting rose abruptly from his seat and made a fervent speech. Nicknamed “boisterous,” he often acted rashly and easily got excited, but he never lost his reason. He stirred up the hearts of people, addressing them in an impassioned and fluent speech.

He shook his fist as he spoke:

“While the Korean communist movement is going through ordeal and the people are lamenting its setbacks, we here in Kalun have made a historic statement marking a fresh start of the Korean revolution. With this statement heralding a new dawn we Korean communists will advance along a new path.

“Comrades, let us take up arms and come out in a life-and-death struggle against Japanese imperialism.”

Having heard his speech, we raised shouts of joy and sang the *Revolutionary Song*.

We could proclaim the new path for the Korean revolution in Kalun because already in the course of the youth and student movement launched in our days in Jilin we had established the Juche stand on and attitude towards the Korean revolution and cleared a new path for the communist movement. I made public in *The Path of the Korean Revolution* the idea and standpoint I had perceived in my days of struggle and elaborated in prison.

This has become the line of our revolution and its guiding idea.

We can say that the content of the treatise was based entirely on the Juche idea.

Since then the idea has been steadily developed and enriched through the various stages of the revolution, including the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, and through a difficult and complicated practical struggle and it has become a philosophical idea in which ideas, theories and methods have been brought together as an integral whole as we now see it.

It was when we were building the foundation of socialism after the war that we particularly stressed the need to establish Juche after liberation.

I delivered a speech on eliminating dogmatism and the worship of the great powers and establishing Juche to Party information workers in 1955. It was made public in the document *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*.

Later I stressed the need to establish Juche whenever the occasion offered itself.

Time and again I explained, in my talks with foreigners, the essence of the Juche idea, how it had been created and implemented.

But I never thought of systematizing it and publishing it in book form. If our people accepted the idea as just and implemented it in their revolutionary practice, I was satisfied.

Later Comrade Kim Jong Il systematized the idea in a comprehensive manner and published his treatise *On the Juche Idea*.

We became convinced, while waging the anti-Japanese armed struggle after the Kalun Meeting, that the line we advanced at the meeting was just. The enemy likened us to “a drop in the ocean,” but we had an ocean of people with inexhaustible strength behind us. Whatever line we put forward, the people easily understood it and made it their own, and they aided us materially and spiritually, sending tens of thousands of their sons, daughters, brothers and sisters to join our ranks.

We could defeat the strong enemy who was armed to the teeth, fighting against him in the severe cold of up to 40 degrees below zero in Manchuria for over 15 years, because we had a mighty fortress called the people and the boundless ocean called the masses.

#### **4. The First Party Organization—the Society for Rallying Comrades**

The fact that we formed a new type of party organization on July 3, 1930, the day following the Kalun Meeting, was made public many years ago and the speech I made at the meeting has been published.

It is known to everyone that the party plays the role of the general staff in the revolution and that victory in the revolution depends on the role of the party. If the revolution is the locomotive of history, the party can be called the locomotive of the revolution. This is the reason why revolutionaries attach importance to the party and work heart and soul to build up the party.

The fact that Marx founded the League of Communists and issued *The Communist Manifesto* at the start of his practical struggle following his creation of a scientific theory on communism is praised even now as the greatest of his exploits. This is because the mission and role fulfilled by the party in the struggle of the communists to transform the world are very important. It can be said that the various opportunist and reformist tendencies that appeared in the international communist movement and working-class movement resulted, in the final analysis, from a wrong view and attitude towards the party.

Among all the epoch-making changes that have been made up to the present day by communists throughout the world since the appearance of communism in the arena of the working-class movement as the new thought of the time, there is nothing that is not linked with the noble name of the party.

In order to implement the tasks put forward at the Kalun Meeting, we first of all started to form a party organization.

It was after hearing that the Korean Communist Party had been expelled from the Comintern that we resolved to found a new type of

party and started to make all-out efforts to find the way.

It was in April 1925 that the Communist Party was formed in our country. In those days in various countries political parties representing the interests of the working class had appeared and were leading the masses. The fact that, in keeping with this worldwide trend, a communist party was founded in our country, a land where no freedom of political activity and no rights were allowed, proves how quick and rich was the political sensibility of the Koreans towards the new thought and the trend of the times.

The founding of the Korean Communist Party was the inevitable result and law-governed product of the development of the working-class movement and the national liberation movement in Korea.

After its foundation the Korean Communist Party disseminated the socialist idea among broad sections of the masses, such as the workers and peasants, and led the working-class movement, thus turning a new page on which the national liberation struggle in our country was guided by communists. While the Korean Communist Party existed the Korean communists displayed the mettle of our nation by leading such a large-scale struggle as the June 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Movement. They also contributed to the work of rallying the anti-Japanese patriotic forces by forming such a mass organization as the Singan Association with the cooperation of the nationalists.

The fact that the Korean Communist Party was founded and the mass movement of various social sections such as the working-class movement and the peasant movement was conducted under its leadership was a historic event that promoted the development of the national liberation movement to some extent and marked the beginning of the communist movement in our country.

However, the Korean Communist Party ended its existence as an organized force in 1928 owing to the cruel suppression on the part of the Japanese imperialists and the factional strife in its highest circles.

At its Sixth Congress held in the summer of 1928 the Comintern pronounced the withdrawal of its recognition of the Korean

Communist Party. This was tantamount to the expulsion of the Korean Communist Party from the ranks of the Comintern.

It goes without saying that while the Korean Communist Party existed we were not satisfied with its highest circles who were engrossed in factional strife. However, we could not repress our indignation and shame at the news that the party had even been expelled from the ranks of the Comintern. We regretted the action of the Comintern. It was at that time that I began to think that, although we were young and had little experience in the communist movement, we ourselves must become masters and work hard to found a new type of party.

If we were to found a party of a new type which would be pure and original, we had to overcome many obstacles and difficulties.

The greatest difficulty was that there was still factionalism in the communist ranks. Because factionalism had not been eliminated the communists of the early years could not conduct the movement to rebuild the party in a unified manner but did it divided into various factions.

After the Korean Communist Party was expelled from the Comintern the communists of our country conducted an intensive movement at home and abroad to rebuild the party. But no faction succeeded owing to the indiscriminate suppression and obstructive moves of the Japanese imperialists. The Tuesday group and the M-L group abandoned their efforts to rebuild the party and declared that they would dissolve the general bureau that had been formed in Manchuria. Following this the Seoul-Shanghai group made an effort to rebuild the party at home, but even this became known and ended in many party members being dragged off to prison.

So we came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to found a revolutionary party by rebuilding the party that had been dissolved or by relying on the existing generation that was infected with the vicious habit of factional strife.

Another difficulty in founding the party was that it was impossible for the Korean communists to found their own party in Manchuria

because of the principle of one party for one country laid down by the Comintern.

In the general provisions of its Rules adopted at its Sixth Congress the Comintern laid down this principle, to the effect that each party belonging to the Comintern should carry the name of the communist party of the country concerned (the branch of the Comintern) and that in each country only one communist party could exist within the Comintern.

The eastern information department of the Comintern convened the Conference of the Korean and Chinese Communist Parties in Khabarovsk in May 1930 and informed the delegates of the decision of the Comintern on the organizational question regarding the Korean Communist Party. In that decision the Comintern set the Korean communists in Manchuria the task of joining the Chinese party and working as members of that party.

Such being the case, those communists who had been working hard to rebuild the party changed their attitude and issued a statement on dissolving the party. Then they started to convert to the Chinese party and, with this, the flames of the May 30 Uprising swept east Manchuria.

The matter of the Korean party members having to work in the Chinese party could not but seriously excite the young Korean communists who had a stronger national pride than others. Our comrades had a heated argument on the matter. Some young people denounced the order of the Comintern as irresponsible and as an incomprehensible decision, some regarded the measure as fair and yet others gave vent to their pent-up anger and indignation, saying that the demand of the Comintern that the Korean communists should join the Chinese party meant rejecting for ever the possibility of rebuilding the party.

My comrades brought this matter up as a topic of conversation and asked me my view.

I told them clearly that the demand of the Comintern that the Korean communists should join the Chinese party in accordance with

the principle of one party for one country should not be censured and that the demand did not imply depriving the Korean communists of the possibility of rebuilding their party.

“In the present circumstances the demand of the Comintern is somewhat inevitable. If the Korean communists had their own party, why would it demand that they live in a rented room? Therefore, we must respect the decision of the Comintern. That is an internationalist standpoint. If one becomes a member of the Chinese party, it will be all right if one does not forget Korea and fights for the Korean revolution. However, on the plea of following the instructions of the Comintern, one cannot abandon the building of one’s own party and live in rented room for ever. Koreans must have a party for Koreans.”

This was my view and standpoint with regard to the problem of converting to another party.

However, I could not be sure that this view accorded with the principle of the Comintern of one party for one country.

In order to deepen my understanding of the principle of one party for one country and decide upon a policy for party building as soon as possible, I met Kim Kwang Ryol (Kim Ryol), a liaison officer of the Comintern, in Jiajiatun in the latter part of June 1930. Kim Kwang Ryol was an intellectual who had graduated from Waseda University in Japan and had been in the Soviet Union before going to Jiajiatun. He stayed for a long time in Guyushu, Wujiazi and Kalun, which were the areas of our activity. In his capacity of a liaison officer, he strove to link us with the Comintern. Jang So Bong and Ri Jong Rak were unsparing in their praise of him, saying that he had been greatly influenced by socialism in the Soviet Union. So I met him with hope. I found him to be a well-read man, as was his reputation. He had a good command of Russian and Japanese, danced Russian dances just as well as Russians and was a good public speaker. Kim Kwang Ryol advised me to go to the Comintern instead of listening only to his opinion. He said that he would introduce me to the Harbin liaison office of the Comintern and asked me to go there and argue about the principle of one party for one country.

After meeting Kim Kwang Ryol I repeated the argument about the principle of one party for one country with my comrades.

We construed the principle of one party for one country as meaning that two or more communist parties in a country could not join the Comintern, that only one communist party could become a member of it, and that no more than one centre of the communist party could exist in one country.

The essence of this principle was that there should not be more than one party centre with the same interests and aim in a country.

The fact that the Comintern advanced the principle of one party for one country and demanded its strict observance was mainly aimed at eliminating the different forms of opportunism, including factionalism, in the international communist movement and ensuring the unity and cohesion of its ranks. The historic lesson of the international communist movement made the Comintern put forward the principle of one party for one country and strictly guard against the infiltration of alien elements into the communist movement.

That the Comintern laid down the principle of one party for one country was connected with the fact that the enemy was making vicious attempts to split and break up the communist ranks from within.

However, the Rules of the Comintern merely laid down the principle of one party for one country. They did not clarify how those conducting the communist movement in a foreign country should be converted to the party of the country of their residence and how revolutionary tasks should be set for them after their conversion. It was precisely because of this that the matter of the Korean communists active in Manchuria converting to the Chinese party gave rise to extremely complex arguments. So some people even regarded the formation of their own party organization by the Korean communists in China as contradictory to the principle of one party for one country.

At a time when, owing to the various interpretations of the Comintern's principle of one party for one country, terrible confusion

and vacillation were created in the activities of the Korean communists for the liberation of their country, and even the right of the Korean revolutionaries to fight for their country was regarded as doubtful, I was seeking tirelessly the way to found a party.

Was there no way which would conform with the instructions of the Comintern and also powerfully promote the Korean revolution?

The way out which I discovered at the end of my search was steadily to lay the organizational and ideological foundation for the formation of a party and, on the basis of this, found a party that was capable of playing both nominally and in fact the role of the general staff of our revolution, proceeding from the lesson of the preceding communist movement, instead of hastily proclaiming a party centre. It was impossible to found a party proceeding only from one's subjective desire without training an organizational backbone of people who were awakened to class consciousness and qualified, without the unity of the ranks in ideology and purpose and without laying down a mass foundation on which the party could rely.

I considered that forming the party by setting up basic party organizations first, with communists of the new generation, who had nothing to do with factions, as the backbone and then steadily expanding them, was the most suitable and realistic method for us of founding a party. I was convinced that the Comintern would welcome it if we founded a party in this way.

I believed that if we formed party organizations first with the communists of the younger generation whom we had been training and steadily increased their role, at the same time as expanding and strengthening the basic party organizations everywhere our steps reached, we would be quite able to lead the communist movement and the national liberation struggle and also fulfil our internationalist duties satisfactorily.

If we refrained from forming a separate party centre in China lest it should coexist with the Chinese party, we would not be contradicting the Comintern's principle of one party for one country.

By establishing this idea we advanced the policy of founding a

party at the Kalun Meeting and formed the first party organization.

Forming a revolutionary party organization was also an inevitable requirement of the development of our revolution.

Because there was no party in Korea, the leaders of the Tanchon Peasant Uprising visited the Comintern to get its opinion on the tactical problems of the uprising. If there had been a revolutionary party in Korea representing the interests of the workers and peasants, as well as a seasoned leadership force, they would not have had to spend money on going to the Comintern.

The national liberation movement in our country at the beginning of the 1930s developed much further, to an extent which was incomparable with the anti-Japanese struggle of the past in its width and depth.

Our struggle also became much more advanced compared to its first stage. The sphere of our activities passed beyond the bounds of Jilin and spread to far-off east Manchuria and areas of northern Korea. Our revolutionary struggle, which had been confined to a youth and student movement, stretched to the broad sections of the workers and peasants and became underground activities. When we had accumulated experience and the military and political preparations had been made, we would have to form a standing revolutionary army and wage a full-scale guerrilla war with large units. The Young Communist League, however, was not equal to leading all this. The leadership given by the Young Communist League to various mass organizations in the past was a transitional phenomenon, not a perpetual one.

Now it was necessary to form a party which would have to control and guide the Young Communist League and various other mass organizations, give leadership to the national liberation movement as a whole, establish relations with the Chinese party and work with the Comintern. In the name of the Young Communist League it would be impossible for us to deal satisfactorily with the Comintern.

The communists of the early years visited the Comintern to obtain its recognition, each group posing as the “legitimate party.”

Therefore, the Comintern was quite at a loss. The Comintern began gradually to realize that it would be impossible for a genuine vanguard of the working class to appear in Korea unless factions were eliminated and that, in order to eliminate the factions and found a new party, there should appear a new generation who had nothing to do with the factional strife and had no ambition for power. So they became interested in our struggle and tried various ways to join hands with us.

Over many years of revolutionary activity we laid down the foundation for forming a new type of revolutionary party organization.

The formation of the DIU was the starting point for the founding of a new type of revolutionary party which differed from the previous party in the Korean communist movement. Everything started from the DIU. The DIU developed into the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and then the Young Communist League.

The hardcore detachment of our revolution trained by the Young Communist League and the mass foundation of our revolution laid by the Anti-Imperialist Youth League immediately became the basis for founding the party. In those days when the Young Communist League had been formed and was leading the revolutionary movement as a powerful vanguard organization, the communists from among the new generation overcame the mistakes made by the communists of the preceding generation and pioneered a new way of winning over the masses and employing the art of leadership. The heroic fighting spirit and the revolutionary fighting traits displayed by the communists of the new generation became the motive force enabling us to defeat the Japanese imperialist aggressors. Later they became the spirit and moral strength of our Party.

A peak in the activities of the communists of the new generation was that the guiding idea of the Korean revolution was established with the Kalun Meeting as the impetus. The decision of the Kalun Meeting clarified the strategic points which the communists had to observe as their principles in the struggle to effect the programme of

the DIU and the Young Communist League. They constituted the ideological basis for the foundation of a new type of party and a guide in the activities of the communists who had long been groping blindly in the dark, suffering failures and setbacks, to find the way ahead.

The guiding idea, leadership core and mass foundation—these can be said to be the essential elements for the formation of a party organization. We had all these elements.

On July 3, 1930 we formed the first party organization in a classroom at Jinmyong School in Kalun with Comrades Cha Kwang Su, Kim Hyok, Choe Chang Gol, Kye Yong Chun, Kim Won U and Choe Hyo Il. Although they were not present at the meeting, Comrades Kim Ri Gap, Kim Hyong Gwon, Pak Kun Won and Ri Je U also became members of the first party organization as did Pak Cha Sok and Ri Jong Rak whom I was intending to appoint as the commander of the Korean Revolutionary Army.

Jinmyong School stood in the fields in front of Jiajiatun, some 500 metres away from the village. Pussy willow fields covering some five or six hectares stretched to the east and south of the school, and in the middle of the willow fields a wide river, the River Wukai, flowed around the southeast side of the school. There were ponds and marshes from the east side of the school to the village. There was a path to Jinmyong School only from the west. If the corner was properly guarded there was no knowing if anything was happening at the school. Even if there was some danger one could easily escape into the willow fields.

That night we held a meeting by posting double and treble sentries on the west gateway where spies might appear. I still remember how the frogs croaked noisily in the rice fields. This noise stirred up mysterious feelings in me.

My most unforgettable impression of when the first party organization was formed is how Kim Won U took such trouble to put up a red flag beside the speaker's table when preparing the meeting place. The red colour of that flag clearly reflected our determination to fight for the revolution till the last drop of our blood.

Even now I think of Jinmyong School whenever the first party organization is mentioned, and when I think of Jinmyong School I picture in my mind the unforgettable flag that stood slantwise by the speaker's table.

That day I did not make a long speech. We had talked a great deal about forming the first party organization during the Kalun Meeting. Therefore, there was no need to explain our aim in forming it at length.

I simply set the tasks for the members of the party organization of expanding the basic party organizations and establishing a system of unified guidance over them, of achieving firm organizational and ideological unity within the ranks and comradesly solidarity, and of laying a solid mass foundation for the revolution. As the means for realizing this I emphasized the need for the party organization to hold fast to the independent stand in all its activities and closely combine the work of building up the party organization with the anti-Japanese struggle.

We did not adopt a new Programme and Rules for the party. The Programme and Rules of the DIU clarified the ultimate goal and immediate fighting tasks for us communists, and the revolutionary line and strategic policies adopted at the Kalun Meeting provided details on the path we should follow and the rules for our conduct.

We gave the first party organization the simple name of the Society for Rallying Comrades. That name embodied the high aims and will of us who were taking the first step in the revolution by winning over comrades, and who were determined to develop the revolution in depth and achieve its final victory by continually discovering and rallying those comrades who would share their fate with us.

All the comrades who joined the Society for Rallying Comrades stood up and made fiery speeches full of strong emotions. Kim Hyok recited an impromptu poem the content of which was: "Now we are sailing. Our ship has left the port. We're rowing towards the ocean on a heavy sea."

Following Kim Hyok's recitation Choe Hyo Il stood up and delivered a speech. On finishing his speech he said:

"Song Ju, if we were not in a classroom but on a mountain, I would like to fire a salute in memory of this occasion!"

I told him he should fire a gun to his heart's content on the day we confronted the Japanese, and that the day was not far off. We felt the urge to fire big guns, not just pistols, in commemoration of the formation of the first party organization. Indescribable indeed were our joy and pride as we solemnly pledged to the times and history that, being party members of Korea with their own party organization, we would devote our lives to the revolution.

When, 15 years later, I was lying on a straw mat in the floor-heated room of my home which smelled of my childhood, following the founding of the Party in the liberated country, I set aside all my cares and recollected with deep emotion how we had formed the first party organization in Kalun.

The first party organization—the Society for Rallying Comrades—was the embryo and seed of our Party; it was an organization with the importance of a parent body in forming and expanding the basic organizations of the party. Since acquiring its first party organization our revolution has been winning victory after victory under the leadership of the communists from the new generation who have not been influenced by factions and are as pure and fresh as driven snow. From that time the struggle of the Korean communists to build an independent party made dynamic headway on the strong current of the great anti-Japanese war.

Afterwards we sent the members of the Society for Rallying Comrades to various areas and formed party organizations in the northernmost part of Korea along the River Tuman and in many regions of Manchuria.

I took charge of the work of forming party organizations in the homeland. In the autumn of 1930 I went to Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, where we had a reasonably great influence, and there formed a party organization in the homeland.

Sharing life and death, good times and bad with the masses, our young party organizations marched through the anti-Japanese war, always in the vanguard. In the course of this they became tempered as an iron-strong vanguard detachment and grew into an indestructible force which enjoyed the absolute love and trust of the masses.

We had our own organization, but in conducting our work we maintained close relations with the Chinese party. Although we were Korean communists we consistently supported the Chinese revolution and fought in the interests of the Chinese party and people, proceeding from the time-honoured neighbourly relationship between the Korean and Chinese peoples, the similarity of the circumstances in which the two countries found themselves and the commonness of the mission which the revolutionaries of the two countries assumed before the times. Whenever the Chinese party and people won a victory in their struggle to liberate their nation, we rejoiced over it as over our own, and when they experienced a temporary setback or went through twists and turns, we shared their sorrow.

Since the Korean communists were conducting their activities in China, they could not receive help from the Chinese people nor could they firmly maintain the anti-imperialist united front unless they had contact with the Chinese party.

We attached importance to our relations with the Chinese party also because there were many Koreans in the party organizations under the Manchurian provincial party committee. There were also many Koreans in the east Manchuria special district party committee; the leadership bodies of the county party committees and district party committees in east Manchuria were made up mainly of Koreans, and more than 90 per cent of party members in east Manchuria were Koreans. They played a central, leading role in the party organizations in east Manchuria.

The large number of Korean party members in Manchuria was attributable to the fact that Koreans comprised the greater part of those pioneers who launched the communist movement in Jiandao.

It was after the Japanese imperialists occupied Manchuria that I

began to have relations with the Chinese Communist Party. When I was forming the DIU at Hwasong Uisuk School and when I was working in Jilin and Wujiazi I had no contact with the Chinese Communist Party. A revolution is naturally an undertaking that is launched independently in accordance with one's own conviction and aim, not at the dictation of somebody else. Therefore, we ourselves evolved the guiding ideology for our revolution and formed the DIU, the genesis of our Party, independently.

Imperialist Japan's occupation of Manchuria after the September 18 incident created a new situation in which Japanese imperialism became the common enemy of the Korean and Chinese peoples. This new situation required that we establish relations with the Chinese Communist Party.

Around the time of the meeting at Mingyuegou in the winter of 1931 I, while staying at Cao Ya-fan's house, began to have relations with the Chinese Communist Party for the first time. When he was studying in Jilin, Cao Ya-fan did Young Communist League work with me, and later at Helong he taught at a school, and was in contact with the Chinese Communist Party. Later, when I was conducting activities in Wangqing and other areas after forming the guerrilla army, I established contact with Wang Run-cheng who, in a high position on the Ningnan county party committee, was also in charge of east Manchuria. When Tong Chang-rong was transferred from Dalian to the east Manchuria special district party committee, I established contact with him.

I established relations with the Chinese Communist Party in this manner, and in the course of this I became a cadre of an organization of the Chinese party. After the death of Tong Chang-rong I came into contact with Wei Zheng-min, as well as with Comrade Pan, an inspector from the Comintern.

I maintained my relations with the Chinese Communist Party throughout the whole period of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, and these relations contributed to extending the common front against the Japanese imperialists and to developing the joint struggle.

We developed the joint struggle by maintaining close relations with the Chinese Communist Party. This was a flexible measure we adopted to cope with the complex situation in those days when the Korean communists had to wage the revolutionary struggle in a foreign land. The measure also accorded with the Comintern's line of recognizing one party for one country. While developing the joint struggle with the Chinese Communist Party in every possible way, we always held high the banner of Korean liberation, the independent line of the Korean revolution which we carried out honourably. Our Chinese comrades-in-arms spoke highly of our principled stand and sincere efforts, calling them a shining example of properly combining national revolutionary duty with international duty.

Upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism, tens of thousands of the fine sons and daughters of the Korean people took part, together with the Chinese communists, in the protracted anti-Japanese struggle, experiencing trials and hardships.

When Comrade Choe Yong Gon visited China in 1963, Premier Zhou En-lai arranged a banquet in Shenyang in honour of his birthday at which he made a congratulatory speech. In his speech he said: "The Koreans played a leading role in paving the way for the revolution in northeast China. Therefore, the friendship between China and Korea is unbreakable and lasting. The Anti-Japanese Allied Army was a united armed force of the best sons and daughters of the Chinese and Korean peoples."

Comrades Yang Jing-yu, Zhou Bao-zhong and Wei Zheng-min also said on numerous occasions that the Koreans had performed great exploits in clearing the way for the revolution in northeast China.

Because we had freely given our aid in the Chinese revolution, the Chinese helped us in our cause, even at the risk of their lives.

After the reorganization of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army into the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, we formed the party committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army within the guerrilla units. That was a fruit of the expansion and development

of the first party organization formed in Kalun. Later our independent party organization spread its roots to the Korean National Liberation League, an organization at home of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, as well as to the peasants' associations and trade unions.

We were able to found a party within a month of our triumphal return home. This was because we had gained success and experience in the course of the struggle to realize the cause of party building during the protracted anti-Japanese revolution.

## **5. The Korean Revolutionary Army**

The building of a party organization put forward as an important task at the Kalun Meeting was started with the formation of the Society for Rallying Comrades, the first party organization. But we could not rest content with this. Ahead of us lay the difficult task of making rapid preparations for an armed struggle. As the first step by way of preparation for an armed struggle we formed the Korean Revolutionary Army at Guyushu. In founding a temporary political and paramilitary organization such as the Korean Revolutionary Army while planning to form standing revolutionary armed forces within a year or two, our intention was to prepare ourselves for the building of a large guerrilla force through the army's operations. We intended to lay a mass foundation for an armed struggle and gain the necessary experience for it in the course of the political and military activities of the Korean Revolutionary Army. The fact was, we had little of the knowledge we would need for the armed struggle. Our armed struggle would have to be conducted not in our own land but on the territory of a foreign country, and we needed appropriate experience. But there was no military manual or experience for us to learn from. All we had as resources was some people from the Independence Army, a small number of former cadets of Hwasong Uisuk School and a few pistols. Beyond this we had nothing. We had to secure our own arms and accumulate military experience for ourselves.

We formed the Korean Revolutionary Army as a temporary setup in order to attain this goal. At Guyushu Kim Won U and Ri Jong Rak made preparations for founding the Revolutionary Army initially and then, later, Cha Kwang Su was sent to complete the preparations. Such preparations were promoted extensively in many places. The

main aspect of the preparations was to select young people as recruits and obtain arms. As a guideline for gaining people and arms we set good work with the soldiers of the Independence Army and the winning over of sensible people who fell in with progressive ideas. If many ex-soldiers joined the Revolutionary Army, they could form its first teaching staff so that it would be quite possible to train those young people who were novices in military affairs. That was why our comrades did a great deal of work among the Independence Army men under the influence of the Kukmin-bu organization. It was our policy to persuade and win over to our camp the progressive-minded men of the Independence Army and enlist them in the Revolutionary Army when they were fully prepared ideologically.

In this period the Kukmin-bu organization was still divided into two groups—the pro-Kukmin-bu and anti-Kukmin-bu factions—and the struggle for power continued. The pro-Kukmin-bu faction had control over the Korean residents in Manchuria and the anti-Kukmin-bu faction held sway over the Independence Army. This led in the end to an estrangement between the people and the army. In the summer of 1930 the antagonism between the two factions developed into terrorist activity to assassinate the cadres of the other side, and this resulted in a complete rupture between the two forces. This being the situation, not only the rank and file but also the platoon leaders and company commanders looked upon the people of the highest levels with distrust and would not readily obey their orders. They were more willing to listen to our operatives.

Cha Kwang Su conducted his work with the soldiers of the Independence Army in the Tonghua, Huinan and Kuanxi areas, and Ri Jong Rak educated his men at Guyushu in preparation for their enlistment in the Revolutionary Army. Ri Jong Rak had originally belonged to the first company of the Independence Army under the control of Jongui-bu at Guyushu before coming to Hwasong Uisuk School, where he joined the Down-with-Imperialism Union. The cadets at the school who came from the first company with Ri Jong Rak included Pak Cha Sok, Pak Kun Won, Pak Pyong Hwa, Ri Sun

Ho and many other young men. After the school had closed, Ri Jong Rak returned to his old company at Guyushu and was appointed its deputy commander and then commander. In those days, unlike now, the strength of the army was quite small, so the company counted for a great deal as an armed force. Even the Kukmin-bu machinery, which was regarded as the most powerful of all Korean organizations in Manchuria, had only nine companies under it. Naturally, therefore, a company commander was highly respected among the Independence Army soldiers. At Guyushu Ri Jong Rak enjoyed great prestige.

As Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Su and Pak So Sim conducted revolutionary activities vigorously under the protection of the Independence Army force controlled by Choe Chang Gol in the Liuhe area in the years 1928-29, so our comrades dispatched to Guyushu worked under the protection of the Independence Army unit commanded by Ri Jong Rak. Ri Jong Rak still had a very strong will and was extremely enthusiastic about the revolution. After Hwasong Uisuk School was closed down, he returned to his old company and acquitted himself well in the assignment I had given him in Huadian to work efficiently with the Independence Army men. He was daring, resolute, quick of judgement and had great ability to command. On the other hand he lacked cool reason and thinking power. He was rash, hot-tempered and self-opinionated. These I think were his chief faults which in later days led him to betray the revolution.

Certain people said that since the Independence Army's line of command was in disorder and there was great confusion within it, the companies scattered in different areas should be disarmed and the reactionaries of Kukmin-bu purged. They insisted that the mantle of the Independence Army be thrown off and operations conducted openly, arms procured and a showdown be had with the Kukmin-bu organization. We strictly guarded against such a tendency, so as to avoid a Left error being committed in work with the Independence Army.

My uncle Hyong Gwon formed two operational groups and went

to the Changbai area. He set up his base of operations on the mountain behind Diyangxi and formed branch organizations of the Paeksan Youth League, Peasants Union, Anti-Japanese Women's Association and Children's Expeditionary Corps throughout Changbai in order to obtain weapons and awaken the people politically. Young people in the area were drawn into these organizations and given military training. Through the efforts of uncle Hyong Gwon the Independence Army forces in the Changbai region came under our influence.

In parallel with the work of selecting new recruits and creating military reserves, activities to obtain weapons continued at full pace. In the procurement of arms, the greatest feat was performed by Choe Hyo Il. Choe was a salesman in a Japanese guns shop in Tieling. At the time many Japanese dealt in firearms in Manchuria. They sold guns both to bandits and to Chinese landlords. Choe Hyo Il was a young man with only a primary school education, but he was proficient in Japanese. When he spoke it, he was so fluent that nobody could tell if he was a Korean or a Japanese. Because he was too bright for a shop-assistant and because he spoke Japanese so well, the owner of the shop put great trust in him.

The man who won him over to our cause was Jang So Bong. When we were working to establish a base in Kalun, Jang So Bong moved about the areas of Changchun, Tieling and Gongzhuling and, by chance, made the acquaintance of Choe Hyo Il. Having met him several times, he realized that Choe was a faithful and upright man. He drew him into the membership of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and introduced him to Ri Jong Rak. From that time on Choe Hyo Il conducted activities among our enemies in Tieling. Maintaining contact with Ri Jong Rak, he secretly sold weapons to the companies of the Independence Army. Although the owner of the shop knew that the weapons sold by Choe Hyo Il were going to Koreans, he was so eager to boost his sales that he showed no signs of knowing about it. At first he sold weapons to the Chinese and then to the Independence Army men but, in the end, turned the Japanese shop

in Tieling into something of an exclusive shop for supplying and delivering weapons to the communists. In the process of this his world view changed beyond recognition. Every time Ri Jong Rak and Jang So Bong met me, they boasted that they had taken in a fine young man in Tieling. So inwardly I came to entertain great expectations of Choe Hyo Il.

In 1928 or 1929 Choe came to Jilin to see me. I found him handsome, with the fair complexion of a young girl. Nevertheless, despite his looks, he was a heavy drinker. According to the criterion of a revolutionary, this was something of a drawback. We dined together and talked for many hours in a hotel. When he, imitating the insinuating voice of a Japanese “madam,” told me some scandal about the emperor and high-ranking military and political figures of Japan and the five quisling ministers of Korea, I held my sides with laughter. He had a wife of rare beauty and was looked on with envy by others, but he was carefree and quite indifferent to the comforts of home. For all this, he was amazingly bold and strong-willed in the revolutionary struggle, which belied his fair, girlish features. It was on the eve of the Kalun Meeting that he fled to Guyushu with his wife, bringing ten or so firearms along with him from the Japanese shop. He was given a hearty welcome because he had come when we were busy preparing for the formation of a small military and political organization as a temporary step towards building a permanent revolutionary armed force.

We realized through reports made by our comrades that everything was ready for founding the Korean Revolutionary Army. When I arrived in Guyushu I found that the list of names of the men selected for the army and the necessary weapons were all in order and that even the site for the ceremony of founding the army and the names of those attending the ceremony had been decided.

The ceremony of founding the Korean Revolutionary Army took place in the yard of Samgwang School on July 6, 1930. Before distributing the arms I made a brief speech. I made it clear that the Korean Revolutionary Army was a political and paramilitary

organization of the Korean communists formed in preparation for launching an anti-Japanese armed struggle and announced that it would serve as the basis for building a permanent revolutionary armed force in the future. The basic mission of the Korean Revolutionary Army was to enlighten and awaken the masses of the people in towns and farm villages and unite them under the banner of anti-Japanese resistance and, at the same time, to gain experiences in the armed struggle and prepare for the formation of fully-fledged armed forces in the future. In the speech I set out the immediate tasks of the army—to build up a backbone to serve as the basis for the formation of anti-Japanese armed units in the future, to lay a mass foundation for the revolutionary army to rely on, and to make full military preparations for starting an armed struggle.

We formed many units under the Korean Revolutionary Army, calling them by number. On my recommendation Ri Jong Rak, who was a veteran of military affairs and had great leadership ability, was appointed commander of the Korean Revolutionary Army.

Some historians confuse the Korean Revolutionary Army created by Kukmin-bu with the military organization of the same name we founded at Guyushu. They have good reason to do so because many of the members of the former were admitted to our Revolutionary Army. The two military organizations had the same name but differed in their guiding idea and mission. The Korean Revolutionary Army produced by the Kukmin-bu setup had no real identity because its name and commanders were changed often due to the continued antagonism and disputes in its practical activities, which was a reflection of its internal conflicts. But our Korean Revolutionary Army was a political, paramilitary organization guided by the communist idea which engaged in both mass political work and military activities.

When we founded the Korean Revolutionary Army, we debated a great deal over its name. Because it was the first armed force organized by the Korean communists, its name should have the flavour of something new, we said and discussed the matter heatedly.

Various proposals were made.

I persuaded them to call our armed force the Korean Revolutionary Army, adopting the name of the army of Kukmin-bu. I told them that when forming the Down-with-Imperialism Union we had named it without using words suggestive of communism in order not to irritate the nationalists, and that if the army we were founding should assume the cover of the Korean Revolutionary Army, it would not offend the nationalists and would be convenient for it to operate. The name the Korean Revolutionary Army benefitted our force in many ways in its later activities.

After its formation the Korean Revolutionary Army was organized into many groups and these groups were dispatched to various areas. A few groups were sent into the homeland. When we sent them into Korea, we wanted to lay the mass foundation for an armed struggle and step up the revolutionary struggle at home while at the same time aiming to test the feasibility of an armed struggle in the homeland.

With Ri Je U, Kong Yong, Pak Jin Yong and others who had been absent at the foundation ceremony of the Korean Revolutionary Army we decided to form an operational group to work in the homeland and to assign it the task of forming revolutionary organizations among the broad masses by going to North Phyongan Province by way of Singalpa and the Rangnim Mountains. Ri Je U was to lead the group. In 1928 we gave instructions to those who were operating in the areas of Fusong and Naitoushan to move their operational base to the Changbai area where there were many Koreans. On these instructions Ri Je U moved to the Changbai area where he organized people and conducted activities for the political enlightenment of the masses, going deep into the homeland.

We decided to send into the homeland another operational group headed by my uncle Hyong Gwon and consisting of Choe Hyo Il, Pak Cha Sok and another. The task of this group was to cross the River Amnok at Changbai and advance almost as far as Pyongyang, going via Phungsan, Tanchon and Hamhung. The inclusion of Pak Cha Sok in this group was due to uncle Hyong Gwon's friendship with him.

He had been engaged in underground activities while working as a teacher in the rural areas outside Jilin until the winter of 1928 when he took part in forming revolutionary organizations in the Fusong area together with Kye Yong Chun and Ko Il Bong. At that time Pak Cha Sok became a bosom friend of my uncle. When he heard that my uncle was going into the homeland, Pak insisted on going with him. Understanding his feelings, we readily granted his request. The members of the Korean Revolutionary Army who had left for their appointed areas of activity conducted their operations fearlessly everywhere.

There was a man by the name of Hyon Tae Hong among the members of the Korean Revolutionary Army who were working in the Sipingjie and Gongzhuling areas. He was arrested while working among the masses in Sipingjie and taken to Changchun. At the moment of his arrest he handed over his weapon to his comrade unnoticed. The police tortured him brutally to get him to tell them where he had concealed his weapon. Hyon Tae Hong mentioned the name of a railway station and “confessed” that he had buried it under an aspen tree near the station. He was seeking a chance to escape. Pleased to hear this, the police took him by train to where he said he had buried his pistol. While the train was moving Hyon knocked down the two policemen escorting him with his handcuffs and jumped off the train. Then he crawled on all fours using his elbows and knees and returned to his revolutionary organization in Kalun. His comrades in Kalun released him from the handcuffs by using a file. Even after undergoing this dreadful ordeal, he went to Gongzhuling as soon as he was restored to health and continued to work, only to be caught again, this time by the Japanese police. Gongzhuling was a leased territory wrested from China by the Japanese imperialists, so it was under the jurisdiction of the Japanese. He fought bravely in the court, too. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and was serving his term in the Sodaemun prison in Seoul when he died of the injuries he had suffered at the hands of the brutal Japanese imperialist torturers.

Entering the 1930s, the strength of Ri Je U's group increased to dozens of men. Through their efforts, successive anti-Japanese organizations came into being in the Changbai area, a school and an evening class were opened in every village, and debating contests, entertainments and athletics meetings took place frequently. This filled the people with revolutionary ardour. But at that time the Japanese imperialists played the trick of sending an armed group of blackguards disguised as mounted bandits to rob a Korean village to lure out Ri Je U and his company. But we had warned them to be wary of mounted bandits, so they did not allow themselves to be caught in the trap. There was only a skirmish in which a few men were wounded, and the incident did not develop into a full-scale battle.

Later the soldiers of a reactionary warlord, in league with the mounted bandits of the Japanese imperialists, launched a surprise attack on the armed men of Ri Je U causing a great damage. Pak Jin Yong died a heroic death during the battle and Ri Je U was taken prisoner. In an attempt to escape the disgrace by killing himself, Ri Je U, though bound hand and foot, thrust a kitchen knife into his throat, but he failed. He was handed over to the Japanese police and escorted to Seoul. There he was sentenced to death and died immediately in prison. Kong Yong was also killed, trying to form a united front with some bogus communists who had been sent there by the Japanese imperialists to lure out and capture the anti-Japanese fighters in Manchuria.

It was immediately after the massive peasants' uprising in Tanchon that I received word of the tragic fate of Comrades Kong Yong, Ri Je U and Pak Jin Yong. When the messenger told me of the fact, I could not calm myself for a long time. My head fell, above all because I felt I had committed the sin of being seriously undutiful to my father. The three men were all members of the Independence Army my late father had particularly cared for and were pioneers of the change of course from the nationalist movement to the communist. My bitter grief over the tragic fate of Ri Je U, Kong

Yong and Pak Jin Yong was partly due to having lost a reliable operational group that was committed to the implementation of the decision of the Kalun Meeting, but mainly it was due to the regrettable loss of pathfinders in the change of course who had been striving to make my father's will the reality.

At my father's funeral Kong Yong and Pak Jin Yong had led the pallbearers. They told my mother they would dress in mourning in my place, so that I need not wear a mourning suit. They must have thought it would be a pitiful sight if I, a boy of 14, took to mourning. For three years the two of them remained in mourning, wearing mourner's hats made of hemp. At the time the Independence Army training centre was located at Wanlihe a short distance from the town of Fusong. Once or twice every week Kong Yong would come to my home with a load of firewood on his A-frame carrier and pay his respects to my mother. His wife, too, often visited my home bringing with her edible herbs such as aralia shoots and anise. Sometimes, Kong Yong would come with a sack of rice over his shoulder. Their support was a great help to our family. My mother treated them as kindly as she would do her own brother and sister, sometimes, even admonishing them sternly for their mistake with the authority of an elder sister. After Kong Yong left for Manchuria to join the independence movement, his wife had lived alone in Pyoktong. Then one year she had come to Fusong, to her husband. On her face was a scar from a burn she had got while cooking noodles at home. As he looked at her scarred face, Kong Yong said sullenly that he would not live with her any longer because her face was so ugly. My mother got angry and scolded him severely, "I say. Are you in your right mind to say that? Your wife has come a long way to see you, and instead of seating her on a cushion of gold for that, you have the outrageous idea of saying that you won't live with her." Kong Yong had always been submissive to my mother, and that day he apologized to her with a deep bow.

I first learned through a newspaper report about the activities of the armed group led by my uncle Hyong Gwon that had gone into the

homeland. I cannot remember accurately if it was when I was in Harbin or somewhere else that a comrade brought me the newspaper. It said that an armed group of four men had appeared in Phungsan and shot down a police sergeant, before hijacking a car coming from Pukchong and disappearing in the direction of Huchi Pass.

The comrade who brought me the newspaper was in raptures about the gunshot that had rung out in the homeland, but that gunshot caused me great anxiety. How was it that they had fired shots in Phungsan, which could be called the threshold of the country? I remembered my uncle's fiery temper. It seemed likely that he had lost control of himself and fired his gun.

From his early childhood he had behaved in a manly fashion and was as stubborn as a mule. In mentioning uncle Hyong Gwon, I recall the episode of a bowl of gruel made from coarsely ground millet. As this happened while I was staying in Mangyongdae, my uncle must have been eleven or twelve years old at the time. Our family used to eat gruel of coarsely ground millet every evening. Needless to say it tasted bad, but the most irritating thing of all was that every time we swallowed it the husks of millet pricked our throats. I hated the gruel. One day my uncle, who was sitting at the table, hit his bowl with his head and overturned it, spilling the hot millet gruel placed before him by his mother, that is, my grandmother. He knocked his head so hard against the bowl that the bowl went flying down to the floor and his forehead began to bleed. He was still young and not fully matured, and was angry to be so poor as to have to eat gruel, so he had vented his grievance on the bowl of coarse gruel. Grandmother gave him a good scolding, saying, "To see you complain about your food, you won't amount to anything." But turning round, she wept.

As he grew up, my uncle would bother about the scar on his forehead. When he came to China to live with us, he used to wear quite a long forelock to hide the scar. He came to China when we were living in Linjiang. My father had him stay with us in order to educate him. As he was a teacher, he could see that his brother, while he lived with us, would get through a secondary school course

without even attending school. His idea was to bring him up to be a revolutionary. While my father was alive, my uncle grew up reasonably soundly under his influence and control. But after my father's death, he lost control of himself and began to behave recklessly. His disposition of his younger days when he had hit his head against the bowl of coarse millet gruel revived, to our astonishment. Now that his eldest brother was gone, he could not remain calmly at home but roamed everywhere, including Linjiang, Shenyang (Mukden) and Dalian. He had been betrothed to a girl of his parents' choosing when he went home. People with an inside knowledge of our family would say that having returned from home he was unsettled because the girl was not to his liking. Indeed, that could have been the reason, but the main reason for his restlessness was that he could not overcome the despair and sorrow he felt over my father's death.

When I returned home after leaving Hwasong Uisuk School, my uncle was still continuing to live recklessly without coming to his senses, like a drunken man. Life for my family was very difficult; my mother was barely eking out a living from her job of washing and sewing. Ri Kwan Rin had come to my house with some money and rice and was helping my mother in her work. She must have felt sorry to see how hard life was for our family. My uncle should have acted as the head of the family in place of my deceased father. In our household there were things he could have attended to. There was my father's surgery, where some medicines remained, though not very many, but if it had been run properly, it could have been of some help to us. But my uncle ignored the surgery. Frankly speaking, I was extremely displeased at his behaviour at the time. So one day at home I wrote a long letter to be read by my uncle when I was away. As I was in my secondary school days, and had a strong sense of justice, I could not stand anything that was unfair, no matter if it concerned someone older than me or not. I placed the letter under my uncle's pillow before leaving for Jilin. My mother, however, thought it quite improper for me to criticize my uncle in that way.

“Although your uncle is now up in the air like a cloud unable to set his mind on anything, he will surely join the right path in due course. Say what you may, he will not lose sight of the main thing. He can be relied upon to return home when he gets tired of roaming. So don’t do anything, not even criticize him. How dare a nephew criticize his uncle?”

Thus my mother admonished me. It was typical of my mother to think that way. But I still left the letter for my uncle.

When I returned to Fusong on a holiday after a year at Yuwen Middle School in Jilin, I was surprised to find my uncle Hyong Gwon leading a steady life. My mother’s prediction had been correct. He did not say a word about my letter, but I could surmise that the letter had had a considerable effect on him. In the winter of that year he joined the Paeksan Youth League. After my departure from Fusong he became deeply involved in the work of expanding the youth league. The next year he was admitted to the Young Communist League on the recommendation of his comrades. This was how he became associated with the revolutionary ranks. From 1928 he guided the work of the Paeksan Youth League organizations in the Fusong, Changbai, Linjiang and Antu areas on the instructions of the Young Communist League.

After their neighbours, who had read in the newspapers that in Phungsan there had occurred an incident in which a Japanese police sergeant was shot dead, reported the fact, our family in my home village of Mangyongdae learned of my uncle’s arrest. Hearing of it, my grandfather said, “Why, just as his eldest brother did, is he also shooting the Japanese to death? Who knows what will come of it in the end? But in any case, it was well done.”

Only after some time had passed did I hear the full story of the activities conducted by the operational group in the homeland at Phungsan. On August 14, 1930, on its way to Tanchon, after crossing the River Amnok, the group stopped for a while in the blueberry fields of Hwangsuwon near Phabal-ri, Phungsan, where they were regarded suspiciously by the wicked police sergeant Opashi (real

name Matsuyama) who was passing on a bicycle. The fellow was a devil who came to Phungsan in 1919 and had been tormenting the Koreans ever since. So the local people called him by the nickname Opashi (stinging bee–Tr.). The inhabitants of the area harboured a deep-seated grudge against this villain. As the group were passing in front of the police sub-station this Opashi called them into his office. No sooner had he set foot in the room than my uncle fired and killed the scoundrel. Then he made an anti-Japanese speech openly before the people. Dozens of people listened to his speech. Ri In Mo, the war-correspondent of the Korean People's Army, who is known to the world for never having recanted in spite of many years in prison in south Korea, said that he heard his speech in Phabal-ri.

Although the members of the group had the enemy at their heels, they attempted to approach the areas being swept by the flames of the peasants' uprising.

We considered the peasants' uprising in Tanchon to be very important. In the places where the uprising broke out there must, without doubt, have been leaders of the mass movement and a large organized force of politically and ideologically awakened and active revolutionary people. While the enemy was searching frantically for the prime movers in the rebel areas, we were eager to find the central figures from among the insurgent masses such as O Jung Hwa of Wangqing, Kim Jun of Longjing and Jon Jang Won of Onsong. By establishing contact with such core elements and exerting a good influence on them, we could lay the foundation for promoting the revolutionary struggle at home. If we could open the door into the Tanchon area, we could proceed by this route to Songjin, Kilju and Chongjin and, further, advance to Pyongyang by way of Hamhung, Hungnam and Wonsan. This was why we had given the operational group at home led by my uncle Hyong Gwon the assignment of meeting the heroes of the peasants' insurgence in Tanchon.

The armed group which had left Phabal-ri after the shooting captured a motor coach carrying the head of the criminal section of the Phungsan police station at the approach to the valley of Pongo.

They disarmed the police officer and then made an anti-Japanese address to him and the other passengers. They proceeded to Munang-ri, Riwon County, and talked to the charcoal burners in the valleys of Paedok and Taebawi and in various other places to enlighten them politically. They worked actively all the time in spite of the difficult conditions. On their way to Pukchong, they divided the armed group into two teams—one with my uncle and Jong Ung and the other with Choe Hyo Il and Pak Cha Sok. They agreed that the two teams would meet in the town of Hongwon before going on their way.

Early in September my uncle and Jong Ung raided the Kwangje Temple on Mt. Taedok, Pukchong County, where an enemy search party was ensconced and then, while moving towards Hongwon and Kyongpho, encountered an enemy squad in the vicinity of the Jolbu Rock. There they shot the head of the Jonjin police sub-station dead. My uncle entered Hongwon that very day and went to the house of Choe Jin Yong which was where they had promised to meet.

Choe Jin Yong had been a member of the Independence Army and a close acquaintance not only of my uncle but also of myself. When he had been the head of the Ansong area control office in Fusong, he had often called at our home. Earlier, when he had been a sub-county chief in Korea, he had embezzled some public money and, when this was brought to light and a scandal ensued, he had absconded to Manchuria where he had placed himself under the orders of the Jongui-bu organization. He had once stayed with us for many months, eating the meals served him by my mother. When the Japanese imperialists showed signs of invading Manchuria, Choe left Fusong on the excuse that he was too old to work for the Independence Army any longer. He left for Hongwon saying that he would buy a small orchard, and spend the rest of his life honestly. As soon as he arrived in Hongwon he became a secret agent of the Japanese imperialists. My uncle did not know this.

Choe hid my uncle in a corner of the yard on the pretext that the enemy was keeping a sharp lookout, and then rushed off to the police station and informed them that the armed gang from Manchuria was

staying at his house. When my uncle was taken to the police station, Choe Hyo Il was already there. Needless to say, it was Choe Jin Yong that had informed against Choe Hyo Il, too. Only then did my uncle realize that Choe Jin Yong was a stooge of the Japanese imperialists. The treachery of Choe Jin Yong was a shock, a bolt out of the blue. He used to repeat over and over again, like a chant to Amitabha, that he would never forget, even in his grave, the kindness of Song Ju's mother who had served him with three hearty, warm meals and a bottle of wine every day for many months. Who could have imagined that this creature would some day turn traitor? When I first heard that Choe Jin Yong had turned informer against my uncle, I could hardly believe my ears. Even now I say that it is good to believe in people but that it is mistaken to harbour illusions about them. Illusions are unscientific things and so, if one harbours illusions, one may commit an irreparable mistake, no matter how perceptive one may be.

Jong Ung was the only one who slipped out of the enemy's net. He had been taken into the group as a guide by my uncle when leaving for the homeland. Being a native of Riwon, he was familiar with the area on the east coast. But later he, too, was arrested in Chunchon because of a spy.

My uncle was detained in Hongwon police station for a while after his arrest, and then transferred to Hamhung gaol where he was put to mediaeval torture. The news of his litigating action in Hamhung local court reached me through many lips. Having accused the Japanese imperialists of their crimes, he had loudly declared that armed burglars should be fought off with arms, I heard. What force was it that had made him behave so proudly in the court? It was his faith in and devotion to the revolution, I believe. If there was anything my uncle feared more than death, it must have been the betrayal of the faith which makes a man righteous and courageous and enables him to be the most dignified being in the world.

Choe Hyo Il was sentenced to death and my uncle to 15 years imprisonment. My uncle and his comrades-in-arms sang revolutionary songs loudly in the court. After singing they shouted

slogans. The members of the operational group appealed to the Seoul court of review in order to continue their struggle for a longer period. The Japanese imperialists, after their bitter experience at the trial in Hamhung, heard the case behind closed doors in Seoul, without an audience. They sustained the decision of Hamhung local court. Choe Hyo Il was hanged shortly after the court ruling. He walked out to the gallows with perfect composure after making his last request to his comrades that they fight on unyieldingly.

My uncle was thrown into Mapho prison in Seoul, a prison intended mainly for long-term prisoners sentenced to more than ten years. He did not cease his struggle in prison, either. When the Japanese ruffians tried to seduce the long-term “political offenders” to abandon their stand, my uncle made a passionate speech against ideological conversion before a crowd of prisoners to stir them up and then waged a dauntless struggle at the head of the prisoners for an improvement in their treatment. I think the facts about his struggle are already widely known to the public.

Stepping up their war preparations, the Japanese rogues drove the prisoners out to work on making ammunition boxes. The prisoners were forced to do murderous labour on seventh-grade rations. Indignant at this, my uncle led a prisoners’ strike in the prison factory to protest against the jail guards who were forcing them to do the murderous labour, the anniversary of the October Revolution marking its launch. A large number of prisoners participated in this strike. In an attempt to stay the influence of my uncle, the prison authorities locked him up in a dark isolation cell and, not content with this, put irons on his wrists and ankles so that the irons cut into his flesh whenever he made the slightest movement. He was given only one meal a day, and this a ball of rice mixed with soy beans as small as a child’s fist. Since my uncle continued with his struggle in such terrible conditions, the prison authorities whimpered that Kim Hyong Gwon was turning the Mapho prison red. One day, while working in the prison factory, Pak Cha Sok heard that we were actively engaged in an armed struggle throughout Manchuria. He

conveyed this news to my uncle. On hearing it, my uncle wept for the first time since being put behind bars and, holding the hands of Pak Cha Sok, said in a faltering voice, as I heard later:

“I think my days are numbered. But you survivors, I pray that you fight on to the last. When you have served your time and get out of here, be sure to go and see my mother in Mangyongdae and tell her about me. ... If you meet Song Ju some day, tell him my story and let him know that I fought to the last moment of my life without yielding. This is my last request.”

My uncle was now so weak that he was confined to bed. When he was on the verge of death, the prison authorities sent notice to Mangyongdae permitting us to go and see him. My uncle Hyong Rok got a loan of 40 *won* and went to Seoul with Pong Ju, a relation, and met his younger brother Hyong Gwon for the last time.

“When we arrived at the prison, a warder took us to the infirmary. I saw all the other sick prisoners sitting up, but our Hyong Gwon who was at death’s door was lying in bed looking like a skeleton. To think how bitter I felt at that time! ... Seeing me, he just mumbled, unable to utter a word. He was so ghastly I could hardly believe he was my brother. In spite of that, he smiled at me and said, ‘Elder brother, although I’m going before attaining my aim, the Japanese villains are bound to fall.’ Hearing him say this, I thought it was just like our Hyong Gwon.”

This is what uncle Hyong Rok said to me when I visited my old home after my triumphal return to the homeland. When I heard this, I wept at the thought of uncle Hyong Gwon. And I felt remorse for the criticism I had once levelled at him in a letter.

My uncle Hyong Rok, who had almost fainted at the sight of his brother in such a terrible condition, said to the warder:

“Please allow me to take my brother Hyong Gwon home for treatment.”

“No,” said the warder, “your brother will live in prison if he should live and should die the ghost of a prison if he should die. ... You can’t take him home.”

“Then I will take his place in prison. After he has received treatment and recovered, he can come back here.”

“You fool, where is there such a law that permits a man to serve a prison term in the place of another?”

“Why, you make up laws as you please, so why can’t you do this? Grant me my request, I beg you.”

“You rogue, where do you think you are to talk such nonsense? Just as the younger brother is a rogue, so the elder brother is, too. You’re all a bad lot. Get out of here right away!”

The warder shouted at him and turned him out of the prison. At his wit’s end, uncle Hyong Rok put 16 *won* in the hand of the warder and asked him, “Please take care of my brother Hyong Gwon.” With this he left for Mangyongdae. Doubtless such a small amount of money had no effect on the prison guard, but that was all he had.

After returning from the prison, my uncle could not sleep for a month. When he closed his eyes, the vision of his brother rose before him and he could not bring himself to sleep. Three months later, uncle Hyong Gwon died in prison. It was early in 1936 and I was on the way to the Nanhutou area with the guerrilla unit, having returned from the second expeditionary campaign to north Manchuria. My uncle was 31 years old when he died.

So, by then gone were my father, my mother, my younger brother and now even my uncle. So all my family who had gone through unspeakable hardships and privations for the sake of the revolution were no more. When I received word in the mountains that my uncle had passed away, I made up my mind that I would not die but by all means survive to avenge the death of my uncle who was lying alone on a nameless hill in the homeland with his grief over the nation’s ruin unassuaged, and would win back my country, come what may. I have already mentioned the painful fact that when the notice of his death came, our family at Mangyongdae could not go and recover his body because they could not afford the travel expenses, and that therefore, his body was buried in the cemetery of the Mapho prison.

Just before he breathed his last, uncle Hyong Gwon told the other

inmates of a fact he had been keeping secret:

“Kim Il Sung is my nephew. He is now leading a large revolutionary force in Manchuria, thrashing the Japanese swines. It will not be long before his army storms into the country. Wait in arms to greet them. Only when we fight can we expel the Japanese ruffians and liberate the country!”

Whenever I think of my uncle Hyong Gwon, I see before my eyes my innumerable comrades-in-arms who laid down their young lives without hesitation on the road to the implementation of the decision of the Kalun Meeting. Uncle Hyong Gwon had a daughter called Yong Sil. After liberation she attended the Mangyongdae Revolutionary School. I thought I would bring her up with all care to succeed her father. But his only child was killed during a bombing raid during the war.

The feats performed by the members of the Korean Revolutionary Army who had opened up the path ahead of our revolution were truly great and noble. It was by drawing on the experiences and lessons of their heroic struggle and at the cost of the precious blood shed by them that the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army came into the world as a permanent revolutionary armed force.

## 6. Revolutionary Poet Kim Hyok

A revolution begins with the recruiting of comrades. For a capitalist money is capital; for a revolutionary the people are the source of his strength. A capitalist builds up a fortune in money, whereas a revolutionary changes and transforms the society by drawing on the efforts of his comrades.

When young, I had many comrades. Some of them I had become friendly with in my everyday life, and some had come to share the same idea as me in the course of our struggle. Each of them was worth his weight in gold.

Kim Hyok, who nowadays is known as a revolutionary poet, was a comrade of mine. He made a lasting impression on me in my youth. It is more than half a century since his death, but I still remember him.

One day, as I was talking with my teacher Shang Yue in the corridor after a Chinese lesson, Kwon Thae Sok hurried up to me and told me that I had a visitor. He said that the stranger was standing with a spectacled man named Cha Kwang Su at the front gate.

I found a young man with a girlish, handsome face, standing, a trunk in his hand, at the gate with Cha Kwang Su, waiting for me. It was the young man, Kim Hyok, whom Cha Kwang Su had been extolling as a talent whenever he had the opportunity. Before Cha Kwang Su had time to introduce him to me, he introduced himself, saying, "I am Kim Hyok," and held out his hand for a handshake.

I gripped his hand and introduced myself. I felt a special attraction towards Kim Hyok not only because his name was already familiar to me, thanks to Cha Kwang Su's enthusiastic "advertisement," but also because his face resembled that of Kim Won U.

"Will you take Kim Hyok to the hostel and wait for me there for an hour? I could excuse myself from an ordinary lecture, but the next

lesson happens to be a literature lesson given by Shang Yue,” I said to Cha Kwang Su, after apologizing to Kim Hyok.

“Oh! Everyone is fascinated by his literature lessons. You are set on becoming a man of literature like Kim Hyok, aren’t you?” Cha Kwang Su said, jokingly, pushing back his spectacles.

“There’s no reason why I shouldn’t. The revolution seems to require a knowledge of literature, doesn’t it, Kim Hyok?”

“It is only now and here in Jilin that I hear what sounds sweet to my ear!” Kim Hyok exclaimed. “It is impossible to talk about a revolution apart from literature. The revolution is the object and source of literature. If the literature teacher is so popular I, too, want to see him.”

“I will introduce you to him later.” With this promise, I went to my class.

When I went out to the gate after the lesson, the two were still there waiting for me, talking about something like variable and invariable capital. I was caught up in the enthusiasm emanating from their voices. Remembering that Cha Kwang Su had told me that Kim Hyok was a born enthusiast, I was secretly glad to have gained a fine comrade.

“I told you to wait at the hostel, so why are you still standing here?”

“Why should we crawl about in a room like cockroaches on this fine day?” Kim Hyok remarked, looking up at the glorious sky, with one eye half-closed. “I would rather walk from here through the streets of Jilin all day, talking.”

“There is a saying that it takes a full stomach to appreciate even the best of scenery. So let’s have lunch and then go wherever you like, to Beishan or Jiangnan Park. It would be very impolite not to buy a lunch for a man who has come all the way from Shanghai to see us, wouldn’t it?”

“Seeing you, Comrade Song Ju, in Jilin, I think I wouldn’t feel hungry even if I missed several meals.”

Kim Hyok was a man of passion, a liberal in action and words.

As luck would have it, I had no money in my pocket at the time. So I took them to the Sanfeng Hotel where I would be welcomed free of charge. The people there were not only kind-hearted, but also good at cooking noodles. I explained to the hostess that I was in financial difficulties, and she served us six bowls of noodles, two for each of us.

Kim Hyok stayed with me in my room for three days, and we talked every night. On the fourth day he left for Xinantun, where Cha Kwang Su was working, in order to acquaint himself with the situation in the rest of Jilin.

At my first meeting with him I realized that he was a man of great passion. While Cha Kwang Su was boisterous, Kim Hyok was fiery. Usually he was calm and quiet but, once excited, he boiled like a blast furnace, and was extremely vehement. He had travelled the three Far Eastern countries living through weal and woe just as Cha Kwang Su had done. Though an adventurer, he was upright. Through the conversations we had I found him to be widely informed and a great theoretician. In particular, he had a profound knowledge of literature and the arts.

We talked a great deal about the mission of literature and the arts. He emphasized that literature and the arts must deal with man. After a period of gaining experience of affairs in Jilin, his views developed; he said that literature and the arts must sing the praises of the revolution. His outlook on literature was revolutionary. In consideration of his abilities, we gave him the assignment of dealing with mass cultural enlightenment for a while. Thus he gave frequent guidance to the activities of the artistic information troupe.

Because he was good at poetry, we nicknamed him Eugene Pottier. Some of us called him Heine. He himself spoke more highly of Heine and Eugene Pottier than any other poets. He liked Ri Sang Hwa best of all the Korean poets.

On the whole he liked impassioned revolutionary poems. Strangely enough, however, he liked the lyrically descriptive novels of Ra To Hyang better than the strongly assertive works of Choe So

Hae. His conflicting literary tastes led us to reflect on how strange the laws of nature were. Around us there were many instances of the harmonious combination of contrasting things. Cha Kwang Su likened them to the “harmony of positive and negative.” He said that Kim Hyok was a literary individual produced from such a harmony.

In spite of the pressure of the difficult and complex work for the revolution, Kim Hyok found time to write excellent poems. The girl students who belonged to our revolutionary organization used to jot down his poems in their pocketbooks and recite them fondly.

Kim Hyok did not struggle with his poetic expressions on paper, writing and re-writing them, but polished them from the first line to the last in his head until he decided that they were perfect. Then he would bang on the desk with his fist and write the poem down on paper. Our comrades, who knew that when he banged his fist on the desk he would produce a poem, were delighted at this, exclaiming that he had laid another “egg.” We all rejoiced over each of his new poems.

Kim Hyok had a beautiful girlfriend named Sung So Ok, who belonged to the Young Communist League. She was of slender build, but daring and ready to stand on the gallows if it was in the cause of justice. She was faithful to the Young Communist League. During the mass struggle in autumn that year against the construction of the Jilin-Hoeryong railway, I heard a speech she made in the street and found her to be extremely articulate. She loved to chant Kim Hyok’s poems, carrying them in her pocketbook. She was good at chanting poems, singing and making speeches, and she always went about in a white jacket and dark skirt, whatever the season, so almost every young man in the town of Jilin knew of her.

Kim Hyok, who always approached life with warm feelings and fused it into his poetry, was also ardent in his love for his girlfriend. Young communists loved the other sex while they worked for the revolution. Some people say that communists are devoid of human feelings and know neither life nor love that is worthy of human beings. But such people are totally ignorant of what communists are

like. Many of us loved while fighting for the revolution and made our homes in the rain of fire. In holiday seasons we used to send Kim Hyok and Sung So Ok together to Guyushu, giving them a few assignments to work among the masses. Guyushu was the girl's home town. In their leisure hours after working among the masses, they would go for walks in the thick willow woods on the River Yitong, or they would go fishing. When Kim Hyok went fishing, his girlfriend would bait his hook or pick the fish off the hook. In Beishan Park and on the River Songhua where the scenery was beautiful and on the River Yitong, their love deepened as the revolution advanced.

For some unknown reason, however, the girl's father Sung Chun Hak did not seem to be pleased with the affair. He was the founder and headmaster of Changsin School, the predecessor of Samgwang School. Having travelled and studied in the Maritime Province of Siberia, he had had some taste of modern civilization, and as such he was a particularly enlightened man. He had been the first to express his understanding of and active support for our work when, in Guyushu, we were reforming Changsin School into Samgwang School and the nationalist mass organizations into communist, revolutionary organizations. Because such a man was against their love, Kim Hyok, though normally bold, could not help feeling embarrassed.

The girl's mother, who regarded Kim Hyok as an ideal match for her daughter, connived at their association and often spoke to her husband in favour of their love. After a long period of close observation of the personality of Kim Hyok, the girl's father, too, recognized him as a stalwart revolutionary and approved their engagement. On the day of their engagement, Kim Hyok and Sung So Ok had a photograph taken together; the girl's family had a camera.

At the news of Kim Hyok's death, the desperate girl tried to drown herself in the River Yitong. Some of our comrades dragged her out of the river and managed to calm her. Later the girl continued to work faithfully for the revolution. She married Choe Il Chon, the author of *A Short History of the Korean Revolutionary Movement Overseas*,

after the death of his wife. She considered it ideal to be the life companion of a man who was as revolutionary as Kim Hyok, even though it meant raising stepchildren.

Kim Hyok's fiery character was expressed in practice in his loyalty to the revolution. As a revolutionary, he had a high sense of responsibility and loyalty. He was older than me by five years and had studied in Japan, but he never revealed any sign of such things. He always accepted sincerely the assignments we gave him. That was why I treasured him and loved him particularly.

From the summer of 1928 Kim Hyok, together with Cha Kwang Su, worked in Liuhe County. Around this time, under their guidance the social science institute (special class) was set up at Tongsong School in Gaoshanzi and a branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League was formed. Kim Hyok taught the history of human evolution, the political geography of the world, literature and music. He was very popular among the students and young people of Gaoshanzi.

Around the time when I was in east Manchuria after my release, Kim Hyok was travelling between Guyushu and Jilin to carry out the assignments given him by the organization. When I went to Dunhua, I gave him the written assignment of preparing to issue a new publication, while guiding the revolutionary organizations in Jiangdong, Jilin and Xinantun.

A while later, on my way to Kalun from Dunhua where I had been working, I dropped in on Kim Hyok and found that he was carrying out the assignment well. When I told him about the plan I had conceived while in prison and about the work that should be done at Kalun, he became excited and said that he would go at once with me to Kalun. I told him to follow me later after carrying out his assignment. He was very sorry to hear that, but he remained in Xinantun and accelerated the preparation of a new publication; then he came to Kalun.

After the meeting at Kalun we stepped up the preparation of a new publication in real earnest. Now that establishing a new revolutionary

line had become the order of the day, and now that the first Party organization with a mission to mobilize the masses for its implementation had been formed, the issuing of a publication to play the role of the Party organization's ideological mouthpiece had become a most pressing task.

With a clear understanding of this need, Kim Hyok, even after his arrival in Kalun, worked day and night preparing the manuscripts for the publication. The publication was called *Bolshevik* at his suggestion. We planned to publish *Bolshevik* in bulletin form for the purpose of equipping the masses with the revolutionary idea and then, after making full material preparations, to enlarge it into a newspaper and increase its circulation. On July 10, 1930 the inaugural issue of *Bolshevik* was finally published. It was circulated to the branch organizations of the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, many other anti-Japanese revolutionary organizations and to groups of the Korean Revolutionary Army, as well as to schools under our control to be used as teaching material. An explanation of my report at Kalun was also carried in the bulletin. *Bolshevik* played an extremely important role in giving publicity to the policy adopted at the Kalun Meeting. After a while the monthly bulletin became a weekly newspaper to meet the requirements of the readers and the developing revolutionary situation.

As the first editor of *Bolshevik*, Kim Hyok, before he left Kalun, stayed up almost every night, writing articles for publication. He was fired with enthusiasm and had hardly any rest. He went to Harbin at the head of a group of the Korean Revolutionary Army early in August 1930. Having worked mainly in Jilin, Changchun, Liuhe, Xingjing, Huaide and Yitong, he was nearly a stranger to Harbin. I myself hardly knew about the situation in this city, either.

While we were in Jilin, we realized the importance of Harbin. The city had a large industrial population. In order to go among the working class, it was necessary to venture into large cities like Changchun and Harbin and develop our strength there. As was demonstrated by the struggle against the construction of the Jilin-

Hoeryong railway and the struggle against the treacherous anti-Soviet acts of the warlords in attacking the east Chinese railways, the workers, students and other young people of that city had a strong revolutionary spirit. If proper organizational lines were laid in such a city, many people could be organized.

We considered Harbin important also because the liaison office of the Comintern was in the city. The Young Communist League organization under the Comintern was also in that city, and it maintained relations with the Young Communist League which I had formed at Yuwen Middle School in Jilin. In order to contact the Comintern, it was imperative to establish a channel in this city for free access to it.

The main purpose of sending Kim Hyok to Harbin was to enlarge our revolutionary organization in that city and establish a liaison with the Comintern. I still remember Kim Hyok who, unable to hide his excitement, cheerfully accepted that task we gave him. It was Kim Kwang Ryol (Kim Ryol) who wrote a letter of introduction for him to the Comintern.

When bidding me farewell, Kim Hyok held my hand in his for a long time. Though he used to accept and carry out instantly any task we gave him, regardless of its importance, he was always reluctant to part with us when going on a mission on his own. He liked to work with many comrades. He hated loneliness more than anything else.

Once I said to him that it was a good idea for a poet to experience solitude frequently as a part of his literary endeavours, and asked him why he was afraid of being alone. He answered frankly that, when he had wandered in indignation, solitude had been a good companion, but now that he no longer did so, he did not like it. He said that after a few months of solitude in Jiangdong he found it interesting to work among his friends in Kalun, sitting up all night, and he was sorry to be parting from us.

I gripped his hand and said, as if coaxing a child, "Kim Hyok, we have to part with each other because we are working for the revolution. When you are back from Harbin, let us go to east

Manchuria and work there together.” Kim Hyok smiled a lonely smile.

“Song Ju, don’t worry about matters in Harbin. I will carry out the task given me by the organization at all costs and come back to you comrades. When you go to east Manchuria, please make sure that I am the first you call.”

That was the last time I bid him farewell. After parting with him, I myself felt lonely.

It was towards the end of 1927 that our line began to stretch into Harbin. At that time several students who had been working their way through Jilin Middle School No. 1 had a battle with the teacher of history, a reactionary, who had insulted the Korean nation. They left the school and ran away to Harbin. Among them were some members of the Ryuji Association of Korean Students which was under our guidance.

We gave them the assignment of forming an organization in Harbin. They organized the Korean Students Friendship Society and a reading circle, centred on the Korean students at the Harbin Academy, Harbin Higher Technical School and Harbin Medical College. With the hardcore elements of these organizations the Harbin branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League was formed in the autumn of 1928, and then the Harbin branch of the Young Communist League of Korea early in 1930. In every holiday season we sent Han Yong Ae on a mission to guide the organizations in Harbin. It was thanks to these organizations that the students and young people of Harbin waged a massive struggle in response to the campaign against the construction of the Jilin-Hoeryong railway.

There were many stalwart young people in the revolutionary organizations in Harbin. Comrade So Chol, now a member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, was working in the Harbin branch of the Young Communist League at the time.

When the group of the Korean Revolutionary Army under the command of Kim Hyok arrived in Harbin, the atmosphere in the city was dreadful. Even such legitimate organizations as the students’

friendship society and the reading circle had been forced underground. The Young Communist League and other underground organizations had to remain very secretive. Kim Hyok discussed with the comrades in the city how to protect the organizations and their members. At his suggestion all the revolutionary organizations in the city were divided into small groups and sent deep underground.

Together with the members of the armed group, Kim Hyok went deep among the dockers, students and other people of different strata and worked hard to explain to them the policy that had been adopted at the Kalun Meeting. On the strength of his organizational skill and audacity, he educated the young people, enlarged the organizations, made preparations for the formation at grassroots level of party organizations and pressed on with the procurement of weapons. He also established contact with the liaison office of the Comintern, despite the enemy's strict surveillance.

Kim Hyok rendered distinguished service in improving work in Harbin. In charge of one district, he worked hard, moving in all directions. But at a secret rendezvous in Daoli in the city he encountered the enemy who surprised him and fell upon him. Having exchanged fire with the enemy, he jumped from the third floor of the building he was in, resolved to die. But his iron-like physique betrayed his resolve. Having failed in his suicide attempt, he was captured by the enemy and taken to Lushun prison. After suffering cruel torture and persecution he died in prison.

Kim Hyok, along with Paek Sin Han, was a prominent young man from the first revolutionary generation who gave his life and youth for the sake of the country and nation. The death of the talented Kim Hyok at a time when a comrade in the revolution was worth his weight in gold was a heart-rending loss to our revolution. At the news of his capture I spent many sleepless nights. Later, when I went to Harbin, grief-stricken, I walked the streets and the dock where Kim Hyok had trodden, and quietly I sang a song he had composed.

Kim Hyok, like Cha Kwang Su and Pak Hun, had joined hands with us after wandering foreign lands far away from his homeland in

pursuit of the path Korea should follow. Cha Kwang Su had written to him about us when he was wasting his life sighing, eating another's salt at a lodging house in the French concession in Shanghai. "Don't waste your valuable life in Shanghai. Come to Jilin and here you will find the leader, the theory and the movement you are seeking. Jilin is an ideal place for you! ..." Cha Kwang Su had written to him not once, but three or four times. That was how he had come to us. Having inspected the city of Jilin over several days after making our acquaintance, Kim Hyok had said, as he gripped my hand, "Song Ju, I will drop my anchor here. My life starts from now."

It was when they were studying in Tokyo, Japan, that Cha Kwang Su and Kim Hyok had become bosom friends. I still remember Kim Hyok leading the song *Internationale* and shedding tears when we were forming the Young Communist League.

That day Kim Hyok took me by the hand and said in the following vein: Once I took part in a demonstration with some Chinese students in Shanghai. When I saw them marching the streets, shouting anti-Japanese slogans, I became excited and jumped into the ranks of the demonstrators. When the demonstration was frustrated, I returned to my lodging, wondering what was to be done next, what was to be done the following day. As I belonged to no political party or organization, there was nobody to tell me where to gather or what to do the next day, or to tell me how to fight. While demonstrating I thought how good it would be if there was somebody who would shout "Forward!" to me when I was discouraged during the demonstration, how encouraging it would be if I had an organization and a leader to tell me what I should do the following day as I was going home after the demonstration, how happy I would be if I had comrades who, if I was shot and fell, would call "Kim Hyok!" "Kim Hyok!" as they wept over me, and how good it would be if they were Koreans in a Korean organization. I was haunted by these thoughts even when I was marching towards the enemy's guns, but here in Jilin, how fortunate I am to meet such fine comrades! I can hardly express my feeling of pride now that I have become a member of the

Young Communist League!

He spoke his mind without affectation. He always said that it was the greatest happiness in his life that he had found good comrades. Because of the life he had led, he composed the *Star of Korea* and disseminated it among the revolutionary organizations.

At first I knew nothing about it. On my visit to Xinantun I found some young people there singing the song.

Kim Hyok had discussed the matter with Cha Kwang Su and Choe Chang Gol without my knowledge and spread the song in Jilin and in the surrounding area. At first I rebuked them severely for singing a song which compared me to a star.

Around the time the song *Star of Korea* was being spread, my comrades changed my name and began to call me Hanbyol. They changed my name despite my protests and called me Hanbyol, meaning "One Star."

It was Pyon Tae U and other public-minded people in Wujiazi and such young communists as Choe Il Chon who proposed to change my name into Kim Il Sung. Thus I was called by three names, Song Ju, Hanbyol and Il Sung.

Kim Song Ju is the name my father gave me. When I was a child I was called Jungson. My great-grandmother called me Jungson, and the rest of my family followed suit.

As I was very fond of the name my father gave me, I did not like to be called by another name. Still less did I tolerate the people extolling me by comparing me to a star or the sun; it did not befit me, young man. But my comrades would not listen to me, no matter how sternly I rebuked them for it or argued against it. They were fond of calling me Kim Il Sung, although they knew that I did not like it.

It was in the spring of 1931 when I spent some three weeks in prison, having been arrested by the warlords in Guyushu, that the name Kim Il Sung appeared in the press for the first time. Until that time most of my acquaintances had called me by my real name, Song Ju.

It was in later years when I started the armed struggle in east

Manchuria that I was called by one name, Kim Il Sung, by my comrades. These comrades upheld me as their leader, even giving me a new name and singing a song about me. Thus they expressed their innermost feelings.

They upheld me with such enthusiasm in spite of the fact that I was much younger than they were and my record of struggle was short, because they had learned a serious lesson from the movement of the previous generation in which various parties and factions, behaving as if they alone were heroes, and without a centre of unity and solidarity, ruined the revolutionary movement through factional strife, and because they had felt to the marrow of their bones that in order to win back the country the twenty million Korean people must unite, and that in order to unite in mind and purpose they must have a centre of leadership, a centre of unity.

So it is with a strong feeling of affection that I remember Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Su and Choe Chang Gol, not because they composed a song about me and upheld me as their leader, but because they were forerunners who ushered in an era of true unity, the pride and glory of our people and the genuine source of their unfathomable strength, the unity which our nation had been unable to achieve in spite of their burning desire for it, and also because these forerunners, at the cost of their blood, created a new history of unity and cohesion in which the leader and the masses were fused into a harmonious whole in the communist movement of our country.

The communists of the new generation, my comrades in the revolution, had never feuded because they knew no lust for position, and they never broke our unity, our lifeblood, on account of any difference in opinion. In our ranks unity and cohesion were the touchstone by which we judged genuine revolutionaries. Therefore, they safeguarded unity even when they were in prison or on the gallows. They handed it down as a treasure to the communists of the next generation.

That was their first historic achievement. The noble and beautiful spirit of the communists of that generation who upheld their leader

and united behind him has become a great tradition of unity which is now called single-hearted unity by our Party.

From the days when the young communists, upholding their leader and united behind him in mind and purpose, developed the revolutionary struggle, the national liberation struggle in Korea put an end to factional strife and confusion, and began a new chapter.

More than half a century has passed since Kim Hyok left us. But the image of Kim Hyok who worked through many a night and made his way through the biting wind in Manchuria, enduring hunger and frostbite, is still vivid in my memory.

If he were alive by our side, he could do a lot of work. Whenever I find myself facing a trial or a crisis on the path of our revolution, I think of Kim Hyok, our close comrade who made his youth glorious through his struggle, fired with love for the country, and I grieve over him, who left us so early.

We have set up a bust of Kim Hyok in the front row of the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt. Taesong in order to convey his image to posterity for ever. Because he left no photograph and because all his contemporaries passed away, no one knew what he looked like. The sculptors had difficulty in making a bust of him, so I described him to them so that they could complete the bust.

## 7. The Summer of 1930

Before and after August 1, 1930, international peace day, the factionalists of the M-L group again caused a reckless revolt in the areas along the Jilin-Dunhua railway, having failed to learn a lesson from the failure of the May 30 Uprising.

The revolt placed a serious difficulty in the path of our revolution. A few organizations which had gone deep underground after the May 30 Uprising were exposed to the enemy. The organizations which we had gone to such pains to restore by touring different places after our release from prison were again dealt a blow and destroyed. Fine leading-core elements in different parts of Manchuria were arrested en masse and executed. The enemy also got another good excuse for slandering communism and suppressing the communist movement. No particular explanation is necessary as to what a great help the revolt was to the national alienation policy of the Japanese imperialists. Because of the two revolts the Koreans completely lost credit with the Chinese people. It was only later, through the guerrilla war, that we were able to restore our credit.

The Koreans in east Manchuria gradually began to be awakened to the danger of Left adventurism through the August 1 Uprising and to look on the factionalists and flunkeyists who had driven the masses into such a reckless uprising with disfavour and alarm.

We immediately dispatched political workers to the areas swept by the revolt in order to prevent the revolutionary masses from again being duped by the factionalists' propaganda.

I decided to go to Dunhua via Jilin and spend a short time restoring the organizations there.

In Jilin I found the atmosphere to be as terrible as it had been immediately after the May 30 Uprising.

Several times a day I went in disguise to visit those who had been involved in the organization.

Jilin station, the city gates and the crossroads were all enemy checkpoints. The secret agents of the Japanese consulate wandered the streets searching for Korean revolutionaries. Because the nationalist movement was on a decline the enemy placed cordons in various places to arrest the young people engaged in the communist movement rather than chasing the heads of the Independence Army as they had done at the time of the An Chang Ho incident.

I was angry at the thought that it was difficult to see familiar faces in the streets of Jilin which had previously been astir with the struggle against the Jilin-Hoeryong railway project.

When parting from me, my comrades had advised me not to stay for long in Jilin and to hurry to Hailong, Qingyuan or somewhere else. Nevertheless, it was not easy for me to leave Jilin. When I thought that I had worked hard day and night to clear a new way for the revolution there for three years, it was not easy for me to turn towards another place. If I had not taken such pains to make the revolution, even being imprisoned, I might not have felt so much affection for the city. A man naturally likes a place where he has worked heart and soul.

Fortunately I met a comrade who had been engaged in the work of the Young Communist League and he told me the whereabouts of several organization members. I gathered them together and told them not to expose any more organization members and, for the time being, bring underground such legitimate organizations as the Association of Korean Children in Jilin and the Ryuji Association of Korean Students in Jilin.

I discussed with them measures for implementing the line of the Kalun Meeting. I gave the most reliable comrades the assignment of restoring the revolutionary organizations, and I sent them to the areas assigned to them.

I decided to leave Jilin. I had too much work to do. While I was handling affairs in Jilin, I ardently desired to go to east Manchuria

and restore the wrecked organizations there.

I decided to go to Qingyuan or Hailong and take refuge at the houses of some Chinese comrades for the time being and then eliminate the aftereffects of the revolt by touring the areas that had been seriously ravaged by the enemy. If I were to go to Hailong and Qingyuan I would be able to establish contact with Choe Chang Gol whom I had not met since the Kalun Meeting and, together with him, explore the route to south Manchuria. The area around Liuhe was where Choe Chang Gol was conducting his activities.

Choe Chang Gol had formed some basic party organizations and was extending the YCLK, AIYL and other mass organizations, touring the Liuhe, Hailong and Qingyuan areas. The revolutionary movement in these areas was suffering greatly from the antagonism between the pro-Kukmin-bu group and the anti-Kukmin-bu group. With the influence of the August 1 Uprising reaching these areas at this time, revolutionary organizations were being destroyed en masse.

Between Hailong and Qingyuan lived a schoolmate of mine from my Jilin days. He was a Chinese comrade who served in our unit in the early years of the guerrilla war and returned home after the expedition to south Manchuria. I thought that if I stayed at his house for a while the white terrorist outrages would lessen and I would survive the most dangerous period.

The day I left Jilin, several female comrades saw me off at the station. They were finely dressed, like the daughters of a rich family, so I boarded the train without causing suspicion. The warlords did not think that gentlemen could possibly be involved in the communist movement.

I caught my train at a station in the suburbs which was loosely guarded by the enemy instead of at Jilin station. On the train I unexpectedly met Zhang Wei-hua.

He said, "I am going to Shenyang to study. I went to Jilin to see you and talk with you about a path for the revolution, but the city was empty. My Korean friends had all hidden themselves and only soldiers, police and cat's paws of the Japanese could be seen. I went

there to see you but I could not. Having no friends, I am going to Shenyang.” In spite of my protests, he took me to a first-class carriage. He seemed to have guessed that I was concealing my identity to avoid the terrorist outrages.

That day the police examined the passengers particularly closely. Shutting all the carriage doors, they checked the identity of each passenger as he boarded the train and even examined the belongings of some passengers. The ticket inspectors, too, were unusually careful in checking the tickets of the passengers. The aftermath of the August 1 Uprising had reached not only the cities and rural communities but also the trains. The police rudely examined the passengers but did not dare to approach Zhang Wei-hua who was wearing a good-quality Chinese robe. Because I was sitting beside him, I was not examined by the police either. The ticket inspector passed us by, without asking us to show our tickets. It was because of Zhang Wei-hua, and thanks to him I arrived safely at Hailong station.

I had papers and secret documents about me. If the police had searched me, I would have been in danger.

When I arrived at Hailong station, I saw an imposing array of policemen from the Japanese consulate standing on the platform and by the ticket gate. I sensed danger.

I became nervous when I saw that the police at the station were Japanese. Chinese police and Japanese police were all alike, but if one was caught by the Japanese police, one could expect no mercy. When they arrested Korean revolutionaries in Manchuria, they escorted them to Korea or tried them at the court of the Guandong government-general and sent them to prison in Lushun, Dalian or Jilin.

As I gazed steadily out of the window, at a loss what to do, Zhang Wei-hua invited me to go with him if I had no particularly urgent matter to attend to. He suggested that I meet his father and talk with him about his future.

According to my initial plan I was to leave the train at Caoshi station and continue to my destination. I should have gone through five or six stations more to reach Caoshi station. If Zhang Wei-hua

alighted from the train at Hailong station, there would be no one to protect me and I might be in danger.

So I decided to accept his invitation.

Zhang Wei-hua's father was waiting for him at the station. On hearing that his son was coming to Hailong, he had come to meet him on his way back from Yingkou where he had been selling *insam* (ginseng), he said. A group of privately employed soldiers with Mausers in wooden cases stuck through their belts brought a luxury carriage for us to ride in. Their appearance was imposing. Awestruck, the police from the consulate did not dare to approach us.

We rode proudly in the luxury carriage along the street in front of the station, escorted by the personal bodyguard. That day Zhang Wei-hua and I stayed at a luxury hotel where we rested well.

Zhang Wei-hua posted sentries of his personal bodyguard. They threw a two and three-deep cordon around the hotel.

His father said that he was glad to meet me again after such a long interval. He conducted me to a luxury room and treated me to a good meal. Whenever he had met me since the Fusong days he had treated me kindly. When his guests asked who I was he, by way of a joke, introduced me as his adopted son.

At first he called me his adopted son as a joke, but later came to call me so in earnest.

I had been on good terms with Zhang Wei-hua since we lived in Fusong, in the full knowledge that he was a rich man's son. As a child I had the conception that landlords were exploiters, but this was no hindrance to my relations with Zhang Wei-hua. I was on close terms with him, since he was honest, conscientious and had a strong anti-Japanese feeling. He had helped me at a critical moment, at which I was greatly moved. If, as I would normally have done, I had given him a wide berth on the plea that he was a landlord's son, he would not have protected me in the critical situation.

Zhang Wei-hua, who could have lived in luxury all his life without taking part in the revolution or supporting it, helped me out of danger together with his father. He did so because he valued our friendship.

Ever since I attended primary school in Fusong, Zhang Wei-hua had been on close terms with me, ignoring the fact that he was rich and I poor and that he was Chinese and I Korean. He showed a deep understanding for the sorrow of our people who were deprived of their country, sympathized with us and wholeheartedly supported our determination to liberate our country. He did so because he was a patriot who ardently loved his country and his nation. He saw the misfortune of the Chinese people in the misfortune of the Korean people.

Though he was a rich man, Zhang Wei-hua's father was a firm patriot who advocated national sovereignty and driving out the foreign forces. His patriotic spirit is reflected in the names of his sons. When his eldest son was born, he named him Wei-zhong. The second character of his name was derived from the first character of "Zhong Hua Min Guo" (Republic of China). He named his second son Wei-hua, his third son Wei-min and would have named a fourth son Wei-guo, if one had been born. If these characters were added together, they made up the name of the Republic of China.

Then Zhang Wei-hua asked, "In spring or autumn next year the Japanese are likely to invade. What are you going to do then?"

"If the Japanese invade, I am going to fight to repulse them. My idea is to wage an armed struggle," I said.

Zhang Wei-hua said that he, too, would fight, and wondered whether his parents would allow him to do so.

So I said, "What is a home without a country? If you want to fight against the old society, you should make a revolution. There is no other way. Otherwise, what is there to do except merely talk about communism as a public-spirited man and read books? These are the only two ways. So, you should carry out the revolution without asking your parents. This is the way to serve China and save the Chinese people. There is no other way for you. You should make the revolution with the Chinese people. If the Japanese invade, both the Chinese and the Korean people will rise in the struggle."

Thus I implanted the anti-Japanese idea in his mind while I stayed at the hotel for two or three days. Having heard my advice he said

that he, too, would make the revolution after leaving school.

I said to him, "When I am in trouble, I might need your help again. Please give me your address in Shenyang." After he had given me his address I asked him whether he could help me to reach my destination safely.

He said he would do anything to help and protect me. With this he took me in his carriage to the house of a Chinese comrade on the border between Hailong County and Qingyuan County.

The family of the man I called on was rich like Zhang Wei-hua's. Among the pioneers of the Chinese revolution there were many such people. That is why I always consider the Chinese revolution to be a special one. Many intellectuals and rich people, together with the workers and peasants, took part in the revolutionary movement, the communist movement.

When people from rich families discover contradictions that suppress a man's independence and check social development, they may be ready to take part in the revolutionary movement to do away with those contradictions. That is why fighters and pioneers defending the interests of the working people are also produced from the propertied classes, I think.

What is important is not one's class origin but one's world outlook.

If a man regards life as enjoyment he cannot make the revolution and merely tries to live in clover. If a man prefers a life worthy of a man, he, even if he is rich, takes part in the revolution.

If such far-sighted people are given a wide berth in the class revolution, the revolution suffers a great loss.

I stayed at the house of the Chinese comrade for several days. He treated me well as Zhang Wei-hua had done. I am not sure now whether his surname was Wang or Wei. I had him search for Choe Chang Gol for a few days, but of no avail. Choe Chang Gol was said to have gone deep underground after the August 1 Uprising.

I met a member of the Young Communist League in the neighbourhood of Caoshi and requested him to convey to Choe Chang Gol a letter asking him to restore the ruined organizations in

the Hailong and Qingyuan areas as soon as possible and to push ahead with the preparations for an armed struggle.

The few days I stayed at the house of the Chinese comrade, though I was treated as guest, were boring and painful for me. I was eager to throw myself into free and brisk activities, treading the earth as I liked even if my life was endangered. I had to disguise myself and start my political activities, but rash action was likely to bring trouble. It was difficult for me to return to Jilin again and it was not easy to take a train because the south Manchurian railways were managed by the Japanese. I wanted to go to Jiandao but I did not think that I would survive the wave of arrests of communists there. Nevertheless I thought I should go. I decided to go to east Manchuria by all means and there to prepare for the armed struggle.

At Hailong I, together with a Chinese comrade, boarded a train bound for Jilin where I changed trains and headed for Jiaohe. In Jiaohe there were many organizations under our influence. Han Yong Ae, who had been on close terms with me since our Jilin days, and her uncle Han Kwang lived there.

I intended to prepare a hiding place with their help to avoid the pursuit of the warlords and restore the organizations. I had decided that, if I met Han Yong Ae, I would establish contact with Harbin's higher organizations under the International Young Communist League.

Han Yong Ae had returned to Jiaohe after leaving school in Jilin early owing to the family's circumstances towards the beginning of 1929, but continued to maintain contact with us.

After thinking over whom I should visit, I called first on Jang Chol Ho who had been a company commander in the Independence Army.

Having broken away from the upper echelons of the Independence Army after the formation of Kukmin-bu and left the service, he came to Jiaohe and became engrossed in running a rice mill. I called on him because he loved me dearly as my father's friend and was a reliable patriot. I needed a temporary hiding place until I could meet the organization members.

He was delighted to see me but did not invite me to hide at his

home. As he seemed to be overcome with fear, I did not tell him why I had called on him. I headed towards the house of Ri Jae Sun. When my father was alive, he had aided the independence champions well, while running an inn. He, too, welcomed me, but suggested that we part after treating me to a Chinese meal at a Chinese restaurant.

I needed a hiding place more than a meal or two. He must have known why I had visited him but simply bade me goodbye without even inviting me to stay overnight at his home. He seemed to have considered the trouble that might befall him and abandoned his sense of duty and friendship as an old acquaintance.

From this I learned a serious lesson. Father's friends, too, counted for nothing without ideological cohesion. I drew the bitter lesson that the revolutionary struggle cannot be shared only by relying on friendship of the past or sympathy.

If an ideological mood and faith change, the sense of friendship and of humanity changes. If one of two people who had been on intimate terms with each other in the past, sharing joy and hardship, changes his mind, their friendship is impaired and they part. Friendship which was supposed to be invariable and eternal is impaired if one side degenerates ideologically. Later in the course of the protracted revolutionary struggle I learned the lesson that without holding fast to an idea it is impossible to maintain a sense of duty as a friend and friendly relations. After parting from Ri Jae Sun, I headed for Han Kwang's house. I thought that Han Kwang might have hidden himself somewhere but that Han Yong Ae might be at home, being a woman, and I entertained the hope that if she understood my situation she would help me, even at the risk of her life.

But neither Han Kwang nor Han Yong Ae was at home. When I asked their next-door neighbour where they were, she told me that she did not know. As all the young Koreans who were supposed to be engaged in the movement had hidden, I had no one to call on.

In the meantime someone must have informed on me to the police. There were policemen on my heels. I thought I was caught and despaired of my situation, but the woman living next door to Han

Kwang saved me from the danger. She said to me, “You seem to be in danger, though I don’t know who you are. Be quick and go into the kitchen.” Quickly she put on my back the baby she was carrying on hers. She said, “I will answer the door. Sit quietly and tend the fire.” It seemed that I looked old enough to be disguised as the baby’s father.

With the baby on my back, I tended the kitchen fire with a poker as she had told me to. While engaged in the revolution, I faced critical moments and danger many times, but I had never been in such a situation before.

The police opened the kitchen door and asked her, “A young man just came this way. Where has he gone?”

The woman replied with composure, “What kind of young man? No one has come to my house.” Then she said in Chinese in a casual manner, “There is no one inside. Please come in and have a meal if you like.” The baby on my back cried incessantly, as it was shy of me. I wanted to soothe the baby but could do nothing, fearing that an awkward act on my part might reveal my identity, so I merely stoked the fire with the poker.

The police talked among themselves, wondering where I had gone and whether they had missed me, before heading for another house.

After they had gone the woman said with a smile, “Please act as if you are my husband until the police leave the village. My husband is out in the field. I will call him home. Stay here and don’t worry. When he comes back, let’s discuss what we should do.” After inviting me to a meal, she went to the field and later returned.

After a while the police came back and shouted at me to come out as they wanted to send me on an errand. She said calmly, “How can this sick man run an errand? If you have some urgent errand, I will do it in his place.” Then she went on the errand in my place.

Thus, with her help I escaped from the critical situation. Though she was a simple country woman, she was possessed of both wit and wisdom. She also had a fairly high degree of revolutionary awareness.

I received an unforgettable impression from this woman whom I did not know. Instead of my father’s friends whom I had visited,

counting on our friendly relations of the past, it was this strange woman who had helped me at the risk of her life. Out of a pure desire to aid a revolutionary she had helped me out of danger with a self-sacrificing spirit. A person reveals his true worth in adversity.

An unstained and sound sense of duty as a comrade to which revolutionaries could entrust their lives without hesitation was found among the working people. So, I always told my comrades-in-arms to go to the people when difficulties arose while making the revolution. I told them to call on the people when they were hungry or thirsty and when misfortune befell them.

She was a good woman. If she is alive, even now I would like to bow before her.

That winter in Wujiazi the commanding officers of the Korean Revolutionary Army and the leaders of underground organizations active in Manchuria held a meeting at which I spoke about the woman.

Having heard my story, the comrades there said, “Comrade Song Ju, you’re lucky. You were born under a lucky star, so heaven helped you.”

It was not because I had good luck that the warlords failed to catch me but because the people were good. I think that the people are precisely Heaven and the people’s will is Heaven’s will, I said. From then on the words “Madam Jiaohe” were used as words symbolizing our resourceful, self-sacrificing people, words symbolizing the women who make it a rule to help revolutionaries out of their difficulties, even at the risk of their lives.

Even now when I recall the bloody summer of 1930 under the scorching sun, I think of Jiaohe and picture “Madam Jiaohe.” When I recall the woman whose whereabouts I failed to discover although I inquired after her for decades, I am seized with remorse for having left Jiaohe 60 years ago without asking her name.

If I had learnt her name I could have placed an advertisement in the newspapers.

Since liberation many of my benefactors have called on me. Some of them appeared before me as grey-haired men and women half a

century after parting from me in a foreign country. Many of my benefactors who helped me in adversity met me and returned to the liberated homeland where they received words of gratitude from me.

But “Madam Jiaohe” did not appear. She might have forgotten the dramatic event in the summer of 1930, regarding it as an ordinary matter.

My benefactor of 60 years ago still remains unknown, leaving no news or trace. The better the jade, the deeper it lies underground.

Only when her husband returned from the field, did she take her baby from me. What happened that day is like a detective story.

I could not give them my real name, so I gave her a pseudonym. Introducing myself as a revolutionary, I exchanged greetings with the husband.

He had been engaged in the revolution but was unsure what to do, having lost contact with the organization, he said. He warned me against the secret agent living in the house opposite his. According to him, Han Kwang had fled to north Manchuria and Han Yong Ae always concealed her identity because of the harsh suppression, and it would be difficult for me to meet her.

When I heard his story, gloomy thoughts came to my mind. With a secret agent living opposite, I could not stay at his house. It would have been better for me to observe the situation, while hiding in his house, and then go to Dunhua again, but Dunhua was searched closely because it served as a base for the Japanese, and the headquarters of the Tuesday group of the communist party was situated there. Most of the Koreans there, except the women, had been arrested immediately after the May 30 Uprising. The question was whether it was possible to gain a foothold in that place.

After it grew dark the husband conducted me to a secluded straw-thatched cottage some six kilometres from Jiaohe. The elderly master and mistress of the house were very kind to me.

That night I was once again clearly aware that we revolutionaries always could believe in and depend on the people alone.

I lay down but could not sleep; various thoughts came to my

mind—I had met none of those I wanted to meet and wasted several days; what a shame! At such a time one should not be on the defensive but brave adversity: If we remain on the defensive, we shall be finished: We must act: It will not do to go about by stealth. I decided that I should escape the critical situation and go to east Manchuria to activate the revolution.

At early dawn Han Yong Ae unexpectedly came to the cottage. On hearing that I was coming to east Manchuria, Han Yong Ae had asked her mother, when she was leaving home to go into hiding, to send word to her if a man with a dimple on his right cheek should come. We were meeting after a year's separation. We were so glad to see each other after all our difficulties that we gazed at each other without a word for a while. Her face had become terribly thin beyond recognition in only a year, and she was not so cheerful; previously once she burst out laughing she split her sides.

According to her, the atmosphere in Jiandao, too, was terrible. I said to her, "It will not do to remain in hiding like this. We should by all means conduct the movement. The Japanese will soon invade. We should not stand by with folded arms but rise and prepare to fight them, shouldn't we? We should restore the organizations as soon as possible and awaken the people ideologically. We should not remain in hiding out of fear, should we?"

She was of the same opinion and, on hearing what I said, was encouraged.

I said, "We can do nothing by sitting here where there is no one. Let's go to Harbin. I will contact the organization for you."

Han Yong Ae was delighted at this, for she had been unsure what to do, having lost contact with the organization.

I had sent Kim Hyok to Harbin to establish contact with the Comintern, but I decided that I should go there immediately and meet the people from the Comintern before he returned to report to me the results of his work. The utter wreckage of the organizations because of the revolt and the cities and rural communities where there was a terrible atmosphere, as if they were under martial law, made me

realize once again the great harm done by the Left adventurists to the revolution. I became clearly aware that, if the aftereffects were not removed, our revolution would inevitably suffer a great loss from the beginning of the 1930s.

A theoretical argument alone could not prevent the factionalists and flunkeyists and the Left adventurists from acting rashly. They would not willingly accept our arguments which were reasonable and beneficial to the revolution. They did not want to understand our view. The outbreak of the August 1 Uprising which caused us a great deal of concern in the wake of the May 30 Uprising meant that they entirely ignored the view we offered at the meeting of party organizations in the area east of Jilin.

It was necessary to get help from the Comintern in order to check the Left adventurism which was being committed without restraint in Manchuria.

I wanted to learn the Comintern's view on the revolt and confirm whether it had been launched on the orders of the Comintern or whether it was a rash act undertaken by some people arbitrarily. Even if the Comintern had given the orders, I wanted to prevent the spread of adventurism, although it would mean controversy.

We decided to go by train, but disguised as Chinese, for the enemy's control was strict.

Han Yong Ae spent the whole day going about the Jiaohe area to get good clothes and shoes for us to wear, as well as our travelling expenses. We also put some cosmetics in the trunk to allay the suspicions of the army and police. With her help I got safely to Harbin.

At the liaison office of the Comintern at the approach to Shangbu Street near Harbin pier, I met a man and introduced Han Yong Ae to him. I informed him of the situation created by the May 30 Uprising and August 1 Uprising in Manchuria and of the Kalun Meeting.

The liaison office of the Comintern, too, called the two revolts adventurous. The man I met in the liaison office told me that in his view the resolutions we had adopted at the Kalun Meeting were appropriate for the situation in Korea and agreed with the principle of

the revolution, saying that our creative attitude towards Marxism-Leninism was encouraging. He went on to say that in putting forward the new policy of founding a party at the Kalun Meeting and forming the Society for Rallying Comrades, the parent body, as the basic party organization we had not been in conflict with the principle of one party in one country.

Thus I received the Comintern's unreserved support for the principle of independence and the creative principle which were the lifeblood of our revolution, and for all the lines we had advanced.

Then the people from the Comintern asked me whether I would like to study at its communist college in Moscow.

I knew about the college in Moscow and that our young people who aspired after communism studied there on the recommendation of the Korean Communist Party. Jo Pong Am, Pak Hon Yong, Kim Yong Bom and others attended the college. In those days the young people of Manchuria had so strong a yearning to study in Moscow that they even sang the *Song of Study in Moscow*.

I did not want to be alienated from revolutionary practice, so I replied, "I want to go and study, but at the moment I am in no position to do so."

When I met the Rev. Moon Ik Hwan in 1989 and mentioned the story about Harbin, he said that around that time his father had been engaged in sending students selected by the Comintern to the Soviet Union.

The Comintern appointed me to the post of chief secretary of the Young Communist League in the eastern region of Jilin Province.

Through the liaison office of the Comintern I learned that Kim Hyok had thrown himself from the third storey of a house and had been taken to prison.

Han Yong Ae and I were gloomy during our stay in Harbin because of Kim Hyok's arrest. Pained by the shackling of Kim Hyok we once even went to stand in front of the house in Daoli from which he was said to have thrown himself.

There was a lot of tasty food in the shops and restaurants in Daoli,

but they were beyond our means.

The Comintern gave us 15 *fen* a day as expenses, but 15 *fen* was far from enough for living in Harbin. Revolutionaries could not stay at ordinary hotels because rigid control was enforced over lodgers. All the hotels were frequented by the police and requested identity papers from lodgers, except the hotel run by white Russians. This hotel's charges for board and lodging were very high. It was a luxury hotel which was accessible only to rich men and not to people like us. After careful consideration I decided to stay at the safe luxury hotel even if it meant eating only one meal a day. I persuaded Han Yong Ae to stay at an ordinary hotel where control over female guests was lax. I discovered the interior of the luxury hotel to be splendid. The hotel was furnished with a shop, a dining hall, an amusement hall, a dance hall and a cinema.

While I stayed at the luxury hotel I experienced many difficulties because I had no money. The first day I entered the hotel a Russian female attendant accompanied me to my room and offered to attend to my nails. I said I had already done it, for I had no money to pay her. Another attendant came in after her and asked what I wanted to order for my meal. I was obliged to say that I had already eaten at my friend's house. Although I was harassed every day like this, I only slept at the hotel without taking meals there, having no money. As for my meals, Han Yong Ae and I went out to the street after finishing our day's business and bought a cheap maize pancake or two.

I related this story to Liu Shao-qi when he visited our country. He said, "I, too, was in Harbin that year. Among the party members there was no one Chinese, but there were several Korean communists." He asked whether I had contacted the Comintern at that time. In view of the dates, it seems that I went to Harbin and met the people of the Comintern immediately after he had left, having conducted his activities there.

I gave Han Yong Ae the assignment of searching for the dispersed organization members.

Han Yong Ae established contact with a certain Han who had

served in a branch of the Young Communist League in Harbin and with whom she had been in contact since the Jilin days. Through him she discovered the organization members in hiding one by one and explained to them the line of the Kalun Meeting.

I went to the railways and harbour where Kim Hyok had been active and met the workers who were under the influence of the revolutionary organizations. Thus I restored the underground organizations in Harbin and established contact with some comrades before departing alone for Dunhua, leaving Han Yong Ae behind. I was very pressed for time and parted from her without expressing my gratitude properly. When I left, Han Yong Ae asked me to take her with me. But as the comrades in Harbin had entreated me to leave her there, I could not agree to her request. After going to east Manchuria, the matter always weighed on my mind. Since the rules of underground activity did not allow correspondence we did not hear from each other.

A long time later I learned what had happened to Han Yong Ae, from material gathered by people from the Party History Institute.

When I left for Dunhua, I left behind me a letter addressed to the revolutionary organizations in Harbin. Han Yong Ae was arrested by the police in the autumn of 1930, while carrying out the assignments I had given the comrades in Harbin in the letter. An ordinary woman would have returned to Jiaohe, simply because of homesickness, but she remained in Harbin and carried out the assignments I had given her, forgetting even to sleep. Though quiet and gentle, she acted tenaciously and boldly once she was engaged in revolutionary work.

Immediately after her arrest she was sent to Sinuiju prison where she served her term of imprisonment. At the time Ri Jong Rak, Pak Cha Sok and others involved in the DIU were also thrown into prison. She and Ri Jong Rak were in the same prison.

When Ri Jong Rak met Han Yong Ae, he said to her, "I was on good terms with Kim Song Ju and you were led by him. Why don't you join me in persuading him to return to an allegiance? If you want, you can join our 'submission work team.'"

Han Yong Ae reproached him to his face. She said, “That will not do. How can we commit such a filthy betrayal, even though we cannot help Kim Song Ju? If I am in no position to make the revolution after my release from prison, I may not take part in it. But I will not betray him.”

Ri Jong Rak admitted this in the winter of 1938 when he appeared at the meeting we held in Nanpaizi, where he tried to persuade me to give my “submission.”

That was how I learned about Han Yong Ae, from whom I had not heard, and how she had remained faithful to the revolutionary principle despite being put to harsh torture in prison. On being thrown into prison Ri Jong Rak, Pak Cha Sok and other men signed a written declaration of their conversion, but Han Yong Ae, a woman, endured the hardship bravely.

After the “Hyesan incident” revolutionaries were arrested en masse everywhere and some of those who had taken the path of struggle became traitors, causing great damage to the revolution. So the news of her greatly moved and encouraged me.

Han Yong Ae worked as a shoemaker at the rubber factory in Dandong, China. At the factory she disseminated among the Korean workers the revolutionary songs of the Jilin days and put forward different demands in defence of the workers’ rights and interests. She worked energetically to rouse them to the struggle to implement them.

Later she went to Seoul, where she passed several more years at the house of Mr. Hong Myong Hui’s son.

She married belatedly, having tried to go to Manchuria again to seek an organization. She buried herself in her family life, but did not abandon her conscience and the principle she had adhered to in the years when she had worked to make the revolution with us. When we, arms in hand, beat the enemy in the Mt. Paektu area she, hearing the news in Seoul, prayed inwardly for our victory, calling her comrades of the Jilin days by their name one by one, so I am told.

Her husband was engaged in underground work, being a member

of the Workers' Party of South Korea after liberation, and was murdered by the enemy during the retreat in the Korean war.

During the war Han Yong Ae was a great help at the front, taking charge of a women's organization in the Seoul area. After her husband's death she came to Pyongyang with her children to see me. But she could not meet me and, on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1951, she and her two children were tragically killed in an enemy bombing raid.

Han Yong Ae led an honourable life to her dying day. She lived her whole life with the spirit of the Jilin days. When singing, she sang the songs of the Jilin days.

Revolutionaries, even on a solitary island, should, like Han Yong Ae, not lose faith or abandon their conscience.

Han Yong Ae, too, was a benefactor I have never forgotten. She was a kind woman who called on me in adversity and helped me, at great personal risk.

I inquired after Han Yong Ae's whereabouts in the homeland after liberation, but she was not in the northern half of the country.

I had not met her again before liberation as I was engaged in the anti-Japanese war. But still vivid in my memory is the way she went about in the sweltering heat to obtain Chinese clothes for my disguise, the way she protected me, deftly overcoming crises when the police examined the passengers on the train, and the way she divided a piece of a pancake into two and quietly placed one half before me.

All the services she did me were the result of a pure, unselfish comradeship transcending feelings of love.

I deeply regret that she was killed in Pyongyang in the bombing without seeing me.

Fortunately a photograph of her in her younger days which survived miraculously came into my hands. When I think of my late benefactors, I admire her noble spirit which left a deep impression on me in my youth and express my heartfelt gratitude to her, as I gaze at her photograph.

## 8. Crossing the River Tuman

My father said on many occasions that the people of Jiandao had great fighting spirit. Having experienced the May 30 Uprising and then the August 1 Uprising, I realized that the Koreans in Jiandao had an extraordinary revolutionary spirit.

Jiandao and the northernmost areas of Korea had for a long time been the stage of the activities of the volunteers and the soldiers of the Independence Army. Under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, Marxism-Leninism was disseminated in these areas before anywhere else. Although the communist movement in Jiandao was going through many twists and turns owing to the petty-bourgeois impetuosity that appeared among its leaders, the revolutionary advance of the masses was continuing.

Therefore, as early as the time I was in prison I was resolved to make the northern border area of Korea, with Mt. Paektu as the centre, and Jiandao an important strategic position once I started the armed struggle.

The Japanese imperialists had also been viewing this area for a long time. While we intended to make the northern border area of Korea, with Mt. Paektu as the centre, and Jiandao an important strong point for the anti-Japanese armed struggle, they wanted to make the area a strategic point for invading Manchuria and Mongolia. It was with the aim of creating an occasion for realizing this ambition that the Japanese imperialists provoked various incidents in east Manchuria from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Under the pretext of “protecting the Koreans” the Japanese imperialists sent their troops into Longjing, Yanji County, in August 1907, and there they set up the “police sub-station under the residency-general in Korea.” In 1909 they induced the reactionary

Chinese government to conclude the Jiandao Treaty and, further, they even obtained the concessions for the Jilin-Hoeryong railway project. Afterwards the “police sub-station under the residency-general in Korea” in Longjing was raised to the status of a Japanese consulate general. It was not with the aim of ensuring that the Koreans in Jiandao could live in luxury that the Japanese imperialists set up a consulate general in Longjing and five branch consulates under it. In addition to these consular machines, they established police stations in various places and set up numerous organizations of their lackeys, such as the Association of Korean Residents and made them watch with sharp eyes every movement of the Koreans living in Jiandao. The branch office of the Oriental Development Company and the financial circles also exerted their influence on the area. East Manchuria was under the complete control of Japanese imperialism both politically and economically.

Thus, east Manchuria was turning into a place of acute confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution.

Therefore, I never ceased to think that the thick forest areas of Mt. Paektu and east Manchuria should be made the base of the armed struggle. After experiencing the August 1 Uprising I felt many omens of the imminent invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese imperialists. So I became more firmly resolved to unite the people in east Manchuria who had strong revolutionary spirit and launch an armed struggle as soon as possible. So, I went to east Manchuria.

When I told my comrades about my intention to go to east Manchuria they tried to dissuade me from doing so. They said that going to a place where the Japanese imperialists had established a strict repressive apparatus and intelligence network was like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. However, I left for east Manchuria without fear, fully determined to make the revolution among the workers and peasants there.

It can be said that until then I had worked mainly among young people and students in urban communities. If we were to take our struggle onto a new, higher stage to meet the demands of the

revolutionary line adopted at the Kalun Meeting, it was essential for us to mix more closely with the masses from all social sections, such as the workers and peasants, and prepare them as soon as possible for the war of resistance against the Japanese imperialists.

The Comintern supported my idea of going to east Manchuria.

First I headed for Dunhua. This was because this area had suffered most in the August 1 Uprising. Dunhua was the source of the uprising, and its central stage.

Here were stationed the headquarters of a garrison of the Japanese army, a branch consulate under the Jilin consulate general and the headquarters of the 677<sup>th</sup> regiment of the former Northeast Army. That such a reckless revolt as the August 1 Uprising had broken out there where the enemy's forces of repression were so concentrated had something to do with the fact that many Left adventurists worked there. Along with Panshi, Dunhua was the base of the M-L group and also the centre of the movement to rebuild the Korean Communist Party. Such prime movers of the August 1 Uprising as Pak Yun Se and Ma Kon were also based there.

In Dunhua there were various revolutionary organizations, such as the party, the YCLK and the AIYL, which we had established, as well as such reliable comrades as Chen Han-zhang, Ko Jae Bong and Ko Il Bong.

When I arrived in Dunhua I made my home at Chen Han-zhang's house. Wearing the Chinese clothes of Shandong Province, I worked to remove the evil consequences of the uprising. Chen Han-zhang, who had attended middle school when I was forming groups of the Young Communist League in Jilin, was also conducting organizational activity in Dunhua. After the occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese imperialists he worked as chief secretary at the general headquarters of the unit under Wu Yi-cheng. In the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China he worked as divisional chief of staff, division commander, commander of a route army, and secretary of the south Manchurian party committee. But at that time he was a simple and quiet YCLK member.

Chen Han-zhang was the son of a rich man, like Zhang Wei-hua. However, he led a perfectly sincere life in the YCLK organization, displaying extraordinary passion for the revolution. Being a very rich farmer, his father had hundreds of horses and many rifles. His house was surrounded by an earthen wall and looked awe-inspiring. He told me jokingly that his family was one which should have been overthrown and that they did not encroach on other people's land because all the land around his house belonged to them. Although I do not know exactly how much land his family owned, they were very rich.

Chen Han-zhang treated me hospitably, saying that it was I who had taught him communism. Because they were leading a comfortable life, his family did not grudge me taking my meals without paying for them.

I started to search for the dispersed organizations through Chen Han-zhang and Ko Jae Bong. In the daytime I dressed in Chinese clothes and spoke Chinese when calling on my comrades, and at night I restored the organizations clad in Korean dress and speaking Korean. After dealing with the evil consequences of the uprising like this, I formed in Dunhua the YCLK committee of the eastern region of Jilin Province as I had been authorized by the Comintern.

Afterwards Ko Jae Bong and some other YCLK members left for the area along the River Tuman with the task, entrusted to them by me, of going to the towns and rural communities in the area, making the masses revolutionary and establishing party organizations there.

After giving Chen Han-zhang the task of conducting YCLK activities at Dunhua Middle School, I also left Dunhua.

Helong was the first place I visited when I went to east Manchuria.

In Helong there was a Chinese man named Cao Ya-fan who had worked in our YCLK organization when he was attending Jilin Normal School. There was also a Korean whose name was Chae Su Hang. I believed that, by relying on them, I would be able to deal with the aftermath of the uprising and also expand the organizations.

I went first to a place called Dalizi where I met Cao Ya-fan.

Pointing out that the consequences of the August 1 Uprising were very serious, Cao Ya-fan told me that, after the uprising, Koreans were nowhere to be seen and that there was no knowing where they were hiding. He said that some people in prison were likely to be released soon and asked me to meet them.

Several days later Chae Su Hang came to see me after having been informed of my arrival. Formerly he had attended Tonghung Middle School in Longjing. When I was attending Yuwen Middle School he came to Jilin and enrolled at the normal school. At that time he started to work for the revolution under our influence. Chae Su Hang was a popular football player among the young people and students of Jilin. In those days many young people from Helong were studying in Jilin. Kim Jun made us known in the areas of Longjing and Onsong, whereas Chae Su Hang gave publicity to our revolutionary idea going around Helong and Jongsong. Afterwards, together with Comrade Kim Il Hwan who, while working as secretary of a county party committee, was later killed on a false charge of being involved in the “Minsaengdan,” he formed the Young Communist League and such revolutionary organizations as the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, the Peasants Association and the Anti-Japanese Women’s Association, rallying many people to them. Comrade Pak Yong Sun who was famous as a master at making the Yanji bomb, was working as a member of the AIYL in the Badaogou Mine in Yanji County.

However, the organizations which had been built up with such trouble had been scattered in all directions because of the two uprisings. Many hardcore elements had either been arrested or gone into hiding, and the few remaining members of the organizations were at a loss what to do and trembling with apprehension, not being fully seasoned.

This made me think a great deal about the faith of a revolutionary. On my way to Helong via Jilin, Hailong, Qingyuan, Jiaohe, Harbin and Dunhua after leaving Kalun, I saw many people who were wavering either frightened by the counterrevolutionary attack or having lost conviction in the victory of the revolution. A firm belief

in the victory of the revolution comes into being when one realizes in theory that one has a correct revolutionary line and strategy and tactics that are capable of winning the sympathy of all the people and rousing them, as well as one's own revolutionary force. This belief becomes firmer through the struggle.

However, those who had instigated the uprising failed to put forward any programme or strategy and tactics which could serve as a banner for the masses. The revolutionary line we adopted in Kalun was not being propagated widely among the people. I held a conference with Chae Su Hang and some other cadres of the YCLK and AIYL and gave them a detailed explanation of the revolutionary line adopted at the Kalun Meeting.

Furthermore, I emphasized the need to build up leading hardcore elements with those who had been tested through the struggle and were popular with the masses, restore the destroyed mass organizations as soon as possible and build up their ranks. It was also at that time that I gave the task of forming a district revolutionary organization in each county along the River Tuman.

Although all the organizers of the uprising had fled, leaving the masses to the mercy of the bayonet and afraid of the prisons and gallows, we emphasized the need to contain the consequences of the uprising as soon as possible. Because I was wearing Shandong clothes, my comrades in Helong called me the "Shandong youth."

The second place I visited was Wangqing. I went there in order to meet O Jung Hwa.

It was Kim Jun and Chae Su Hang who had told me about O Jung Hwa. Whenever they met me in those days on a visit to Jilin, they told me about many people. They told me that a certain man was in a certain place, that if I went to a certain place there was a certain man there who was doing a certain job, what a certain man was like and how clever a certain man was. Therefore, even when I was in Jilin I was comparatively well aware of the situation in Jiandao.

I listened to them attentively and bore in mind all those whom they regarded as clever.

When he was told about a good man, my father covered any distance, however long, no matter where he might be, joined hands with him at any cost and won him over as a like-minded man. He taught me that talented people decided everything and that the victory of revolutionary work depended on how many genuine comrades were won over.

In those days I did not mind going hungry for three days, or even ten days, if only I could win over a like-minded man. It was with this feeling that I went to Wangqing. Chae Su Hang accompanied me from Helong to Shixian in Wangqing.

In Shixian I met O Jung Hwa, O Jung Hup and also old man O Thae Hui.

Old man O Thae Hui's family was a very large one. The old man and his three brothers had lived in Kojak village, Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province before moving to Wangqing around 1914. They had dozens of children and grandchildren. They were conducting revolutionary work in wide areas of Wangqing and Onsong with the River Tuman separating them. In those days O Jung Hwa was working as the party secretary of the fifth Wangqing district and O Jung Hup was doing YCLK work in Yuanjiadian in Chunhuaxiang, Wangqing County. O Jung Song, O Jung Hwa's younger brother, had conducted YCLK activities in Shixian, Wangqing County, before moving to Phungri-dong, Onsong County, at the beginning of 1929 and was now conducting revolutionary activities while working as a teacher at Pomun School.

After leaving secondary school O Jung Hwa taught at the private Hwasong School in Helong.

When I met him in Shixian I told O Jung Hwa repeatedly that, in order to make the masses revolutionary, he must first become a revolutionary, then make his family revolutionary and then the villagers.

Later O Jung Hwa made his family revolutionary. More than ten of his brothers and near relatives were killed while working as faithful revolutionaries. It was not by chance that such fine

communists as O Jung Hwa, O Jung Song and O Jung Hup were produced from among them.

When I finished my work in Shixian I made up my mind to cross to the Onsong area at once. Having been born in a western province and lived in a foreign land at a young age, I had no good understanding of the six towns south of the River Tuman.

The area covering the six towns was where, during the Ri dynasty, noblemen who had been dismissed from their official posts were exiled. In this area there was a shortage of grain and the climate was harsh. Moreover, because of the unbearable maltreatment and cruelty of their leaders, those soldiers who had been mobilized to defend the frontier here used to flee very quickly. Even those who were in government service regarded it as terrible to be appointed as a public official in this area. Even after receiving notice of their appointment, they idled away their time in the streets of Seoul under various pretexts because they were reluctant to go there. It is said that the feudal rulers worried about this for 500 years.

Whenever Kim Jun told me about the six towns I said to him, “Although our ancestors did not take good care of this land, regarding it as barren, let us turn this area into a revolutionary fortress by making strenuous efforts.” According to this far-reaching plan I started dispatching people there.

Onsong was a place where such people as Kim Jun, Chae Su Hang and O Jung Song began to work on a wide scale under our influence in the end of the 1920s. We had already grasped the importance of the area of Mt. Paektu and that of the six towns along the River Tuman, including Onsong, in the development of the Korean revolution and intended to make this area a strategic base for the anti-Japanese revolutionary war. We also planned to open the way for a fresh upsurge in the revolution in the homeland there. In those days some 100 to 150 young people from Onsong were studying in Longjing. When they came back home during their holidays they exerted the influence coming from Jilin in this area under the guidance of such far-sighted people as Kim Jun and O Jung Song who were in close

contact with us. Branches of the Young Communist League of Korea and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League were formed in Onsong. It was a promising foothold for us to extend our influence into the homeland. Thanks to this foothold our idea spread to the area of Onsong.

I went to the area of Onsong with the aim of expanding and developing the Korean revolution as a whole by forming a party organization in the homeland and adopting the measures needed for implementing the policy set at the Kalun Meeting.

O Jung Hwa's cousin who had accompanied us from Shixian, crossed first to Phungri-dong where O Jung Song was in order to inform him that we were coming.

At the approach to a valley of Huimudong, on the far bank from Namyang, Onsong County, we met O Jung Song and other members of the organizations who had come there on receiving the summons. That was my first meeting with O Jung Song. He was taller than his elder brother O Jung Hwa and had a magnanimous disposition. O Jung Hwa had said that his younger brother was a good dancer and singer as well as a fine poetry reader.

We quietly crossed the River Tuman by boat at night. O Jung Song rowed the boat quickly and well. As I looked at the fields and mountains veiled in darkness, I could not repress my beating heart at my deep emotions at returning to my homeland after five years.

Having left the boat at Namyang Sangthan, I told O Jung Hwa how good it would be if we were crossing the river after winning the independence of the country.

In a positive response to what I had said, O Jung Hwa said that he felt the same each time he crossed the River Tuman.

Having passed Namyang Sangthan village we took the uphill path leading to Mt. Namyang. There we went into a straw-thatched cottage prepared by O Jung Song and examined the work of the revolutionary organizations in the Onsong area as well as the trend of the masses.

The people of Onsong had achieved many successes in establishing mass organizations.

I spent a week guiding the work of the underground revolutionary organizations at home. In the course of this I discovered that although the revolutionaries in the Onsong area had formed many organizations throughout the country, they were lapsing into extreme passivism in expanding and developing them.

In this area it was a universal practice to form an organization with a few reliable core elements and then shut the door and neglect the expansion of its ranks. For this reason the organizations had failed to take deep root among the broad sections of the masses.

The Onsong Young Communist League which was formed in the spring of 1929 as an organization under the YCLK, also built a high fence around a few members and did not go among the masses. In those days various organizations and factions such as the Local Association, the Promotion Association, the Singan Association and the Group for Rebuilding the Party were competing to win young people over to their side. Under these circumstances the mass organizations were merely maintaining the status quo while trembling with fear, in an effort to prevent the slightest bad influence from being exerted on them.

An official of the YCLK whom I met in Phungri said that people were extremely unwilling to open their hearts to him because the enemy was resorting to severe machinations. Another YCLK official said that he had no idea of how to deal with those young people who were associated with the youth league or the Singan Association. Jon Jang Won, who was working as the head of the Peasants Association in Phungin-dong, would not speak his mind even to those of his close relations who were working in the enemy's government organs. This was because he was nervous, fearing that the enemy's tentacles might extend to the revolutionary ranks through the many of his relatives who were working as village heads, sub-county heads and policemen.

All this was an expression of distrust in the masses.

Without putting an end to these wrong practices it would be impossible to develop the revolution in the Onsong area in depth to meet the requirements of the new situation.

The life of a revolutionary can be said to begin with his going among the masses and the failure of the revolution with a failure to believe in the strength of the masses and a neglect of mixing with them.

I said earnestly to O Jung Song:

“It is impossible to make the revolution with only a few people from a good class origin. You should boldly believe in the masses and keep the door to the organization wide open for them. Now that youth organizations with every kind of name are each trying to win the young people over, the organization of the YCLK should not become passive but win over many young people through a positive campaign. You must politically awaken and lead the young people who were once involved in the organizations of the youth league or the Singan Association, as well as those who are either following people from the Group for Rebuilding the Party or are being unconsciously used by them, so as to win them over to our side.”

I also told Jon Jang Won about the tactics that must be employed in the work with those who were serving in the enemy’s establishments. I said:

“A man who is making the revolution must not be frightened or discredit himself because his family contains a village head, sub-county head or policeman. On the contrary, you must resolve to paralyse the lowest government machinery of the Japanese by going into the enemy establishments, taking advantage of family relations and working on a big scale. If you are to make the area of the six towns a strategic base for the armed struggle, you must be bold and win over those who are serving within the enemy’s government organs at the same time as making the masses revolutionary. Try it and acquire experience in this work.”

The most unforgettable event from my stay in Onsong was how I, together with Kim Jun, O Jung Hwa and O Jung Song, met men working on the railway project in Wolpha-dong, Mipho Sub-county.

From the beginning of 1929 the Japanese imperialists had been pressing ahead with the project to lay a railway along the River Tuman. Over 1 000 labourers from all parts of the country, including

the three southern provinces, as well as from Jiandao gathered there and formed in the Wolpha village a congested residential district called Kaephung Street. Those labourers who had been working on the Jilin-Hoeryong railway project also crowded into this street where they had a hard time of it making a living.

On hearing of this when I was in Jilin I met Kim Jun and told him to go among the workers and try to form an organization when the railway project got under way in Wolpha-dong.

Kim Jun could not conceal his eagerness, saying that it was something worth trying. He went to Onsong as he had promised and formed in Wolpha-dong a working youth association and an Anti-Imperialist Youth League organization.

When I expressed my intention to visit the railway project my comrades in Onsong asked me to abandon the idea because the enemy was keeping a strict watch.

In those days they went to extremes to protect me, telling their comrades, "A representative of the Comintern has come."

They organized a guard for me, even giving me the official title of "representative of the Comintern" because, in the homeland, the Japanese police maintained close surveillance against revolutionaries.

Needless to say, I also knew that, if I went to Korea, I must be careful in everything I did and sharpen my vigilance. However, I felt an urge to grasp the hands of the workers and tell them something that might be of some help to them, although I might not achieve much among them immediately. All the work I had conducted with the young people and students until then was aimed at building a bridge for going among the working class. Our ultimate goal was to carve out and complete the Korean revolution by giving prominence to the working class. How ardently had we been yearning for the working class of Korea from the day when we set out its liberation as our programme and pledged to devote even our lives to this end!

I joined the workers at the construction site unloading gravel, carrying sand and taking the meals they offered me at their quarters for a day and a half.

Kim Jun introduced me as a man who had been studying in Yanji and had come there to earn money to pay his school fees.

Even now I think that it was very good for me to go among the workers at that time. At their quarters and at the construction site I witnessed not only the sad plight of the workers who were toiling with might and main for a few pennies, but also workers who were eager for a struggle, workers who were seeking the correct way for them to shape their future.

This had a strong impact on me. My heart was burning with an eager desire to devote my whole life for the happiness of the working class.

At the railway project I got acquainted for the first time with Choe Chun Guk and Choe Pong Song, anti-Japanese fighters from Onsong.

While guiding me to his quarters, Choe Chun Guk told me that he had secretly stored up some powder while he had been working as a dynamiter and that he intended to blow up a tunnel with it when the project was completed.

I told him that under the prevailing circumstances building up the organization and politically awakening and organizing the workers was more urgent than running such a risk as blowing up a tunnel and advised him to keep the powder and use it when it would be needed during our future armed struggle.

At that time I talked a great deal with the workers.

I told them about the matters of launching an armed struggle, founding a party and forming an anti-Japanese national united front. It would be a great gain if we could clearly implant at least the spirit of the Kalun Meeting in the minds of the workers in the homeland. Then, if we told something to one man it would be conveyed immediately to ten people, and would reach the ears of 10,000 people through the mouths of 100 and 1,000 people. Our idea would ultimately be the faith and banner of the people at home. All this was certain.

When the workers at the railway project learned about our line, they expressed full support for it.

If they gained confidence from our line, I gained confidence from

their looks full of delight at being told of the line.

The greatest success achieved in Onsong was the formation of a party organization on Turu Hill on October 1, 1930.

In the course of visiting the revolutionary organization in Onsong I realized that the fighting will and preparedness of the revolutionaries in this area were far stronger than I had expected, although they committed some mistakes in their understanding of the strategic problem and were timid in their work with the masses. I also reached the conclusion that the foundation existed for establishing a party organization in this area.

All those revolutionaries of the Onsong area who were to take part in the meeting gathered on Turu Hill dressed like firewood gatherers. Jon Jang Won had asked the man in charge of the organization in Wolpha-dong to bring an ox-pulled sleigh up to the meeting place.

We held the meeting to set up a homeland party organization on a quiet, vacant spot on the top of Turu Hill with the River Wolpha flowing nearby.

Firstly I told those attending the meeting about the line adopted at Kalun and made clear that the primary task for implementing that line was to build a revolutionary party. Then I explained the aim of forming a new type of party organization in the Onsong area. I also set the task for the party organization in the Onsong area of continually increasing and strengthening the party ranks with fine progressive elements who had been tested through an organizational life and practical struggle, and of organizing and mobilizing the masses for the anti-Japanese struggle.

On my recommendation O Jung Song, Jon Jang Won, Jon Chang Ryong, Choe Chun Guk, Choe Pong Song and Choe Kun Ju were admitted to the Onsong party organization. O Jung Song was elected to head the party organization.

Those who had the honour of being party members stood up in succession to relate their past life and briefly state their determination.

I have forgotten the determination of all the others, but that made by Jon Jang Won is still fresh in my memory. Jon Jang Won said that

he would never forget the fact that we had admitted to the party even such a man as he who had a problematic family background, and pledged to saw off his bones, slice away his flesh and even offer his life if it was needed for the revolution. He said that if he was ever so silly as to break his pledge, he would not mind even if his body was cut to pieces and thrown into a river. Although his words were violent and plain, they expressed his feelings frankly.

Afterwards Jon Jang Won, true to his resolve, performed great exploits in making Onsong a semi-guerrilla zone and aiding the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

In order to keep it secret, there was no record of what was discussed at the meeting. The meeting adopted no inaugural declaration or manifesto.

Those attending the meeting said to the following effect:

“We feel something is lacking because this meeting, a historic meeting held to establish a party organization, is so simple and informal. Even such an organization of the lowest class as the equity society makes public a manifesto and circulates it to the world, so we feel our meeting will fall flat if it is concluded merely by a brief pledge.”

I encouraged them as follows:

“The pledge you have just made is far more substantial than a statement or a manifesto amounting to hundreds of pages. What is the use of continually drawing up documents? You must not think of a party organization as something which only makes a fuss and wins a name for itself. Party members do a lot of work without making a fuss. Therefore, display your party spirit and patriotism through a practical struggle.”

The formation of a party organization in the Onsong area was the start of the laying of the foundation for party building in the homeland and an important turning point in promoting the anti-Japanese struggle of the people there. Thanks to the activities of the party organization in the Onsong area, the process of the political awakening and organization of the masses was stepped up rapidly and

the anti-Japanese struggle gained momentum in the area of the six towns.

As the masses started to follow us and the revolution gained momentum, Choe Chang Ik, who was hanging about in this area, his native place, in order to expand the influence of his own faction, fled to Seoul. After liberation he told us frankly what had happened at the time. He said: "I thought the M-L group had gone to Onsong because that is my native place. However, when I reached there, our force was not to be seen and instead the influence of Jilin had reached there. That influence was so powerful that everywhere I could see only your people, Comrade Kim Il Sung. I thought you must be quite old. However, people told me that it was not true and that you were a youth in your twenties and very strong. So I resolved to visit you, but gave up the idea."

The reason that Choe Chang Ik left Onsong for Seoul was that he knew that we disliked factions and did not compromise with factionalists like him.

Following the formation of the party organization, I guided the meeting of the political workers and those in charge of the underground revolutionary organizations from various areas including the six towns before starting on my way back. We crossed the river by ferry from the Ojong ferry. My heart was much lighter than on my way to the homeland. I felt like soaring high up into the sky now that everything had turned out as I had wished. My visit to the homeland at the risk of my life was something worthwhile.

The week we spent in the homeland was an important period which proved that the revolutionary line we had put forward in Kalun was a correct one acceptable to all. It was as if we had had our line judged by the people at home.

From that time the people of Onsong remained always faithful to us.

Having crossed the River Tuman in safety I, guided by O Jung Hwa, reached Chaoyangchuan, Yanji County, going via Liangshui-quanzi and Changgou. Together with Longjing, Chaoyangchuan was a

place where we were exerting the greatest influence in the Yanji area.

Ma Tuk Han and Ra Il, members of the secretariat of the party and YCLK in the Jiandao area, were working in Chaoyangchuan. Rim Chun Chu, who later worked as a member of the party committee of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, also conducted revolutionary work here as "Rim Chun Bong—physician of the Pongchun Dispensary." Before coming to Yanji, he had been arrested for being involved in a student incident and was sent to prison. Working as a doctor of traditional Korean medicine, he carried out the duty of liaising between the party and YCLK secretariat in the Jiandao area and various counties.

At that time I met Rim Chun Chu for the first time in Chaoyangchuan. He, who had managed to acquire skill in traditional Korean medicine at a young age, quite impressed me. Thanks to his skill in traditional Korean medicine, our guerrillas got a lot of help throughout the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The May 30 Uprising and the August 1 Uprising had caused a big loss to the revolutionary organizations in Yanji. Here the enemy's terror had been more overpowering than in Dunhua. Many who had been making the revolution lost heart and hesitated, and those people who were not sufficiently awakened, clamoured that "they were being brought to ruin because of the communist party."

I met leading cadres of the party and YCLK such as Ma Tuk Han, Ra Il and Rim Chun Chu and discussed the problem of eliminating the consequence of the Left adventurist machinations as soon as possible and further expanding and strengthening the revolutionary struggle.

After leaving Onsong I did not go straight to Wujiazi but went as far as Chaoyangchuan via Liangshuiquanzi. This was because I foresaw that this area would be the field of our future armed struggle. I had done some preparatory work for laying the mass foundation in Onsong, Wangqing and Yanji of an armed struggle in the future. Afterwards this area became the most reliable base of the anti-Japanese war, as we had foreseen.

## **9. An “Ideal Village” Is Transformed into a Revolutionary Village**

At one time the independence fighters in our country conceived a plan to build “ideal villages,” and they tried in every way possible to implement it. When one hears the word “ideal village,” one visualizes a village in which everyone is free from any exploitation, oppression and inequality and leads an equally free and happy life. From time immemorial our people have dreamt of such a Utopian world.

The nationalists’ endeavour to build “ideal villages” might be considered a reflection of our ancestors’ aspiration to a rich, harmonious, peaceful and comfortable life for everyone.

An Chang Ho was a proponent and champion of the “ideal village” scheme. Immediately after the proclamation of the “annexation of Korea by Japan” An Chang Ho, Ri Tong Hui, Sin Chae Ho and Ryu Tong Yol held talks in Qingdao, China, where An Chang Ho put forward a proposal to build “ideal villages.” After serious consideration the leaders of the independence movement decided to buy the land of the Taedong Business Company (in Mishan County, China) which had been managed by Americans, bring it under cultivation and train Independence Army soldiers by establishing a military academy there. They intended to build such “ideal villages” in order to raise funds and educate cadres, and thus lay the material, personnel and financial foundations for the independence movement.

Even after this plan had failed, An Chang Ho made painstaking efforts for many years to procure funds and obtain suitable sites for such villages, because he felt the necessity for an independence movement base which could render material support to his “theory of the cultivation of strength.” The attempt to build such villages was a

trend in the independence movement at that time. Many nationalists tried to realize their unsophisticated dream of cultivating strength by reclaiming uncultivated land and making it suitable for farming and establishing military academies.

The rural community on the Liaohe was born of this trend. This community was developed by the nationalists who had been active in south Manchuria. Some of the nationalists in south Manchuria, particularly Song Sok Tam, Pyon Tae U (alias Pyon Chang Gun), Kim Hae San, Kwak Sang Ha and Mun Sang Mok drifted west before settling on the Liaohe. Saying that they were building an ideal Korean village, they created a community of 300 Korean families there and began to develop it according to their own principles by cutting it off from the surrounding world. This community was named Wujiazi (a village of five families–Tr.) after the five families that had settled there originally.

Some of my comrades attending Wenguang Middle School in my days in Jilin were from Guyushu and Wujiazi. They used to say that Wujiazi was a good village. So I became interested in Wujiazi and made up my mind to transform it into a revolutionary village.

I went from east Manchuria to Wujiazi in October 1930. Originally I was planning to convene a large meeting in east Manchuria for the preparation of an armed struggle but, in view of the situation there at the time, I considered the place unsuitable for the meeting and changed the site to Wujiazi. I decided to stay there for some months while I prepared for the meeting and make the village revolutionary. I found the people kind-hearted and their customs agreeable, as I had been told they were.

The people in this village, unable to roof their houses with tiles because of the strong wind, plastered clay on the roofs. The saline clay did not allow the rain in. They also built neat clay walls, walls of adobe which, they claimed, were even bullet-proof.

The founders of the village never tolerated the infiltration of any heterogeneous ideological trends into the village. They, together with the peasants, had converted the marshy land into paddy fields and

established a school in the village. They formed such mass organizations as the Association of Fellow Peasants, the Youth Association and the Association of Schoolchildren. They also formed a village council, an autonomous organ. Every year on August 29, the day when Japan proclaimed the annexation of Korea by Japan, the village people gathered and sang the song *National Humiliation Day*. It is no wonder that the people of Wujiazi called their village a “heaven,” it being out of the reach of the Japanese army and police and the reactionary Chinese warlords.

The majority of the population of the village was from Phyongan and Kyongsang provinces. Those from Kyongsang Province were under the influence of the M-L group in the General Federation of the Korean Youth in South Manchuria and those from Phyongan Province were mostly affiliated to Jongui-bu.

In view of the fact that I hailed from Phyongan Province I stayed in most cases at the houses of the people from Kyongsang Province, as I had done in Kalun before. If not, I might have upset them.

When I was in Kalun, I had sent some members of the Korean Revolutionary Army to Wujiazi as political workers but they had proved ineffectual because they could not win over the leading figures of the village who were obstinate, yet well established.

I spent the winter there through the good offices of my comrades. I stayed in that one place for so long, more than just a week or two, because we attached such great importance to Wujiazi. We regarded this village as the last stronghold of the nationalist forces in central Manchuria. If successful here, we could turn Wujiazi into a model for making the rural areas revolutionary and, drawing on that experience, bring the rural villages in the whole of Manchuria and the northern border areas of our country under our influence.

We recognized that the workers, peasants and working intellectuals were the main force of the revolution, and made particularly great efforts to transform the peasants into revolutionaries in view of the position they occupied in the class composition of our country. The peasantry accounted for more than 80 per cent of the

population of our country. The situation in Jiandao was the same. More than 80 per cent of the population of Jiandao were Koreans about 90 per cent of whom were peasants. Owing to the persecution by the warlords and the ruthless expropriation by the landlords and usurers, they were living in dire poverty, enjoying no rights, and were subjected to harsh exploitation through land rents and to such physical extortions as those imposed upon serfs and slaves. The case was similar with the peasants in the homeland. This showed that the peasantry, along with the industrial working class, was the class which had the keenest interest in the revolution and that the peasants, together with the workers, should become the main force of our revolution.

To make the rural areas revolutionary was the foremost task in laying the mass foundation for the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

As the young people in Wujiazi grew more and more enthusiastic about our cause as a result of the activities of our political workers, the village elders shook their pipes and threatened that those who would introduce socialism onto the Liaohe plain would not be safe; they complained that the young people in those days were affected by an alien ideology. Some of them warned that, if the crazy communist ideology that had ruined Jiandao was tolerated in Wujiazi, the village would not be safe, either.

If we were careless and rash, we might fall before the pipes of the old people. Some of the young people wavered. They wanted to march to the communist tune, but they hesitated lest they should offend their elders. Only a few determined young men opposed the elders.

On hearing a report from the political workers, I judged that the prerequisite for making Wujiazi revolutionary was to work well with the influential people. Unless we corrected their way of thinking we would be unable to awaken Wujiazi from its pipe dream of building an "ideal village" or execute our plan to transform the village on the Liaohe into a model village in central Manchuria. Once the elders were reformed, the others would follow us.

Our political workers, however, had not approached them for three months, and had only been feeling out their views. It was no simple job to deal with such people. No ordinary man dared argue with them, these learned people with theoretical views as well as records of conducting the independence movement. The group of elders had the village under its control.

One old man, Pyon Tae U, ran the village council behind the scenes and supervised all the affairs of the village. He was at the head of both the group of elders and the village itself. The villagers called him Pyon Trotsky because he frequently mentioned Trotsky. Pyon had travelled through the homeland and various parts of Manchuria in his early years in the interests of the independence movement. At first he had established schools in Hanchon (South Phyongan Province), his home town, and Jasong, and Daoqinggou (in Linjiang County, China), working as a teacher. He had been involved in armed activities from 1918, the year when he joined the Independence Army unit which had its headquarters at Maoershan, Linjiang County. In those days he had frequented our house to contact my father. When he was unable to come, my uncle, Kang Jin Sok, would maintain contact between them. Having held the posts of information chief of the Korean Independence Association, deputy-commander of the National Independence Army, chief of the military law section and commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the Liberation Corps and then head of the business section of Thongui-bu, he had devoted himself to building up the movement of the Independence Army. He retired from his military posts in 1926, and applied himself to building an “ideal village.” Once he had been to the Far Eastern region of the Soviet Union, allegedly to launch a communist movement. He had the blue-covered membership card of the Communist Party of Koryo.

It was impossible to reform the bigoted village elders and make the village revolutionary unless old man Pyon was won over.

Learning that I had arrived in Wujiazi, the old man’s son, Pyon Tal Hwan, came to see me. He was in charge of the Association of Fellow Peasants. He said that he had intended to transform the “ideal

village” into a revolutionary village by prevailing on the nationalists, but had been unable to do anything because of his father and the other village elders. He suggested that, now that I was there, we should do away with those good-for-nothings.

Dumbfounded, I asked him, “Do away with them? What do you mean by that?”

“I mean we must form our own organizations, ignoring what the old men say, and make Wujiazi a socialist village on our own,” was his absurd answer.

“No, we cannot do that. It will split the village into two. And it is not in accordance with our policy, either.”

“Then, what shall we do? We can’t leave Wujiazi in the hands of these backward old men, can we?”

“The point is that we should win their support. I am going to work with your father. What do you think of that?”

“It will be useless. Many people have been here from Kukmin-bu, from the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai and from the committee for rebuilding the communist party affiliated to the M-L group, to establish footholds in this village, but they have all been given the cold shoulder by my father. Ordinary people have not even been granted an interview with him, and even high-ranking nationalist leaders have been thrown out after being taught a good lesson.”

“Your father and mine were on friendly terms and you and I are old friends. So I think I stand a better chance than a total stranger.”

Pyon Tal Hwan said with embarrassment that an old friendship would not influence his father. He had been to my house in Linjiang 10 years before with a letter from his father to mine.

I talked with Pyon Trotsky for days at his house, where the village elders used to gather.

On the first day Pyon talked more than I did. He sat haughtily, his legs crossed, and as he spoke he now and then tapped his pipe on the floor. He said he was glad to see Mr. Kim’s son but he treated me as just a boy. He merely gave me condescending advice, every time

addressing me as “you youngster.” He was a man with good features and a gallant spirit and he had a high theoretical level, so I found him awesome from the start.

When he asked me how old I was, I answered that I was 23, five years older than I actually was. If I had said I was 18, he would have treated me as a mere boy. I looked older than I was, so no one doubted me if I said I was 23 years old. In those days, I always claimed to be 23 or 24. That was favourable for me in my work with both the village elders and the young people.

I behaved politely, listening to old Pyon with patience, not retorting or interrupting him even though what he said did not stand to reason. He said that young people would find fault with him, labelling him as feudalistic and so on, while not understanding even one out of the ten words he said. He said it was interesting to talk to me.

One day he invited me to dinner. He said that he had frequently been accorded warm hospitality by my father in Linjiang and that, therefore, he had prepared a dinner, though humble, for me.

After chatting with me for a while, he asked me suddenly:

“Is it true that you youngsters have come here to do away with our ‘ideal village’?”

Pyon Tal Hwan had been right when he said that his father was guarding against the communists with the highest vigilance.

“Do away with your ‘ideal village’? Why should we destroy the results of you old people’s hard work, if we are unable to help you? We do not have the strength to destroy it.”

“Hm, is that so? But the youngsters in Wujiazi who follow my son Tal Hwan are always finding fault with the ‘deal village’; they think only of knocking down the old people and hoisting the red flag in this village. Rumour has it that you, Song Ju, are manipulating the youngsters in Wujiazi. Do the young people from Jilin hate the ‘deal village’? Tell me frankly what you think.”

“We don’t think it bad. Why should we hate the ‘deal village’? You have built it to get the wandering Korean exiles in this foreign

land to settle down in one place and live in comfort. It is marvellous that you have built a Korean settlement of this size on the swampy land on the Liaohe. You old people must have worked very hard to build it.”

Satisfied at my complimentary remarks, he stroked his moustache. He no longer called me “you youngster.”

“Yes, that’s it! As you will learn, there is neither a policeman nor a prison nor a government office here. All the village’s affairs are dealt with in a democratic way by the Koreans themselves through an autonomous organ called the village council. Where else in the world is such an ideal village?”

I thought that now was the time to state our opinion of the “ideal village” clearly.

“Sir, I think it is patriotic of you to have built a village where the Koreans lead a fair life by democratic methods through an autonomous body. But do you think we can achieve the independence of the country by building villages like this?”

The old man who was speaking in a dignified manner with his legs crossed, waving his pipe, shut his mouth and raised his eyebrows. Then, he heaved a sigh.

“No, we can’t. You have touched me on the raw. We have built an ‘ideal village,’ but it is of no help to the independence movement. That is why I am in anguish. How good it would be if we could win the independence of the country by building ‘ideal villages’!”

I did not lose the opportunity to prove the absurdity of the building of such villages. I said: “It is impossible for a ruined nation to build ‘ideal villages’ in a foreign land. It is true that Wujiazi, thanks to your efforts, has become a more comfortable village to live in than other Korean settlements, but we cannot say that the ideal of the Korean people has been realized. The ideal of the Korean nation is to live in their motherland which is independent of the Japanese and free from exploitation and oppression by landlords and capitalists. How can you say you are living an ideal life when you are in debt to landlords? When the Japanese invade Manchuria Wujiazi will not be safe. And

sooner or later Japan will invade Manchuria. They do not want the Korean people to lead an ideal life.”

“Then, you mean we should give up the idea of building an ideal village?” he asked with irritation.

“We wish to transform this village into a revolutionary village that fights for the liberation of the country, rather than seeing it so quiet.”

“That means you are going to spread socialism in Wujiazi? No, you can’t. I detest socialism. When your father said in Kuandian in 1919 that we should switch over to the communist movement we all supported him. But, while following the Communist Party of Koryo, I discovered the communists all to be crazy. They were all involved in factional strife. Since then I’ve been disgusted by the mere mention of communism.”

Then he showed me his membership card of the Communist Party of Koryo.

“However hard you may be working for the revolution, you don’t have such a membership card, do you?” the old man said in a casual manner, looking at me craftily.

I opened the card and examined it before putting it in my coat pocket. He found this so unexpected that he looked at me in blank dismay.

“Allow me to keep as a souvenir your membership card of the Communist Party of Koryo that has gone bankrupt on account of factional strife.”

I thought he would want it back, but he didn’t. He asked me if we had any special policy for making the village revolutionary.

I spent a good while explaining to him how we had made such villages as Jiangdong, Xinantun, Naitoushan, Kalun and Guyushu revolutionary. He listened to me attentively. Then he said, “What you say smacks of Stalinism, but I am not against you. Nevertheless, you should not pay tribute only to Stalin. There is some sense in what Trotsky said.”

He then expounded Trotsky’s theory. Yet he did not seem to be opposed to Marxism-Leninism. I learned that he had an extremely

good impression of Trotsky. I had talked to many people who were known to be well-versed in communist theory, but none had spoken so highly of Trotsky as he did. Out of curiosity I asked, “Why do you worship Trotsky?”

“Frankly, I don’t worship him. I just don’t like the young people nowadays worshipping people from major powers indiscriminately. Trotsky is Trotsky and Stalin is Stalin. Young people nowadays are in the habit of quoting from them, but I don’t see what is so great about their propositions. It is for the Russian people to consider their propositions. The Korean people should speak in the spirit of Korea in order to promote the revolution in their own country, don’t you think?”

The old man was right in a sense. In the course of my conversations with him over several days I found him to be no ordinary man. At first I wondered if he was a Trotskyite, but I learned that, tired of factional strife, he was just warning us young people, warning us against the blind worship of everything, against talking only about other countries, about Russia and Stalin, and against copying everything from Russia. In short, he was telling us to live in the Korean spirit.

He continued: “I don’t care what the young people do, nor do I interfere in my son’s work. Whatever he does, it is up to him. But I will fight to the end against those who put on airs, chanting foreign propositions without having their own principles.”

What he said convinced me that our consistent stand against factionalism, flunkeyism and dogmatism was correct and that our policy of carrying out the revolution through the efforts of our own people and by believing in our own strength was correct.

The following day I talked a lot more than the old man. I explained to him in detail the line we had adopted at the Kalun Meeting. He seemed to be strongly impressed by my explanation that we should form a party and an army of a new type, organize an anti-Japanese national united front by enlisting all social strata irrespective of ideology, religious belief, status of property, age and sex and

liberate the country through the resistance of our 20 million people. In particular, he hailed our intention to organize an anti-Japanese national united front.

Pyon Tae U was a widower and his son was a bachelor. The old man's daughter kept the house, but she could not sweep away the lonely, dull air prevailing in the family. After repeated discussions with Pyon Tal Hwan and other comrades about choosing a suitable match for him, I singled out a girl with the surname Sim who lived in a rural village near Wujiazi and got my comrades to prepare for a wedding ceremony for them. I felt it presumptuous and awkward for a bachelor to arrange the marriage of his elders, but after their wedding the villagers were happy, and gave me unstinted praise.

The event won us the trust of the village elders. One day Pyon Tal Hwan came to see me and inform me of his father's attitude. He quoted his father as saying to the village elders, "Some new masters who will take over the 'ideal village' from us have now appeared. They are Song Ju and his friends. If socialism is what they adhere to, we can accept it without a worry. We must not take Song Ju for a mere youngster. We are old and lagging behind the times, so let us hand over the whole of Wujiazi to Song Ju and his friends, and help them in all sincerity." The other elders were said to have expressed their admiration for what we had said.

Hearing this, I went to old man Pyon. I said, "I have come to return you your membership card of the Communist Party of Koryo." But he replied, without so much as glancing at it, that he did not need it. I was at a loss what to do with it. Later the card was passed around my comrades.

In 1946, the year following the liberation of the country, the old man came to Pyongyang to see me. When I reminded him of the happenings in Wujiazi, he looked back upon the old days with emotion and then grinned. He said that now that he had witnessed the northern half of the country having become a great and ideal land, a land of perfect happiness, he would not regret it even if he were to die there and then. He was 67 years old at that time. That year he passed

away in Yitong County, Jilin Province, China, so I learned much later.

His son Pyon Tal Hwan worked in Wujiazi as the head of the Peasants Union organization. On the charge of having been involved in the anti-Japanese struggle under our guidance, the Japanese put him in Sinuiju prison in 1931, and there he served a term of several years.

Thus the breakthrough in making Wujiazi revolutionary was achieved. After that, the village elders' attitude towards the political workers from the Korean Revolutionary Army changed. They vied with each other to invite them to dinner.

During the revolutionary transformation of Wujiazi I made great efforts to win over the Chinese people. Without winning over influential Chinese people, it would have been impossible for us to establish a foothold for conducting free activities in central Manchuria. Therefore, I did not hesitate to bring even landlords around to our side and make use of them, if it was possible.

At that time a landlord named Zhao Jia-feng was living near Wujiazi. Once he quarrelled with another landlord in the neighbouring village over some farm land and resolved to bring a law suit against him. But he did not know how to write the indictment. He had a son who had received secondary education in a nearby town, but the son did not know how to draft it, either. It seems he had idled away his time at school.

Zhao Jia-feng asked Kim Hae San, a doctor of Korean medicine in Wujiazi, to recommend someone capable of writing the indictment for him. Kim Hae San came to see me one day and asked me if I knew how to write it. When we were engaged in underground activity, books on the composition of letters, funeral orations and indictments had been available in China for students and the public in general to use as reference.

Kim Hae San and I were invited to a dinner at the landlord's house. The host explained at length that he was seeking judgement over a land dispute. I wrote an indictment in Chinese for him and

went with him to the county town where I helped him behind the scenes to win the case. Had it not been for my assistance, he would have lost dozens of hectares of land. The landlord told me that I was a very good man, not a communist. Regarding me as his benefactor, he gave me unqualified support in everything I did. On holidays he never failed to invite me to dinner. There I met many influential people in China and gave them anti-imperialist education. Thus my revolutionary activities, including the work of the Korean school at Wujiazi, became legitimate, and the foothold for our revolutionary struggle began to be consolidated.

After winning over the village elders and other influential people, we set about reforming the mass organizations into revolutionary ones. First we restructured the Youth Association, making it the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. It had previously been under the nationalist influence. Thanks to the activities of the detachment of the Korean Revolutionary Army, the core members of the association had been educated. But the association itself was not yet completely free from the remnants of nationalism. First of all, its fighting objective and tasks were not clear. In addition, its membership was small and it had no proper working method. It was an organization that existed in name only, doing almost nothing to rally the young people. The Wujiazi area consisted of hamlets sprawling over distances of 4, 8 and even 24 kilometres away from one another, but the association had no branches in those hamlets. This being the situation, the youth organization could neither strike root among the young people nor motivate them.

Some people insisted that we should reform the Youth Association into the AIYL right away. But it was premature to reform the existing organization into a new one without taking into account the political and ideological preparedness of the young people, they being still under nationalist influence and still believing in the association.

The men of the KRA visited the nearby hamlets with cadres from the association and conducted ideological work for forming the AIYL. In the course of this our revolutionary line was propagated

among the young people. I also had conversations with them every day.

After making such preparations we formed the Anti-Imperialist Youth League of Wujiazi in a classroom of Samsong School. The league established branches in the hamlets. Choe Il Chon was elected chairman of the league committee, and Mun Jo Yang chief of the organizational section.

Later the Association of Fellow Peasants was reformed into the Peasants Union, the Association of Schoolchildren into the Children's Expeditionary Corps and the Wujiazi branch of the Educational Federation of Korean Women in South Manchuria into the Women's Association, and thus a fresh upsurge was brought about in the activities of the mass organizations in Wujiazi. After their restructuring the organizations admitted many new members. Almost all the people living in Wujiazi became affiliated to an appropriate organization and led a political life.

We also restructured the village council, an autonomous administrative organ, into a self-governing committee, a revolutionary one. The pioneers of Wujiazi had formed the village council in the first half of the 1920s. The council paid primary attention to economic and educational affairs and improving the peasants' life by maintaining normal relations with the Chinese government authorities and operating a rice sales agency at Gongzhuling and similar agencies under it.

But the people of Wujiazi openly accused the councillors of having no popular spirit and of being dishonest.

In the course of talking to the peasants I learned that the councillors were not distributing some foodstuffs and daily necessities that had been purchased by the sales agency at Gongzhuling to the peasants equitably and were disposing of them as they pleased out of their own selfish desires. I sent a man to Gongzhuling to ascertain whether this was true. On his return he told me that the village council was corrupt. He confirmed that the councillors were misappropriating money collected from the peasants

and were feathering their own nests.

Because the village head was dealing with most of the affairs of the council by himself in a subjective and arbitrary manner, the opinions of the masses were ignored. As they had no right to participate in the work of the council, the masses did not know about the mistakes made by it. Since the people, their life and the way they worked were all in the process of being transformed, the village council could not work as the masses required with the existing organizational structure and conservative work method.

We called a consultative meeting attended by the cadres of the council, the chiefs of all the hamlets and the chairmen of the organizations of the Peasants Union, and reviewed the work of the village council. At the meeting we restructured the council to form a self-governing committee. The committee eradicated subjectivism and arbitrariness as we had intended and gave full play to democracy in its work.

We paid particular attention to the rice sales agency at Gongzhuling which was under the control of the self-governing committee. The peasants of Wujiazi had previously had to take their rice as far as Gongzhuling 25 miles away on oxcarts or horse carts to sell it. Normally it was good business to store it somewhere when the price of rice was low and sell it when the price had risen. But there was no one for them at Gongzhuling to entrust with their rice. This being the case, they had sold it to anybody without waiting for a better price. Then, in the autumn of 1927, in order to remedy the situation they installed a rice sales agency at Gongzhuling.

We appointed to the agency the most popular people from among the members of the mass organizations. We also sent Kye Yong Chun, Pak Kun Won and Kim Won U, men of the KRA, to help the agency in its work. After we had taken over the agency it performed the secret mission of establishing contact with revolutionary organizations and providing the KRA with the information it needed in its activities while still fulfilling the function of a legal commercial organ serving the peasants.

Our restructuring of the village council to form a self-governing committee and our conversion of such a legal commercial organ as the rice sales agency at Gongzhuling into a servant of the revolution were a great experience in our revolutionary struggle in the early 1930s.

In Wujiazi we sent political workers to many parts of Manchuria to expand our organizations and widen the scope of our activities. In those days we also sent several political workers to the Kailu area. Pak Kun Won, one of the first members of the DIU and a former pupil of Hwasong Uisuk School, worked for some time in that area.

Many Mongolian people lived in the Kailu area. Cut off from the civilized world, they did not know how to treat illnesses and, when they were sick, they only prayed to God. So our comrades took medicines with them whenever they visited that area and administered them to the sick, which were very effective. From that time the people of Kailu treated Korean visitors with hospitality.

In order to improve the political and professional qualifications of those in charge of organizations, we gave a short training course to the heads and core members of every organization. Cha Kwang Su, Kye Yong Chun and I gave lectures for two or three hours every night on the Juche line of revolution and the strategic and tactical policies adopted at the Kalun Meeting, as well as on how to conduct political work among the masses, how to expand organizations and consolidate them, and how to educate the organization members and guide their life in their organizations. After the short course we took the people into the field and taught them working methods—how they should form organizations, train core elements, give assignments and review their fulfilment, conduct meetings, talk to individuals and so on. Then the leading personnel of Wujiazi went boldly among the masses.

We put great efforts into enlightening and educating the people of Wujiazi.

We paid primary attention to education. We appointed men of the KRA and able young men from among the members of the

underground organizations as teachers at Samsong School and ensured that they played the leading role in improving the education provided by the school in a revolutionary manner. It was after we began to run the school that the subjects which inculcated nationalist and feudal-Confucian ideas were discontinued and political subjects were included in the curriculum. And it was around this time that tuition fees were abolished at Samsong School. The upkeep of the school was financed by the self-governing committee. All the children of school age in Wujiazi were given free education from that winter.

We later included an article on free and compulsory education in the Ten-point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, but in fact the communists of Korea first tried and implemented free education in Guyushu, Kalun and Wujiazi. Samsong School in Wujiazi, along with Jinmyong School in Kalun and Samgwang School in Guyushu, was an important educational establishment, the first to introduce free education in our country.

We also ran night schools for the education of the grown-ups, particularly housewives, who could not go to school. I saw to it that night schools were organized not only in the village but also in the surrounding hamlets, and that all these people were enrolled in them.

Drawing on the experience we had gained in launching *Bolshevik* in Kalun, we published a magazine *Nong-u* in Wujiazi. The magazine played the role of the organ of the Peasants Union. While *Bolshevik* was a little hard to understand, the articles in *Nong-u* were written in a concise and plain fashion so that the peasants could understand them. This magazine, along with *Bolshevik*, was circulated as far as Jiandao.

In those days we propagated many revolutionary songs to the villagers through the pupils. If the *Red Flag* and *Revolutionary Song* were taught at the school, they would spread throughout the village on the same day.

In Wujiazi we had formed an art troupe. This troupe was based at Samsong School and worked successfully under the guidance of Kye

Yong Chun. I worked hard to complete the libretto of *The Flower Girl* which I had begun to write in my days in Jilin and then staged rehearsals for it. Once the libretto was finished, Kye started the production of the opera with the members of the drama group that had been formed at the school. We staged this opera in the hall of Samsong School on the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the October Revolution. This opera was not seen on stage for many years after liberation, and then was improved and adapted into a film, opera and novel by our writers and artistes under the guidance of Comrade Kim Jong Il and presented to the public in the early 1970s. At that time he did a lot of work.

With the strong support of the people of Wujiazi, we transformed the village on the Liaohe into a reliable operational base for the KRA in a short span of time. We had worked among the peasants in the outskirts of Jilin and in the vicinity of Changchun, but we had never so thoroughly transformed a rural village into a revolutionary one as we did with Wujiazi.

Kim Kwang Ryol, a liaison officer of the Comintern, expressed his admiration for all the success we had achieved in Wujiazi.

Because we had put forward an original revolutionary line and were paving the road of revolution in an independent way, the Comintern showed great interest in us. It seems that the Oriental Department of the Comintern discussed us a lot at that time. They seemed to have been curious about the emergence in Korea of revolutionaries of a new generation who were quite different from those of the previous generation and who, while not affiliated with any faction, were working independently and without fuss on a sound mass foundation. It must have been out of curiosity that the Comintern sent a liaison officer.

Kim Kwang Ryol, who had been at the liaison office in Harbin, came to Wujiazi and talked to my comrades, the heads of the revolutionary organizations and the village elders. After talking to many people, he met me and made many encouraging remarks concerning our work. He said that the young communists of Korea

had been paving an original road for the communist movement and for the struggle for national liberation from colonial domination, and that in the course of this we had accumulated rich experience. He gave his full support to our revolutionary lines and policies.

He expressed great surprise at our line of the anti-Japanese national united front. He said that a serious discussion about the definition of the supporters of, and sympathizers with the revolution was being conducted in the international communist movement, and asked me how he should understand our alliance with the bigoted nationalist forces, religious believers and even the propertied class.

I said: “A revolution cannot be carried out by a small number of communists or by workers and poor peasants alone. In order to defeat Japanese imperialism we have to enlist even middle-of-the-road forces. I don’t know about the situation in other countries, but in Korea most of the national capitalists and religious believers are all opposed to foreign forces. Only a handful of landlords, comprador capitalists, pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation are against the revolution. We intend to mobilize all the rest of the people in a nationwide resistance. The key to liberating Korea through the efforts of the Korean people is to win all the anti-Japanese forces over to our side.”

After hearing my explanation he said, “I am most gratified with the original way you are dealing with everything, without being restrained by the classics.” Then he advised me to study in Moscow, saying, “The practical struggle is important, but since you are a promising young man, you should study.”

Then he produced a suitcase containing a suit, a shirt, a tie and a pair of shoes, and told me that it would be a good idea for me to comply with his request because the Comintern was expecting a great deal from me. He had probably been to the Comintern and come to me with instructions to persuade me to go to Moscow.

I answered, “I am very grateful to you for your interest in me, but I intend to go to east Manchuria, to the masses. If I go to the Soviet Union and eat Russian bread, I may become a pro-Russian, which I

do not want. There are many factions in Korea such as the M-L group, the Tuesday group, the Seoul group and others which I find distasteful. I cannot be the same. I shall learn Marxism-Leninism from my books.”

Cha Kwang Su, Pak So Sim and other comrades, too, had once advised me in Taolaizhao to go to Moscow, after preparing daily necessities needed in my studying abroad.

Later in December that year I called a meeting of the leading personnel of the KRA and heads of the revolutionary organizations in Wujiazi. The meeting was to review the experiences and lessons gained in the struggle to implement the tasks put forward at the Kalun Meeting and to expand and develop the revolutionary movement as required by the prevailing situation.

Militarist Japan, resorting to the force of arms, had spurred up her preparations for war to seize new colonies and expand her territory by mobilizing all her strength. She ruthlessly destroyed anything she found standing in her way.

We were planning to go to east Manchuria, anticipating Japan's invasion of Manchuria, and to entrench ourselves there to fight against the invasion. In order to go to east Manchuria we had to review our activities in the central part of Manchuria and take the necessary measures for preparing for an armed struggle, and the Wujiazi Meeting was convened for this purpose.

All the core members of the KRA and heads of the revolutionary organizations attended the meeting. Chae Su Hang and many other heads of revolutionary organizations came to Wujiazi from the Jiandao, Onsong and Jongsong areas, braving the severe cold of 30 degrees below zero. Many young revolutionaries, who had not known one another, became acquainted, exchanged opinions and conducted a serious discussion on the future of the Korean revolution.

The focus of the debate at the meeting was the matter of radically strengthening our activities in east Manchuria. We were firmly resolved to move the main theatre of our activities to east Manchuria. This was a pressing need in view of the prevailing revolutionary

situation. That was why I, though staying in Wujiazi, did not forget east Manchuria and was waiting impatiently for the day when I could move there.

At the meeting I also proposed that the preparations for the anti-Japanese armed struggle be speeded up and solidarity with the international revolutionary forces be strengthened.

The meeting fully displayed our determination to switch over from the youth and student movement and from the underground movement in the rural areas to an armed struggle and a decisive offensive against the enemy. While the Kalun Meeting had crystallized the will of the Korean nation to defeat Japanese imperialism by force of arms and liberate the country, the Wujiazi Meeting reaffirmed that will and indicated a shortcut to the theatre of the great war against the Japanese.

This meeting served as a bridge between the meeting held in Kalun and the meetings held in Mingyuegou in the spring and winter of 1931 and the meeting held in Songjiang in the same year, meetings which led us young communists to the field of the decisive battle against the Japanese imperialists.

Our youth and student movement finally developed to the stage of the armed struggle in the 1930s. Wujiazi played the role of a springboard, so to speak.

When I was leaving Wujiazi, Mun Jo Yang followed me for 4 kilometres to see me off, with tears in his eyes.

## 10. Unforgettable Men and Women

Once I met Comrade Fidel Castro in Pyongyang, and I talked to him for a long time about my experience in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. He asked me many questions, one of which was how we had obtained food while conducting the armed struggle.

I said that we had taken food from the enemy sometimes, but that the people always supplied us with it.

During our youth and student movement and underground work, too, people offered us food and bedding.

The Shanghai Provisional Government, Jongui-bu, Sinmin-bu, Chamui-bu and other Independence Army organizations each made laws and raised subscriptions and war funds from their compatriots, but we did not do so. Of course, we needed money for our revolutionary activities, but we could not enact laws to collect taxes. Restricting the people by laws and rules and raising funds by travelling about villages with a book in which was noted down which family should contribute how much money, did not accord with our ideals. Our attitude was that we would take what the people offered us, but if they did not offer us anything, we would not mind.

However, the people helped us in any circumstances even risking their lives. They were awakened to political awareness and always ready to help revolutionaries as they would do their own children. Therefore we always trusted them. Where the people lived we never had to skip a meal. We could emerge victorious, even though we had started the struggle empty-handed, solely because the people trusted and supported us. Hyon Jong Gyong, Kim Po An and Sung Chun Hak in Guyushu, Ryu Yong Son, Ryu Chun Gyong, Hwang Sun Sin and Jong Haeng Jong in Kalun, Pyon Tae U, Kwak Sang Ha, Pyon Tal Hwan, Mun Si Jun, Mun Jo Yang, Kim Hae San, Ri Mong Rin and

Choe Il Chon in Wujiazi, they were all unforgettable men and women who helped us in south and central Manchuria.

Though they lived on gruel, the people treated us kindly, offering us boiled rice.

Sometimes we slept in the night-duty room of a school on the excuse that we had an urgent task to perform that night, because we were sorry to bother the family. We used classrooms at Jinmyong School as a lodging in Kalun and those at Samgwang and Samsong schools were our bedrooms in Guyushu and Wujiazi.

Whenever I tried to sleep with my head on a wooden pillow in a classroom at Samgwang School, Hyon Kyun would come and seize me by the hand in a fit of anger.

He was a member of the DIU and a soldier of the Korean Revolutionary Army. He was clever, upright and kind-hearted. His elder brother Hyon Hwa Gyun worked in the Peasants Union in Guyushu and helped us a lot in our work.

Two brothers were involved in our organizations and, what is more, their father, too, was an independence fighter, as a result of which their family was exceptionally kind and warm towards us.

As a man of some social standing Hyon Kyun's father Hyon Ha Juk enjoyed high prestige among the independence fighters. Ha Juk was an alias, his real name was Hyon Jong Gyong. Instead of addressing him by his real name, the people of Guyushu called him Mr. Ha Juk. In those days all the Koreans resident in Manchuria knew of him.

In his lifetime my father, too, was on intimate terms with him and spoke a lot about him. Not only as mere friends but also as comrades who shared one idea and purpose for the independence movement, they had frequent contact and discussed matters until they came to a mutual understanding. They devoted themselves to the independence movement, respecting each other as close friends.

Mr. Hyon Ha Juk was the chairman of the central legal commission in the days of Thongui-bu, a member of the central committee in the days of Jongui-bu and, in the days of Kukmin-bu,

the head of the political department of the Korean Revolutionary Party which was known by the nationalists as the one and only party of the nation. He had a deep understanding of communism and always sympathized with the young men who aspired to communism, mixing freely with them.

When Comrades Kim Hyok, Cha Kwang Su and Pak So Sim were establishing the Anti-Imperialist Youth League organizations following the formation of the social science institute in Liuhe, he would often appear as a lecturer to enlighten the young people. Those who had attended his lectures in their school days in Wangqingmen and at Hwahung Middle School days frequently recalled him.

Whenever I went to Guyushu, Hyon Ha Juk invited me to spend the night at his house.

“Make yourself comfortable. Treat this as if it were your uncle’s house,” he would say. He was over ten years older than my father.

I stayed at his house for ten days, twenty days and even a month to work with the masses. One year I celebrated the *Tano* festival with his family in Guyushu. In those days, the family’s circumstances were so difficult that offering a guest food and bedding for a day or two, let alone several weeks, was no easy matter. Because the farmers offered food to the revolutionaries from the small amount of grain which remained after paying their farm rent to the landlord, they did not have even enough gruel to eat.

Hyon’s family did all they could to feed me well. Sometimes they served chicken, bean curd, ground beans and chard soup.

Whenever the women of his family were turning a handmill to make bean curd, I rolled up my sleeves to help them. I still remember Hyon Hwa Gyun’s wife Kim Sun Ok, who was twenty-two or twenty-three years old and who, out of shyness, would not show her face when I helped her to turn the handmill.

Mr. Hyon Ha Juk belonged to Kukmin-bu, a nationalist organization, but he did not conceal his involvement in the progressive group within Kukmin-bu and said openly that he would follow communism in the future.

I was told that he went to Xian to avoid a quarrel within Kukmin-bu after I left Guyushu. Apparently he went there seeking something from Zhang Xue-liang when his army moved to Xian. Because Zhang's anti-Japanese feelings were strong, many people wanted to conduct the anti-Japanese movement under his umbrella. Before and after the Manchuria incident many Korean independence fighters who had been active in the three eastern provinces of China moved the theatre of their activities to such places as Shanghai, Xian and Changsha.

Whenever I passed the northeastern area of China by air or by train on a foreign tour after liberation, I recalled Guyushu, Mr. Hyon and his family, as I saw the familiar mountains and rivers. He may have passed away, but one or two of his children must still be alive. However, there was no news from them. I have been able to do nothing because I do not know their address, but they could have written to me. I thought that it was easy for a man to receive kindness but it was difficult to repay it.

Unexpectedly, in the spring of 1990, I had an emotional meeting with members of his family. Kim Sun Ok, the eldest daughter-in-law of Mr. Hyon, sent to our revolutionary museum the brass bowl which I had used when I had eaten at their house, as well as the handmill which had been used to make bean curd for me. She had preserved them for 60 years as souvenirs. This story was carried in *Toraji*, a Korean magazine published in Jilin, and our *Rodong Sinmun* copied the article.

When I heard that my benefactors, from whom I had heard nothing for 60 years, were still alive, I could not control my feelings. I had intended to repay the debt I owed in Guyushu someday when the country was independent, so I was anxious to meet Kim Sun Ok to share our past experiences with each other, offering her simple dishes of my own.

Kim Sun Ok, too, said that she could wish for nothing more than to meet me again before she died.

So I invited her to Pyongyang in March 1990. When I met her I

found her in her 80s, hardly able to walk because of a serious illness.

When she came to our country, she was accompanied by six of Mr. Hyon's grandchildren who were all strangers to me. Hyon Kyun's son was there. His lips closely resembled his father's. As I looked at the familiar lips I felt as if Hyon Kyun had come to life again and was calling on me.

I made sure that her party stayed in a guest house for foreign VIPs for about a month while they travelled about the homeland. What troubled me was that she could not catch what others were saying because she was hard of hearing. Her pronunciation was not clear and she had a poor memory. Though I had met her, one of my benefactors, whom I had been anxious to meet for 60 years, we could not make ourselves understood to each other. I had hoped that we could spend a long time looking back on the days in Guyushu, she reminding me of what I had forgotten and I reminding her of what she had forgotten. I was very sorry that my wish had not been granted.

Mr. Hyon Ha Juk's family knew little about his life and activities. So I told them how he had fought for the independence of Korea and how he had helped us in our revolutionary activities. I regarded this to be my duty as a man who knew well about his personal history.

The cause of the previous generation is not inherited naturally by the children of the same stock. Only when the younger generations know all about the distinguished service rendered by their forerunners and its value, can they inherit the revolutionary cause begun by their grandfathers' and fathers' generations.

When I met Kim Sun Ok, we sat together with Kong Kuk Ok, Mun Jo Yang and Mun Suk Gon who had helped us in our revolutionary activities in Wujiazi. Kong Kuk Ok is the daughter of Kong Yong who, when my father passed away, had remained in mourning for three years in my place. One year when I was studying at Jilin Yuwen Middle School I went home to Fusong for the holiday. At that time Kong Yong's wife, whom he had treated badly because of a scar on her face, came to our house with a baby on her back. That baby was none other than Kong Kuk Ok.

While directing a meeting of the Peasants Union in Pyongyang immediately after liberation, I met a man from Pyoktong, a delegate to the meeting, and asked him if he knew where the bereaved family of Kong Yong lived. Because Kong Yong came from Pyoktong I guessed that his widow and daughter might be living there.

The delegate said that many people in Pyoktong had the family name Kong, but he had never heard of Kong Yong's family. I was disappointed at what he said. My mind was troubled because I did not know the whereabouts of Kong Yong's family, while other bereaved families had been found.

In those days we were preparing to establish a school for the bereaved families of revolutionaries at Mangyongdae. When I returned, after 20 years, to my old house where my grandparents were waiting for me after I had given my address on my triumphal return to the citizens in the Pyongyang public playground, my classmates from my primary school days called on me and suggested that a middle school named after me be established on the old site of Sunhwa School at which my father had taught. They said, "Mangyongdae is the famous place where General Kim was born. How wonderful it would be if we were to build a large school and name it Kim Il Sung Middle School."

At that time there was no middle school in my home village.

I said to them, "In the past innumerable patriots sacrificed themselves in the armed struggle while fighting at my side in the mountains. With their dying breath they asked me to educate their children and train them into fine revolutionaries after the independence of Korea. Since then, I have believed that, true to their last words, I should provide education for the bereaved children of my comrades and ensure that they inherit their parents' will, after the country became independent. Now that we have won back our country, my determination has become firmer. A school for bereaved children of revolutionaries should be established at Mangyongdae, rather than a middle school."

When I said this, the villagers asked me how many bereaved

children of revolutionaries there were and if they were so many that a school should be established exclusively for them. Even some cadres who were working at important posts of the Party and administration said the same. They could not even guess how many martyrs had sacrificed themselves in the fight for the country. Whenever I met such people I was dumbfounded because I had buried innumerable comrades-in-arms in the mountains of a foreign country.

We established the school for the bereaved families of revolutionaries at Mangyongdae, using as capital rice donated by the peasants to the country as a token of their patriotic devotion out of their first harvest after the land reform.

I dispatched many officials to various places at home and in northeast China to find the bereaved children of revolutionaries. At that time hundreds of such children came home from China. Some of those children whom Comrade Rim Chun Chu brought back have now become members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of our Party.

Some children who had been living by selling dyestuffs or cigarettes returned home on foot of their own accord after hearing that a revolutionary school would be established at Mangyongdae. Among them were descendants of Independence Army men and the children of the patriots who had died while fighting against the Japanese in labour unions or peasants unions.

However, only Kong Kuk Ok was nowhere to be found. Whenever I went to North Phyongan Province I searched for Kong Yong's family by following up rumours, and I requested the officials of the province to find them. Whenever I visited the revolutionary school to enjoy the holidays with the children and saw them singing and dancing merrily, I felt a heartache at the thought of Kong's wife who would come to my house in Xiaonanmen Street wearing straw sandals and with a wild herb package on her head, and Kong Kuk Ok who was licking her hand on her mother's back.

I discovered Kong Kuk Ok at last in 1967. It was after her mother had died. If her mother had known that Kim Il Sung was

Kim Song Ju, she would have called on me. Apparently she said nothing about her husband's activities to her daughter because she had not known who Kim Il Sung was and, moreover, she was afraid that the communist party which had seized power was prejudiced against her husband who had belonged to the Independence Army.

I sent Kong Kuk Ok to the Higher Party School. After her graduation she worked for the Pyongyang City Party Committee and in the museum of the Ministry of Railways. Because she is now too old to work, she is spending the rest of her life at home on an old-age pension.

Kim Po An from Guyushu was a friend of my father's, as Hyon Ha Juk was. Once he was a company commander of the Independence Army. He said with regret that I had never visited his house, and only went to Mr. Hyon's, I was told. When friends of mine called on him, he said that he had been on intimate terms with Kim Hyong Jik and was friendly with Song Ju, too, but that I had not visited him.

From then on I dropped in at his house whenever I went to Guyushu. He had established a pharmacy and offered some of the money coming from it to support our Samgwang School. As a man of great enthusiasm for education, he was deeply concerned in enlightening the young people and children. Whenever we requested him to give a lecture at Samgwang School he readily complied. He said that the people of Guyushu did not know even how to count money, so he worried about how we would gain the independence of Korea with such ignorant people. Nowadays people may not believe that adults could not count money, but in those days many of the Chinese and Koreans living in Jilin were not able to calculate prices. The money issued in the province was different from that being circulated in the counties and, in addition, there were various kinds of money of different values, such as the Jilin government cheque, the Fengtian *dayang*, the Jilin *xiaodayang* and the silver coin. So many people could not calculate prices in the markets.

We got the peasants together at the night school and taught them

how to calculate prices. Seeing that those who had been regarded so ignorant were now mastering the four rules of arithmetic, Kim Po An said with satisfaction, "Of course, Koreans are naturally clever." He observed the lessons at the night school and at Samgwang School, saying that seeing their development from ignorance to intelligence was very interesting.

Every student of the advanced course at Samgwang School was clever and resourceful. Among them Ryu Chun Gyong and Hwang Sun Sin still remain in my memory as unforgettable figures. Both of them came to the school on the recommendation of the revolutionary organizations in Kalun. Ryu Chun Gyong's father Ryu Yong Son helped us in our revolutionary activities, teaching the pupils at Jinmyong School. At that time Comrades Ryu and Hwang were only 14 or 15 years old. When we were returning to Kalun or Jilin after finishing our work in Guyushu, we would ask them to carry our weapons. The warlords were not so careful in searching women. The two girls always complied with our request. They would follow about 50 metres behind us with our weapons under their skirts. The warlord authorities searched us carefully, but they allowed the two girls to pass without taking any serious notice of them.

Hwang Sun Sin returned home after liberation and worked as a farmer in her home village. She worked well, worthy of a member of the Children's Expeditionary Corps in her Samgwang School days and became famous for her good harvests. She enjoyed respect and love among the people throughout her life and, in the postwar period, worked as a deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly.

Ryu Chun Gyong lived in various parts of Manchuria before returning home in 1979, saying that she would spend the last years of her life in the homeland as Ri Kwan Rin was doing. If she had returned home at a young age as Hwang had done, she would have become a famous career woman and enjoyed a more worthwhile life in her old age for the society and people. Of the girl pupils at Samgwang School she was the best at writing and speaking. She was clear-headed and very promising.

When we were making preparations to found the guerrilla army in Antu, she wrote to me expressing her intention to continue the struggle. Because we were so busy launching the armed struggle at that time and because I considered that it would be difficult for women to follow men in the armed struggle, I failed to send for her. Though we advocated that women should have the same rights as men, at that time we did not regard women as being so good for the armed struggle. If she had returned home at the age of about fifty, we would have given her an education and had her take part in social activity.

We established a principle whereby, if we found those people who had taken part in the revolutionary struggle in the past or had been involved in it, we would educate them, even if they were old, and promote them to suitable posts before they started their political activities. However clever and useful a person may be, he will become ignorant of the world, his thinking ability will decrease and his view of life will get rusty if he coops himself up at home, away from social activity.

After liberation many fighters and those who had been involved in the revolutionary struggle became buried socially without being promoted to suitable posts. The factionalists did not promote the anti-Japanese fighters to cadres for a long time, saying that their background was good but they were useless because they were ignorant. They should have provided them with an education if they were ignorant, and trained them with a strong determination so that they could discharge their duties satisfactorily. But the factionalists excluded the anti-Japanese fighters and turned their faces away from them.

Therefore, we saw to it that the bereaved children of revolutionaries and those who had been involved in the revolutionary struggle, once they were found, studied at the Higher Party School or the University of National Economics before being promoted to cadres, according to their preparedness. If they fail to study and lead an organizational life, even veteran revolutionaries lag behind the times.

In this process, a lot of anti-Japanese fighters, bereaved children of revolutionaries and those who had helped the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle have grown up to become leading members of the Party and government and distinguished public figures.

Mun Jo Yang of Wujiazi was one of such people. When he worked as the head of the organizational department of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, he helped us substantially, together with Pyon Tal Hwan, Choe Il Chon, Ri Mong Rin and Kim Hae San. He worked enthusiastically with us, writing articles, making speeches and building up mass organizations. I think that the meetings were held mostly at his house. When I was staying in Wujiazi, I became indebted to his brother Mun Si Jun's and Choe Il Chon's families. Mun Si Jun was kind-hearted. He offered me food over several months without receiving any money. It is fresh in my memory how, when our party was active in Wujiazi, he went so far as to butcher his pig for us to eat, requesting us earnestly to liberate the country. I ate and slept at his house for a long time. I very much liked the pickled garlic which was put on the table at every meal in his house. Because it had such a distinct taste, it was the first thing I recollected when I met Mun's daughter Mun Suk Kon after liberation. So I invited her to my house to teach us to make the pickled garlic. Whenever I go to the provinces the people there put pickled garlic on the dining table, but it cannot be compared with the pickled garlic I ate in Wujiazi with cooked millet. Not long ago Mun Jo Yang celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Recalling the days in Wujiazi I sent him some flowers and had a dinner prepared for him.

In Wujiazi I stayed at Choe Il Chon's house for several days. He was the chairman of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and the chief editor of *Nong-u*. In those days he was called Choe Chon or Choe Chan Son. The name Choe Hyong U printed on the cover of *A Short History of Korean Revolutionary Movement Overseas* was the pen name which he used when he was writing in Seoul after liberation. He was the most enlightened man in Wujiazi. He did not write poems as Kim Hyok did but had a distinguished literary talent in prose. That is

why he worked as the head of the Changchun branch office of *Dong-A Ilbo*, while conducting activities as an underground political worker for several years under our orders. In this process he collected a lot of material about our activities and wrote many articles for publications.

Choe Il Chon was put on a blacklist by the Japanese intelligence service. The Japanese military policemen and secret agents were on duty every day outside the *Dong-A Ilbo* office to watch him. The enemy became interested in him because he continued to work among the young people in Changchun, too, and because he disseminated our activities widely among the patriots at home and abroad. After we started the armed struggle in east Manchuria, he sent to the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army many hardcore young men whom he had trained himself in the Anti-Imperialist Youth League organizations. We must conclude that the details of the national liberation struggle of Koreans in Manchuria that appear in *A Short History of Korean Revolutionary Movement Overseas* and the vigorous and passionate literary talent with which he described them were learned and polished through his revolutionary practice.

When he was living in Shenyang and Beijing Choe Il Chon went to Seoul many times to introduce the anti-Japanese armed struggle to the distinguished figures and the people from all walks of life at home. After the founding of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland he explained its programme to them. Influenced by his information work the Korean Language Society and the Korean folklore movement led by Ri Kuk Ro gave their full support to the Ten-point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and, in accordance with this programme, conducted a struggle to safeguard the nation's culture and the spirit of the nation.

As the persecution and surveillance by the Japanese authorities became stricter, Choe went to Seoul, taking with him material about our struggle and the independence movement which he had collected while travelling around Manchuria when he was working at the branch office of *Dong-A Ilbo*, and handed it all over to Ri Kuk Ro who was the head of the Korean Language Society. Among this

material were copies of the magazine *Nong-u* we had published in Wujhazi.

“This material is worthy of being a national treasure. I am not able to keep it because I am followed constantly by the enemy. I will write the history using this material after the independence of the country. So I hope you will keep it until that time.”

Having made this request Choe returned to Manchuria. Immediately after liberation he took the material from Ri, who had kept it in safety at his request, and wrote *A Short History of Korean Revolutionary Movement Overseas*. This book was printed on reclaimed paper mixed with grains of sand, but it was so popular that the young intellectuals studying history and literature copied the full text out on white paper.

In the bloody atmosphere immediately after liberation in which the American military government defined anti-communism and anti-north as the “state policy” of south Korea and backed it with the bayonet, Choe even published cartoons depicting the anti-Japanese struggle to infuse in the young people and children the anti-imperialist and anti-Japanese spirit. It was wonderful that he wrote such a valuable book as *A Short History of Korean Revolutionary Movement Overseas*, tapping all his mental power, in Seoul where political confusion and disorder prevailed.

After entering the political world in south Korea he worked at important posts such as the head of the political department of the Korean Revolutionary Party, the department head of the Central Committee of the New Progressive Party, a member of the Committee for Welcoming General Kim Il Sung and a member of the executive committee of the National Independence Federation, and fought with devotion for the unity of the democratic forces and national reunification, joining hands with Ryo Un Hyong, Hong Myong Hui, Kim Kyu Sik and other important figures. He was assassinated in Seoul by the reactionaries during the Fatherland Liberation War.

Choe Il Chon’s *A Short History of Korean Revolutionary*

*Movement Overseas* is unfinished. He planned to write the next volumes after publishing volume 2, but he failed to do so because he could not find time to write them after stepping out on the political stage in south Korea. I was told that he intended to write about our revolutionary activities in all their aspects in the next volumes. If Choe Il Chon had not been killed, the next volumes would have been published and, accordingly, more interesting material about our revolutionary history would have become known to the world.

Many decades have passed since then, so not many of those who can remember the days of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle remain alive. What is worse, those who can remember the early days of our struggle are only a few. My memory, too, is limited. I have forgotten many experiences and sometimes I fail to remember the correct dates and names because my memory is dim.

Among those who helped us in our activities in central and south Manchuria, Kim Ri Gap's girlfriend Jon Kyong Suk remains most vividly in my memory. As a hero of the "Kumgang restaurant (Taesong restaurant) incident," Kim was included in *A Short History of Korean Revolutionary Movement Overseas*. In the spring of 1930 some Japanese consular policemen disguised as Chinese arrested him at O Sang Hon's (O Chun Ya) house in Fuxing Street, Jilin, and escorted him to Changchun after gagging him and binding his arms and legs. In court he was sentenced to nine years in prison and transferred to Dalian prison.

Jon Kyong Suk's parents refused to allow their daughter to marry a revolutionary such as Kim Ri Gap, but Jon disobeyed her parents and left home to follow her fiance to Dalian. At the time she was 18 or 19 years old. While carrying out her duties as the head of the Young Communist League organization at a textile mill, she supplied Kim with food and clothing.

I was told of this by Dong Chang-rong, the then secretary of the east Manchuria special district committee of the Chinese Communist Party. He said that when he was engaged in underground party work in Dalian he happened to meet her and was deeply moved by her true

and ardent love. He went on to say that when he saw her he felt that the faithfulness and will of Korean women was very strong.

Listening to him, I also admired her for her noble character. His words reminded me of her preparing a dinner for me and informing me of Kukmin-bu's terrorist plan when we were staying in Wangqingmen to take part in the Conference of the General Federation of Korean Youth in South Manchuria. I thought that Kim Ri Gap must be a truly happy man.

On this occasion I cannot write the innumerable stories I would like to about my benefactors who offered me food and provided me with my school fees and travelling expenses from their trifling savings when we young communists were running about vast Manchuria to save the nation. Many of them remain undiscovered, whether alive or dead and, should they be alive, we don't know where they are. If they appear before me even now it would satisfy a long-cherished desire of mine. How wonderful it would be if I could treat them and we could share our experiences of several decades ago. However, even by doing that I cannot repay all the sincere efforts they made for me in the past.

I consider it my best payment and gift to them to make the people prosperous, promote the well-being of the people and carry out the revolution initiated with the support of the people. Until he has made such a contribution to the people, nobody can say that he has fulfilled his duty as a communist.

## **CHAPTER 5. PEOPLE IN ARMS**

*(January 1931–April 1932)*

### **1. The Earth in Agony**

With the advent of 1931 the whirlwind of white terrorism that had started in the wake of the May 30 and August 1 Uprisings swept across the whole territory of Manchuria with increasing force. In an attempt to root out the revolutionary forces that had been painstakingly fostered over many years by the Korean communists and patriots, the enemy resorted to bloody repression everywhere. When I arrived in east Manchuria, I found the atmosphere there more strained than in south or central Manchuria; the consequences of the uprisings were even more horrible and devastating there. When I saw the heads of the rebels on spikes at the South Gate of Dunhua, I realized how far the offensive of the enemy against the revolutionary forces had gone. Even after the May 30 and August 1 Uprisings the factionalists and flunkeyists who were steeped in dogmatism and petty-bourgeois vainglory staged riots in the name of anniversary revolts, harvest revolts and terror revolts on such occasions as the anniversary of National Humiliation Day, the anniversary of the October Revolution and the anniversary of the Guangzhou Uprising. The number of such riots reached several hundred. This was why the storm of terrorism by the enemy was continuing into the following year.

In the course of this nearly all the revolutionary organizations in Jiandao broke up. Even the people who had followed the insurgents with food for them, to say nothing of the hardcore men who had

fought in the front line, were all captured or killed. The organizations we had rebuilt a year before when we were on our way to the River Tuman also suffered a considerable loss. Some of those taking part in the uprisings either surrendered to the enemy or fell away from the revolutionary organizations. When we visited villages in search of the organizations that had gone underground, some people would not speak to us and would only look at our faces fearfully. Others would say, "The communist party has ruined Jiandao," "The whole area of Jiandao has become a sea of blood, a sea of flames due to the senseless moves of the communist party," and "If you dance to the tune of the communist party, all your family will be exterminated," and would turn away from or give a wide berth to people known to be communists, regardless of their affiliation.

When I went to Mingyuegou, Ri Chong San who was a member of the Weng district party committee told me of the afflictions he had gone through following the uprisings. He said:

"Those higher up tell me incessantly to go among the masses and restore and expand the organizations, but to be frank with you, I find meeting people now uninteresting and discouraging. Those people who used to treat me with respect as a revolutionary, and even those who were admitted to the organization on my recommendation, have been keeping out of my way for months now. I feel so sad I can hardly carry on my revolutionary work. The wind of revolt blew a few times and public feelings have turned nasty in Jiandao, I tell you. Sometimes I have the sudden thought that, if I have to live on like this with people giving me the cold shoulder, I would rather give up the revolution and go away somewhere just to earn a living, and then I shall find peace of mind. But it's easier said than done. How can a revolutionary abandon his original aim that he was determined to attain, come what may? In any event there must be some measures taken to find a way out, but I'm quite at a loss what to do, and I only resent the confused situation."

This was the anguish of Ri Chong San and, at the same time, my anguish. All the revolutionaries in Jiandao experienced such mental

agony in the years 1930-31. The situation was so grim and dark that even such a faithful and reticent old revolutionary as Ri Chong San had unburdened himself to me in that way. Of course, he did not abandon the revolution. Later I met him again in Antu. While I was away touring many counties on the banks of the River Tuman, he was transferred to the Antu district party committee. His face was much brighter than when he had been in Wengshenglazi. He said with great pleasure that things were going well at his new post. "Gone are the days of my nightmare," he remarked. This expressed the change in his life. I could not find a trace of the bitter and dismal look he had worn on his face when he complained that people kept aloof from him. But until I met Ri Chong San at Wengshenglazi the revolutionaries in Manchuria had suffered terribly under the white terrorism and had had to suffer anguish due to the cold and wary attitude of the people.

I was also distressed with the same affliction. It was at that time that I had to eat watery maize gruel and pickled mustard leaves and stems for my meals and sleep in the cold, drafty front rooms of people's houses at night, resting my head on a wooden pillow and fighting with my hunger pangs. The greatest pain molesting me in those days was that of hunger. Moving about Jiandao, I suffered much from the cold and hunger. I had to pass the winter in my Western clothes without a quilted coat, and so I always suffered more from the cold than other people did. In houses where no bedclothes were available, I would lie down in my clothes at night and try to fall asleep. When I stopped at the house of Ri Chong San, they had no bedding or pillow to offer me. So I lay down in my Western clothes at night, but I felt so cold that I could not fall asleep. It was such a tormenting experience that later when I went to my home in Antu I told my mother of what I had gone through that night. On hearing this, in a few days my mother made me a large quilted coat that looked like that of a cart driver. Whenever I happened to stop for the night at a house with no bedclothes I would cover myself with the quilted coat and sleep cuddled up with my

head on a wooden pillow wrapped in a handkerchief.

But such hardships were nothing to me. During my tour of Jiandao in the spring of that year I never once had a good night's sleep. When I lay down to sleep at night, I remained awake because of the cold and hunger and, to add to that, I could not calm my mind at the thought of my murdered comrades and of the ruined organizations. I was also tormented by feelings of despair and loneliness caused by the people's unkind attitude. When I lay down in a cold room resting my head on my arm after meeting people who were cold and aloof, I could not get to sleep because of visions of distrusting people floating before my eyes. To tell the truth, we had pinned great hope on the Jiandao area. Although factionalism had been rife in Yanji, the other parts of Jiandao had been relatively free from the filth of factionalism. This had provided favourable conditions for the rapid growth of a new generation of communists in the area to develop the revolution in a new fashion. For many years our comrades had, through tireless efforts and painstaking work, pushed steadily ahead with preparations for taking the anti-Japanese revolution onto a higher stage in the area. Nevertheless, the two uprisings had severely impaired the results of their hard work. The Left tendency had bewitched the masses for a time with its ultrarevolutionary phrases and slogans, but the harm it did was as serious and destructive as this. I believed it was not absurd to say that the Left tendency was an inverted manifestation of the Right tendency. So we hastened to Jiandao, setting aside everything else, out of our desire to make good the damage caused by the Left excesses and speed up the preparations for switching over to the armed struggle as soon as possible. Our expectations had been great when we came to Jiandao, but the damage suffered there was more disastrous than anticipated and, moreover, the people regarded the revolutionaries with distrust and remained aloof from them. Witnessing such a state of affairs was terribly distressing. What could be sadder for the fighters who were devoted to the people than to be forsaken by the people, who had given birth to them? If a revolutionary should forfeit the people's

confidence and support even for a single day, he can scarcely be regarded as a living man. When the masses were cold and unkind towards the revolutionaries, regardless of their affiliation, we were deeply grieved because to our great regret the uprisings had discredited the communists, the masses had lost faith in their leaders and were falling away from the organizations, and barriers of distrust and misunderstanding had appeared between the Korean people and the Chinese people. This was our greatest anguish at the time.

But we did not just remain in a state of distress, anguish and agony. If a revolutionary did not face problems in his struggle, he was not conducting a revolution. Faced with an ordeal, he should strengthen his resolve and pull through it without flinching and full of confidence. In 1931 we worked tirelessly to sweep away the evil consequences of the May 30 Uprising in Jiandao. The first obstacle in the way of implementing the line adopted at the Kalun Meeting was the aftermath of this uprising. Without removing this obstacle quickly and regrouping the revolutionary forces, it would be impossible to save the revolution from the crisis and to develop it.

When departing for east Manchuria after winding up the Wujiazi Meeting, I set myself and my comrades two tasks.

One was to conduct a general review of the aftereffects of the May 30 Uprising. Although we had not planned or directed it, we felt it necessary to analyse and review the uprising in a scientific manner from various angles. Despite the fact that the revolt had gone from setback to setback, there were still fanatical believers in terrorism and adherents to Li Li-san's line in east Manchuria and they were instigating the masses to conduct a reckless, violent struggle. Li Li-san's line of "victory first in one or a few provinces" was a dogmatic application of Lenin's proposition on the possibility of victory in the socialist revolution in one country. This line had been a powerful stimulant in urging the masses to riot. It was a line laid down by someone who held power in the Chinese party and passed down through organizational channels. Therefore, people followed it for a long time until the man responsible, that is Li Li-san, resigned from

his post in the party and his view was labelled as Left adventurism. In spite of their bitter experience of failure and setback, the people could not shake themselves free from the sweet illusion they had been given by Li Li-san. A review of the May 30 Uprising would free them from this illusion. We decided to warn people against the careerism, fame-seeking and petty-bourgeois vainglory of the factionalists and flunkeyists through a review of the May 30 Uprising. I thought that the review would also mark a historic turning-point in awakening the revolutionaries in Manchuria to the importance of a scientific strategy and tactics and a method of leading the masses.

The other task was to put forward a correct line for organizing the broad masses into a single political force and to equip the new generation of communists with this line. The communists in the Jiandao area had no clear organizational line to serve them as a guide in restoring and consolidating the ruined organizations and expanding and strengthening them. The factionalists and flunkeyists active in east Manchuria were committing a glaring Left error also in organizing the masses. While advocating a “theory of class revolution,” they admitted only poor peasants, hired farmhands and workers to the organization. They regarded all the other sections of society as having nothing to do with the revolution. In consequence, the people left out of the organization would say in anger: “So this is what communism is like! The small fry are closeted together, leaving all the other people out in the cold. That’s communism, then.” In order to remove this exclusivist tendency and unite the patriotic forces of all social quarters, it was imperative to lay down and implement as soon as possible a correct organizational line which would make it possible to overcome the flunkeyist and dogmatic tendency of clinging to the propositions of the classics and the experience of other countries and unite and take in all the patriotic forces.

I set this as the object of the first stage of my work in Jiandao as I hurried on my way to east Manchuria. But while on my way towards Changchun in company with Ryu Pong Hwa and Choe Tuk Yong

after giving guidance to the work of the mass organizations at Guyushu, I was arrested by the reactionary warlord authorities because of a report made by a spy. The warlord authorities had been keeping a sharp watch on our activities. They were as eagle-eyed as the Japanese police. They were even aware that we were going to east Manchuria to prepare for an armed struggle. Having realized that Guyushu was a major operational centre of the Korean communists in central Manchuria, the warlord authorities had instructed the administration office of Yitong County to send an inspector there and had all our movements closely watched. In Guyushu there lived a Chinese landlord called Li Chu-liu, who, in touch with the inspector, had been spying on our movements. It was this Li who informed the inspector when we left Guyushu and set off in the direction of Changchun. We were arrested at Danantun by guard corps members who had rushed to the spot on the instructions of the inspector. After a few days' interrogation in the detention room of the county office, we were escorted to Changchun, where we spent some 20 days behind bars. That was my third time in prison. Headmaster Li Guanghan and teacher He from Yuwen Middle School in Jilin happened to be in Changchun at the time. On hearing of my arrest, they went to the warlord authorities and protested strongly, saying, "Kim Song Ju was found innocent and acquitted at Jilin prison, so why have you arrested him again? We stand guarantee for Kim Song Ju." I was set free thanks to the help of the two teachers. They were both communist sympathizers who had an understanding of communism, and that was why, I presume, they did not hesitate to come to my rescue when I was in trouble. When I saw how they sympathized with me, protected me and understood our cause with their whole hearts as ever, I was deeply touched and filled with great emotion, an event which I could not forget all my life.

The first thing we did after arriving in east Manchuria was to conduct a short training course in Dunhua for the men of the Korean Revolutionary Army and hardcore members of the revolutionary organizations. In this short course lectures were given on the tasks for

stepping up the preparations for an armed struggle in real earnest and the ways to implement them, on the cardinal problems arising in providing unified leadership to the basic party organizations, and on the question of uniting the dispersed revolutionary masses in organizations. This class, it could be said, was preparatory to the Winter Mingyuegou Meeting held in December that year.

After that short course, I toured Antu, Yanji, Helong, Wangqing, Jongsong and Onsong giving guidance to the work of the revolutionary organizations in those areas. On the basis of a full understanding of the actual situation in Jiandao and in the six towns on the Korean side of the River Tuman, we called a meeting of cadres of the party and the Young Communist League at the house of Ri Chong San in Wengshenglazi in mid-May, 1931. Historically this meeting is called the Spring Mingyuegou Meeting. Wengshenglazi means a rock giving out the sound of a ceramic jar. Before the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, Mingyuegou used to be called Wengshenglazi. After they had usurped Manchuria, the Japanese established a railway station at Wengshenglazi and called it Mingyuegou. The name became accepted and people came to call the place Mingyuegou. At present Mingyuegou is the Antu county town, but when we held the meeting, it belonged to Yanji County.

The Spring Mingyuegou Meeting was attended by the cadres of the party and Young Communist League organizations, members of the Korean Revolutionary Army and underground workers, numbering dozens of people in all. Of the communists of the new generation in the Jiandao area, Paek Chang Hon and nearly all the other renowned revolutionaries were present at the meeting, I suppose.

My speech at the meeting was edited and published under the title *Let Us Repudiate the "Left" Adventurist Line and Follow the Revolutionary Organizational Line*. In this speech I mentioned the two tasks I set on leaving for east Manchuria. As I had planned, at the meeting we analysed and reviewed the true nature of the May 30 Uprising and put forward the revolutionary organizational line of

uniting the whole nation into a political force by firmly rallying the masses of workers, peasants and intellectuals and banding together the anti-Japanese forces of all other social sections around them.

The meeting discussed the tasks for the implementation of this organizational line, the tasks of building up a hard core of leadership and enhancing its independent role, of restoring and consolidating the ruined mass organizations and enlisting people from all walks of life in them, of tempering the masses in the practical struggle, and of strengthening the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples and promoting their friendship and solidarity. At the same time, the tactical principles were laid down of advancing from small-scale struggles to large-scale ones and from economic struggles gradually to political struggles, and of skilfully combining legitimate struggles with underground ones, with special stress being laid on the matter of thoroughly overcoming the Left adventurist tendency.

It can be said in short that the Spring Mingyuegou Meeting in May 1931 was a gathering aimed at winning over the masses. The largest barrier to this was the Left adventurist line. This was why we resolutely criticized that line.

When we criticized Leftism and advanced the comprehensive organizational line, those attending the meeting voiced their whole-hearted approval of it. Many people took the floor, and all their speeches were revolutionary. The speakers were unanimous in their opinion that Japan's invasion of Manchuria was imminent and that therefore they should make full preparations and fight a decisive battle when the time came. Since the meeting was attended by many revolutionary veterans, there were many things to listen to and learn from. I learnt many lessons from the meeting. Following it, political workers left for all parts of Jiandao and the homeland. I stayed in Mingyuegou for some time directing the work of the party and mass organizations in the area before proceeding to Antu. My plan was to help the revolutionary work in Jiandao and in the homeland while staying in Antu. Antu was situated in a mountain recess a long way from the railways, main roads and cities, well beyond the reach of

Japanese imperialism's evil power. Surrounded by steep mountains and thick forests, the place was a favourable location for establishing contact with the organizations in the six towns and other areas in the homeland, to say nothing of the regions of Yanji, Helong, Wangqing, Hunchun, Fusong, Dunhua and Huadian, and was very convenient for founding and training a guerrilla army and promoting the work of building party organizations. The composition of the population was also very good.

In addition, Mt. Paektu, our ancestral mountain, was nearby, and we, the people who had not forgotten our motherland even for a moment, could draw great mental comfort and inspiration from its solemn and majestic appearance. On a serene, bright day, the silvery grey peaks of Mt. Paektu were visible under the distant southwestern sky. At the sight of it in the distance, I felt my heart beating violently with a desire to take up arms and win back my country as soon as possible. Although we were going to launch an armed struggle in a foreign land, we desired to raise the sound of gunshots against Japan within sight of Mt. Paektu. This was a feeling common to us all.

In April, after the short training course in Dunhua, I happened to go to Antu and guided the work of the mass organizations there. My mother was weak with illness. Medical science was still backward and no correct diagnosis could be made of what was wrong with her. She would only say that she felt as if a "lump" were kicking about inside her and take some kind of decoction. She did not care how serious her illness was but she worried about my moving about strange places all the time without a penny and gave herself body and soul to the work of the Women's Association.

As I went back to Antu after two months' absence, I was anxious in my mind about my mother. But when I arrived, I was relieved to see an unexpected glow in her cheeks. She used to tell me not to care about my home but devote myself heart and soul to the work of winning back our homeland, and yet when I turned up, she could not repress her joy and would try to conceal her sickly appearance.

On hearing of my arrival, my grandmother who had come from

Mangyongdae rushed out in her stocking feet and gathered me into her arms. Since coming to Manchuria in the year of my father's death, she had stayed on in Fusong without returning home, eking out a scant existence with my mother. When my mother had moved to Antu from Fusong, she had gone, also. In Antu she had taken up residence at the house of Yong Sil's maternal grandparents at Xinglongcun, and stayed there and at my home in turns. Yong Sil was the only daughter of uncle Hyong Gwon. After my uncle's imprisonment, my aunt (Chae Yon Ok) had had a severe nervous breakdown. She had just had her first baby and was looking forward to a happy life when her husband was sadly taken away to prison. So she had good reason for falling ill.

After uncle Hyong Gwon had been condemned to 15 years' penal servitude and started to serve his time in prison, I wrote to my aunt advising her to give her child to someone else and remarry. But she did not marry again. She wrote: Even my elder sister-in-law who has no husband has not remarried and is raising her three children in spite of all the hardships, so how can I marry for a second time when my husband is alive and well? If I take a second husband, how grieved the father of my Yong Sil will be when he hears of it in prison! If I give away Yong Sil to someone else and start a new home with another man, shall I be able to sleep in peace and shall I be able to eat? Never suggest such a thing again.

My aunt was a prudent, graceful and strong-willed woman. My mother had been living with her, but after coming to Antu, she had sent her sister-in-law to her parents' home for a change. My grandmother, who was then staying with my aunt at her parents' home, would look after her and keep her company. Then, when her thoughts ran to her sick eldest daughter-in-law, she would go hurriedly to my home and decoct some herb medicine and cook meals for my mother. While she looked after her two weak daughters-in-law, my grandmother silently worried a great deal. So she spent years in an unfamiliar land unable to return home readily. This I think was due to her kind and sympathetic affection as a mother-in-law for her

two pitiable, lonely daughters-in-law. The night I arrived in Antu, she slept at my side. I awoke in the dead of night to find my head resting on my grandmother's arm. It seemed to me that after I had fallen asleep, she had quietly pushed my pillow aside and taken my head in her arm. My grandmother's kindness touched my heart and I could not bring myself to shift my head back onto the pillow. But she was not asleep. She asked me quietly: "You've forgotten your home, haven't you?"

"How can I, grandma? Never for a moment have I forgotten Mangyongdae. I am longing to see my family and relatives at home."

"To be honest, I came to Manchuria to take all my family here back home. If I could not take you along with me, I thought I would still take back home your mother, your younger brothers and all the others. But your mother won't listen to me. She says that you have all come here pledging not to cross back over the River Amnok before winning back the country. How then can she turn back on the spur of the moment and retrace her steps just because your father has passed away? So stubborn is she that she would not even look back just once when we were leaving Fusong. So I cannot ask her any more to go back home. If your living here is helpful to the winning of Korea's independence, I won't try to take you away but go back to Mangyongdae alone. When you feel homesick and yearn for your grandfather and grandmother, please write us a letter. Then we'll think we've seen you. You know I can't come here often."

Later I could not comply with my grandmother's request even once. I did not write her a letter because I thought that she would hear of my name and the reports about the military achievements of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army carried often in the newspapers of my homeland. My grandmother sighed quietly as she said that if I was to do something great my mother should be in good health, and that it was embarrassing that she was working so hard while her illness was going from bad to worse. On hearing this, I could not sleep because of my anxiety about my mother. I had many things to worry about as her eldest son and the heir to the Mangyongdae

family who should look to family affairs.

In those days it was much in vogue among the young people who were my revolutionary companions to think that a man who had stepped out on the road of struggle should naturally forget his family. The young revolutionaries were generally of the opinion that he who cared about his home was not equal to a great cause. Criticizing such a tendency, I would say that he who did not love his home could not truly love his country and the revolution. Yet, how much did I love and care for my home? It was my view of filial piety in those days that earnest devotion to the revolution represented the supreme love for one's family. I never thought of pure filial duty detached from the revolution. This was because I believed that the fate of a family and that of the country were inseparably interrelated with each other. It is common knowledge that the peace of the country is a prerequisite to peace at home. It is a rule that national tragedy will inevitably affect the millions of families that make up the nation. Therefore, to safeguard the peace and happiness of families it is necessary to safeguard the country; and to safeguard the country, everyone must faithfully discharge his duties as a citizen. But a man should not lose sight of his family on the ground that he is engaged in the revolution. Love for his family constitutes a motive force which prompts a revolutionary to the struggle. When his love for his family cools, his enthusiasm for the struggle will cool also.

I knew in principle about the interrelation between a family and the revolution, but I had no clear, established view of how a revolutionary devoted to the revolution should love his family. As I looked around the house, inside and out, after getting up in the next morning, I found many things that needed a male hand to put them right. There was not enough firewood, for one thing. I decided that I would find time to lend my mother a hand in looking after the housekeeping. Putting aside everything else, that day I went up the mountain with my brother Chol Ju. I had decided to gather some firewood. But my mother came after us with a head-pad and a sickle in her hands. I wondered how she had discovered where we were,

after she had gone out to the well. I implored her to go home but to no avail.

“I haven’t come just to help you. I want to have a talk with you here. Last night grandmother talked with you all night, didn’t she?”

Mother smiled brightly as she said this. Only then did I understand. At home grandmother was always beside me and when she let go of me, my younger brothers would hang on to me and would not let me go. While collecting firewood, mother kept close at my side, speaking to me all the time.

“Dear Song Ju, do you remember a man named Choe Tong Hwa?”

“Yes. Choe Tong Hwa, isn’t he known to be in the communist movement?”

“He called at our house a few days ago. He asked me when you were likely to come to Antu and wanted me to let him know when you did. He said he would like to have a discussion with you.”

“Did he? But why did he say he wanted to discuss with me?”

“He said he wanted to tell you he was displeased with you for going around telling the people that the May 30 Uprising was a mistake. He shook his head and said he could not see why a sensible young man like Song Ju should be so critical of the uprising when it had been supported and countenanced by people higher up. I’m afraid you’re out of favour with the people.”

“That may be possible. It seems there are some people who don’t take kindly to my views. But mother, what do you think?”

“I can’t claim to know anything of the world. I only think it a serious matter when crowds of people are being killed and arrested. When all the hard core is gone, who will carry out the revolution?”

My mother’s simple yet clear thought delighted me. The people always had an unerring eye. There could never be a social phenomenon which defied the people’s judgement.

“You’re right, mother. You have passed fairer judgement on the matter than that man Choe Tong Hwa. Even now, the revolution is suffering because of the uprising, isn’t it? I have come to Antu to repair the damage.”

“So I suppose you must dash around busily as you did last spring. Don’t worry about household affairs again but devote yourself to your duties.”

This was the point of what she wanted to say to me. She must have begun talking about Choe Tong Hwa so as to tell me this.

After that I dedicated myself heart and soul to the work of building up organizations, as my mother wished. Antu also had been greatly victimized because of the May 30 Uprising. To add to that, the work of organizing the masses was unsatisfactory in this area. To make Antu revolutionary it was essential above all else to expand the party organizations and party ranks and firmly establish the organizational leadership system of the party in the area. So in mid-June 1931 we formed the district party committee of Xiaoshahe, Antu County, with Kim Jong Ryong, Kim Il Ryong and other core elements, and gave the party committee the assignment of sending out political workers to the areas of Erdaobaihe, Sandaobaihe, Sidaobaihe, Dadianzi, Fuerhe and Chechangzi to set up basic party organizations. Following the formation of the district party committee, Young Communist League organizations were extended to Liushuhe, Xiaoshahe, Dashuhe and Antu, and anti-Japanese organizations such as the Peasants Association, Anti-Imperialist Union, Revolutionary Mutual-Relief Association and Children’s Expeditionary Corps were founded in these areas. As a result, the groundwork for organizing the masses was completed in the Antu area in the summer of that year. There was no village without an organization. The greatest problem in making Antu revolutionary was that the revolutionary ranks were divided among themselves. Antu was divided in two halves—north and south—with a river in between. Different youth organizations had these villages under their influence. The young people’s organization in the northern village was under the control of the followers of the Jongui-bu machinery and that in the southern village was under the thumb of such Chamui-bu people as Sim Ryong Jun. These two organizations were at daggers drawn, and even the young people’s organization of the M-L group led by

Choe Tong Hwa was reaching out its hand to them, thus greatly complicating the situation within the youth movement. This being the situation we did not limit ourselves to restoring the youth organizations to their original state but educated and led the young people to unite them into one organization. We guarded against and ruthlessly criticized the slightest attempt to split the youth movement. This compelled people steeped in factional strife such as Choe Tong Hwa to adopt a prudent attitude to our opinion that a unified youth organization should be set up in the Antu area.

In the process of making Antu revolutionary we ran up against the vehement obstructive moves of the hostile elements. In places like Kalun and Wujiazi the village heads were all under our influence, but in Xinglongcun the village head cringed to the wicked landlord Mu Han-zhang and acted as his spy. He always spied on the movements of the villagers and mass organizations and sent reports to the town. So we called a meeting of all the village inhabitants, men and women, young and old, to denounce the fellow, and threw him out of the village. A few days later Mu Han-zhang came to bargain with me. He said:

“I am aware that you, Mr. Kim, are a communist. I am really worried because I am always away in Jiuantu and only my bodyguard remain here. If those reckless men in my bodyguard should find out who you are and do harm to you, I shall be an enemy of all the communists, shan’t I? I am worried that I have to get along as I am doing now. Should the Japanese find out that I know about you, they will behead me right away before anyone else. So let’s settle the matter amicably between ourselves. I pray you, Mr. Kim, to leave this place for all time. If you need money for your travelling expenses, I’ll give you as much as you like.”

After hearing him out, I replied:

“There is nothing for you to worry about. I believe that, although you are a landlord, you must have a conscience as a Chinese man and hate the Japanese imperialists who are out to swallow up China.

“I think you have no cause to turn against us or hurt us. I take no

exception to you and the Chinese young people who are members of your bodyguard.

“If you were a worthless man, I would not talk to you in this manner. Rather than worrying about me, you ought to take care that you are not called a ‘running dog’ of the Japanese ruffians.”

At this, Mu Han-zhang had nothing more to say and left Xinglongcun. After that, the man and his bodyguard behaved discreetly towards us, maintaining a more or less neutral position. The newly-appointed village head always considered our position and carefully performed only those of his administrative duties that he was obliged to.

If we had failed to carry through the line of organizing the masses in Antu, we would have been unable to subdue such an important landlord as Mu Han-zhang and neutralize him in the vast, wild land of Jiandao that was swept by white terrorism. The power of the organized masses was truly unlimited and there could be no such word as impossible for this power. The revolutionary organizations in Xinglongcun and the surrounding area moved forward in high spirits, expanding their forces.

## 2. The September 18 Incident

When the revolutionary organizations in Antu became active, I went out to the local organizations in the Helong, Yanji and Wangqing areas in the summer and early autumn of 1931 and rallied the masses who had dispersed following the May 30 Uprising.

The September 18 incident occurred when I was conducting brisk activities based in Dunhua, establishing contact with the comrades in Antu, Longjing, Helong, Liushuhe, Dadianzi and Mingyuegou. At the time I was working with activists from the Young Communist League in a rural village near Dunhua.

Early on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of September Chen Han-zhang arrived suddenly in the village where I was staying and told me that the Kwantung Army had attacked Fengtian.

“It’s war! The Japanese have at last started the war.”

Groaning, he plumped down on the earthen verandah like a man with a heavy burden. The word war that came from his lips sounded pathetic.

The incident had been foreseen long before and its date virtually coincided with our guess, but I was shocked when I thought of the calamity it would bring to hundreds of millions of Chinese people, as well as to the Korean people, and of the great change that would affect my fate.

Later we learned what had happened from various sources. On the night of the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1931 the railways of Japan’s Manchurian Railway Company were blown up in Liutiaogou west of Beidaying in Shenyang. The Japanese imperialists then launched a surprise attack on the absurd excuse that Zhang Xue-liang’s army had blown up the railways and attacked the Japanese garrison, and they occupied Beidaying and seized the airport in Fengtian on the

morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>.

After Shenyang, other big cities in the northeast of China including Dandong, Yingkou, Changchun, Fengcheng, Jilin and Dunhua were occupied in succession by the Kwantung Army and the army stationed in Korea which had crossed the River Amnok. The Japanese aggressor army occupied almost all of Liaoning and Jilin Provinces in less than five days and surged towards Jinzhou, extending the front. They were advancing at lightning speed.

The Japanese imperialists shifted the responsibility to China, distorting the truth of the incident, but no one in the world believed their version, for people knew only too well the nature of the crafty Japanese. As those who concocted the incident later admitted, it was the secret service of the Kwantung Army that blew up the railways of the Manchurian Railway Company and touched off the incident. In an article published in those days we disclosed that the Liutiaogou incident was caused by the Japanese imperialists as part of this scheme to swallow up Manchuria.

On the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1931 when the Kwantung Army was on standby prior to the Manchurian incident one of the plotters, Colonel Dohihara Kenji (chief of the secret service in Shenyang), unexpectedly appeared in Seoul. During a call on Kanda Masatane, senior officer of the staff of the Japanese army stationed in Korea, he gave a roundabout account of the aim of his visit to Korea, saying that he was visiting him because of his annoyance at the press. What he meant was that he had come to Korea to avoid the harassment to which he would be subjected by the press when the Manchurian incident broke out.

At the same time General Watanabe Jotaro, commander of the Japanese air force, is said to have visited General Hayashi Senjuro, commander of the Japanese army in Korea, in Seoul, to take a rest, hosting a banquet at the Paegunjang restaurant. Their trip was very peaceful and leisurely.

When I read this historical account, I was reminded of the fact that Truman had stayed at his villa without any particular reason at the

time of the outbreak of the Korean war. We find common features in the September 18 incident and the Korean war not only in the fact that these two wars began without any declaration of war, but also in that those who ignited the two wars displayed the craftiness and impudence that are incidental to imperialists and their disposition to invade and dominate other countries.

Some say that history is a sequence of non-repetitive events, but we cannot entirely ignore the similarity and common trends existing in different events.

We had always known that Japan was going to swallow up Manchuria by provoking the like of the September 18 incident. We foresaw it when the Japanese imperialists had Zhang Zuo-lin assassinated by a bomb, when the Wanbaoshan incident took place with the result that the Korean and Chinese peoples were pitted against each other and when they created the incident in which Captain Nakamura, who was serving with the staff of the Kwantung Army and was spying in the guise of an agronomist, “disappeared.”

I was particularly shocked by the Wanbaoshan incident. Wanbaoshan is a small rural village about 20 miles northwest of Changchun. The Wanbaoshan incident was a dispute over the irrigation canal in the village between the Korean immigrants and the Chinese natives. The Korean immigrants had dug the canal to draw water from the River Yitong with a view to turning the dry fields into paddies, but the canal encroached upon the fields of the Chinese natives. Also the damming of the river might cause floods in the rainy season. So the natives were against the project.

The Japanese egged the Korean peasants on to complete the project, and thus extended the dispute into Korea, causing casualties and damage to property. Thus they deftly used a local dispute, common in the rural villages, to cause discord between nations.

If the Japanese had not sown discord, and if farsighted men from among the Korean and Chinese peoples had followed the dictates of reason, the dispute would have been a brief quarrel and would not have developed into a fight. The incident sowed great

misunderstanding, mistrust and antagonism between the Korean and Chinese peoples.

I considered the matter all night without sleeping. Why should the peoples of the two countries who were suffering similar misfortune because of the Japanese imperialists fight a bloody battle with their fists? What a shame it was to be feuding with each other because of a canal when the two nations should fight the common anti-Japanese war! Why did the misfortune arise and who caused it? Whom did it benefit and whom did it harm?

It suddenly struck me that the incident was a prearranged farce, a prelude to something terrible. Above all it roused my suspicion that the Japanese consul in Changchun was out to “protect” the interests and rights of the Koreans, while meddling in a casual conflict between peasants. It was in fact a political farce that should have been exposed to public ridicule that those who had taken away the farmland of Korea through the predatory “Land Survey Act” and pursued a murderous agricultural policy were suddenly out to “defend” the Korean peasants in the guise of protectors. I was suspicious of the fact that the branch office of the newspaper *Kyongsong Ilbo* had hastily reported the dispute in Wanbaoshan to its head office and that an extra issue was hastily put out and distributed in the homeland. Did this not mean that the best brains of Japanese imperialism had thought up a terrible trick, deftly using a small local dispute, and that it had worked? What was the purpose of it?

The Japanese imperialists were evidently making hasty preparations for something while we were putting in order the revolutionary organizations in the mountain recess of Jiandao.

The “disappearance” of Captain Nakamura in the summer of that year when the aftermath of the Wanbaoshan incident was still evident brought Sino-Japanese relations to the brink of war. Simultaneously with this incident alarming events were taking place in Japan proper. Some young officers in Tokyo got together and held a memorial service for Nakamura at the Yasukuni Shrine, drew a Japanese flag with their blood and put it up on top of the shrine to fan the war fever

of the nation. Various organizations with interests in Manchuria held a joint meeting to discuss the problems of Manchuria and Mongolia and told people that the use of force was the only way to settle the problems there.

At that time I judged that the invasion of Manchuria was only a matter of time. I had ample grounds for this.

As was mentioned in *Tanaka's Memorial to the Throne*, it was basic Japanese policy to swallow up Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia and then China so as to dominate Asia. Militarist Japan, ambitious to become the leader of Asia, was advancing steadily in accordance with her national policy.

The Japanese imperialists massed the Kwantung Army in Shenyang and completed their arrangements for an attack, using as an excuse the “disappearance” of Captain Nakamura.

Chen Han-zhang was very worried at this. He said, “The Japanese army is going to invade Manchuria, yet we are as good as empty-handed. What should we do?” He had put some hope in the Zhang Xue-liang-led warlords of the Kuomintang. They were irresolute so far, but once the sovereignty of the nation was violated, they would have to resist in the face of the pressure of hundreds of millions of Chinese people, even if only to save their face, he thought. I said to Chen Han-zhang, “It is absurd to expect that the warlords of the Kuomintang will resist. Remember Zhang Zuo-lin’s assassination in a bombing. Clearly it was the work of the Kwantung Army and they obtained convincing proof of the fact, but the warlords of the Northeast Army made no inquiries into the matter and did not call the Kwantung Army to account. They even received the Japanese who went to offer their condolences and pay their respects to the departed. How can this be attributed only to their prudence, weakness and irresolution? The Kuomintang is throwing an army of hundreds of thousands of men into the central soviet region in Jiangxi Province in an attempt to destroy the communist party and launch ‘punitive operations’ against the Worker-Peasant Red Army. The ulterior motive of the Kuomintang is to annihilate the communist party and

the Worker-Peasant Red Army even if it means yielding part of the territory to the Japanese imperialists. It is the line of the Kuomintang to eliminate the communist forces and control the political situation in the country before beating back the foreign enemy. Zhang Xue-liang, who began leaning towards the Kuomintang after his father's death, is blindly following its cursed line. Therefore, he will not resist the Japanese and it is absurd to pin your hopes on him."

He listened to me attentively but did not express any support for my view. Nor did he relinquish his hope in the warlords, and he said, "Even if Zhang Xue-liang follows the line of the Kuomintang, surely he will resist the aggressors, since he is likely to lose northeast China, the political, military and economic base of his army."

Then the September 18 incident broke out and the hundreds of thousands of men of Zhang Xue-liang's army surrendered Shenyang without offering any resistance. That was why Chen Han-zhang had come running to me, his face pale and shaking his fist.

"Comrade Song Ju, I was naive and an idle dreamer."

His whole body was shaking. He reproached himself in excitement, saying, "I was foolish enough to think that Zhang Xue-liang would defend northeast China. He is a coward and a beaten general who did not resist Japan, thus breaking faith with the Chinese nation. When I went to Shenyang before, the whole city was swarming with his troops. Every street was alive with troops shouldering new rifles. To think that an army of such strength retreated without firing a shot! How lamentable! I can't understand it."

That morning Chen Han-zhang, who was normally cool and mild, could not keep his feelings under control and was shouting. Later Zhang Xue-liang came to support resistance to Japan and contributed to collaboration between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party, but his failure to act at the time of the Manchurian incident lost him popularity.

I showed Chen Han-zhang into my room and said quietly, "Comrade Chen, don't get excited. We expected the Japanese army to

invade Manchuria, didn't we? Why then are you making such a fuss? From now on we must closely watch developments in the situation and prepare ourselves to counter them."

"Of course we must. How annoying! I seem to have pinned too great a hope on Zhang Xue-liang. I could not sleep all night, and this morning came straight here.

"Comrade Song Ju, do you know how strong is the Northeast Army under the command of Zhang Xue-liang? It is 300,000 men strong. I say, 300,000! It is a huge army. To think that a 300,000-strong army gave up Shenyang in a night without firing a shot. Is our Chinese nation so inferior and powerless? Is the homeland of Confucius, Zhu-ge Liang and Du Fu and Sun Yat-sen in such decline?"

Thus Chen Han-zhang lamented, beating his chest. Tears trickled from his eyes. It was natural that he should lament the tragic fate of his nation. He was lamenting out of the pure feeling of someone who loves his country. His lamenting was his inalienable right.

I once wept secretly in a pine grove in the homeland, thinking of the homeland that had been trodden underfoot by the Japanese. It was on Mangyong Hill on the evening of one Sunday when I had been in a gloomy mood all day, unable to calm my anger on returning from the walled city of Pyongyang where I had seen an old man, his body covered in bruises, writhing in agony as he was kicked by the Japanese police.

That day I was in a rage like Chen Han-zhang, thinking: How was it that our country with its proud history of 5,000 years should suffer the disgrace of being ruined in a day? How could we wipe away the disgrace?

In this light Chen Han-zhang and I suffered the same disgrace. Formerly common ideas had brought us closer. From then on the same status promoted our friendship. In adversity people become more intimate with one another and their friendship and affection deepen. In the past the Korean and Chinese peoples and communists had fraternized easily with each other because they shared a similar

status, goal and cause. Imperialists form temporary alliances for profit, whereas communists forge firm internationalist unity for the liberation and welfare of humanity, the goal of their common struggle. I regarded Chen Han-zhang's sorrow as mine and the sufferings of the Chinese people as ours.

If Chiang Kai-shek, Zhang Xue-liang and other heads of the political and military circles who had command of several million men had had such patriotism and insight as this youth from Dunhua had, the situation would have developed otherwise. If they had put the fate of the nation ahead of their interests and the interests of their groups and collaborated with the communists instead of opposing them, and roused the whole nation and the entire army to a war of resistance, they would have frustrated the invasion of the Japanese imperialists at the start and defended the country and people with credit.

But they gave no thought to the homeland and nation. Prior to Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Chiang Kai-shek restricted the army's potential resistance by issuing to Zhang Xue-liang's Northeast Army a written command to the effect that "In the case of a challenge by the Japanese troops prudence should be exercised to avoid conflict," which later roused the resentment of hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

Even after the outbreak of the September 18 incident Chiang Kai-shek's government in Nanjing issued a capitulationist statement to the effect that the Chinese people and army should maintain their composure and exercise patience instead of resisting the Japanese troops, and this dampened the morale of the army and nation. The fate of Manchuria was as good as decided before the September 18 incident. The government in Nanjing even sent delegates to Tokyo and held secret negotiation with the Japanese government in which the Japanese were told that Chiang Kai-shek did not scruple to commit such a treacherous act as agreeing to yield to Japan the border area between the Soviet Union and China on the condition that Japan would not seize other regions of China.

Chiang Kai-shek did not hesitate to commit the reckless act of sharing out to the Japanese a large piece of territory, abandoning his self-respect as the Head of State with a population of hundreds of millions and an area of several million square kilometres, because he feared the struggle of the people against the landlords, comprador capitalists and Kuomintang bureaucrats more than a Japanese attack.

The 300,000-strong Northeast Army fled, abandoning the whole of vast Manchuria with its inexhaustible natural resources, in the face of the Kwantung Army whose strength was less than one-25<sup>th</sup> of its own.

I said to Chen Han-zhang, who was so indignant at the nation's ruin, "Now it is impossible to believe in any party, military clique or political force. We must believe only in ourselves and our strength. The situation requires that we arm the masses and come out in an anti-Japanese war. The only way out is to take up arms."

Chen Han-zhang grasped my hands firmly without saying a word.

I passed the whole of that day with him to divert him. I suffered the sorrow of a ruined nation more than Chen Han-zhang. He had lost part of his country, whereas I was deprived of the whole of mine.

He invited me to his house, so the next day I left for Dunhua with him.

The September 18 incident shook not only Korea and China but also the rest of the world. The world, which had been alarmed at the annexation of Korea by Japan, raised a cry of protest at the September 18 incident. Mankind thought of the incident as a prelude to another world war.

Japan described it as an unexpected local incident which could be settled through negotiations between China and Japan, but the world's people did not believe her version. Public opinion in the world denounced Japan's attack on Manchuria as a violent act of aggression against a sovereign state and called for the withdrawal of the Japanese troops from the occupied area.

But the imperialists, headed by the US imperialists, assumed a sympathetic attitude towards the aggressive act of Japan, secretly

hoping that Japan would turn her spearhead to the Soviet Union. The League of Nations sent the Lytton-led fact-finding commission to Manchuria, but it failed to discriminate clearly between right and wrong, adopting an ambiguous attitude, and did not even call Japan the aggressor.

The incident shook the continent, the large army of Zhang Xue-liang's military clique was routed in a day by the sweeping attack of the Japanese troops, and the morale of hundreds of millions of people was destroyed. The myth of the "invincible Japanese army" born of its victory in the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War became the reality. Waves of rage and horror swept not only Korea and Manchuria but also the rest of Asia. In the face of this terror all the armed forces, political forces, revolutionary organizations, public-spirited men and distinguished figures of different hues began to show their true colours.

The September 18 incident drove most of the remaining, disintegrated troops of the Independence Army into the mountains and pushed those who advocated the cultivation of strength into the embrace of the Japanese imperialists. Soldiers from the Independence Army, dejected, returned home, burying their rifles in the ground, while the national reformists advocated collaboration with Japan. The public-spirited men who had clamoured for a war of resistance for the salvation of the nation and had made a declaration of independence, went into exile abroad, singing *Farewell to the Motherland*. Some independence champions fled to Jinzhou, Changsha or Xian, following Zhang Xue-liang's retreating army and abandoning the former base of their activities.

The complicated process of the break-up between patriotism and betrayal of the nation, resistance to Japan and collaboration with her, and self-sacrifice and self-preservation proceeded rapidly within the nation after September 18. Each person attached himself to the positive or negative pole according to his view on life. The Manchurian incident acted as a touchstone revealing the tendency and true intention of each member of the nation.

I continued my discussion with Chen Han-zhang on the September 18 incident in Dunhua for a few days. At first I, too, was extremely alarmed. I judged that the time had come for us to take up arms, but I did not know what to do and how to act, with the Japanese troops surging in en masse. But I soon recovered my composure and coolly watched the situation develop.

At that time I thought a great deal about the influence Japan's invasion of Manchuria would have on the Korean revolution.

With the sending of Japanese troops to Manchuria and its occupation we had the enemy at our side. The Japanese police authorities intensified their crackdown on the Korean independence champions and communists, getting help from the Chinese reactionary warlords on the strength of the "Mitsuya agreement," but the instances were few in which the army and police from Korea entered Manchuria across the border. The agreement with China did not allow the Japanese army and police to cross the border.

It was generally the police of the Japanese consulate in Manchuria who searched for and arrested the Korean revolutionaries there.

Before the Manchurian incident the Japanese army in Korea was not allowed to enter Manchuria. When withdrawing from Siberia during the Russian civil war, two companies of the Korea occupation army were stationed in Hunchun on the agreement of the Chinese side. These were the only troops occupying Korea that were stationed in northeast China.

However, with the September 18 incident Manchuria swarmed with Japanese troops. Tens of thousands of soldiers surged into Manchuria from Korea, Shanghai and Japan. Manchuria became the front where friend fought foe. The border between Korea and Manchuria was as good as removed with the invasion of the Japanese troops.

The occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese troops caused great difficulties to us in our struggle, which we were waging with Manchuria as our base. We felt threatened by the Japanese army and police authorities in our activities, since one of the aims of Japan's

invasion of Manchuria was to suppress the mounting national liberation struggle of the Korean people there and promote the maintenance of peace in Korea.

I realized that the iron club of the “new public peace maintenance act” enforced in Korea would fall on the heads of the Koreans in Manchuria.

If Japan established a puppet state in Manchuria, it would present a great obstacle to us. In fact, “Manchukuo,” which was set up by Japan later, became a great hindrance to us in our activities. Japan’s occupation of Manchuria would reduce the hundreds of thousands of Korean people, who lived there with a fence around them, to misery.

So an end was to be put to the freedom of the Korean immigrants who lived out of the reach of the government-general administration in a place that had been free of Japanese. Leaving their home towns to seek a living in a foreign country was to become pointless for Koreans.

But we did not consider only the unfavourable aspects of the September 18 incident. If we had resigned ourselves to pessimism and merely lamented, considering only the unfavourable aspects of it, we would have remained dejected and failed to rise.

I was reminded of a Korean saying “If one wants to catch a tiger, one must enter the tiger’s den.” The philosophy of life our ancestors had grasped and formulated over several thousand years told me the profound truth.

I thought: Manchuria is a tiger’s den; in this den we must capture the tiger called Japanese imperialism; now is the time to take up arms and fight; if we do not fight to a finish at a time like this, we shall never prove our worth.

With this thought I made a firm resolve to rise, without losing the opportunity.

For victory in the future war the Japanese imperialists will intensify their colonial rule in Korea and become hell-bent on economic plunder to supply their war needs. National and class conflicts will grow extremely acute and the anti-Japanese feelings of

the Korean people will mount. So if we form armed ranks and begin the anti-Japanese war, the people will actively aid and support us materially and morally.

Hundreds of millions of Chinese people will also rise in a nationwide anti-Japanese war of resistance.

The invasion of Manchuria will be escalated into aggression in China proper and China will be enveloped in the flames of an all-out war. It goes without saying that the Chinese people, who have a strong sense of independence, will not look with folded arms on the danger facing their homeland. By us stand numerous Chinese communists and patriots who are burning with the desire to frustrate the imperialists' aggression and defend their national sovereignty, and hundreds of millions of Chinese brothers who love freedom and independence. Those who sympathize with us Koreans as stateless people will become reliable allies and fight our enemy in the same trench with us. The Chinese people, a great ally with an allied army, will always stand by us.

If Japan extends the war into China proper, she will come into head-on collision with the interests of the Western powers, which will lead to another war. If the Sino-Japanese War becomes protracted and Japan becomes involved in another world war, she will suffer difficulties due to shortages of manpower and material resources.

That Japan has swallowed up Manchuria means a further extension of the area controlled by her. The extension of the area she controls will inevitably weaken her ability to rule. Japan will not be able to maintain the rigidity of her colonial rule.

The whole world will denounce imperialist Japan as an aggressor and Japan will inevitably be isolated in the world.

All this will be strategically favourable for our revolution. This is what I thought.

With the general retreat of Zhang Xue-liang's army and the sweeping attack of the Japanese aggressor army, a marvellous opportunity was created for us. The officials of the government and administration offices and security police stopped work and fled in all

directions. The local offices of the rule of the warlords had all shut their doors within a few days.

With the flight of Zhang Xue-liang's army the ruling system of the warlords was paralysed.

The Japanese aggressor army failed to direct its efforts to the maintenance of public peace, being bent on following up its success in the war. As a result, chaos prevailed for some time in Manchuria. We decided that the situation would persist for a while until the Japanese imperialists established their new ruling system on the continent. This void afforded us a golden opportunity to form armed ranks without anxiety. The opportunity was not to be lost.

The revolution was approaching a fresh turning point.

The time had come for each person to decide what he should do to carry out the duties devolving on the Korean revolution and to devote himself to fulfilling them.

The September 18 incident was aggression against the Chinese people and, at the same time, an attack against the Korean people and communists in Manchuria. So we Korean communists had to counter it.

I decided to speed up the formation of armed ranks.

### **3. To Oppose Armed Force with Armed Force**

Owing to the September 18 incident we were confronted with the task of starting the anti-Japanese war immediately. The time was ripe for responding with the cannonade of justice to the cannonade of injustice which had heralded a new world war.

On hearing of the invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese imperialists, all the revolutionaries came out of hiding. At the sound of the bombardment shaking the continent, the people in Manchuria generally came to their senses in the autumn of that year. The bombardment did not dishearten the people but rather awakened and inspired them to make renewed efforts. A new fighting spirit emerged in Manchuria, which had been reduced to ashes owing to the oppression of the enemy.

We considered that a good opportunity had arisen for us to harden the masses in the struggle.

Frankly speaking, in those days all the people in Manchuria were distressed owing to their feeling of frustration caused by the failure of the uprising. If we were to take the revolution onto another stage, we had to give them confidence. However, we could not do so if we merely made appeals and talked idly.

In order to give the masses, who were used to failure, strength and confidence, we had to inspire them to a new struggle and lead the struggle to a victorious conclusion. Only a victorious struggle could save the masses from their nightmarish inactivity. An armed struggle waged by a few farsighted people alone would not bear fruit; the masses had to be tempered through a struggle.

The outbreak of the September 18 incident afforded the people in east Manchuria the opportunity to rise in a struggle once again. The mutinous advance of the people in the homeland also gave

them great impetus.

Successive tenancy disputes by the peasants and anti-Japanese uprisings were taking place in the homeland. Typical examples of this were the tenancy disputes at the Kowon Farm of the Oriental Development Company, at the Ryongchon “Fuji” Farm and at the Kimje “Oki” Farm.

In the Ryongchon area the peasants’ struggle continued even after 1929. At that time the organizations there fought well in connection with us. Many of our underground workers worked there.

More than 3,000 peasants in Yonghung and over 2,000 peasants in Samchok started a huge uprising against the Japanese imperialists who, after the September 18 incident, were intensifying their fascist oppression and plunder on the excuse of a “time of emergency.”

At that time we organized a harvest struggle in Jiandao.

The struggle committees in various areas had information squads and pickets under them and made full preparations, printing leaflets and appeals and formulating fighting slogans and so on. Then they started the harvest struggle with each area under the control of a revolutionary organization as a unit. At the beginning it was a legal, economic struggle aimed at cutting farm rents.

Some historians gave this struggle the name of “Harvest Uprising,” but I did not think this name to be appropriate. The harvest struggle was neither a copy nor a repetition of the May 30 Uprising. It was a victorious mass struggle waged according to a new tactical principle on the basis of completely getting rid of the evil ideological aftereffects of Li Li-san’s reckless Leftist action. While the factionalists had played the leading role in the May 30 Uprising, in the harvest struggle the communists of the new generation led the masses. The participants in the harvest struggle did not regard violence as their main resort. The participants in the May 30 Uprising had no scruples about committing arson and murder, setting fire to transformer sub-stations and educational institutions and overthrowing all the landlords and wealthy people. The participants in the harvest struggle, however, put forward just demands such as

the three-to-seven or four-to-six system of tenancy and acted in an orderly manner under the unified leadership of the struggle committee and in concert with the neighbouring villagers.

Their demand for a cut in rent could in no way be considered unjustified in view of the circumstances of the peasants, who were on the brink of starvation. Because this demand was just, even the government of Jilin Province was obliged to proclaim that the tenancy system would be three to seven or four to six (30-40 per cent for the landlord and 60-70 per cent for the tenant).

Violence was never employed against those landlords who acceded peacefully to the demands of the peasants. Violence was employed against the evil landlords who stubbornly rejected the demands of the struggle committee, and against the soldiers and policemen who suppressed the struggle of the peasants by force of arms. In the case of the obstinate landlords who did not accede to the demands of the peasants, the participants in the struggle carried the share of the tenants—60 or 70 per cent of the crops—from the fields or seized their granaries and divided the grain in them among themselves.

The predatory Oriental Development financial institutions, usurers and reactionary organizations which assisted the Japanese imperialists in their rule, such as the “Association of Korean Residents,” were also targets of the struggle.

The following happened when I returned to Antu after leading the harvest struggle in Yanji.

Choe Tong Hwa, who had been in hiding to avoid discovery by the Japanese imperialists after the May 30 Uprising, came to see me. He was worried that the harvest struggle was gradually assuming a violent character. He was the instigator of the May 30 Uprising in Antu. Furthermore, he later disagreed with us when we defined that uprising as a blind Leftist action and even tried to argue the matter with us. But he had suddenly changed and was talking about the harmfulness of violence. So, I was greatly surprised.

He said:

“Comrade Song Ju, what is the matter with you? You who once denounced the May 30 Uprising as a blind Leftist act, are now using violence in a purely economic struggle. How on earth should I understand this?”

Having asked me this, he walked round me several times, his arms folded inside his sleeves. He seemed to be inwardly pleased at the thought that he had hit home.

“Sir, you seem to misunderstand something. Do you consider the ‘red violence’ advocated by you during the May 30 Uprising to be similar to that which we are employing in the harvest struggle?”

I asked him this without even thinking that I was being impolite.

Choe Tong Hwa said:

“Of course there may be a slight difference. However, violence is violence, isn’t it?”

To this I replied: “We employ violence only when there is a just reason and when it is proper to do so. For instance, if a landlord does not obey the peasants’ demand, we seize his granary by force. When the soldiers and policemen arrest people, we use force to release our comrades. So, should we be benevolent towards the enemy when they are suppressing our struggle by resorting to violence?”

Choe’s reply was: “I am critical of you not because I don’t know the general principle of Marxism that violence must be met with violence. What I mean is that now is not the time to answer violence with violence. The May 30 Uprising is an old story. Unfortunately our revolution is at an ebb.”

“At an ebb?”

“Yes, it’s at an ebb. It’s a period of two steps back. Even the Stolypin reactionary period was no darker than now, I believe. Didn’t you see the ease with which the Kwantung Army occupied the whole of Manchuria? Even the 300,000-strong army of Zhang Xue-liang retreated. At a time like this we must preserve the revolutionary forces instead of exposing them. If you provoke the enemy, I fear that such a tragedy as the large-scale ‘punitive operations’ which began in 1920 may recur in east Manchuria.”

Thus Choe Tong Hwa insisted on preventing the harvest struggle from becoming a violent struggle and on stopping the participants in the struggle from taking up arms. He also opposed our idea for an armed struggle, claiming that the time was not ripe for it and that undertaking it would be like building a castle on the sand.

Arguing with him was beyond my power. He was an intellectual with a clear head as well as a high level of communist consciousness. Therefore, it was hard to persuade him of the justness of my idea. He frequently quoted propositions from the classics to prove the justness of his assertion, and all his remarks were logical. It was not easy to convince Choe Tong Hwa of the justness of my idea.

In the final analysis, his assertion proceeded from his view that the revolution was at an ebb. Although he saw such unfavourable omens as the wholesale armed offensive of the Japanese imperialists, the rout of Zhang Xue-liang's troops and the breaking up of the Independence Army, he was utterly ignorant of the violent advance of the people in the homeland and in east Manchuria. It was without doubt a purblind man who was standing before me, a man who could not see reality even when it was clear to others.

The counterrevolutionary offensive and the flight of some cowardly groups did not immediately mean that the revolution was at an ebb. Everything depended on the tendency of the masses, the motive power of the revolution.

As was the case with all the communists of the preceding generation, Choe Tong Hwa underestimated the strength of the masses. He could not regard the people as the motive force of the revolution, and he underestimated their strength and did not believe in it.

When I heard Choe Tong Hwa talking about the revolution being at an ebb, I felt the radical difference between the communists of the preceding generation and us. In the final analysis, it can be said that all the differences between them and us arose from our views of the masses. It was precisely because of that difference that we could not combine our efforts and were like strangers, although we shared the same ideal and aim.

I said to Choe Tong Hwa:

“You may think it paradoxical, but I consider this moment, when the masses are advancing violently without yielding to the aggression of the Japanese imperialists, to be a period of a great upsurge in the revolution. We have decided to awaken and organize the masses immediately after the harvest struggle without missing the opportunity and thus take the anti-Japanese struggle onto a higher stage. No matter how the general trend of the times may change, my resolution will neither change nor waver.”

Choe Tong Hwa could say no more and left in a bad temper.

Although people like Choe Tong Hwa were trying to stop us by talking about the disadvantages of revolutionary violence, we led the harvest struggle with confidence and without deviating in the least from the course we had chosen.

From September to the end of 1931 over 100,000 peasants in Jiandao waged a bloody struggle, refusing to yield in the face of the cruel suppression of the Japanese soldiers and policemen and the reactionary warlords.

In the course of this struggle many legendary incidents displaying the heroic mettle of the Korean nation took place. The story of the battle which the people of the Kaiqu area fought against the Japanese and Manchurian soldiers and policemen on the ice of the River Tuman during the demonstration was an inspiration to the people in Manchuria.

The story of the dramatic end of Kim Sun Hui, a woman fighter, also emerged in the flames of the harvest and spring struggles. Kim Sun Hui was a member of the Red Guards in Yaksudong and a member of the harvest struggle committee there.

When some “punitive troops” appeared in Yaksudong, they asked her what she had in her stomach, poking her there with the muzzles of their rifles. She was near her time.

Glaring at the Japanese soldiers from the garrison and policemen from the consulate as they surrounded her, she answered, “The best that can happen is that it will be a king, the worst that can happen is

that it will be like you, who have to walk the street before the outer gate.” This famous response amazed the enemy. Finally Kim Sun Hui even bit out her tongue to ensure that she would not betray the secret of the organization. She ended her precious blooming life at the age of 22 in the flames kindled by the enemy.

The harvest struggle ended in the victory of the peasants.

Through this struggle the people of east Manchuria gained confidence in victory. For the first time they realized that the victory of the struggle depended on the indomitable will of the masses themselves as well as on the method of guidance. They looked up, with their eyes full of wonder, at the young communists of the new generation who had led the harvest struggle to victory, and they rallied closely around them.

Through the victory of the harvest struggle the masses discovered why the May 30 Uprising had failed; they also discovered that the degree of violence employed could never be the main factor deciding the results of the struggle, and they came to believe this firmly. They all came to realize that, just as the cause of the failure of the May 30 Uprising did not lie in the fact that a small degree of violence was employed, so the factor determining the victory of the harvest struggle was not that a large degree of violence was employed. Violence was in no way omnipotent. It was merely a means to achieve an aim.

Only violence which is just, well-advised and timely and is used for a just purpose can promise victory for those who use it. Only such violence can make a genuine contribution to the transformation of society and the development of history. We support only such violence.

Everything depended on how the masses were mobilized, organized and led. The communists of the new generation created a model in this respect. The harvest struggle was a unique struggle. In this struggle we always held the initiative and kept the enemy on the defensive, closely linking an economic struggle with a political one and properly combining peaceful methods with violent ones. The

struggle that was waged in the spring of the following year was also such a struggle.

Through the harvest struggle the solidarity between the Korean and Chinese peoples was strengthened and the revolutionary ties between the Korean and Chinese communists were consolidated.

The harvest struggle was a good occasion for awakening and hardening the masses. In the course of this struggle simple and ordinary people grew into fighters, into revolutionaries. The revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria were able to strengthen their ranks with many hardcore elements who had been trained in the harvest struggle. The creation of such core elements would also be of benefit in the armed struggle that would soon be launched.

The many young revolutionaries produced in the course of the harvest struggle became the backbone of the guerrilla units that were later formed in various parts of east Manchuria.

While leading the harvest struggle, I continually developed my idea on the armed struggle. The mass heroism and indomitable fighting spirit of the people in east Manchuria that were displayed in the course of the struggle were a great encouragement to me as I sought the revolutionary line for a new stage. They instilled in me the confidence that the masses would always support and encourage us once we took up arms and waged a bloody battle against the Japanese imperialists.

In October 1931 when the flames of the harvest struggle were spreading to the whole of east Manchuria, I paid a brief visit to the Jongsong area in North Hamgyong Province. The aim of my visit was to meet my comrades who had been in the homeland to discuss with them the matter of an armed struggle and to recall the political workers active in the area of the six towns in order to give them some important tasks relating to the armed struggle. Chae Su Hang and O Pin accompanied me to Jongsong.

Jongsong was Chae Su Hang's home town; the home of his wife's parents was there. His deceased parents had lived there until the end of the Ri dynasty. His great-grandfather had once worked as an

adviser to the Jongsong county administration. It was immediately after the “annexation of Korea by Japan” that Chae Su Hang’s family had left the homeland to move to Jingu, Helong County.

Chae Su Hang came of age in Jiandao, but he always longed for his home town where he had nurtured his childhood dreams. Whenever he crossed to Jongsong with me, he could not suppress his joy.

However, on that occasion he seemed very melancholy.

Thinking that the waves of the harvest struggle had reached Chae Su Hang’s family, I asked him quietly:

“Comrade Chae, is it, perhaps, that your family, too, has been expropriated?”

Chae Su Hang’s family was rich. His father held the post of president of the Toksin Company, and for this he was disliked by the people.

“What do you mean by expropriated? Before the peasants demanded, we distributed to them 70 per cent of the grain right in the field.”

“Oh, how different is the family of the county party secretary! But why do you look so sad?”

Chae said: “Some people have told me to try to persuade my father to give up his post as the company president. But my father will not agree.”

Chae Su Hang did not know that his father held the post, having been entrusted by the revolutionary organization with it. His father could not tell him because of revolutionary discipline. Therefore, it was natural for Chae Su Hang to regret that his father would not comply with his request.

Having heard him out, I understood the reason for his feeling sick at heart. In those days there were some Leftists who were holding important positions in the higher party organizations. They indiscriminately imposed extreme demands upon their subordinates, demands which ran counter to the interests of the revolution, and thus put them in an awkward position. Once they went so far as to dismiss

Chae Su Hang from his post of county party secretary, charging him with the “blame” for having failed to establish his class “demarcation” from that of his father; later they reinstated him.

I changed the topic of our conversation to that of the armed struggle in order to remove his melancholy.

Chae Su Hang said jokingly that if we formed an army he would be the first to join it and become a machine gunner.

“You are not fit to be a military officer. Comrade Chae, your gift is as a civil official,” I said, also smiling.

Although I had spoken jokingly, I meant what I said. I considered him to be a born political worker. I am sure if he had remained alive long enough to join the revolutionary army, he would have become a political worker at regimental or divisional level.

When we were launching the armed struggle vigorously after founding the Guerrilla Army, he was killed at the hands of the Japanese “punitive troops” in the vicinity of Dalizi.

O Pin was famous as a sportsman from his days at Tonghung Middle School in Longjing. He had once even won an ox as first prize in a wrestling contest at a sports meeting in Hunchun County. He was free and easy, cheerful and quick.

I regarded O Pin to be the type of a military officer who would be a brave soldier of the revolutionary army. Whenever I met people, I wondered what type of work in the revolutionary army would be suitable for each of them. I acquired this habit about then. It seems that the acute situation in those days when the anti-Japanese war was impending made me this “calculating man.”

After crossing the River Tuman by boat from the Shijianping ferry we visited the beans selection ground of the Tonggwangjin Turyang Corporation. This corporation weighed the beans, which the Japanese imperialists had plundered from Manchuria, by dividing them into various grades before putting them into flax sacks and sending them to Japan by ship.

We disguised ourselves as day labourers from Jiandao and talked to the workers there, while giving them a helping hand.

On hearing that we were from Jiandao, the workers started to talk about the harvest struggle. Their view of this struggle was generally pessimistic. The workers' view was thus; "The many uprisings that broke out in Jiandao even before the Japanese imperialists' occupation of Manchuria ended in failure. Moreover, now that they have invaded Manchuria, will there be any chance of victory merely by waging such a struggle as the harvest struggle? In the final analysis, this struggle will without doubt meet the same destiny as the May 30 Uprising. It is useless to launch a struggle. Look! The Japanese army is winning victory after victory. On top of that, the international organization made up of the big powers also sides with the Japanese. There is no one on whom a small and weak nation can rely, is there?"

When I heard what the workers had to say I learned three lessons. One was that if a revolutionary were to know the public feeling well, he must always mix with the masses; another was that if he were to launch an armed struggle, he must first step up the work of awakening the masses politically and organizing them; and another was that no form of struggle could succeed unless the masses fully understood its importance and took part actively in it.

Having listened to the nihilistic and desperate views of the workers, I felt even more keenly that the Korean communists should start an armed struggle as soon as possible and give our nation the hope of rebirth and the hope of independence.

That day, in the house of Choe Song Hun, chairman of the Kwangmyong village youth association, we held a meeting of the underground political workers in the homeland and those in charge of underground organizations and discussed the task of the homeland revolutionary organizations with relation to the armed struggle.

I emphasized to those attending the meeting that the sudden change in the situation following the September 18 incident, as well as the historic lesson of the anti-Japanese national liberation movement in our country, urgently demanded that we should wage an organized armed struggle and that launching an armed struggle was a

requirement of our revolutionary struggle and a qualitative advance in it. Then I set two major tasks, namely, the task of making full military preparations for the armed struggle and the task of laying a firm mass foundation for it.

Those attending the meeting could not conceal their excitement at the mention of an organized armed struggle, a very significant event; they made fiery speeches advancing creative opinions to help the formation of armed ranks.

The matter of preparing the revolutionary forces needed for organizing and waging an armed struggle had already been discussed and decided upon at the Kongsudok Meeting held in May 1931. So, on the basis of this, the Kwangmyong Village Meeting discussed the practical tasks confronting the revolutionary organizations in the homeland with something new—the armed struggle—in the imminent future. This meeting tolled the bell announcing the armed struggle for the people and revolutionaries at home. The ready response which the revolutionaries at home expressed for the armed struggle in the course of the meeting gave me great strength.

After a day in Jongsong I returned to Jiandao and there parted from Chae Su Hang and O Pin. We decided to meet in Mingyuegou again in about the middle of December and there review the preparations for the armed struggle and discuss in detail ways to conduct the armed struggle and strategic and tactical matters relating to it.

Afterwards, my whole schedule was devoted to preparations for the Mingyuegou Meeting.

At the mention of preparations for a meeting, what may first come to mind is such documents as a report and resolution. However, in those days the preparations for a meeting meant a process of laying down the revolutionary line and defining a strategy and tactics. Putting an idea into writing was a secondary process.

I devoted a lot of time to a consideration of the form to be chosen for the armed struggle.

Marxist-Leninist theory emphasized the importance of an armed

struggle. However, it provided no formal definition of the form in which the armed struggle should be waged. This is because there cannot be any ready-made solution which suits any era and can be applied in any country. In seeking a form for the armed struggle, I strove also not to be guilty of dogmatism.

Having made up my mind to deepen the consultation on the armed struggle and discuss tasks for coping with the new situation, I visited the east Manchuria special district Party committee in order to meet Dong Chang-rong. Since we intended to found the armed forces and start an anti-Japanese war in Manchuria, we could not ignore our cooperation with the Chinese communists.

The question of an armed struggle was also coming to the fore among the Chinese communists in Manchuria. Following the September 18 incident the Communist Party of China and the Worker-Peasant Red Army of China addressed an appeal for the masses to be organized in resistance against the aggression of the Japanese imperialists so as to deal a direct blow at them by force of arms.

The Korean and Chinese communists who were aiming at the same target were confronted with the urgent task of forming an unbreakable, firm united front and cooperating closely with and supporting each other.

Dong Chang-rong, secretary of the special district committee, had narrowly escaped death in the “punitive operations” by the Japanese troops. I heard that he was staying in the city of Longjing and wanted to see me.

Because it was dangerous to go to that city where there were many secret agents, I sent word asking him to come to Mingyuegou.

However, the east Manchuria special district committee conveyed to me the news that Dong Chang-rong who was still unaware of the situation in Jiandao, had been wandering from place to place to inquire into the whereabouts of the special district committee, without knowing that it had moved, in the course of which he had been caught by secret agents and dragged off to prison. This unexpected news disappointed me. After the September 18 incident Luo Deng-xian,

secretary of the Manchurian provincial party committee and Yang Rim, secretary of the military commission under the provincial party committee, left Shenyang and went into hiding, and Yang Jing-yu was still in prison. So there was no one with whom I could discuss matters.

I resolved to save Dong Chang-rong and consulted some comrades concerning a way to do so.

Ko Po Bae (Po Bae is his nickname) volunteered to save Dong Chang-rong. Being extraordinarily quick with his hands, like a conjurer, he was good at “stealing.” He could in an instant remove the fountain-pen from the pocket of the man he was talking to. Because Ko Po Bae was good at such tricks, everywhere he went there was trouble over something being “lost.”

He went to Longjing and stole something so as to be arrested by the police. In prison he met Dong Chang-rong. There Ko Po Bae handled the policemen so skilfully that the secretary of the special district committee was released before long. Thus he was able to attend the Mingyuegou Meeting.

Around the middle of December 1931 we convened the meeting of Party and YCL cadres in Mingyuegou. We called this meeting the “Winter Mingyuegou Meeting” for convenience.

This meeting was attended by over 40 young fighters who enjoyed the love and reputation of the masses because of their devotion to the struggle. Among them were Cha Kwang Su, Ri Kwang, Chae Su Hang, Kim Il Hwan, Ryang Song Ryong, O Pin, O Jung Hwa, O Jung Song, Ku Pong Un, Kim Chol, Kim Jung Gwon, Ri Chong San, Kim Il Ryong, Kim Jong Ryong, Han Il Gwang and Kim Hae San.

At Mingyuegou I tasted for the first time what they called *yongchae kimchi*. At supper on the day when I arrived at Mingyuegou, Ri Chong San’s family served me with kidney-bean-and-maize porridge and *yongchae kimchi*. I ate them with relish. The people of Kilju and Myongchon, North Hamgyong Province, are good at pickling that kind of *kimchi*. Nowadays it is served even at dinners given by the state.

At the time of the Mingyuegou Meeting, Ri Kwang caught five pheasants for us. He had hunted them, together with some activists from the Young Communist League, because he was sorry to see that the delegates to the meeting had been eating only maize porridge and foxtail millet all the time.

For supper that evening Ri Chong San had noodles prepared, saying that pheasant meat was good for garnishing noodles. Rice was scarce in the area of Mingyuegou, but starch was available there.

Cha Kwang Su, who was helplessly fond of noodles, boisterously teased Ri Kwang, saying, “Hey, old man from Wangqing, five pheasants are not enough to go round all of us, are they?” Cha Kwang Su, who suffered from chronic stomach trouble, used to eat very little, but among young people he would pretend to be very hungry, as if he were a great eater.

“Don’t talk so big, you from Jilin who cannot even eat a bowl of maize porridge,” Ri Kwang retorted, jokingly. “Listen, you oaf. I’m exhausted, carrying those five pheasants on top of my load of cereal.”

Cha Kwang Su argued vehemently, saying that, because the five pheasants would not be enough to go round all of us, the delegates should be divided into two rooms and that those in one room should be served with noodles garnished with pheasant and those in the other room with noodles garnished with chicken.

But the delegates all objected to his idea. We saw to it that the pheasant and chicken were mixed and that all the delegates ate convivially in the same room. Pak Hun, a big eater, ate three bowls of noodles and earned the nickname of “noodle lover.”

In order to ensure the meeting’s success, we held a preliminary meeting at Ri Chong San’s house beforehand. At that meeting the agenda, the participants and the order of the meeting were discussed.

Then the meeting was held, lasting for 10 days. The discussion was concentrated on the problem of what form the armed struggle should take. It was only when this problem was settled that it would be possible to decide other matters, such as the form of the armed organization and that of the base.

Because we had no state, resistance by a regular army could not be expected. Yet conditions were not ripe for all the people to be mobilized immediately for an uprising. In these circumstances it was only natural that my mind was drawn to guerrilla warfare.

Lenin defined guerrilla warfare as an auxiliary form of the struggle which is inevitably adopted either when the mass movement has already become an uprising or when there is a midway period between major battles in a civil war. I very much regretted that Lenin regarded guerrilla warfare as a temporary and auxiliary form of struggle instead of regarding it as the basic form. This was because it was not regular warfare but guerrilla warfare which I was interested in at that time.

I thought a great deal about whether guerrilla warfare by a standing revolutionary armed force would suit the circumstances in our country, should we choose guerrilla warfare as the basic form of the armed struggle. In the course of this I read *Sun-tzu's Art of War* and reread the *Three Warring Kingdoms*. Among our country's books on military science I read such books as the *Military Books of the Eastern Country* and *Instructions on Military Science*.

Some people said that the origin of guerrilla warfare dated back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. However, we did not know in which country and how that guerrilla war was waged.

The guerrilla warfare which Marx and Engels studied with the greatest interest was the activities of the armed units of the Russian peasants during the Franco-Russian War of 1812. The story of Denis Davidov, a partisan hero born of the Franco-Russian War, and of General Kutuzov who skilfully commanded the combined operations of the regular units and guerrillas, fanned my curiosity about guerrilla warfare.

The Imjin Patriotic War gave me many ideas concerning a definition of guerrilla warfare as the basic form of our struggle. I regarded the struggle of the volunteers who won a glorious victory in the Imjin Patriotic War as an example holding an outstanding place in the history of guerrilla warfare. I was totally fascinated by the bravery

displayed and the varied fighting methods employed by the famous generals who emerged from among the volunteers such as Kwak Jae U, Sin Tol Sok, Kim Ung So, Jong Mun Bu, Saint Sosan, Choe Ik Hyon and Ryu Rin Sok. The words guerrilla warfare gripped my heart with the approach of the great battle against the heavily-armed Japanese imperialists.

However, some people said that a guerrilla war could be waged only when there was a home front or support from a regular army. This presented me with a problem. These preconditions laid down in the classics of Marxism-Leninism forced me to go through a complicated process of inquiry to choose the form of the armed struggle. No one could decide whether a guerrilla war would be possible, given the circumstances of Korea which had no home front or regular army. It was a serious and controversial issue for us.

Successive dramatic incidents pushing us towards revolution occurred around us. Military disturbances took place among the patriotic officers and men of the former Northeast Army who were displeased by the capitulation of Chiang Kai-shek and Zhang Xue-liang. Wang De-lin, Tang Ju-wu and Li Du did not follow Zhang Xue-liang; they all altered course and left the former Northeast Army. General Ma Zhan-shan created a military disturbance and then took up arms, calling for resistance to Japan. With these people as the centre the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units were formed and the movement of the national salvation army began in various parts of Manchuria.

This situation created favourable circumstances for us who were aspiring to an armed struggle.

I spoke to the following effect: So far as the form of the armed struggle is concerned, there has been regular warfare and guerrilla warfare throughout history. Regular warfare has been predominant, but guerrilla warfare has also been employed. We must choose one of these two forms. I am of the opinion that guerrilla warfare will be more suitable to the situation in our country. Under the conditions in our country where regular warfare is impossible, guerrilla warfare

should be the main form of our struggle, irrespective of what has been happening until now.

Then I said, “Constantly-varying guerrilla warfare is the main form of the armed struggle which we must choose. In our country which has lost its statehood, it is impossible to oppose the Japanese imperialists by waging regular warfare. We must wage constantly-varying guerrilla warfare because we must fight the powerful Japanese imperialist aggressor army with an armed force which is inferior both in military equipment and in numbers. There can be no other way than this.”

The young people who had seen only the warlord army of Zhang Xue-liang, the Independence Army and the Japanese army knew nothing about a guerrilla army.

After explaining the difference between a regular army and a guerrilla army, I went on: “If we are to beat the strong Japanese aggressor army, we must conduct every type of military, political and economic activity, such as superb combined operations by small and large units, surprise attacks, ambushes, political activities, political underground work and production activities. To this end we should form a guerrilla army that is capable of waging war constantly and of freely dispersing and concentrating its soldiers.”

After hearing me some people expressed doubts: Will it be possible to defeat the enemy by waging such a form of the armed struggle? Will it be possible to beat, with an irregular armed force such as a guerrilla army, an army several millions strong equipped with modern, highly efficient weapons such as tanks, artillery and war-planes when we will have to fight without any home front or the support of a regular army, and in a foreign territory at that?

It was not unreasonable for them to express such doubts.

As a matter of fact, I myself had considered such a possibility many times.

I thought: Will we not be exposed to the ridicule of the world if we, with only a few guns, dare to oppose such a military power as Japan? All of the Righteous Volunteers, the Independence Army and

the 300,000-strong army of Zhang Xue-liang have not been able to escape the fate of being beaten by the great strength of the Japanese army. So, what shall we be relying on when we try to defeat them? Have we state power, territory or wealth?

I said to them:

“We are the sons of ruined people who have been deprived of all their state power, territory and resources. We are empty-handed young people who are now living in a foreign country. However, we have not hesitated to challenge the Japanese imperialists. What is it we are relying on in doing so? We have decided to start an anti-Japanese war by relying on the people. The people are the state, the people are the home front and the people are the regular army. When the war starts, the people will become soldiers and rise up. Therefore, the guerrilla warfare which we shall wage can be called a people’s war.”

Thus after a long argument we reached complete agreement on the matter of organizing and waging an armed struggle with guerrilla warfare as its basis.

Guerrilla warfare is a method of armed struggle with which one can deal heavy political and military blows to the enemy while preserving one’s own forces and annihilate, with a small force, an enemy who is superior both in numbers and equipment. We firmly believed that we would ultimately be able to defeat the enemy if we organized and waged an armed struggle by relying on guerrilla warfare, the active support and encouragement of the masses and the favourable natural and topographical conditions.

When all others regarded guerrilla warfare as a means of helping regular warfare, we confirmed it as the basic form of our struggle and adopted it as our policy. This was a scientific and creative decision commensurate with our situation.

When our consultation on waging an organized armed struggle with guerrilla warfare as the basis was over, we discussed ways of conducting it.

First the problem of building a revolutionary armed force was

brought up for discussion. We decided to organize first a small-scale guerrilla unit for each area and gradually develop them into a revolutionary armed force consisting of large units while fighting to arm these units. We also agreed that we would form battalions at the first stage and expand them gradually into a people's revolutionary army. Following this the way to obtain arms was also discussed.

The discussion on the formation of a guerrilla army gave way for one on bases. We put the following questions: If an anti-Japanese guerrilla army is formed, where should the base for its operations be? Should it be on a mountain, in a city or in a rural village? Now that both Korea and Manchuria are under the occupation of the Japanese imperialists, should the base for guerrilla warfare be in the homeland or in Manchuria? We exchanged serious views on these problems.

That there must be a stronghold for any army is simple common sense which even a primary school pupil knows.

Our armed forces had to fight without any home front and without the support of a regular army. Therefore, only when there was a base where we could rest securely after battle while putting our ranks in good order, replenishing our weapons and ammunition, carrying out military training and giving medical treatment to the wounded soldiers, would we be able to wage a guerrilla war for a long time. Therefore, we had to build a base at the same time as forming a guerrilla army.

At the end of an animated discussion we decided to build a guerrilla base in the mountainous areas of Jiandao where there was a good mass foundation, fine supply conditions and favourable terrain. We decided to establish a base first in Jiandao for the time being because in Manchuria with its wide area the enemy's rule was spread more thinly than in Korea. And we agreed that when the time came, we would go into the homeland and occupy the wide forest area of Mt. Paektu and the Rangnim Mountains.

The form of the liberated area, the area where the enemy's rule could not reach, had to be the main form of the base and we had to establish that base without fail in the mountainous areas along the

River Tuman which were convenient for us both in conducting our operations into the homeland and in getting support from the people there. Along the River Tuman there were many mountain villages providing good conditions for supplying materials and unfavourable for the enemy to attack but favourable for us to defend ourselves.

When we started to choose real places for establishing our base Ri Kwang, O Pin, Kim Il Hwan and many others vied with one another in advancing many good opinions. According to their proposal it was decided to establish the base in such natural strongholds as Yulangcun, Niufudong, Wangyugou, Hailangou, Shirengou, Sandaowan, Xiaowangqing, Gayahe, Yaoyinggou, Dahuanggou and Yantonglazi. In those areas were concentrated the revolutionary masses who had gone there after the harvest struggle to avert the “punitive operations” of the Japanese imperialists; even the Red Guards had been formed there and were defending the revolutionary organizations and the people.

As the discussion deepened and became more detailed, the matter was raised of operating and maintaining the base for a long time; there were many complicated practical problems such as how to conduct agricultural production and manage the economy, how to build an ordnance repair shop and a hospital and who should take charge of population administration and how to conduct this work.

At the meeting we also discussed the matters of laying a mass foundation for the armed struggle and forming an anti-Japanese joint front of the Korean and Chinese peoples, as well as the problem of strengthening party organizational work and the work of the YCL.

All these were important problems which had to be solved in order to wage an armed struggle with guerrilla warfare as the major tactic. At the meeting all these matters were formulated as a policy.

It was truly gigantic and unfathomable creative work. There was no history of guerrilla warfare in any era or in any country which could provide something to serve as a model for our revolutionary struggle. Therefore, we had to think over all the problems by using our own brains and establish the base by our own efforts. It was an

unavoidable task for us Korean communists who had to wage a guerrilla war in unprecedentedly arduous conditions without any home front or the support of any regular army.

If, in solving this task, we had dogmatically copied the experience of other countries which had waged a guerrilla war in combination with a regular army, regarding its support as essential, we would have met with failure.

One year a Latin-American resistance fighter came to see me and asked me to tell him about our experience in waging a guerrilla war.

I told him about some of the experience we had gained during our anti-Japanese war and said: "There cannot be a universal formula in guerrilla warfare. That is a creative struggle in which the creative wisdom of man should be displayed to the highest degree. Our experience may be of some help to you, but you must not regard it as absolute and adopt it mechanically. Circumstances differ from country to country. So you, too, create and apply fighting methods and forms which are suitable in your situation. The key to victory lies precisely in that."

After listening to me, the leader of the resistance movement thought over something for a while and then spoke to the following effect: There are many mountainous areas in our country. However, until now we have put too much stress on guerrilla warfare in the towns without taking this into consideration. It is probably for this reason that we have achieved little success and suffered much loss. From now on we will conduct our resistance movement with a guerrilla war in the mountainous rural areas as our major tactic, in conformity with our situation.

We wound up our discussion at Mingyuegou after reaching an agreement on starting the formation of guerrilla units immediately upon our return to our respective areas of activity following the meeting. Whenever they had lost their kinsmen and comrades owing to the bloody suppression and "punitive operations" of the Japanese imperialist aggressors, the young people beat their chests and craved for our army, for our armed forces. And now that they could see the

birth of this army, these armed forces, as something to happen in the near future, these young people rose up all at once and solemnly and loudly sang the *Revolutionary Song* and the *Internationale*, expressing their oath to their beloved motherland and revolution.

The Mingyuegou Meeting was also attended by Tong Chang-rong and many other Chinese communists. They were farsighted revolutionaries who had from the start attached great importance to the friendship between the Korean and Chinese peoples and cooperation between the Korean and Chinese communists in view of the specific situation in east Manchuria where the Korean communists and residents formed the overwhelming majority.

Tong Chang-rong repeatedly requested that the Korean comrades who had fought for a long time in east Manchuria and accumulated a lot of experience make major speeches.

With the subjects under discussion at the meeting as the main point, I made an inflammatory speech in Korean and Chinese about our idea of forming armed ranks and waging an armed struggle.

Our Chinese comrades expressed their full support for this idea. They were of the same opinion as us on all matters such as that of the form of the guerrilla warfare, that of forming a guerrilla army and that of a guerrilla base.

From that time on the armed struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples against the Japanese imperialists, their common enemy, shook the continent, and the tradition of great Korea-China friendship started to strike root amid a bloody battle.

The Winter Mingyuegou Meeting of 1931 marked the start of the anti-Japanese armed struggle; it was a historic meeting that brought about a fresh turn in the anti-Japanese national liberation movement and communist movement in our country. The line of the armed struggle advanced at the Kalun Meeting was developed in depth through this meeting. If the will of the Korean nation to switch from the anti-Japanese national liberation movement to an armed struggle, its highest stage, was confirmed in Kalun, in Mingyuegou that will was reaffirmed and an anti-Japanese war was formally proclaimed

with a view to annihilating the Japanese imperialists under the slogan “Oppose armed force with armed force, and resist counterrevolutionary violence with revolutionary violence!” At this meeting the main point of the strategy defining the direction of the guerrilla war and of its tactical principles was defined and, on the basis of this, immensely rich and varying methods of armed struggle were created.

After the Mingyuegou Meeting Tong Chang-rong and I talked about many things while we sat under a white rock. I think it was at that time that I heard from him about Kim Ri Gap who was then in Dalian prison and Jon Kyong Suk who was supplying him with clothes and food while working at a textile mill and doing YCL work.

Tong Chang-rong said that an analysis of the composition of not only the population but also the members of the party organizations in east Manchuria showed that the greater part of them was Koreans, and asked me to help him on their behalf.

He said: “The main force of the revolutionary struggle in east Manchuria is the Koreans. The guerrilla war can be victorious only when we rely on the Korean residents. No matter how hard Japan may try to alienate us, the communists of our two countries will be able to prevent national prejudice. The special district committee intends to pay special attention to working with its Korean comrades, so we wish you to give us great help. I believe in you, Comrade Kim Il Sung.”

Gladly I granted his request.

I said: “We are also particularly concerned about the unity of our two nations. So set your mind at rest. The gun report of the guerrilla war will end all the temporary mistrust between the Korean and Chinese peoples.”

We gripped each other’s hands and smiled.

Afterwards Tong Chang-rong and I often recollected that day.

Whenever I visited China Premier Zhou En-lai said, in his banquet speeches or in his talks with me, that Korea-China friendship had developed onto a high stage through the founding of the Anti-

Japanese Guerrilla Army at the beginning of the 1930s and through the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese armed forces against the Japanese imperialists. He spoke a lot of moving words about the deep-rooted tradition of that friendship.

Each time he said this I thought of the Mingyuegou Meeting and its heated atmosphere of Korea-China friendship, and I recollected with great emotion our intimate Chinese communist friends such as Wei Zheng-min, Tong Chang-rong, Chen Han-zhang, Wang De-tai, Zhang Wei-hua, Yang Jing-yu, Zhou Bao-zhong and Hu Jin-min who joined us in the flames of the war. A feeling of friendship is a human feeling. Therefore, it can be firm only when it is established through concrete human relations, and it seems that the feeling that has been established in such a way will not cool no matter how much time passes.

## 4. Preparations for a Bloody Battle

After we had adopted the decision to wage an organized armed struggle at the Mingyuegou Meeting, I was requested to play the pivotal role in the work.

“A start should be made by you, Kim Il Sung. In any work there must be a model and an example.”

With these words my comrades parted from me. I remained in Mingyuegou until those who had attended the meeting had all left, and then I went to Antu after parting from Tong Chang-rong. Antu was in all respects suitable for guerrilla warfare.

We decided to establish the basic forces of the organization in Antu and Wangqing, in view of the fact that in forming the armed groups priority should be given to work with the national salvation army, the Chinese anti-Japanese armed forces, formed in different parts of Manchuria after the September 18 incident, as was decided in December at the Mingyuegou Meeting. The national salvation army was massed in Antu and Wangqing.

Returning to Xinglongcun, I stayed in Ma Chun Uk's house for a while with my family and then moved to Kalbat village in Tuqidian valley in Xiaoshahe. There I concentrated on the preparations for founding the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. The circumstances in Xiaoshahe were better than in Xinglongcun because the people of Xiaoshahe were enlisted in organizations. Secret agents had no free access to the village where the underground organization had struck deep roots. Because there were no running dogs sneaking about in Xiaoshahe, the army and police rarely ever came there for “punitive operations.”

Our efforts to found the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army faced difficulties from the beginning. The questions of cadres,

weapons, military drill, provisions, the mass foundation and relations with the national salvation army, as well as many other questions of a military and political character, were raised and awaiting solution.

In forming the armed units we considered cadres and weapons as the most essential two elements. But we were short of them both.

By cadres we mean those who were prepared militarily and politically. We needed young people who understood politics and military affairs and were ready to fight in arms for the country and people for a long time.

We had lost almost all the core elements of the Korean Revolutionary Army in a year and a half. The main force of the revolutionary army, including Kim Hyok, Kim Hyong Gwon, Choe Hyo Il, Kong Yong, Ri Je U and Pak Cha Sok fell in action or were thrown into prison within a year. On top of that, in January 1931 Ri Jong Rak who was a company commander was arrested together with Kim Kwang Ryol, Jang So Bong and Pak Pyong Hwa by the police of the Japanese consulate when he went out to obtain weapons, carrying pamphlets concerning the Korean Revolutionary Army. Kim Ri Gap, who was versed in military affairs, was imprisoned and Paek Sin Han fell in action. There was no knowing what had become of Choe Chang Gol and Kim Won U.

There were so few among the rest of the revolutionary army who had military experience that they could be counted on the fingers of both hands. But because they were conducting mass political work, they could not be included in the armed units. When I was busy forming the guerrilla units in Antu, Cha Kwang Su was the only person from the Korean Revolutionary Army who stood by me.

Those holding state power could easily find the military personnel they needed through a mobilization order or a system of obligatory military service, but we could not recruit men by such methods. The masses cannot be enlisted in the revolution by law or by force. The Provisional Government in Shanghai included in its constitution an article stating that all the citizens were under an obligation to pay taxes and undergo military service, but the people did not even know

that such law had been adopted. It is self-evident that the decrees and directives of a government in exile which exercised state power in one corner of a concession in a foreign country, without national sovereignty, were ineffective.

In the national liberation revolution in colonies it is impossible to make people take up arms by means such as a mobilization order or a system of obligatory military service. In the revolution the appeal of the leader of the revolution or farsighted people replaces the law, and the political and moral awareness and militant enthusiasm of each man decides his voluntary entry into the army. The masses take up arms for their liberation of their own accord without the request or direction of anyone else. It is an act natural to the people who regard independence as their lifeblood and are ready to devote their lives to it.

Based on this principle, we began to search for people to be enlisted in the guerrilla unit in Antu and the surrounding area. In the paramilitary organizations such as the Red Guards, the Children's Vanguard, the worker pickets and the local shock brigades there were many sturdy young people who wanted to join the army. Paramilitary organizations grew fast and young people were awakened ideologically beyond recognition in the stormy harvest and spring struggles.

But it was impossible to enlist into the guerrilla unit anyone who requested to be enlisted in it without our considering his preparedness. The young and middle-aged men of east Manchuria were not yet prepared militarily. To ensure a guerrilla reserve it was necessary to intensify the political and military training of the young people in the paramilitary organizations such as the Red Guards and the Children's Vanguard.

But I had no suitable drill instructors. I alone could not conduct military drill for all the young people in the Antu area. Though I had attended Hwasong Uisuk School for some time, I was not qualified to command a new type of army, a guerrilla army. Cha Kwang Su, who was fresh from school, knew less about military affairs than I did . As

Ri Jong Rak was in prison, I had no one to whom I could look for help. If I had had the like of Ri Jong Rak, I could have devoted all my time to political work, entrusting military affairs entirely to him, but being unable to do so, I was anxious.

Whenever I had difficulties I felt the shortage of comrades.

While we were experiencing these difficulties, we were visited by Pak Hun, a promising graduate of the Huangpu Military Academy. Chiang Kai-shek was the commandant of the military academy and Zhou En-lai was in charge of political affairs there. The academy was attended by many young Koreans. The Chinese people called the Guangzhou revolt the “three days’ soviet,” and a leading part in it was played by the cadets of that military academy.

Pak Hun and An Pung took part in the Guangzhou revolt and, after its failure, fled to Manchuria from China proper. Pak Hun was of sturdy constitution and free and open in his speech and behaviour; he was every inch a soldier. He spoke Chinese more often than Korean and wore Chinese dress more than Korean. He became my military adviser.

After the collaboration of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party had broken down because of Chiang Kai-shek’s betrayal of the revolution in the April 12 incident, and the first revolutionary war had ended in failure, Yang Rim, Choe Yong Gon, O Song Ryun (Jon Kwang), Jang Ji Rak, Pak Hun and many of those who took part in the Chinese revolution after graduating from the Huangpu Military Academy, the Guangdong Military Academy and the Yunnan Military Training School came to Manchuria from the southern area of China to avoid the reprisals of the Chiang Kai-shek clique.

Frankly speaking, I expected much from Pak Hun when I heard the name of the Huangpu Military Academy.

Pak Hun had the special skill of shooting with pistols in both hands in battle. His marksmanship was remarkable. He shot like a devil.

Another of his special skills was in giving commands. He had a splendid voice capable of easily commanding an army ten or twenty

thousand strong without using a megaphone. When he shouted commands on the tableland of Tuqidian the whole village heard him.

Intrigued by his commanding voice, all the young people of Antu looked on him with fascination.

“His voice is so stentorian that even the Japanese Emperor in Tokyo can hear it. Where did such a man come from?” said Cha Kwang Su in admiration, when he saw Pak Hun conducting military training for the Red Guards. Cha Kwang Su took a great liking to him. The two men were close friends though there was a lot of theoretical argument between them.

Because Pak Hun imparted such good training in Antu, the unit we formed was later famed as a “student unit” in Wangqing. The members of our guerrilla unit were respected by the people for their good order and discipline, good manners and good appearance throughout the whole of the anti-Japanese war. Yang Jing-yu, too, always admired our revolutionary army for its discipline and cultured manners.

At such times I always thought of Pak Hun and his words of command resounding across the tableland in Tuqidian.

His next conspicuous quality as a drill instructor was his rigid demands on his trainees. The trainees acquired military knowledge quickly due to his rigid demands.

But at times he punished the members of the unit.

When trainees failed to perform the drill as he required, or violated discipline, he hurled abuse at them as he glowered at them, kicked them or made them stand aside as a punishment. I said to him that punishment was unacceptable in a revolutionary army, but to no avail.

One day as I returned home with Pak Hun, whose voice had become husky after conducting drill, I asked him, “You have something of the warlords about you. Where did you get it?”

At this he looked at me with a smile and said, “Our drill instructor was a German and a martinet. It might be the legacy I acquired from him. Anyway, the rod makes a good soldier of a man.”

He retained many traces of his German military education. In his lectures he spent a great deal of time talking about the Prussian army. He talked much about the bravery of the British soldier, the promptness of the French soldier, the exactitude of the German soldier and the stubbornness of the Russian soldier. Whenever he talked about them, he called on the trainees to become versatile soldiers with all these qualities.

Most of the military training he conducted was not suited to the special type of guerrilla warfare we planned. He explained to the trainees about the Napoleonic column formation and the British line formation and made a tremendous effort to make such formations with 20 or so trainees.

At the training I once said to him quietly during a break, "Comrade Pak, what about replacing the drill in the British line formation you just conducted with a short explanation? If we were to fight a battle such as Waterloo, it would be another matter. But we are intending to wage a guerrilla war in the mountains against an enemy armed with cannons and machine guns. So what is the use of learning outmoded tactics?"

"But in order to wage a war one must have at least some military knowledge, I believe," he said.

"Of course, it is important to acquire a general knowledge of the military experience of other countries, but it is necessary to select and teach what is of immediate use. You would do better not to teach them all you learned at the military academy."

By saying this to Pak Hun I meant that he should guard against dogmatism.

When I gave Pak Hun charge of ten or so red guardsmen and told him to make them practise their shooting, he had targets set up on the level ground and told them repeatedly to shoot at the lower part of the centre of the enemy when he appeared.

I said to Pak Hun, "It will not do to conduct drill that way. We must put aside what does not suit the actual situation and first teach what will be useful in a guerrilla war. Specifically, we must give

priority to training in mountain warfare. Let us change what does not suit our condition and, by pooling our wisdom, work out fresh tactics that are not found in the manuals.”

He listened to me attentively and acceded to my suggestion.

From then on we conducted drill with the emphasis on what would be useful in a guerrilla war. We began with imparting a practical military knowledge as to footdrill, the use of arms, camouflage, signalling, bayonet drill, reconnaissance, mountain walking, the handling of a club, capturing arms and the discrimination between friends and foe at night.

Pak Hun at first taught things in a happy-go-lucky fashion, but finally he drew up a teaching schedule and conducted drill according to a plan.

Looking back on those days later, Pak Hun said, “At the Huangpu Military Academy I acquired the military knowledge accumulated by the five great military powers of the world. It was comprehensive knowledge crystallizing the tactics used in all ages and by all countries. I took pride in having gained such a knowledge at the famous Huangpu Military Academy, an edifice of military education in modern China. If I disseminate that knowledge in east Manchuria, people will greet me with wild applause, I thought. But I was proved wrong. I was given the cold shoulder instead of wild applause. The young people regarded my lectures as imparting common sense, but not as having any vital and essential significance. I realized that the military knowledge I had acquired over several years was useless for guerrilla warfare, although it was universal, and was disgusted with myself for regarding it as a code of universal significance. I realized the need to create a new military theory for a guerrilla war. So I rid myself of dogmatism and acquired a new way of thinking suited to the Korean revolution.”

Another conspicuous drill instructor in the Antu area was Kim Il Ryong. He had no knowledge of modern warfare to speak of, as Pak Hun did, but persistently trained the men by relying on the practical experience of war he had acquired in the Independence Army.

With the training in the Red Guards, the Children's Vanguard, the Children's Expeditionary Corps and other paramilitary organizations being intensified and their ranks built up, dozens of reliable young people who were prepared politically and militarily were rallied around us. We selected those who were working in the various counties along the River Tuman and the young people tempered and seasoned in the harvest and spring struggles and called them together in Antu. Many young people came to us from different parts of Manchuria, including Antu and Dunhua.

We selected 18 of them as core elements, including Cha Kwang Su, Kim Il Ryong, Pak Hun, Kim Chol (Kim Chol Hui) and Ri Yong Bae and formed them into a guerrilla group. At the same time we saw to it that similar armed groups were formed in the Yanji, Wangqing, Helong and Hunchun areas. As a result, armed groups, each comprising between 10 and 20 men, came into being in succession in each county. This was the line adopted at the Mingyuegou Meeting, that of forming small armed groups, obtaining weapons and accumulating experience through stealthy activities, increasing the ranks and forming large armed groups in each county when the situation was right.

The formation of these guerrilla groups was attended with a bloody struggle to acquire weapons. The struggle was beset with great difficulties.

The Japanese aggressor army steadily increased the fighting ability of their ground, sea and air forces by supplying them with modern arms and other equipment mass-produced in their own country, whereas we had no home front to provide weapons nor money to buy rifles. What we needed was not cannons and tanks but, for the time being, rifles, pistols, grenades and other light arms. If our country had had factories producing weapons, we could have acquired them with the help of the workers. But our country did not have such factories. Unfortunately, in arming ourselves we did not benefit from the industry of our country.

That was why the grim slogan "Let's take the enemy's weapons

and arm ourselves!” was adopted.

On returning to Antu I dug up from the ground the two pistols which my father had entrusted to my mother. I said to my comrades, as I held up the two pistols:

“Look, these are the pistols my father left for me. My father did not serve in the Righteous Volunteers or in the Independence Army, but he had these pistols with him until the day of his death. Why? Because he considered the armed struggle to be the highest form of struggle to achieve national independence. My father’s desire was to launch an armed struggle. When he left me these two pistols, I made a firm resolve to do what he desired in his place. The time has come. Let us start our march for independence with these two pistols to help us. Now we have two pistols, but think that one day they will have multiplied to two hundred, two thousand and then to twenty thousand. With 2,000 rifles, we will be fully able to liberate the country. Let us multiply these two pistols into two thousand and then twenty thousand rifles.”

I felt a lump in my throat at the thought that my father had died an early death without realizing his aspiration, and I could speak no more.

When the acquisition of arms was placed on the list of priorities, Pak Hun told me that he had heard that a son of a rich family in Fusong had given dozens of rifles to me and asked me what I had done with them. Who he meant by the son of a rich family in Fusong was Zhang Wei-hua. When we were active in Wujiazi, he had visited us, bringing with him 40 rifles of the private soldiers at his house. We handed them out to the men of the Korean Revolutionary Army.

Pak Hun, on hearing of this, said that it was a great pity, and that the only solution was to get money. He proposed to raise money by appealing to the peasants in the villages we had made revolutionary.

We did not agree. If we had raised funds by appealing to the rich people, it was another matter. But depriving the poor workers and peasants of their money was not a good way to buy weapons. The easy way to obtain weapons was to raise money, but they should also

be taken from the enemy, at the risk of one's life.

We chose the difficult way. I thought that we might buy weapons but I did not encourage this. To ask the people for money was the way of the Independence Army, not our way.

Even if we had raised money, it would not have helped us much. Once Comrade Choe Hyon had bought a machine gun for 1,500 *yuan* from some mountain rebels.

One machine gun cost thirty oxen at market prices in those days when an ox was priced at about 50 *yuan*. We could not ignore such a figure.

After much discussion we went to Naitoushan and dug up some rifles buried there by men of the Independence Army.

In other counties, too, weapons which had been used by the Independence Army were collected in a similar fashion.

The Independence Army under the command of Hong Pom Do had buried many rifles and a lot of ammunition in the Dakanzi area after the Battle of Qingshanli and retreated across the border separating the Soviet Union and Manchuria.

Informed of this through its secret agents, the Japanese garrison carried away a lot of rifles and ammunition, loading them on to dozens of lorries. Our comrades in Wangqing sent people to Dakanzi after the Mingyuegou Meeting to recover about 50,000 cartridges from the place where the Japanese garrison had been digging.

Having acquired some rifles, we went over to taking weapons away from the enemy with their use.

The house of landlord Shuang Bing-jun was chosen as the target of our first attack. He had a guard of about 40 men. Its captain was Ri To Son who later became the notorious captain of the Sinsondae Band which was routed by Comrade Choe Hyon's unit.

The guardroom was both inside and outside the earthen wall which surrounded the landlord's house.

We formed an assault team with the members of the guerrilla group and Red Guards and took over ten rifles in a raid on the landlord's house in Xiaoshahe after preliminary scouting.

The struggle to obtain arms was waged vigorously in a mass movement all along the River Tuman. The revolutionary masses, irrespective of age and sex, with members of the guerrilla group, the Red Guards, the Children's Vanguard and the local shock brigades in the van, waged a brave battle against the Japanese aggressor army, the Japanese and Manchukuo police, the pro-Japanese landlords and the reactionary bureaucrats to take their weapons from them under the slogan "Arms are our lifeblood. Arms for arms!"

At the time the phrase "Youqiang Buyaoming" was in vogue. It means: Off with your gun not your head! When one shouted "Youqiang Buyaoming," pointing a gun at a customhouse, guardhouse, police station or landlord's house, the timid officials, reactionary landlords and police offered their weapons, trembling.

The phrase "Youqiang Buyaoming" was used widely and spread across the areas by the revolutionary organizations in east Manchuria.

O Jung Hwa's father O Thae Hui and his uncle, too, took weapons from policemen and guardsmen, threatening them with a bogus pistol made of a table's leg and shouting "Youqiang Buyaoming!" at them; these weapons they sent to the Red Guards. News of this spread to Antu. On hearing the story, we admired the old men's wit and boldness.

When I met old man O Thae Hui later in Wangqing, I asked him, "How did you come up with such a good idea?" The old man said with a smile, "At night a table's leg looks like a pistol. We have no rifle or grenade. So I used a bogus pistol made of a table's leg. At my wit's end, I hit on the idea. There is the saying 'A thirsty man digs a well,' isn't there?"

He was right. Then we threw ourselves boldly into the fight to take weapons like thirsty men digging a well. It was an arduous struggle requiring the highest degree of creativity and wisdom.

The revolutionaries and revolutionary people of east Manchuria took weapons by cleverly disguising themselves as military police, men of the national salvation army, officials of the Japanese consulate, rich men or merchants, as the situation required. In some

places women attacked soldiers and policemen with their laundry paddles or clubs and seized their weapons.

The struggle to obtain arms was a prelude to an all-people war of resistance. All the revolutionary organizations and the entire people roused themselves to the struggle and enlisted in it. As the revolution required arms, the masses came out in the struggle to obtain them without hesitation. In the course of this they were awakened ideologically, and they came to realize how great their strength was.

Our slogan that one should obtain weapons for oneself proved its great vitality everywhere.

Needless to say, in the course of struggle we lost many revolutionary comrades. Each rifle we obtained was imbued with the warm blood and the ardent patriotism of our revolutionary comrades.

At the same time we launched the struggle to make weapons for ourselves under the slogan of self-reliance.

At first we made spears and swords at smithies. Then we made pistols and bombs.

The most elaborate and useful pistol we made was the “pijikkae pistol” which was manufactured by the members of the AIYL in Nangou, Wangqing County. People in North Hamgyong Province called a match a “pijikkae,” like the Russians. They made powder from matches and put it in the cartridge chamber. Hence the name of the pistol they made.

They also made the barrels of rifles with sheet steel.

Famous among the arsenals of east Manchuria were the Suribawigul Arsenal in Xincheng Hill in Jingu, Helong County, the Nanqu Arsenal in Wangqing County and the Zhujiadong Arsenal in Nanyangcun in Yilangou, Yanji County.

The Suribawigul Arsenal made bombs with powder obtained by the revolutionary organization in a mine in Badaogou, Yanji County.

At first they made noise bombs. They exploded with a thundering sound, but their killing capacity was slight. Next they made chilli bombs, an improved version. They were better than the noise bombs but they merely emitted a disgusting smell and were not very effective.

Later comrades in Helong made some effective bombs with iron shrapnel instead of chilli powder. These were the famous Yanji bombs. After the appearance of the Yanji bombs we summoned Pak Yong Sun from Helong and held a two-day bomb-making course in Dafangzi in Xiaowangqing to disseminate bomb-making techniques to different parts of east Manchuria. The short course was attended by people from the arsenals and the commanders of guerrilla units in different counties.

On the first day of the short course I gave a lecture on the manufacture of gunpowder. The arsenals of the guerrilla units were using powder which was obtained secretly from mines to make bombs.

This method of acquisition was always dangerous because the enemy exercised rigid control over powder. We succeeded in manufacturing powder with the powder materials that were readily available in private houses. The short course taught the skill of powder-making to those attending it so that it could be widely introduced in different areas.

Pak Yong Sun lectured on the manufacture, use, keeping and handling of bombs. The story of how they made bombs for themselves in Helong aroused the admiration of the people attending the short course. Pak Yong Sun and Son Won Gum who managed the Suribawigul Arsenal were particularly talented. Later the arsenal became a reliable weapons-producing and repair base for the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and made a great contribution to the anti-Japanese war.

If a writer were to collect episodes about the unexcelled spirit of self-sacrifice, boldness, wit and creativity our people displayed in their struggle for arms and give a vivid portrayal of them, it would make an epic story. A simple people who had been worked hard as cheap labour for tens of thousand years, plunged in the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy and were suffering the sorrow of a stateless nation shedding tears of blood, deeming it to be their fate, finally embarked on the path of the noble liberation struggle to forge their own destiny.

Whenever I saw the weapons the local organizations acquired or manufactured I noted with pride that our determination to clear the way for the Korean revolution by believing in the strength of our people and depending on it was quite right.

We paid special attention to laying a mass foundation for the anti-Japanese armed struggle while pushing ahead with the preparations for building active revolutionary armed forces. It was an essential demand of our developing revolution to awaken and ceaselessly temper the masses in the practical struggle and prepare them thoroughly for the anti-Japanese war. Their voluntary enlistment across the country in the anti-Japanese war was a guarantee for ultimate victory in the war.

The unprecedentedly bad harvest and ensuing famine in 1930 created the conditions for us to launch a new mass struggle following the harvest struggle in east Manchuria. We saw to it that a new spring struggle was launched against the Japanese imperialists and the pro-Japanese landlords as a continuation of the heightened fighting spirit shown in the harvest struggle. The spring struggle which began with the struggle to borrow cereal from the landlords rapidly developed into a struggle to confiscate the cereal of the Japanese imperialists and pro-Japanese landlords and a violent struggle to eliminate the lackeys of the Japanese imperialists.

The work to make the people of east Manchuria revolutionary in the flames of the spring struggle developed to a new high. The Korean communists persistently enlightened and educated the masses by going among them in spite of the intensified offensive of the counterrevolution against our revolution. The mass organizations kept the door to the masses wide open and steadily tempered them in a practical struggle.

But the work was not smooth sailing everywhere. In one case several revolutionaries laid down their lives to make a village revolutionary. At times revolutionaries had to tolerate intolerable insults and the mistrust of the people, without revealing their identity.

Such was my experience in Fuerhe village.

Fuerhe is an important village occupying a key position on the road from Antu to Dunhua. Free travel between Dunhua and south Manchuria was impossible without passing this village. Without making the village revolutionary it would have been impossible to ensure the safety of Xiaoshahe, Dashahe, Liushuhe and other nearby villages.

The organization sent several able political workers there, but all of them, one after another, met with failure. Those who went there to ensure that the organization took root there were all arrested and lost their lives, but no one could come up with a solution. Kim Jong Ryong was angry, qualifying Fuerhe as a reactionary village, and said that spies or some white organization seemed to be there, but it was impossible to discover them. Whenever the village was mentioned, I could not dismiss my doubts.

In Fuerhe there was an organization member called Song, but he alone could not discover the reactionary elements or make the village revolutionary. Someone had to go to the village at the risk of his life and reshape the village into a revolutionary one from a reactionary one by removing certain people and forming organizations.

So I volunteered to go to Fuerhe.

I summoned Comrade Song to Xiaoshahe and made prior arrangements with him. I said to him, "When you return to the village, spread a rumour that you have sent for a young farmhand as you are short of hands. Then I can act as a farmhand at your house."

Comrade Song said, staring at me with his eyes goggling, "The village is very reactionary. How can you go on such a venture? It would be nonsense for you to act the farmhand," and he shook his head. The organization, too, disapproved of my going to Fuerhe.

Comrade Song and I rode in an ox-drawn sleigh to Fuerhe village, in spite of the disapproval of my comrades.

I slipped into the "reactionary den," assuming the appearance of an uncouth simpleton with long hair and a dirty face.

Several hours later, when Comrade Song and I were at supper, some mounted policemen unexpectedly galloped into the village,

raising clouds of dust behind them. The authorities in Antu had already dispatched police to the village. I did not know how they were informed of my arrival.

When the children playing outside shouted that some mounted policemen were coming, I went out to the yard and began to split firewood with an axe. The situation was similar to that I had experienced at the house of the unknown woman in Jiaohe.

The mounted policemen pointed at me and asked who I was.

Comrade Song said that I was his farmhand.

One of the mounted policemen said, tilting his head to one side dubiously, "A head of the communist party has come to this village to give guidance, I have heard." They had come rushing, expecting to find a gentleman arrayed in good Western clothes, and they seemed disappointed at having had a wasted journey, seeing me in a shabby overcoat with my face smeared with soot.

I wondered whether an alien element communicating secretly with the enemy was in our ranks, for only a few responsible people knew that I had slipped into the village.

When the mounted policemen had left, I found Song looking terribly pale, perspiration standing in beads on his forehead.

Getting up early in the morning the next day, I fetched water, chopped firewood, swept the courtyard and boiled cattle feed. Every day Song and I went up a mountain on his ox-drawn sleigh. On the mountain I examined documents, collected firewood and discussed matters, while giving Song assignments.

The rumour went round the village that I was good at my work. The people in Fuerhe took me for a meek farmhand. When the well iced over, the village women waved to me to come and break the ice. I did what they asked with good grace. I did so because if the village people gave me more work to do, I would look more like a farmhand. If I did what they asked of me creditably, it would have been harder for secret agents to recognize the revolutionary in me.

One day a wedding was held in the house opposite Song's. That day the village people came and asked me to pound some steamed

rice to make rice cakes. As I was a “farmhand,” they seemed to think that I would be good at it.

My grandfather who was a farmer all his life used to say that only when one is able to plough, chop fodder and pound rice can one be called a real farmer. But I had never before pounded steamed rice into rice cakes. Our situation at home did not allow us to live in luxury eating rice cakes. I feared that if I complied with their request I might give myself away. But it did not seem becoming of a farmhand to refuse their request. So at first I hesitated and said that I could not help them because I was doing domestic chores.

People came repeatedly and pressed me with requests, so finally I had to agree.

When I appeared in the courtyard of the house where the wedding was to be held, the master and mistress of the house were delighted. Taking a mallet from the hand of their slender, middle-aged neighbour, the mistress gave it to me, saying, “Look here, the quality of today’s rice cakes depends on your skill. Prove your worth.” The way the mistress bustled about bringing me steamed rice in a wooden dish was strange and ludicrous. The village people stood around to see the “farmhand’s” skill. It was a spectacle for people in the countryside to see how rice was pounded into rice cakes.

Grasping the mallet firmly, I thought: “Whatever will be, will be. Let me wield the mallet to the best of my ability. Pounding rice is work for a man, isn’t it? A farmhand cannot do everything, can he? At worst I will be looked down upon as a poor hand.” But just then Song, who had evidently read my thoughts, saved me. Pretending to put on airs, he reproached me, saying, “Hey, you! How can you pound rice with your arm? How many times have I told you to take good care of your arm?” Looking round at the people, he said, “He hurt his arm yesterday while collecting firewood. He cannot pound rice. But I will pound the rice for my neighbour’s happy event.”

That day the village women, as they served rice cakes to the guests, treated me like a farmhand. They handed out rice cakes on a dish to others, while handing me some with their hands. Yet I did not

consider the village people to be bad because of this insult. I rather thought it helped me in my work.

So it was not easy to make the village of Fuerhe revolutionary. The process of making Wujiazi village revolutionary had been attended by many difficulties, but it was easier than that of Fuerhe. But while staying in the village for about one month and a half, I formed organizations and induced the youth core elements to get rid of the secret agents.

When I told this story to my comrades on returning to Xiaoshahe, they held their sides with laughing. I said to them, “Revolutionaries can gain a foothold anywhere. So far we have failed to do so because we made the revolution in a gentlemanly fashion without going among the masses, like drops of oil floating on water.”

I once went to Fuerhe at the head of a unit after forming the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army. Riding to the village on horseback I, the commander of the guerrilla unit, stopped there and held a mass meeting at which I delivered a speech. Seeing me, the people were extremely surprised.

When she saw me riding my horse again after my speech, one woman who had waved me over to crush the ice exclaimed in surprise, “Dear me! Isn’t that the young farmhand who was once in our village? He’s become the commander of the guerrilla army!”

The difficulties in our way were overcome in this way.

But the most difficult problem still remained unsolved. The work with the Chinese national salvation army caused much bloodshed for the Korean communists.

## 5. The Birth of a New Armed Force

The spring of 1932 was turbulent with events that shook the world. After occupying Manchuria the Japanese imperialists rigged up the puppet Kingdom of Manchukuo through the reinstatement of Pu Yi, the last Qing Emperor who had been dethroned by the nationalist revolution led by Sun Yat-sen. The Japanese government-patronized mass media and the Chinese and Manchurian pro-Japanese publications chanted their praise of the kingdom, clamouring about the “concord of five nations” and the building of a “paradise of righteous government,” whereas the progressive people of Asia and the rest of the world strongly denounced it.

The world’s attention was focussed on the activities of the fact-finding commission from the League of Nations which had just arrived in Japan on a mission to investigate the cause of the outbreak of the September 18 incident and the responsibility for the incident. The commission headed by Lytton, an adviser to the British Privy Council, and consisting of delegates from such great powers as the United States, Germany, France and Italy was received in audience by the Emperor of Japan and met the Japanese Prime Minister, the Minister of the Army and the Minister of Foreign Affairs; it proceeded to China to hold talks with Chiang Kai-shek and Zhang Xue-liang, and then appeared in Manchuria where it met Lieutenant-General Honjo, the commander of the Kwantung Army, and inspected the area where the September 18 incident had occurred. Japan and China vied with each other in welcoming and entertaining the Lytton commission in order to win its support. The conjecture that Japan might withdraw her troops from Manchuria if the commission disclosed the true facts and the League of Nations exerted its influence, was widespread not only in political, public and news

circles but also among primary school pupils and old men in the rural villages, who had become interested in politics.

But we who were in the Antu area preparing for the armed struggle did not listen to the rumours and conjectures; we were applying ourselves to military training, with the Women's Association of Xiaoshahe bringing our lunch in large wooden vessels to the tableland near Tuqidian every day.

In the middle of March we organized in Antu a short training course for the leaders of the small guerrilla units in several of the counties of east Manchuria. Nearly 20 leaders gathered in Tuqidian, Xiaoshahe.

The training course lasted for two days—theoretical lectures on the first day and drill on the second day. I gave a lecture on the lines and policies of the Korean revolution in the political class and on the regulations and code of conduct for the guerrillas. Military drill was mostly supervised by Pak Hun. We started with the basics of formation drill and the disassembly and assembly of weapons, and then dealt with such tactical matters as raids and ambushes.

Antu became the headquarters of the Korean communists who were forming the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Political workers and messengers from several counties along the River Tuman often came to Xiaoshahe to make contact with us. The news of our activities to form the guerrilla army in Antu spread from mouth to mouth as far as the homeland. On hearing the news, young patriots in their early twenties from Korea and various parts of Manchuria flocked to Antu, at the risk of their lives, to volunteer for the guerrilla army.

At this time Pyon Tal Hwan and 8 young volunteers were arrested and imprisoned by the Japanese military police on their way to Antu from Wujiazi. Pyon Tae U came to see me after liberation to express his sorrow that his son had been unable to join the army and had wasted several years behind bars. Many people came, particularly from Yanji County in Jiandao. The enemy's ruling organs and repressive machines were concentrated in the Yanji area and its

network of secret agents was developed. The Jiandao task force under the command of Colonel Ikeda, which consisted of the 75<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 38<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Ranam 19<sup>th</sup> Division, and was reinforced with artillery, engineers and a signal corps, crossed the River Tuman and marched into Yanji and other parts of Jiandao for a “mop-up” operation in east Manchuria. In this situation the underground organizations in the area sent to Antu many young people who had volunteered for the army. On hearing the news, even people without any recommendation from such organizations came to us in large numbers. Chen Han-zhang came from Dunhua, bringing with him a young Chinese man, Hu Jin-min (Hu Ze-min). Hu had been a teacher at a normal school in Helong. Sometimes young people came by the dozen at a time.

But the Chinese national salvation army units often captured them on their way to us and killed them in groups.

At that time there were various Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units in the northeastern region of China, such as the Northeast Self-Defence Army, the Anti-Jilin Army, the Anti-Japanese National Salvation Army, the Anti-Japanese Volunteers’ Army, the Mountain Rebels, the Broad Sword Society and the Red Spear Society. These nationalist armed units comprised patriotic soldiers who had broken away from the former Northeast Army to march under the banner of anti-Japanese national salvation after Japan’s occupation of Manchuria, as well as Chinese government officials and peasants. These units together were known as the national salvation army.

Well-known among these units in Manchuria were those led by Wang De-lin, Tang Ju-wu, Wang Feng-ge, Su Bing-wen, Ma Zhan-shan, Ding Chao and Li Du.

The largest one in east Manchuria was Wang De-lin’s unit. Wang had in his younger days been an insurgent, as “a heroic man in the green forest,” in the forests around Muling and Suifenhe, holding no principles or views, before being assigned with his followers to the Jilin army under the command of Zhang Zuo-xiang. There he became an officer in the regular army. He had served as the commander of the

3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the former Jilin army before the September 18 incident. People called his unit the “Former 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.”

After Japan’s occupation of Manchuria his senior officer, Brigade Commander Ji Xing, had surrendered and met the commander of the Kwantung Army. After pledging his allegiance to the Empire of Japan, he was appointed Jilin garrison commander. Indignant at the betrayal by his senior officer, Wang immediately revolted and proclaimed the anti-Japanese national salvation struggle. He took 500 of his soldiers to the mountains and, after organizing the national salvation army, appointed Wu Yi-cheng as the forward area commander and started his resistance against the Japanese imperialist aggressor army.

Wang De-lin’s faithful subordinates Wu Yi-cheng, Shi Zhong-heng, Chai Shi-rong and Kong Xian-yong, operating in the Luozigou area, contained the enemy in Jiandao and, in later years, established blood-sealed ties with our guerrilla army.

In the mountainous areas of south Manchuria the Self-Defence Army led by Tang Ju-wu was operating, and in Heilongjiang Province, Ma Zhan-shan’s unit was resisting against the Japanese army which was advancing northwards. The unit of Commander Yu under the command of Wu Yi-cheng crowded into the backwoods around Antu. This unit was extremely reckless.

They all regarded the Korean communists as stooges of the Japanese imperialists and the Korean people as having guided the Japanese army of aggression into Manchuria. They were prejudiced against the Korean people partly because the Japanese imperialists continued to drive a wedge between the Chinese and Korean peoples, and partly because the bad impression the Chinese people had received of the Korean people from the May 30 Uprising and the Wanbaoshan incident was still vivid in their memory.

The die-hard upper stratum of the national salvation army lacked political judgement and insight with which to understand that both the Korean and Chinese nations were suffering the same disaster and

misfortune because of the Japanese imperialist aggressors, that the Korean people could not be the cat's paws of the Japanese just as the Chinese people could not, and that the Korean people could not be the enemy of the Chinese people just as the Chinese people could not be the enemy of the Korean people. They were blindly hostile to communism because they came mostly from the propertied class. They concocted their own equation that the Korean people were communists, communists were factionalists, and factionalists were the running dogs of the Japanese imperialists and, based on this equation, persecuted and ruthlessly killed young Korean people.

In the cities and lowlands the Japanese troops of aggression were running wild, and in the rural and mountainous areas which had not yet been occupied by the Japanese army tens of thousands of Chinese nationalist soldiers occupied vantage points to bottle us up. Their hostile acts were a serious obstacle threatening the very existence of our young guerrilla army.

Since the Japanese imperialists, the Chinese mountain rebels and the Korean Independence Army were all opposed to the Korean communists, we had seemed to have the world against us.

Without improving our relations with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units, it was impossible for our guerrilla army to survive and operate as a legitimate force. And without making itself legitimate it was impossible for it to increase its ranks and operate in daylight.

As our organized unit was not legitimate, we were as good as confined in a back room. In such circumstances it was impossible to see the light. We merely lamented, saying, "How can we fight the Japanese by fumbling with Mauser rifles in civilian clothes in the back rooms of others' houses?" Worse still, we could hide only in Korean settlements; we could not go to other places and had to move about in groups surreptitiously and only by night.

That was why we called the guerrilla army a secret guerrilla army in its early days.

In those days we had to keep away from not only the Japanese army but also the remnants of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese

units and the army of Manchuria; we also had to guard against some of the Korean nationalists and reactionary elements. As we were fired at and persecuted in public on the ground that we were communists, we really had a headache. The same was the situation in Yanji, Helong, Wangqing, and Hunchun.

Nevertheless, we could not stay only at the houses of communists. As they were living in poverty, they would become even worse off if we stayed in dozens at their houses, eating their grain; this, too, was a problem.

If things were to improve and if we were to fight in high spirits, it was imperative for us to make the guerrilla army legitimate so that we could march in broad daylight, singing, welcomed by the masses and conducting information work. It was painful for us not to be able to do so.

Whenever we got together, we discussed over and over again how we should make our guerrilla army legitimate and how we should improve our relations with the Chinese nationalist army. The most serious issue was whether it was right to join hands with the nationalists of China. Several comrades doubted the validity of an alliance with them, considering that it would mean giving up our class principles and compromising with them, given the fact that their upper stratum came from the propertied class and that their army represented the interests of landlords, capitalists and bureaucrats. These comrades insisted that, even though we might improve our relations with them on a temporary basis, we could never enter into an alliance with them, and that we should overcome their hostile acts by force of arms.

This was an extremely dangerous opinion. We maintained that we should not only improve our relations with them but also form a united front with them because we firmly believed that these units, in spite of their various limitations, could become our strategic ally in the anti-Japanese war as we shared common fighting objectives and a similar situation. The question on an allied front of two armed forces with conflicting ideologies and ideals was extremely controversial

when it was raised for the first time in those days.

Forming a common front with those units was also a serious question facing the Communist Party of China. From the early days its east Manchuria special district committee had been interested in Wang De-lin's unit and sent seven or eight excellent communists there to conduct work with the unit. We sent Ri Kwang and some other Korean communists to the national salvation army units. On several occasions I received through liaison officers reports on the painstaking efforts of Ri Kwang, who had been sent to Tong Shan-hao's unit.

As their hostile acts became more and more outrageous, our comrades said that the allied front was an idle fancy and that we should return fire and avenge the people who had been killed by them. I made a lot of effort to restrain them. Making them our enemy and paying them back was inconsistent with our great anti-Japanese cause and moral duty and was imprudent enough to invite the destruction of our young guerrilla army.

The communists and guerrillas not only in Jiandao but also in the whole of Manchuria racked their brains over the Chinese nationalist armed units. The guerrilla units in the various counties at that time were small in size; there were only a few dozen guerrillas in each county. They were in danger of being annihilated if captured by the Chinese nationalist units, so they could not expand their ranks even if they wanted to.

In the light of this I wondered if it would not be a good idea for our guerrillas to join Commander Yu's unit and operate as a special detachment of it for a period. I presumed that if we joined Commander Yu's unit, we would be safe under the flag of the Chinese national salvation army and could obtain some weapons and, that if we had a proper influence on them, we could make the soldiers communists and reliable allies. I put this idea to my comrades to be debated.

We had a day-long meeting on this question at Kim Jong Ryong's house in Xiaoshahe, where the headquarters of the party organization

was situated. It is now called the Xiaoshaha Meeting. The atmosphere at the meeting was very heated. We debated from morning till late at night until our throats were sore on the question of whether it was possible and favourable for us to operate as a special detachment of the Chinese national salvation army. Not only the heavy smokers but also those who were non-smokers puffed hand-rolled cigarettes continually. I still remember how my eyes smarted in the oppressive atmosphere. I was a non-smoker.

Finally my idea gained the support of my comrades. The meeting decided to dispatch a delegate to Commander Yu's unit to negotiate with the Chinese national salvation army unit, and I was singled out as the most suitable person for the job. To be more precise, I volunteered, rather than being chosen by my comrades.

None of us had any experience of military diplomacy. So the question of who should go on the mission was taken very seriously. None of us was sure whether or not the Chinese would agree, whether or not they would baffle us by making preposterous proposals at the negotiations or whether or not they would shoot our delegate if the worst came to the worst. We were all of the opinion that someone who was prepared for all these eventualities should go.

But none of us was right for the task. An elderly man was needed to deal with Commander Yu and we had Pak Hun, Kim Il Ryong and Hu Jin-min as such. Kim Il Ryong was more than 10 years older than me, but he did not speak Chinese well. The rest of us were between eighteen and twenty years old and had, like Cao Ya-fan, recently left school.

I suggested that I should go, but they objected. They said that I, their commander, must not risk myself when Commander Yu might kill me because I was a communist, and that any of the Chinese comrades, Chen Han-zhang, Cao Ya-fan or Hu Jin-min who was diplomatic should be sent.

When I asked them why Commander Yu would kill me, they said, "How do you know he won't kill you? If they curse you as a '*gaolibangzi*' (a Chinese derogatory term for the Koreans-Tr.) and

shoot you when you are there, that'll be the end of you. They kill anyone, so why shouldn't they kill you? They say that the Chinese are more vigilant against young Koreans nowadays after the incident of the Guan Corps in Wangqing. So you must not go."

The secret guerrilla army in Wangqing led by Comrade Ri Kwang had disarmed a national salvation army unit called the Guan Corps. This was known as the Guan Corps incident. This incident further aggravated our relations with the Chinese units and created a more unfavourable situation for the activities of our guerrilla army. A messenger from Wangqing reported that, after the incident, the Chinese soldiers in his area had captured several of our guerrillas as retaliation and killed them. It was around this time that Comrade Kim Chaek had been arrested by the Chinese mountain rebels in north Manchuria and had only narrowly escaped execution.

Nevertheless, I insisted on my going to negotiate. I did not insist because I would be more skilful than others in dealing with them or because I had any particular means to force Commander Yu to yield. It was a brutal fact that the existence of our guerrilla army depended on negotiating successfully with Commander Yu, that the success of our activities depended on improving our relations with the national salvation army, and that without making them our allies, it would be impossible for us to go outdoors, let alone launch a guerrilla war in east Manchuria. I thought that unless we overcame the crisis and started the armed struggle I, as a Korean man, would have no reason to live.

I persuaded my comrades by saying that a man who was afraid of death could not fight for the revolution, that I could speak fluent Chinese, that I had experienced many trials in the days of the youth movement, that I would be perfectly able to deal with Commander Yu and that, therefore, I must go. Then I left with Pak Hun, Chen Han-zhang, Hu Jin-min and another young Chinese man to negotiate with Commander Yu, without any guarantee for our personal safety.

The headquarters of Commander Yu's unit was situated in Liangjiangkou. We promised to say that we were from Jilin, not from

Antu, when asked by the unit's soldiers where we were from. It was not to our advantage to name the place in east Manchuria where our guerrilla army was stationed.

On our way to Dashahe we came across Commander Yu's unit. Hundreds of soldiers were marching in a stately manner, carrying a standard on which was written "Commander Yu," as in the *Three Warring Kingdoms*. As they had already defeated the Japanese army at Nanhutou and even captured some machine guns, their reputation was running high.

"Why don't we try to avoid them?" Hu asked me, with an uneasy look.

"No. Let's carry on," I said, walking on. The other four kept in step with mine, walking at my side. The moment they saw us, the soldiers shouted, "*Gaolibangzi*, come on!" They tried to arrest us there and then. I asked them in Chinese why they were arresting us who were fighting against the Japanese as they were. They asked in return if we were not Koreans. I answered proudly that I was a Korean and, pointing at Chen and Hu, said that they were Chinese.

"We are going to see your commander to discuss something urgent with him. Take us to your commander," I said with dignity.

They cowered and told us to follow them. After we had followed them for a short distance, a man in the uniform of an officer of the former Northeast Army ordered the men to take lunch, and detained us in a farmhouse. To my surprise Liu Ben-cao, a teacher of mine at Jilin Yuwen Middle School, entered the house. He had taught Chinese at Yuwen Middle School for a while and later at Wenguang Middle School and Dunhua Middle School. He had been on friendly terms with Mr. Shang Yue and knew Chen Han-zhang well. As he had been good-natured and had a wide knowledge, and moreover introduced many excellent books and enjoyed reading to the students the good poems he had written, we had admired him and respected him highly.

As soon as we recognized him, Chen and I hailed him. In that adverse situation, we were delighted to see him.

Without concealing his delight and surprise, he asked us one question after another, “Why are you here, Kim Song Ju? What have you come here for? Where were you going and why are you being detained?”

After I had given him a short explanation, he ordered the men in a loud voice, “Be polite to these people. I will take my lunch here with them. Serve us a good lunch.” Later I learned that he had given up teaching when the Japanese army invaded Manchuria, and had joined Commander Yu’s unit. He was chief of staff of that unit.

While having lunch with us, Liu said that he had put on the military uniform because he could not bear to see the country being ruined, but it was extremely difficult for him to fight alongside ignorant soldiers. He then asked us to work with him. We agreed and asked him to help us to see Commander Yu. He replied that the commander was on his way to the Antu county town from Liangjiangkou and that we could see him if we followed him.

“Sir, we would like to organize an armed unit of Koreans,” I said. “As you know we Koreans hate the Japanese imperialists more bitterly than the Chinese do. So why are the Chinese nationalist soldiers against the Koreans’ fighting the Japanese? Why do they persecute Koreans and kill them?”

“I know! I tell them not to do it, but they won’t listen to me. These ignoramuses do not even know what kind of people communists are. What is wrong with the communists fighting against the Japanese imperialists?”

Liu Ben-cao was indignant, too. I was inwardly pleased that now we seemed to have found a way out. I sent Pak Hun immediately to Xiaoshahe to inform the comrades there that we were safe and that it seemed possible that we would make the guerrilla army legitimate as the chief of staff of Commander Yu’s unit was giving us his full backing.

After lunch we followed Liu Ben-cao to the Antu county town. Liu had a horse of his own. We told him to ride on the horse, but he replied, “How can I ride on a horse while you are walking? Let’s talk

while walking together.”

He walked with us all the way to the county town. Most of the soldiers were wearing arm-bands with “*Bupasi Buraomin*,” written on them, meaning that they should not be afraid of death nor should they harm the people. Unlike the nasty attitude of the soldiers, their maxim was very sound and militant. The maxim gave me a ray of hope that my interview with Commander Yu would be a success.

Thanks to the good offices of Mr. Liu, that day we met Commander Yu without difficulty. He received us with courtesy and accorded us hospitality probably for the sake of the dignity of the chief of staff, or probably out of his desire to take us into his unit, for he had made secret inquiries about us and learned that we, having been educated at middle school, were capable of making speeches, writing declarations and handling weapons, in addition to being in the prime of our youth.

As I had guessed, Commander Yu asked us to join his unit. He asked me to work as chief of the information squad under the headquarters. I was extremely embarrassed, for my intention was to form our own army and make it legitimate. If I declined, it would surely incur Commander Yu’s displeasure and place Liu Ben-cao in an awkward situation.

I thought: Things are developing in a strange way, but fortune might smile on me if I win his confidence. I accepted his offer saying, “Thank you, commander, I will do as you have asked.”

Commander Yu was delighted. He ordered his subordinate to write a notice of my appointment immediately. Thus I became chief of the information squad of the headquarters. Hu Jin-min was appointed an assistant staff officer and Chen Han-zhang, a secretary. This was a ridiculous development, and not something we had desired, but it was a step up the ladder we had to climb. To tell the truth, these absurd appointments proved valuable in making the guerrilla army legitimate.

In my mind I cried, “Bravo!” comparing our situation in which we had been confined in the back rooms of others’ houses to the present

situation in which we had penetrated deep into the heart of Commander Yu's unit.

That evening an unexpected event occurred. The soldiers of the unit had arrested 70 or 80 young Korean men on their way from Yanji to Fuerhe and brought them to the county town. I saw them at a distance with indignation and shock, and then hurried to Mr. Liu and said:

"Here's a pretty state of affairs, sir. Your soldiers have again arrested dozens of Koreans. What sort of pro-Japanese can there be among them? There is no pro-Japanese. We should deal with any cat's paw after an examination, shouldn't we?"

He said, "Go and handle the matter, Song Ju. We trust you."

"I can't do it alone, sir. Please come with me. You were a good orator, weren't you? If you make a speech, even a stooge of the Japanese will be moved. We should teach them to fight against the Japanese. What's the good of killing people who are not pro-Japanese?"

"You are good at speaking, so there's no need for me to speak. You go alone."

He flatly refused, waving his hand.

As he said, I had made speeches on many occasions in my school days. Roving around such places as Jilin, Dunhua, Antu, Fusong and Changchun, I had delivered many speeches denouncing the wild scheme of the Japanese imperialists to invade Manchuria and calling for the unity of the Korean and Chinese peoples. Mr. Liu knew this well.

"If I speak in Korean how will the officers of your unit understand what I am saying? They may think that I am conducting information work against them."

Again he waved his hand and urged me to go.

"At most you will conduct communist information work. That's all right. I will vouch for you, so please speak without any worry."

He knew that I was associated with the communist party and involved in the communist movement.

“Communist information work should be conducted whenever necessary. It isn’t bad to conduct it, is it?”

If we had not been on intimate terms with each other, I would not have dared say this to Mr. Liu. If they regarded me as a communist and pro-Japanese and tried to kill me, I could do nothing. But no such thing happened because of our special relationship. He and I had been open with each other since our days at Yuwen Middle School. When I had been attending school in Jilin, he had looked after me.

As I was talking to Liu Ben-cao, Commander Yu entered the office. Looking outside, he remarked that his men seemed to have arrested some communists and, shaking his head, went on to say that he wondered when the communist party had produced so many members in Manchuria.

Then Liu Ben-cao, winking at me, said, “You, the information chief, go out quickly and talk with them. Not all Koreans can be communists and not all communists can be the cat’s paws of the Japanese imperialists.”

Commander Yu grew angry at his words and yelled, “What? Are the communists not the stooges of the Japanese? They have brought the Japanese to this land to rob us of our land by their revolt.”

Commander Yu’s prejudice against the Korean people was stronger and blinder than we had expected. His misunderstanding of communism was no less deep-rooted than his prejudice. I decided to make every effort to persuade him. With determination, I dared to ask him:

“Excuse me, sir, but how do you know that communists are bad? Did you learn it from books or did you hear it from others? If not, why do you call them evil?”

“Damn the books! I learned it from what other people told me. Anyone who has a mouth says that communists are bad. That is why I believe they are bad.”

I felt aghast at his words, yet relieved, for I thought I would be perfectly able to dispel his misunderstanding, which was not based on personal experience but on hearsay.

“How can you carry out a great undertaking if you believe what other people say blindly apart from your own experience?”

As Chen Han-zhang and Hu Jin-min were communists and his chief of staff was supporting us, Commander Yu was surrounded. Thinking this a golden opportunity, I continued:

“What is the use of killing precious youngsters at will? What about giving them spears, even if not guns right away, and using them as a shock force? In that way we can test them to see if they fight the Japanese bravely. If they fight well, can we expect anything more from them? It is too much to kill them for no reason.”

After thinking for a while, he said, “That’s right. Go and deal with them.”

I went to the arrested young men and secretly circulated a slip of paper among them. The slip said: “As there is no material evidence, never say you are communists; tell them you picked up by chance the handbill reading, ‘Appeal to the Anti-Japanese Soldiers’ they have found on you.” The young men did not know from whom the slip came.

When I appeared they shot angry glances at me. They seemed to suspect that I was a henchman of Commander Yu. Seeing their hostile glances I asked, “Has any of you ever heard the name Kim Song Ju?”

This question dispelled the tension and they began to murmur. Some answered yes and some no.

“I am Kim Song Ju. I am now working as chief of the information squad in Commander Yu’s unit. The commander has just given me the order to ask you whether you would like to join his unit and fight together with him. Those who are willing to do so, please speak up.”

All the young men answered in chorus, “We will!”

I informed Commander Yu of what the young men had said; then I asked him to admit them to his unit and get them to fight the Japanese. He agreed readily with my proposal. In this way the young men’s fate and future was decided as we desired, and we were in a better position to achieve an allied front against the Japanese.

When we thus were on the threshold of making our guerrilla army legitimate, a Korean adviser to Commander Yu who was pulling the wires behind the scenes raised a fuss. A veteran nationalist belonging to the group of Kim Jwa Jin, he had been farming in Nanhutou before joining the national salvation army after the September 18 incident. As he was clever and had a wide knowledge, he enjoyed the deep trust of Commander Yu. It was he who had been instigating Commander Yu to persecute the communists. He claimed that admitting those 70 or 80 people without examination was rash, and that there might be pro-Japanese elements among them. Without forestalling him, our activities might be confronted with another great difficulty.

One day I asked Commander Yu casually, "I have heard that there is a Korean in your unit. Why do you hide him from me?"

He wondered why I had not yet met him, and ordered one of his men to bring him to me.

I found the man to be very tall and sturdy. I introduced myself, and then said, "I am glad to see you. As you are old and probably experienced, please help us young novices as much as you can."

He introduced himself to me. He said he had heard that a young Korean man who spoke fluent Chinese had come to the headquarters and was assisting Commander Yu as the chief of the information squad, and that he, as a Korean, had been very glad at the news.

Because he was speaking about the nation, presenting himself as a Korean, I took the opportunity to scold him:

"If so, you should enlist many people who are willing to fight against the Japanese. Why are you killing so many of them? Is it right to kill them because their ideology is different from yours? It is pitiful for Koreans not to be able to live in their homeland and it is all the more pitiful for them to be killed by the national salvation army in Manchuria. You ought to ensure that they unite, irrespective of their ideology, be they communists or nationalists, and fight against the Japanese; what is the good of ostracizing and killing them?"

He said I was right and gave me a meaningful look. Thus the second barrier was removed. Commander Yu smiled as he saw our conversation ending in a friendly atmosphere.

I asked the commander if he would trust me and allow me to be relieved of the command of the information squad by Hu Jin-min and to form and lead a unit of Koreans.

Liu Ben-cao supported me, saying that my proposal was reasonable. Commander Yu asked me how we would obtain weapons for the proposed unit.

I replied, "Never mind the weapons. We will not ask you for them. We will arm the unit by capturing weapons from the enemy."

The commander was extremely satisfied with my answer.

"Then you may form a unit. But what if you turn your guns against us?"

"Don't worry about that, we will never be guilty of such a betrayal. Should we turn our guns against you, your large army will be able to destroy us greenhorns, won't it?"

Waving his hand and laughing boisterously, he asked me if I had taken his joke seriously.

Afraid that he might get angry if I began by asking him for his permission to break away from the national salvation army, I asked him as the commander to name the unit.

Liu Ben-cao who was standing beside us said, "So, call it a special detachment. What about a special detachment of Koreans?"

Commander Yu and I agreed with Liu's suggestion.

The preparations for making the secret guerrilla army legitimate came to a successful conclusion with the birth of the special detachment. We enlisted in this detachment secret guerrillas from Antu and the 70-80 young men who had been detained by Commander Yu's unit, making the guerrilla army legitimate.

I left the commander's room, taking the hands of Chen Han-zhang and Hu Jin-min in mine. We shouted "We're won!" "Success!" and we walked round the walled town all that night. Hu offered me a cigarette, saying that it would be a good experience to get drunk on

alcohol or on cigarette smoke if there was no alcohol on that happy day.

I put a cigarette between my lips for the first time in my life and inhaled the smoke but, choking, I coughed for a good while. We all laughed. Hu even said, jokingly, “How can you become the commander of the guerrilla army when you cannot even inhale cigarette smoke?”

I returned to Xiaoshahe, and when I told them about the success of the negotiations, the comrades, who had been staying in a back room, carried me on their shoulders, crowding out of the room. The three cheers they raised reverberated throughout the village.

Kim Il Ryong, a celebrated singer, sang *Arirang*. It was strange to see him, a steel-like man, singing such a sorrowful song on that festive day when he should have sung a merry, lively waltz or a vigorous march.

Kim Chol (alias Kim Chol Hui) asked him, shaking him by the arm, “Brother Il Ryong, why are you singing such a song on this happy day?”

“I don’t know. *Arirang* just came out of my mouth. Yet, we have passed through many crises, haven’t we?”

Kim Il Ryong finished singing and glanced at Kim Chol, with tears in his eyes.

What he said made me muse over the trials we had overcome to greet that day. Kim Il Ryong himself was the epitome of all these trials. He had lived through the nationalist movement as an Independence Army soldier, and also through the communist movement. He had lived in Korea, Manchuria and in the Maritime Province of Siberia. His very life was a continuation of suffering, lamentation and tears.

*Arirang* was a musical interpretation of his life. At a historic juncture when he could laugh off all his sorrows and jump from setback to offensive, he sang the song to sum up his tortuous past and announce a fresh start in a jubilant mood.

If we had not met Liu Ben-cao on our way, what would have

happened to us and to the destiny of the guerrilla army? With this thought I express my silent gratitude to him, who has now passed away.

Liu Ben-cao was happier than anyone else at the success of our negotiations with Commander Yu. When I left the town, he followed me a long way from the military camp and said in excitement that now that we were friends, friendly forces, we should destroy the Japanese imperialist aggressors together. When I heard of his death, I mourned, remembering the eventful days at Yuwen Middle School and in the walled town of Antu where we had held the negotiations.

Thanks to the successful negotiations with Commander Yu we were able to make our guerrilla army legitimate and have an ally in the war of resistance against the Japanese imperialists. The success also gave us the belief that in the great, patriotic cause we would be able to form a united front with the nationalists of another country who had a different ideology and different ideals.

This belief, I think, has had a great influence on my political career of more than half a century since then. Whenever I encountered officials who were prejudiced or hesitant in dealing with the matter of winning over the nationalists with a different ideology and different ideals and people with chequered records from the propertied classes, I would tell them about the experience I had gained in the negotiations with Commander Yu and persuaded them to be magnanimous.

Back in Xiaoshaha I sent detailed information of our negotiations with Commander Yu and the resultant formation of the special detachment of Koreans to Ri Kwang who had been struggling with the problem of working with the national salvation army unit in the Wangqing area, and gave him the assignment of forming without delay another special detachment in Wangqing, in view of our experience in Antu.

Ri Kwang had been working underground until then. I sent one of my companies to him so that he could form a special detachment there and emerge from underground to conduct legitimate operations.

The special detachments were formed of Koreans. Of Korean units only my unit and Ri Kwang's unit conducted legitimate activities in relation with the national salvation army.

The naming of the special detachment at that time was, so to speak, a tactical measure to ensure the legitimate activities of our guerrilla army, improve our relations with the Chinese nationalist units and form an anti-Japanese allied front with them.

After forming the special detachment we pushed ahead with preparations for expanding and reorganizing it into the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army as soon as possible.

The organizational structure was established after a wide-ranging discussion. Some comrades were very apprehensive of the small number of people of working-class origin in the guerrilla army. An investigation into those 100 men applying to join showed that most of them were students or peasants. Alarmed at this fact, some of my comrades said that if the army was composed mainly of such people, it would mean violating Marxist-Leninist principles for forming a revolutionary army, and that it might be a factor leading to the degeneration of the revolutionary army.

I explained to them that, although the general principle of Marxist-Leninist military science regarded the industrial working class as the main component of a revolutionary army, there was no need to apply this principle mechanically. Although the industrial working class was relatively small in our country, with peasants accounting for the overwhelming majority of the population, I said, we could not postpone the formation of the guerrilla army until the number of workers had increased. I told them that the peasants and students in our country had as high a revolutionary spirit and as strong a national spirit as the working class, that it would be good if people from different backgrounds fought with the ideology of the working class, and that the preponderance of peasants and students in the revolutionary army would not cause the army to degenerate.

In establishing a command system we did not regard the existing formula as absolute. We defined the organizational structure in such a

way as to increase the combat strength to the maximum and to keep the number of commanding officers to the minimum to suit the characteristics of guerrilla warfare. In short, we made the command system as simple as possible. We did not maintain a supply department or a supply officer. We ensured that everyone was able to cook, launder, fight and, if necessary, conduct political activities.

How much useful information we would have received if we had such a book as *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz at that time! In those days we had no more than the basic military knowledge that the triangular system of military organization had been created by Napoleon. We knew of Clausewitz only by name. I obtained his work *On War* for the first time during the Second World War. His principle that the command system should be simplified so as to increase combat strength sounded reasonable to me.

The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was formed with the company as the basic combat unit. I was elected commander and concurrently political commissar.

Uniforms for the army were made from cloth dyed green in water and boiled oak-tree bark. A five-pointed piece of red cloth inscribed with the company number was worn on the left breast of the tunic. We were to wear caps with a red star insignia and white leggings. Our hearts swelled as we prepared the design of the uniform, the finishing touch to the formation of the guerrilla army.

The members of the Women's Association began to make the uniforms according to our design. My mother, even though she was suffering from her recurrent illness, cut the cloth or handled a sewing machine with all her heart with the other members of the Women's Association.

In the second half of April 1932, we held a meeting to finalize the preparations for the formation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army in Antu. The meeting discussed the date and place of the inauguration of the guerrilla army along with the final screening of the applicants, defined the area of its immediate activities and adopted general measures related with the activities of the guerrilla army.

After the meeting the recruits assembled at Liujiafenfang (Polchatun), at the entrance to Sandaobaihe and then proceeded to Xiaoshahe. The recruits numbered more than 100; those whose names I still remember are Cha Kwang Su, Pak Hun, Kim Il Ryong (from Xiaoshahe), Jo Tok Hwa (from Xiaoshahe), “pockmark” (a nickname, from Xiaoshahe), Jo Myong Hwa (from Xiaoshahe), Ri Myong Su (from Xiaoshahe), Kim Chol (alias Kim Chol Hui, from Xinglongcun), Kim Pong Gu (from Xinglongcun), Ri Yong Bae (from Xinglongcun), a Kwak (from Xinglongcun), Ri Pong Gu (from Sanrenfang), Pang In Hyon (from Sanrenfang), Kim Jong Hwan, Ri Hak Yong (from Korea), Kim Tong Jin (from Korea), Pak Myong Son (from Yanji), An Thae Bom (from Yanji) and Han Chang Hun (from south Manchuria).

On the morning of April 25, 1932, we held the founding ceremony of the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army on the tableland at Tuqidian. The guerrillas, dressed in their new uniforms and with their guns on their shoulders, lined up in unit order in the clearing on the tableland surrounded by larch trees, and the people from Xiaoshahe and Xinglongcun were buzzing, as they stood in a group at one edge of the clearing.

When looking at the fresh, sturdy soldiers, my mind was flooded with surging memories. How many miles our comrades had walked, how many meetings they had held, how many speeches they had delivered, how many rugged mountains they had trekked, and how many comrades had laid down their lives in the course of forming this armed force! The Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army was a priceless creation of our revolution, born of superhuman efforts, a bloody struggle and sacrifice.

Feeling an irresistible urge to summon all the comrades and people who had sacrificed themselves for this day to this tableland at Tuqidian, I made a speech, with strong emotion bursting out of my heart.

As I proclaimed the founding of the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army, the soldiers cheered at the top of their voices and the

people applauded them enthusiastically.

On May Day, the militant holiday of the working class of the whole world, the AJPGA entered the county town of Antu with the red flag flying in the van and marched in parade, while blowing trumpets and beating drums. Kim Il Ryong, who had been appointed an officer of the guerrilla army, led the chorus of the march that day. Not only the citizens but also the officers and men of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units crowded out to the streets and extended a welcome to us with their thumbs up, applauding us to congratulate us.

When we returned to Tuqidian after the parade, Cha Kwang Su and Kim Il Ryong hurried to my house and fetched my bed-ridden mother. Her face did not look well, with wrinkles between her eyebrows and with grey hairs on her head; but her eyes were smiling a quiet smile. She walked to Ri Yong Bae and stroked his rifle, cartridge belt and five-pointed star. Then she proceeded to Kim Chol, Jo Tok Hwa, Kim Il Ryong, Pang In Hyon and Cha Kwang Su, stroking this or that rifle and patting one man's shoulder, and then another's. Before long, her eyes were moist. She said:

“I am proud of you. Now we have our own army! That's what we needed. You must destroy the Japanese and win back the country without fail.”

Her voice was thick. Forgetting her devotion to us, she was apparently thinking of the painstaking efforts of my father and other patriotic fighters who had passed away, praying for the liberation of the motherland.

Later guerrilla units were formed in Yanji, Wangqing, Hunchun, Helong and other parts of east Manchuria. Guerrilla units were also formed in north and south Manchuria by such staunch Korean communists as Kim Chaek, Choe Yong Gon, Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang, and began to fight the enemy.

The spring of 1932 advanced with the rumbling of the gunfire of the great war against the Japanese imperialists.

## **CHAPTER 6. THE YEAR OF TRIALS**

*(May 1932–February 1933)*

### **1. To South Manchuria**

Following the legitimization of the guerrilla units and the formal founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, our comrades discussed how it should start its activities.

After parading in the walled town we returned to Xiaoshahe, and billeted the troops on the villagers in groups of three or four. We let them rest for a few days and held discussions to decide upon the direction of the guerrilla army's activities. The process of these discussions was attended by a hot dispute, as had been the case in Kalun and Mingyuegou.

Everyone had his own opinion.

Not only was everyone's view with regard to guerrilla warfare different but also their assertions and expositions of tactics for it varied. Our collective consisted of over 100 young people with varying standards of learning and different backgrounds who had previously belonged to different organizations. Therefore, it was natural that their intentions and beliefs should be varied.

Their beliefs can largely be divided into three categories.

The first category was the theory of small groups. The advocates of this theory insisted that many small and mobile armed groups should be formed and the enemy defeated through a war of attrition instead of following the stereotyped method of forming such units as the company, battalion, regiment and division. They were of the

opinion that if the strength of the guerrilla army was divided into small groups of three or five and tens and hundreds of groups conducted operations in many places in accordance with the unified strategy of the general staff, it would be quite possible to bring the Japanese imperialists to their knees.

The advocates of this theory claimed that guerrilla warfare with small armed groups as the basic unit might mark the creation of a new form of the national liberation struggle in colonial countries.

Many advocates of the small group theory were to be found among the young people from Dunhua and Yanji in particular. The young people in these two places were most influenced by Li Li-san's Left adventurist line. The evil aftereffects of this were still evident in their way of thinking.

Cha Kwang Su harshly criticized this theory of small armed groups as modern Blanquism. I was of the same opinion as Cha Kwang Su.

The essence of the theory of small armed groups was that groups of several people would roam around avoiding a full-scale armed confrontation by large units because the military strength of the Japanese imperialists was enormous, and throw bombs at enemy leaders, set fire to their ruling installations and deal heavy blows to pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation, as Ra Sok Ju and Kang U Gyu had done.

The theory of small armed groups was a type of terrorism disguised as guerrilla warfare.

If we did as they maintained, we would virtually be abandoning guerrilla warfare in large units. This would represent a retreat. We could not tolerate a retreat.

Before and after the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, two noteworthy incidents took place in Japan and China perpetrated by our country's patriots. One of them was the heroic deed of martyr Ri Pong Chang who threw a bomb at the Japanese Emperor's carriage outside the Sakurada Gate of the royal palace in Tokyo; another was the incident involving patriot Yun Pong

Gil's throwing of a bomb in Hongkou Park in Shanghai on April 29 that year. Ri Pong Chang failed to achieve his aim of assassinating the Emperor because the bomb did not hit the mark. However, Yun Pong Gil succeeded in killing General Shirakawa, commander of Japanese forces in Shanghai, Murai, consul general in Shanghai, and Kawahashi, the leader of the Japanese residents. He also inflicted severe injuries upon many key military and political figures who had gathered in the park to celebrate the Emperor's birthday, such as the resident minister to China, the commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> division and an admiral. By doing so he caused a great sensation at home and abroad.

On January 9, 1932, the day after Ri Pong Chang was arrested for throwing a bomb at the Emperor's procession, *Guominribao*, organ of the Kuomintang in China, carried in special type an article entitled "Korean Ri Pong Chang Attempts to Assassinate Japanese Emperor, but Sadly Fails." Many other newspapers gave wide publicity to the heroic deed of Ri Pong Chang. The report made such an impact that Japanese soldiers and policemen in the field even raided the office of the newspaper *Guominribao* and destroyed it. All the newspapers that had expressed their regret for the failure were closed.

All the Korean and Chinese peoples highly praised the brave deed of Yun Pong Gil. After the incident in Hongkou Park prominent figures from Chinese public circles asked for an interview with Kim Ku who had organized and instigated the incident. Even the bosses of the Chinese Kuomintang-led reactionary government who were capitulating to Japan's aggression, promised to cooperate economically with the Koreans in China, moved by the great spirit of resistance and heroism of the Korean nation.

Both Ri Pong Chang and Yun Pong Gil were subordinates of Kim Ku and members of the Group of Korean Patriots which was superintended by him. This group's basic method in the anti-Japanese struggle was terror.

Following the heroic deeds of Ri Pong Chang and Yun Pong Gil, an incident occurred in Dalian in which some members of the Patriotic Group sent by Kim Ku were arrested on the charge of

attempting to assassinate the commander of the Kwantung Army. They had intended to assassinate the commander of the Kwantung Army, the president of the Manchurian Railway Company and the newly appointed chief of foreign affairs, taking advantage of the moment when key figures in Japanese military and political circles were coming to the station for the arrival in Dalian from Fengtian of the Lytton-led fact-finding commission of the League of Nations. Kim Ku even wanted to send his subordinates to finish off the governor-general in Korea.

Terrorism dazzled many Korean young people who were burning with hatred for the enemy at a time when An Jung Gun who had shot Ito Hirobumi to death was praised as a national hero and when all our compatriots dispersed on the American continent, in the Maritime Province of Siberia and in Manchuria, not to mention the people at home, were inspired by the heroic deeds of Ri Pong Chang and Yun Pong Gil. So it was not at all strange that at this time the theory of small armed groups should come to the fore and be brought up for discussion when we were discussing the direction of the activities of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. The advocates of the theory of small armed groups were emphatic in asserting that the stronghold of Japanese imperialist rule would be shaken if such heroic deeds as that of Yun Pong Gil took place in succession in all parts of Korea, Japan and China.

The second category was made up of those who recommended that we should go over to a full-scale armed offensive immediately. While such people as Kim Il Ryong were interested in the theory of small armed groups, Pak Hun, Kim Chol (Kim Chol Hui) and the like supported the theory of a prompt armed confrontation. I could to some extent understand it when Pak Hun, who had seen tens of thousands of the soldiers of the regular army and rioters thronging a big city, insisted on starting an immediate full-scale armed attack, not satisfied with the theory of small armed groups. However, when Kim Chol, who was married, and living in his wife's parents' home, spoke with fervour, which was unusual for that mild man, claiming that we

should operate immediately on a large scale, I found it strange.

All those who insisted upon going over to full-scale armed attacks had some grounds for their argument. Through the September 18 incident Japan had easily achieved her aim of occupying Manchuria and seized Shanghai and many other strategic points in China proper. A new puppet state called Manchukuo was established in the three eastern provinces. What was her next target? It was China proper and the Soviet Union. It was as clear as daylight that, although the Japanese army was slowing down its speed of attack as it watched the trend in the situation, it would invade China and the Soviet Union on some pretext or other. Therefore, starting full-scale military operations with the existing armed units would mean attacking from behind the Japanese imperialists who were deep in the mire of war. For us guerrillas to adopt a positive attacking posture was the law of history, so went their argument.

Kim Il Ryong rejected this extreme assertion and quoted the brief proverb "Cut one's coat according to one's cloth." This theory was thoughtless and subjective and did not take into consideration the preparedness of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army.

Needless to say, the line of the armed struggle we had advanced in Kalun was one which envisaged a full-scale armed confrontation with the Japanese imperialists. Without doubt the main aspect of the anti-Japanese armed struggle would be an organized and full-scale armed confrontation. However, it would be tantamount to committing suicide for a guerrilla army which had only just made a start to follow such a road from the beginning without making any preparations.

There was another category besides these two. It was the theory of prudence which put forward the principle that one would be ever-victorious if one knew the enemy and oneself and that one would always be defeated if one did not know either the enemy or oneself.

This is what the advocates of the theory of prudence said: "Our enemy is strong. How are we? We are no more than a young bud in both numbers and quality. Without doubt in the future we shall be enormously powerful. However, now we must steadily foster our

strength quantitatively and qualitatively at the same time as conducting secret activities. Because our struggle will assume a protracted nature, we must accumulate our strength and beat the enemy at a stroke, taking advantage of a time when they are weak.”

This view was censured as very lukewarm and vague, as no one could guess when such a time would come.

This time in Xiaoshahe was not the first time we had had such an argument. We had had a similar argument when we were forming the Revolutionary Army in Guyushu; we had also had such an argument when we confirmed the line of the armed struggle in Kalun and also when we adopted in Mingyuegou the resolution on waging an organized guerrilla war. Therefore, those who had not been leading an organizational life with us for long could not understand our intention fully. The fact that various opinions were expressed in the revolutionary ranks with regard to an important line was a good example of the incipient nature of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Our unit comprised people who had various occupations and different standards of learning, and who came from various places and organizations. Some of the young people were regularly reading such publications as *Dong-A Ilbo* and *Joson Ilbo* as well as the lecture texts for secondary schools. Others had been dreaming about transforming society after reading such novels as *A Boy Wanderer* by Jiang Guang-ci or *Abscondence* by Choe So Hae before joining the guerrilla army. Still others had no schooling at all. However, they had been training themselves politically for several years in such revolutionary organizations as the Red Guards and the Children's Vanguard. Then they got rifles and joined the armed ranks. Therefore, it was inevitable that there were differences in the levels of their understanding of things and phenomena.

This situation encouraged us to pay special attention to organizational and political work to ensure in our unit singleness of idea, identity of action and unity of practice. We decided that, as the first process in this, we should adopt, before anything else, the measures needed to ensure identity in the understanding of the

tactical principles of the guerrilla army and of our major strategic lines and that, unless we went through this process, the newly-born Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army might at the outset be in danger of meeting with disaster.

Walking around the village with Cha Kwang Su, I said the following to those who did not fully understand our tactical intention.

“The theory of small armed groups will repeat the same method as that of An Jung Gun. It is an illusion that the Japanese imperialists can be brought to submission through terror. Although Ito Hirobumi was killed, Japan's rule remains as ever; it has even established Manchukuo and is now stretching out its tentacles to China proper. There may be cases in which the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army needs to undertake small group activities, but the small group should not be the basic combat unit.

“The claim that we should immediately go over to full-scale armed attacks is also unrealistic. It is absurd to try to fight, with a unit of a little over 100 men, against the large Japanese army that is hundreds of thousands strong, meeting it head on. Thinking it possible to defeat a large army of hundreds of thousands by a charge of some 100 soldiers is very unrealistic. Comrades, don't underestimate the enemy, please.

“So, what should we do then? Let us wage a guerrilla war with the company as the basic unit for the time being. If we operate with a small group as a unit, we can do nothing big. If our unit increases in size in the future, we shall be able to operate by a larger unit, but for now it is best to conduct our operations with the company as a unit. You also know that we are not in a position to form large units immediately. The anti-Japanese war will not be a short war which will be over after a few battles. Therefore we must, after starting with a small force, continually accumulate and expand our military forces in the course of the war, and when the time comes, we should win the final victory through a decisive battle combined with a nationwide armed uprising. We should constantly ensure our strategic and tactical predominance over the enemy and defeat the Japanese

imperialists through an unceasing war of attrition. To this end we must, equipped with small arms and moving secretly, disperse the concentrated enemy soldiers and destroy the dispersed enemy troops one by one, avoid large enemy forces and swallow up small enemy forces. This is guerrilla warfare and here lies the advantage of guerrilla warfare. You advocates of the theory of prudence who maintain that we should not fight but only build up our forces furtively and defeat the enemy at a stroke after waiting for a favourable opportunity to do so, do you think that such a time will come of its own accord without a struggle and sacrifice, without bloodshed? You must remember that no one will present us with the opportunity to win our independence. We must win the opportunity by ourselves through a struggle.”

Thus I convinced the men of the wisdom of our decision.

Needless to say, not all the men understood me immediately. Some young people did not withdraw their opinions but stubbornly stood by them.

I thought that only a practical example would bring our heated argument to a close and decide on which side truth was. Thinking thus, I devoted my time to studying to decide the direction of the guerrilla army’s activities.

Our unit, which had started on the ambitious course of the anti-Japanese war, was confronted with the following tasks at that time. Firstly, we had to strengthen the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army in the course of a practical struggle. Secondly, we had to expand and strengthen our unit quickly in terms of its quality and quantity. Thirdly, we had to lay a solid mass foundation for the revolutionary army to rely on, and rally all sections of the masses around it.

We discovered a way to resolve these matters in an expedition to south Manchuria and set this to be our main strategy for the year 1932.

The armed unit which we formed in Antu had specific features that made it different from those formed in other counties and

districts. Whereas the guerrilla units in other counties were formed of people from the given counties, the guerrilla unit in Antu comprised vanguard elements selected from various counties in east and south Manchuria as well as farsighted people from the homeland. If the guerrilla units in other areas regarded it as a principle to carry out their operations by settling in their respective areas, our unit considered it to be its principle to operate in the area of Mt. Paektu and in all the areas along the Rivers Amnok and Tuman instead of confining the theatre of its activities to one or two places.

From the geographical point of view, Antu was very favourable for guerrilla warfare, but we could not remain only there. Our newly-created guerrilla unit had to advance into a vast area and, exposed to the elements, grow and take root among the people. While it was true that we had to guard against the practice of hastily leaning towards a struggle alone, we could not allow either the practice of idling away our time in one place, thinking only of preserving our forces.

An important reason why we chose the expedition as the initial step of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army lay precisely in this.

The main, immediate aim of the expedition to south Manchuria was to establish contact with the units of the Independence Army active along the River Amnok. The unit of the Independence Army under Commander Ryang Se Bong was stationed in the area of Tonghua in south Manchuria, and we intended to form a united front with it.

The Independence Army force under the command of Ryang Se Bong amounted to hundreds. The unit was known as the Korean Revolutionary Army.

At the time when the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was founded in Antu, Ryang Se Bong, in cooperation with Tang Ju-wu's self-defence army, was successfully defeating the Japanese army and the Manchukuo army. This news reached even the valley of Xiaoshahe, to our delight.

Pak Hun wondered if Ryang Se Bong would agree to collaborate

with communists because he was a nationalist from Kukmin-bu with a deep-seated anti-communist idea. But, I said that we should make every possible effort to achieve a united front with the unit of the Independence Army. I told him that, now that we had formed an allied front with the national salvation army of China, there was no reason for us people of one and the same blood not to combine our efforts when we had a common ambition to fight against the Japanese.

I considered that collaboration with Ryang Se Bong would prove successful also because I attached importance to our past friendly feelings and our personal relations; as someone who had been on extremely friendly terms with my father, Ryang Se Bong loved me very much. In my childhood I heard that Kim Si U and Ryang Se Bong became sworn brothers with my father in Huadian and even had their photograph taken with him. Commander Ryang and my father were very close. Had it not been for this relationship he would not have written a letter of introduction for me, a letter addressed to Hwasong Uisuk School, and would not have visited Yuwen Middle School and slipped money into my hand whenever he came to Jilin. In those days I was saving every penny, unable even to eat a Chinese pancake stuffed with sugar when everyone else was buying them, because of my difficulties in paying my school fees. So, I used the money which he gave me only when absolutely necessary.

After the Wangqingmen incident Ryang Se Bong and I became estranged because of my disillusionment over Kukmin-bu as a whole. However, I was no less grateful to him.

It was not by chance that, at the time when I was undecided what to do after founding the guerrilla army, the first thought that came to my mind was that I must visit Ryang Se Bong. It is true that in doing so I wanted to form a united front with him. However, no less was my desire to take the necessary advice and encouragement from him who had acquired combat experience over many years.

Commander Ryang Se Bong was a veteran of many battles when compared with us who were excited at making an expedition without

having gone through even a single battle. In the presence of those who were engaged in the national movement we had time and again expressed our resolve not to fight in the way the Independence Army did. This meant that we would not repeat the blunders of those who had not relied on the strength of the people, but it did not mean that we would ignore their military experience and technique.

When we witnessed the white terrorism committed by Kukmin-bu at Wangqingmen, we resolved with bitter tears not to deal with the old people of the Independence Army any more. But we decided not to consider their past faults when we shared the common noble work of liberating the country. If we took the past into account we would never be able to collaborate with them.

Besides Ryang Se Bong's unit, in south Manchuria there were anti-Japanese armed units led by such Korean communists as Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang. The guerrilla unit which Ri Hong Gwang formed in May 1932 was called the Panshi Worker-Peasant Volunteers. Later this unit was reformed into the South Manchurian Guerrilla Unit of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Army of the Chinese Worker-Peasant Red Army, and into the First Army of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army.

Ri Hong Gwang became famous partly because he commanded his unit skilfully by displaying remarkable resourcefulness and art of command, and also because such enemy publications as the newspaper of the Kwantung Army and the newspaper of Manchukuo reported him wrongly to be a "woman general."

That Ri Hong Gwang came to be called a "woman general" was associated with a comic story which caused everyone to smile. When he returned to his base after an assault on Dongxing, Ri Hong Gwang had a woman guerrilla under his command interrogate the prisoners of war. Before interrogating the captives the woman guerrilla introduced herself by saying, "I'm Ri Hong Gwang." Then she demanded that they state the disposition of the policemen and their plan for "punitive operations."

When the prisoners of war returned to their unit they spread the

rumour, “Ri Hong Gwang is a beautiful lady of about 20.” This is how the rumour started among the Japanese soldiers that Ri Hong Gwang was a woman general.

While Ri Hong Gwang was someone who fully displayed his wit and courage as a warrior through the armed struggle, Ri Tong Gwang was an able political worker who displayed extraordinary ability in the building of the party and in the political awakening and organization of the masses. His name was known widely in east Manchuria from the latter half of the 1920s.

It was Kim Jun, So Chol and Song Mu Son who told me about Ri Tong Gwang. When he was attending Dongxing Middle School in Longjing Ri Tong Gwang began to distinguish himself as a leader of the student movement. The news of the escape from prison of Ri Tong Gwang, who had been arrested in Longjing in connection with the first incident involving the Jiandao Communist Party, reached even Jilin.

In the summer of 1930 I happened to meet So Chol in Harbin. In the course of our conversation he unexpectedly told me that Ri Tong Gwang knew of me. He had told So Chol that he had seen me when Mr. An Chang Ho was delivering a lecture in Jilin and then, later, when a meeting of the representatives of the peasants in the Panshi area was held in Wulihezi. So I asked So Chol to tell Ri Tong Gwang, when he met him, about our strategy for the struggle and that some time we should meet each other, exchange greetings and fight hand in hand in the same trench.

Afterwards Ri Tong Gwang worked as secretary of the south Manchuria special district committee and as head of the organizational affairs department of the south-east Manchuria provincial committee. However, at the time when we were making preparations for our expedition to south Manchuria, he was working as secretary of a district committee in Panshi County.

As in east Manchuria, so in south Manchuria, too, the Korean communists formed the backbone of the anti-Japanese armed force.

We intended to establish contact with them, too, when we went to

south Manchuria. I regarded it very good for the development of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army if the young units met one another, swapped experiences and jointly sought measures for the struggle. In the whole course of the anti-Japanese armed struggle we conducted our operations in close contact with the guerrilla units in south Manchuria. In the course of this I formed unbreakable relations with Ri Hong Gwang, Ri Tong Gwang and Yang Jing-yu.

Many of our organizations were in the area of south Manchuria, such as Liuhe, Xingjing and Panshi. When we were operating in central Manchuria we had sent to these areas many fine workers of the YCLK and AIYL to form organizations. We had also sent there Choe Chang Gol and Kim Won U. However, those organizations that were born thanks to their efforts had been destroyed after the September 18 incident.

If we went to south Manchuria, a favourable phase could be created in restoring the organizations there and instilling vigour into the hearts of the daunted revolutionaries.

Some historians suggest that all our activities were conducted smoothly and quickly without any obstacles and vicissitudes following the foundation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. However, a revolution is not so simple.

We had had to experience enormous psychological distress and many twists and turns until we chose our expedition to south Manchuria to be the first action of the new-born guerrilla army and put it into effect.

At Kim Jong Ryong's house where the headquarters of the district party committee had been set up, we held in May 1932 a meeting of the party and YCLK leading core elements operative in the various counties of east Manchuria and discussed the problems of conducting an expedition into south Manchuria and establishing a base. Our plan for an expedition into south Manchuria enjoyed the unanimous support and approval of those attending the meeting. Even some young people who, divided into two or three groups within the same unit, had been engaged in an extremely heated argument, willingly

accepted our policy of conducting an expedition.

One day when we were enthusiastically making preparations for our expedition, Cha Kwang Su who had been appointed the unit's chief of staff, appeared before me, looking serious, and said:

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

The people of that area had joined a spring uprising because they had been suffering from hunger. Therefore, his appeal concerning the food situation fully convinced me.

But I could not agree to leaving Xiaoshahe soon simply because the main road was frequented by the enemy's convoys.

So to Cha Kwang Su, in response to his proposal that we should disappear secretly from Antu, I said:

“Comrade Chief of Staff, since we have risen in arms, what about trying a battle?”

“Do you mean it?”

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

Cha Kwang Su readily consented to my proposal. That very day he went to the road with Pak Hun to scout the terrain. The aim of his scouting was to select a suitable spot for an ambush. They proposed that we should keep watch at an important position on the road in Xiaoyingziling and attack a passing convoy. Their proposal accorded with my plan. I regarded an ambush to be the most suitable and universal form of combat for a guerrilla army.

Xiaoyingziling was situated midway between Antu and Mingyuegou. It was between Dadianzi and Dashahe. It was a little over ten miles from Xiaoshahe as the crow flies. Although the mountains were not steep, it was a very good spot for an ambush because there was a winding cart track through a ravine. By using this road, the enemy was supplying munitions for its armed forces in the Antu area.

A provincial organization informed us that a puppet Manchukuo army convoy of carts carrying weapons and supplies had left Mingyuegou for Antu. I took those men who were scheduled to go to south Manchuria and, after reaching Xiaoyingziling by a rapid night march, placed them on both sides of the road in ambush.

An ambush at night is not a good idea. At night when it is impossible to distinguish friend from foe an assault is more effective than an ambush. Throughout the whole period of the anti-Japanese war we laid only a few night ambushes.

We, who had just started on a new road, were unaware of this principle at that time. Fortunately, the moon was full and bright so our forces would not get confused and fight among themselves.

The enemy's convoy appeared in Xiaoyingziling towards midnight. Our men in the first position who were 100 metres ahead of us signalled the appearance of the enemy. The convoy was composed of 12 horse sleighs in all.

I was so tense and excited that I could feel my heart beating. I realized then that anything one encounters for the first time causes one great shock, apprehension and misgivings. I looked at Pak Hun who was lying next to me, and saw that he, too, looked extremely tense. With him who had graduated from Huangpu Military Academy and had had a taste of gunfire being like that, it was not difficult to guess how the other men were feeling.

The first small unit of the ambush let the column of carts pass. When the head of the column reached about half the length of the distance along which the second small unit was lying in ambush, I stood up on a rock and fired my pistol. With that piercing sound a

battle cry was raised.

We could distinguish easily between friend and foe because we had bound white cloths round our arms. However, the men of the enemy's transportation unit who had been taken by surprise, fired at random, unable to tell friend from foe. Some ten or so of the escorts desperately replied to our fire from behind the carts. The longer the battle lasted, the more dangerous it was for us.

After about ten minutes' firing we charged and wound up the battle. The enemy surrendered after suffering more than ten casualties. The number of captives was also about ten. All of them were soldiers of the puppet Manchukuo army; one of them was a Japanese noncommissioned officer.

I made a brief anti-Japanese speech to the enemy soldiers who had surrendered to us.

That night we returned to Mutiaotun carrying our trophies in ten carts. Our trophies consisted of 17 rifles, one pistol, a large amount of flour which was enough to feed 100 people, for about a month, cloth and combat boots and so on. It was very impressive as first trophies.

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

Even as I ate the soup I could not calm my beating heart. The food tasted good, but my mood was still better. Even now when 60 years have passed since then, I can still vividly remember my joy over victory in my first battle and the great excitement which I felt that night.

Cha Kwang Su who had been looking into the bonfire weeping behind his glasses, grasped my hand tightly all of a sudden and said in a choking voice:

"I say, Song Ju, now that I have experienced battle, it is nothing special."

Such was the chief of staff's impression of his first battle.

My impression was the same. A battle is nothing extraordinary. Anyone can fight if only he has a gun and courage. The enemy is not

so strong as we have so far regarded them to be. Look! They have surrendered to us. So, let us prepare with confidence for a bigger battle. We can win.

“How good it would be if Kim Hyok were here at a time like this. If he were alive, he would already have recited an impromptu poem. What a pity he has gone so early. Kim Hyok, Sin Han, Ri Gap, Je U, Kong Yong...where have they all gone!”

Cha Kwang Su was muttering to himself thus as if complaining about something as he wiped away the tears streaming down his cheeks. He was thinking about those who had left our ranks early without seeing the birth of the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army.

I was also thinking of those who had fallen in battle while working to lay the foundation of the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army. I could not ease the pain in my heart as the faces of my comrades-in-arms who had died without seeing this day came to my mind. If they were all still alive, how strong our ranks would be.

With his glasses in one hand and gesturing, Cha Kwang Su made a speech in front of the bonfire.

“Comrades, we have taken the first step. We have achieved the first victory. Who has done this? It is we who are sitting here.”

He stretched out his arms and made a gesture, as if he was lifting the men up in his arms.

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

It was the first time that I saw Cha Kwang Su so excited.

That night he made a really good speech. It was much more vivid and appealing than I can convey in writing by referring to my memory. I regret that I cannot repeat the speech as it was.

He said: “Comrades, how good fighting is. It gives us guns,

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

I was the first to applaud his speech. The whole audience responded to his speech with warm applause.

Then someone stood up and sang a song. I am not sure whether it was Jo Tok Hwa or Pak Hun. Anyhow, the song overflowed with inspiration.

Thus, we took our first confident step.

## 2. The Last Image

One day when our unit was busy preparing for its expeditionary campaign my younger brother Chol Ju came to Xiaoshahe to see me. The news of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army's raid on a puppet Manchukuo army convoy led by a Japanese noncommissioned officer at Xiaoyongziling had spread widely, going beyond the bounds of Antu and as far as Dunhua and Yanji, and everywhere our victory was the topic of conversation. The revolutionary organizations in Songjiang, Dadianzi and Liushuhezi went so far as to send people to Xiaoshahe to discover the truth about the Xiaoyongziling battle.

At first I merely surmised that my brother had come on a similar errand and met him in a matter-of-fact way. But contrary to my expectation, he asked nothing about the Xiaoyongziling ambush. He spent the whole day in silence watching the footdrill of the guerrilla men and then making straw sandals in company with the men chosen for the expeditionary campaign in the room next to the headquarters. Straw sandals were one of the items stipulated by the headquarters as equipment for the campaign. I changed my mind and decided that my brother must have come to Xiaoshahe to help in the preparations for our campaign. At nearly suppertime, when I came back to the headquarters after meeting the head of the peasant organization in the village, Chol Ju told me he was going home. I told him he should have supper with me before going. But he refused and insisted on going. He looked as though he wanted to say something to me, but never did. Then he nervously studied my face with a somewhat curious expression. My sixth sense told me that my brother had not come to Xiaoshahe to help in the preparations for the expedition and that he had some cause to come to see me. If he had some cause, it

must have been something which had happened to my mother or to himself. So I did not go inside the headquarters but walked with my brother as far as the entrance to the village to see him off, asking him point-blank:

“Has something happened in Tuqidian?”

By Tuqidian I meant my home. Somehow I was afraid to say “at home.”

“No, nothing has happened,” he said, forcing a smile. A clever actor and irresistibly humorous, my brother could easily crack a smile to deceive me. But his smile then was doleful and his mouth became twisted at one corner. Avoiding my eyes, he stared over my shoulder at the distant sky.

“If there is anything amiss, you should tell me directly. If you leave without telling me, I shall be anxious, shan’t I? Don’t keep it to yourself. Come clean right away.”

Chol Ju heaved a deep sigh before reluctantly opening his mouth:

“It appears that mother’s illness has become critical. She hasn’t even eaten a spoonful of food for two days.”

His words struck me like a bolt out of the blue. I felt faint inside on hearing that my mother was not eating anything. I knew she had been ill for a long time. When we were living in Badaogou, I had scarcely seen her ill in bed. But after my father had passed away in Fusong and I had left for Jilin to go to secondary school, my mother would often be ill. Chol Ju would sometimes tell me of her infirmity in his letters. At first when I received such letters, I was afraid that she had contracted *Shuitubing*, a local disease. Many of the people in the Fusong area suffered from it. When someone caught it his hands became crooked, his finger joints grew thick and his throat gave him trouble, so that he was disabled. Moreover, it was said, he would die before reaching 30 years of age. This local disease was one of the reasons why, after my father’s death, O Tong Jin came to Fusong and advised my mother to move out to Jilin, so that our family should not be harmed. When I came home for the holidays I found my mother ill not from the disease but from fatigue. It upset me to think that her life

of overworking, living in destitution, had at last come to tell upon her health. But I was relieved to learn that it was not the horrible *Shuitubing*. After coming to Antu she suffered from heartburn. In those days heartburn was called a “lump.” My mother would complain that she felt as if something big were pushing upwards in her chest. Looking back now, I think it might have been stomach cancer. The doctors diagnosed it as a “lump in the stomach,” but were unable to find a remedy. No medicines were effective. When she felt a movement in her chest, she would lie down in her bed and skip her meals or take a few spoonfuls of thin gruel for a meal. That was the only cure. My friends went to a lot of trouble to find a cure for my mother’s illness. All my friends who were engaged in the work of the Young Communist League would send medicines to her. When they came across an advertisement for a medicine in a newspaper and thought it might be good for my mother’s ailment, they bought it no matter how expensive it was and sent it to her by parcel post. Such postal packages came from Jilin, Shenyang, Harbin and Longjing. Traditional herb doctors in the Antu area, too, spared no efforts to treat my mother. The herb doctors in Dashahe treated her free of charge.

From the bloodshot eyes and dismal expression of Chol Ju I guessed that my mother’s illness was in its last stage. When I asked if there was any grain in the house, he answered that it was almost all gone. The next day I bought a large *mal* of foxtail millet at Xiaoshaha with money my comrades had given me and set out for Tuqidian. I reckoned one *mal* of food grain would last the family of three (mother, Chol Ju and Yong Ju) for a month and that in that time we would have returned from south Manchuria. A large *mal* of grain was about 15 kilogrammes. For our family struggling along on gruel in those days 15 kilogrammes of grain was a great deal, enough for a feast. But that one *mal* of grain hardly satisfied me. The straps cut painfully into my shoulders, but I did not feel the weight of my load of grain. It seemed as light as a feather compared with the love my mother had shown for me.

My father had once told me the story of Ri Rin Yong, the commander of the Honourable Righteous Force of the 13 Provinces. The story of this man's appointment as the commander was dramatic and instructive. When the heads of the Righteous Volunteers units in the eastern regions called on Ri Rin Yong to ask him to lead their units, he was tending his sick old father who was near death. Declining their request, he said: Someone else can command the Righteous Volunteers, but I cannot see my parents again once they have passed away. How can I leave my home and my old father when he is at death's door? I do not want to be an undutiful son. But on the fourth day he accepted their request. The Righteous Volunteers hastened to rally under his command from all parts of the country. Their number reached 8,000. Some time later the units of Ho Wi and Ri Kang Nyon joined them, so that the strength of the Honourable Righteous Force swelled from 8,000 to 10,000. They were further reinforced by 3,000 troops of the old national army of the Ri dynasty armed with rifles. The heads of the Righteous Volunteers units from all regions of the country hailed Ri Rin Yong as the commander of the Honourable Righteous Force of the 13 Provinces, and under his command they advanced to Seoul. The ultimate goal of the Righteous Volunteers was to storm into Seoul and crush the Japanese residency-general and abrogate the Protectorate Treaty. According to this plan of operations, the Righteous Volunteers units were closing in on Seoul when Ri Rin Yong received word that his father had passed away. He handed over the command to another man and went off to his home. His departure, along with the defeat of Ho Wi's troops sent out as the advance force, demoralized the men and led sadly to the collapse of the whole army.

When I was involved in the student movement in Jilin, I had an argument with members of the Ryuji Association of Korean Students on the subject of Ri Rin Yong's decision to leave for home on hearing of his father's death. Many of them accused him of being a spineless commander. They argued furiously that, because he, the commander of 10,000 volunteers, went home just because of his father's death

when he had before him the great task of leading his army to Seoul, he could not be called a man and a patriot. But not everybody criticized Ri Rin Yong. Some expressed their approval of his act. They said it was right, proper and natural that a man should return home and go into mourning when his father died, and even praised him as a dutiful son. At the present time a dutiful son means a man who is both faithful to his country and devoted to his parents, but in those days he who was devoted only to his parents was considered a dutiful son. I refuted them by saying that Ri Rin Yong's behaviour should not be taken as a model of genuine filial piety. I argued:

“Only a man who loves both his country and his family can be called a truly dutiful son. If he merely thinks much of his family and shows little concern for the national calamity, how can such a man be called a dutiful son? Now it is high time we were correcting our Confucian sense of value on filial piety. If Ri Rin Yong had, after fulfilling his duty to the country and achieving his aim, visited his father's grave and, pouring a cup of wine and burning incense, bowed before it, his name would have been honoured more by posterity.”

This came as a great shock to the people who were steeped in the old way of thinking, their minds soaked in the feudal moral view and Confucian idea on filial piety. The members of the Ryuji Association of Korean Students, divided into two groups, argued hotly for and against what I had said. Although it is a simple and clear question beyond any dispute for the members of our League of Socialist Working Youth and Children's Union today, it was quite a controversial problem that was difficult to decide between who was correct and who was not at the time. It took decades and a bitter, dearly-bought experience for the entire people of the country to realize and come to believe firmly that loving both their country and their family was genuine filial piety.

As I returned to my house in the Tuquidian valley carrying the food grain on my back, I recollected this episode about Ri Rin Yong. For some reason I was reflecting that the behaviour of the commander of the Honourable Righteous Force might have been

right. It was strange that I should have discovered some justice in the conduct of a man we had all decried so vehemently as a spineless commander, that I should feel inward sympathy, and express some understanding for him.

It is difficult, even impossible, for a man to lose sight of his family on the ground that he is making the revolution. The revolution is for the benefit of man, so how could revolutionaries ignore their families and remain indifferent to the fate of their parents and wives and children? We have always regarded the welfare of our families and the destiny of our country as one and the same. When the country is in distress, families cannot remain in peace, and when the families are overshadowed by misfortunes, the country will also be afflicted. This is our theory. Because we were convinced of this we were able to take the step, unheard-of in the history of warfare, of sending a regiment behind enemy lines to rescue the family of a soldier. This was motivated by the sense of duty and moral obligation which only the communists of Korea could display.

At first I, too, tried to be faithful to this moral duty. After shifting my theatre of activity to east Manchuria upon my release from prison, I often visited my house, taking medicines which I thought would be good for treating my sick mother, while moving about in the areas around Dunhua and Antu. But this offended my mother. As my visits became more frequent, my mother called me to her side one day and said in admonition:

“If you are to make the revolution, you should devote yourself to the revolution, and if you are to keep house, then you should devote yourself to housekeeping. Choose one or the other. In my view you should devote yourself to the revolution without worrying about household affairs since Chol Ju is at home and we can make a living by ourselves.”

After that my visits home became less frequent. After the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army I seldom went home. I regret that now. Even though mother might have admonished me, I should have fulfilled my filial duty, I reflected in anguish. It was not

an easy thing to be faithful to one's family and to one's country at the same time.

As I approached Tuqidian, my pace became irresistibly faster. But my heart grew heavier with each moment. I felt distracted at the thought that I would be seeing my mother critically ill. In a pool reeds were swaying in the wind. The area had been called a reed field village because of its abundance of reeds. But since a few years before when Kim Pyong Il's family at the lower end of the village started making earthenware for sale, this sparsely-populated out-of-the-way village had changed beyond recognition and acquired the name of Tuqidian (earthen-ware shop). The sight of the familiar straw-thatched house met my eyes. The untrimmed bush-clover fence was leaning to one side and the straw thatch was unkempt, so the house looked deserted. This was my home that had been untended by a male hand for years. No sooner had I pushed open the brushwood gate and entered the yard than the door of the house opened.

"Mother!" I called, running up to my mother who sat leaning against the door post, smiling.

"I thought the footsteps sounded familiar," she said, beside herself with joy, as she fingered the straps of the grain sack I had put down on the earthen verandah.

I had been afraid that she would scold me for coming home. But to my relief she said nothing to reprove me for coming. Mother and I exchanged compliments for a while. As we talked, I studied her complexion, her voice and her carriage, trying to discover the state of her health. Outwardly she had changed little from the previous winter, but she was much weaker than before. Her ample bosom had grown smaller, her neck was thinner and her hair at her temples was noticeably greyer. I could not help feeling sad at the thought that time had left its lamentable marks so early on my mother's appearance. That night I talked with my mother until after midnight. Our conversation wandered on endlessly—what place had the Japanese army reached? What would be the guerrilla army's course of action in the future? How could we join hands with Mr. Ryang Se Bong? What

was to be done at the guerrilla base? Mother kept leading our conversation to political topics. When mention was made of the family's livelihood or her health condition, she would hastily close the subject and shift the conversation to other topics. When I noticed how my mother tried to conceal the state of her health from me, I decided that her illness must be serious. My intuition told me that my mother's days were numbered. This made me shudder, sending chills down my spine. I gulped back my tears.

The next day, after an early breakfast, I climbed up the mountain with my brother Chol Ju. I was going to collect firewood. Looking round the house, I had seen only one or two bundles of fuel. I would feel easier in my mind if I gathered some firewood, if nothing more, now that I was back at home, was my thought. I had wished to collect enough firewood to last a few months, but the circumstances did not allow me to do so. The mountain was not deep, so there were no dead trees. I had to content myself with cutting some shrubs.

"Chol Ju, isn't there something better than this?" I asked.

"Let's collect anything that comes our way. If mother finds out, she will be angry," my brother answered, hitching up his hemp trousers.

He appeared to be an innocent boy, but he was already quite clever. While using his sickle, he was always looking down restlessly towards the village. It seemed he was worried that mother would discover that we had slipped out of the house to collect firewood unnoticed by her. He was also aware that mother would be angry if I bothered about trivial household matters. Taking hold of the branches of some shrubs, I worked my sickle swiftly until my hands were raw. Towards sunset we put the firewood on our A-frames and went down to the village. When we rounded the bend from where we could look out over the reed fields, I saw my mother standing at the edge of the yard.

As I was climbing down the mountain, a stick in my hand, my mind was weighed down by a depressing thought. I felt my heart breaking to think that I would be going off on an expeditionary

campaign leaving my seriously-ill mother behind. The way ahead for me looked dark. We had decided we would be back from the campaign in a month or two, but no one could tell what would be my fate and where our unit would be going. I was thinking: What if I continue with the underground struggle for a few years more? Is it not right for me to do so and call at my home once every few months to discuss household affairs and console my mother? Is that not my filial duty to my mother who has lived in hardship all her life and experienced unusually bitter mental afflictions? If I leave Antu now, only a short time after my grandmother's departure, how will my sick mother be able to bear up, feeling lonely and supportless? Yet, for all that, I surely cannot allow my own family circumstances to prompt me to revoke the plan for the south Manchurian campaign that has been decided upon as the guerrilla army's line of action for a year, can I?

"Why, you are worried we may lack firewood here, is that it?" asked my mother grimly, as she stood by the fence waiting for us.

Instead of answering, I looked at her with a smile, wiping the perspiration from my face.

"You are behaving strangely. You didn't behave like this when we were in Fusong, and I didn't see you do this sort of thing in Xinglongcun, but recently you have become concerned about the housekeeping," she said in a thick voice.

"I feel refreshed when I smell the scent of grass after a long time," I said and walked into the yard with an innocent look, pretending not to have heard what she said.

That evening we, the four members of our family, sat together round the table for the first time after a long separation. There was a plate of broiled fish called *podulchi*. They tasted good. When I asked how they had got them, mother said that my youngest brother who had been extremely concerned about the lack of side dishes to serve at the table should I come had caught them and hung them under the eaves to dry. Each of the fish was as thick as a finger. I was so moved that I could not eat all of them, so I left a few.

After my youngest brother had fallen asleep mother, who had been leaning against the wall, sat up straight and said to me in a grave tone:

“You seem to have changed a little from before. I never thought you would carry a sack of cereal here on your back to support your mother. I suppose you are anxious about your sick mother. I am grateful to you for your great filial devotion, but I am not of the type to be comforted by that. In Fusong I would cross rugged hills, holding your hand, in order to expand the Women’s Association. Do you think I did so to get this sort of consolation today? You have a greater cause to attend to. Don’t you think you should carry out your father’s will? You know there are many Koreans who are suffering in a worse state than me. Don’t worry about me, but hurry along your own way.”

She trembled with a strong emotion as she said this. When I raised my head, I saw her biting her lip, unable to continue. My mother’s view of life reflected in every word she spoke shook my soul violently like a storm and went straight to my heart. It was a precious moment for me. After recovering her breath for a few moments, she resumed:

“I can say the same about your gathering firewood. You might well do it if you were a man with nothing else to do. ... Forget your mother and your brothers and never trouble yourself on account of the family’s affairs. If you acquit yourself well of your revolutionary work away from home, my illness may pass. So you should leave at once with your unit. That’s my desire.”

I answered her promptly:

“I will always bear your wish in mind. Tonight I’ll sleep here and tomorrow I’ll go to Xiaoshahe and start immediately with the unit for south Manchuria to see Mr. Ryang Se Bong.”

Tears gushed from my eyes and I turned my face to the wall. My mother must also have felt heartbroken, as she pulled to her the sewing box which was lying in a corner of the room and started sewing buttons on my uniform jacket. Suddenly for some reason I recalled what had happened during my father’s funeral. My mother did not put on mourning dress or go to the burial ground. She put us

three brothers in mourning dress and sent us to the funeral. Dozens of people, including O Tong Jin, Jang Chol Ho, Ryang Se Bong and other members of the Independence Army, followed the coffin with my uncle, but my mother did not even go to the burial ground.

The *Tano* festival came round soon after my father's death and we persistently asked mother to visit his grave. She asked us what was the use of her going there, and sent us by ourselves. She made a package of offerings for us to take to the grave. She taught us minutely how to burn incense, how to pour wine and how to bow. That she refused to join us in going to the grave, I surmise, was so that her sons would not see her tears. She would visit the grave alone. Only once did she break her resolve, when Ri Kwan Rin, who had been unable to attend my father's funeral, came to Fusong and visited his grave. My mother went to the grave with her and, when she saw her wailing sadly before the grave until she was fit to faint, asked her soothingly to weep no more. My mother was warmhearted but tearless. She was very stouthearted, something rare in a woman. My mother's amazingly strong character has left a lasting impression on my mind. Because she was a woman of such a type my mother, despite her lonely life in her sickbed, could without hesitation urge her son to go on his way and, as if she were giving him the rod, admonish him sternly, enough to prick him body and soul, which would remain an injunction for him all his life. I think my mother was a mother above the common run of humanity. Precisely for the same reason I used to consider the late Mrs. Jang Kil Bu, mother of Ma Tong Hui, to be an uncommon mother. She met me after liberation. But she did not weep. All the other women wept when they met me, but that mother did not. When I told her to live in Pyongyang where many old comrades-in-arms of her late son were living, she said she was going in search of the foes who had informed against her son and went back home before anyone knew.

Being unable to sleep, I went outside. I was pacing in front of the crooked bush-clover fence enjoying the cool air when Chol Ju opened the door quietly and came out onto the earthen verandah. We sat on

the bundles of firewood and talked. He said he had been absorbed in the work of the Young Communist League and failed to take good care of mother, but that from then on he would behave more wisely so that I should not worry about home. I myself, to speak the truth, had wanted to ask this same favour of him, but fortunately he mentioned it first.

In the morning we prepared and ate some ground-bean mash. After the meal I went to see Kim Jong Ryong, our neighbour behind our house. I wanted to discuss the future of my brothers with him. I told him frankly that, although I had to depart for south Manchuria without delay, I was reluctant to leave Tuqidian because my worries about my family weighed heavily on my mind. Kim said that I should go, leaving all my household cares to him, and that he would look to everything, take care of my brothers and attend well to my sick mother, so that I did not need to worry. I returned home and got ready to leave. As I was fastening my shoelaces, my mother took out four five-*yuan* notes from under the wicker trunk and handed them to me.

“Away from home, you will have many occasions when you are in need of money. So keep this. A man must have money in his pocket in case of emergency. Your father would often say that in the closing period of the Qing dynasty in China Sun Yat-sen, who was locked up in a foreign embassy, gave some money to the cleaning man and escaped with his help.”

I accepted the money, but my hands trembled. I could not put it into my pocket, at a loss what to do with it. I was well aware of how much trouble the 20 *yuan* had cost my mother. The 20 *yuan* she had earned and saved penny by penny by working her fingers to the bone doing washing and sewing for pay! At that time one could buy a cow for some 50 *yuan*, so that much money was enough to buy a medium-sized cow or cereal to last our family of three for a whole year. I stepped down from the earthen verandah, tottering as if I had lost my balance under the weight of that money, and bowed my head in farewell to her, “Good-bye, mother! Peace be with you.” I was thinking at that moment that my parting words should be no different

from those at other times so as not to cause my mother to cry. So I pronounced the words as casually as possible and in my usual way.

“Be off quickly, for it’s a journey you must make,” she said nodding, a smile on her sickly face. As I turned away, I heard the door shut behind my back. I walked forward, but I could not leave the village. I began to walk around my house. The 20 *yuan* was still in my hand. I went round, and round, and round yet again. ... As I walked my mind was torn between a thousand and one thoughts which had gripped me like a vice all night long. When will I step into this yard again? Am I trying to go on my way with any prospect of winning? What is in store for me on the path ahead? Is there any hope of my mother’s illness taking a turn for the better? As I went round the house despondently with these thoughts, my mother threw the door open and scolded me severely:

“What are you worrying about that you are still here? How can a man who has turned out with a determination to win back his country cope with the great cause when he has such a weak heart and so many worries about his home? You should be thinking of your uncles who are in prison rather than worrying about household affairs. You must think of your lost country and its people. It is already nearly twenty-two years since the Japanese burglars seized our country. If you are a true man of Korea, you should set yourself a high aim and stride ahead, shouldn’t you? If in the future you ever think to come home, anxious about your mother, don’t turn up before this door. I won’t meet a son of that sort.”

Her words struck my heart like thunder. My mother looked totally exhausted after uttering these words, resting her head against the door post. She was staring at me with eyes expressing a mixture of affection, passion and anger. Her appearance reminded me of her image on the day when I arrived at Badaogou after walking a distance of 1,000 *ri* (250 miles). Then she told me to leave at once for Linjiang and pushed me off without allowing me even to stay for one night. At that time I first saw as her son the stout and noble image of my mother alive with a sense of justice and radiant with ardour. She

looked as though she would be burnt to a cinder in the flames of her fiery sense of justice and ardour. Until then I had believed I knew my mother, who had born and brought me up, well. But my mother with her noble spirit and soul was now looking down at me from a height beyond my reach. Her image at that time was more of a teacher than of a mother. I felt so happy that my heart seemed to burst with pride in my mother who was so excellent and so kindhearted.

“Good-bye, mother!” I took off my cap and made a deep bow to her. Then I strode off. After crossing the wooden bridge down the village street, I looked back. My mother in white clothes, supporting herself against the door post, stood watching me. That was the last time I saw my mother. Where in that weak body was her noble and indomitable soul lurking, the soul that had shaken the heart of her son so violently? If my excellent mother had not been suffering from an illness, how light I should have felt in my heart as I was walking down the road? I bit my lip to keep myself from weeping.

That was not an ordinary parting a person experiences thousands of times in his life, but the last parting which has remained a heartrending memory to me and which would never occur again. I never saw my mother after that.

A few months later, when I heard the sad news of my mother's death, the first thing I felt in my heart was sharp regret at my failure to speak more affectionately to her at our last parting. But it could not be helped because my mother did not wish for a pathetic parting. Even now, in spite of my advanced age, I cannot forget that scene. People will have similar experiences several times in their life. Each time the slightest difference in their behaviour will bring about a remarkably different result in their fates and their ultimate destinies will be poles apart. If at that time my mother had betrayed her anxiety about household affairs or had uttered a single word which could unbend my resolute mind, what impact would it have made on the heart of her son who was ready to spread his wings and fly up into the sky?

From the day when I left the hill of Xiaoshahe at the head of the

ranks of the newly-formed Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, I travelled the path of bloody battles, the path of severe frost, the path of starvation beyond human imagination, together with my comrades-in-arms for decades. After that, I passed half a century of creation and construction under the banner of socialism. Each time I ran up against an ordeal which tested my faith as a revolutionary on the rugged and thorny path I was following in the cause of my homeland and its people, I would renew my resolve by recalling the words my mother had said to me as she pushed me off to south Manchuria, and the last image of my mother dressed in white seeing me off, before seeking recourse to an ideology or philosophical proposition.

### 3. Joy and Sorrow

When the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army was moving to south Manchuria, Commander Yu also dispatched a 200-strong detachment under the command of Liu Ben-cao to the Tonghua area. Commander Yu was sending his chief of staff Liu Ben-cao, his right-hand man, to south Manchuria for the purpose of cooperating with the self-defence army led by Tang Ju-wu and obtaining weapons from him, the shortage of weapons being a serious problem for Commander Yu. The self-defence army in south Manchuria, whose headquarters was in Liaoning Province, was better equipped than Commander Yu's army.

On hearing about our expedition, Liu Ben-cao had visited Xiaoshahe. Saying that he had received an order to march to south Manchuria, he asked me to go together since we were moving in the same direction. He added that he would help me to get in touch with Tang Ju-wu and that we would probably be able to obtain weapons from him.

I accepted Liu's proposal with pleasure. Frankly, we were badly in need of weapons. The joint operation with his detachment on our march to south Manchuria could avoid any clash with Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese army units on our way and guarantee our safety.

Tang Ju-wu had been the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment of the eastern frontier defence force. He had organized the Liaoning people's self-defence army in their professed cause of anti-Japanese national salvation after the September 18 incident. He had approximately 10,000 troops under his command. Being stationed in the Tonghua area and operating mainly in south Manchuria, his army was fighting, against heavy odds, with the Japanese Kwantung Army

stationed in Shenyang. In the course of this it organized combined operations with the Korean Revolutionary Army which was under Kukmin-bu.

The Liaoning people's self-defence army, in its early days, had enjoyed high morale and achieved fairly good battle results. But when the tide turned in favour of Japan and when he found himself in manifold difficulties, Tang Ju-wu began to vacillate.

In spite of the fact-finding investigation of the September 18 incident by the Lytton commission to Manchuria from the League of Nations, the Japanese army continued its invasion into a wider area, experiencing little restraint from the commission. The Japanese imperialists occupied Jinzhou early in January 1932, and on January 28 the same year provoked the Shanghai incident in a conspiratorial and brigandish way. Seizing upon the violence done to five Japanese monks in Hongkou, Shanghai, they destroyed Chinese factories and shops and killed some Chinese policemen; they further launched a large-scale armed attack on Shanghai by mobilizing marines. Japan provoked the Shanghai incident in order to make the city a bridgehead for her aggression on the mainland of China. The Japanese military leadership miscalculated that, if they occupied Shanghai in a blitz attack, they would be able to follow up their success and seize the whole territory of China at a stroke.

The soldiers and people of Shanghai launched a heroic counterattack and dealt a heavy blow to the Japanese invaders. Nevertheless, their resistance failed because of the treachery of the reactionary government of the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jing-wei, and the Shanghai incident ended in the concluding of the humiliating, counterrevolutionary Songhu Agreement.

The failure of the resistance in Shanghai dampened the spirit of the patriotic soldiers and people, particularly the Chinese national salvation army and self-defence army who were eager to fight against the Japanese.

As the Shanghai incident and the signing of the Songhu

Agreement showed, the reactionary, traitorous policy of the Kuomintang government was the greatest obstacle in the way of the Chinese anti-Japanese national salvation forces. The reactionary Kuomintang clique not only refused to assist the Shanghai people to resist, but hindered their resistance, regarding it as criminal. Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jing-wei intentionally suspended the sending of supplies to the 19<sup>th</sup> route army and seized the financial aid sent to Shanghai from various parts of China, while ordering their naval forces secretly to supply the Japanese army with foodstuffs, including vegetables. This was a shameful act of treachery.

The Kuomintang reactionaries not only avoided fighting the Japanese invaders but also prevented the people from resisting the enemy. Their guns were always levelled at the people who were fighting against the Japanese invaders. People who spoke in favour of resistance against Japan fell victims to terrorism or died on the gallows.

Chiang Kai-shek went so far as to say that if China was conquered by imperialists, the people could survive, though as slaves, but that if she was ruined at the hands of communists, they would not survive even as slaves. This shows that Chiang Kai-shek and his reactionary clique feared and guarded against the people's revolution more than the imperialist forces of aggression, and that they themselves had been faithful vassals and stooges of the imperialists.

Chiang Kai-shek's treachery had a bad ideological influence on the upper levels of the Chinese national salvation army and self-defence army which had been related to the Kuomintang in one way or the other and which were representing the interests of the former warlords, bureaucrats and politicians.

The ever-expanding sphere of Japanese military operations also badly affected the morale of the national salvation army. In its report the Lytton commission proposed that Manchuria be placed under an international condominium, not Japan's monopoly control, but Japan ignored this and continued her military action. The Japanese armed forces pressed upon Shanhaiguan and north Manchuria. They

gradually occupied the vast area of north Manchuria and concentrated their forces in the Rehe area.

Prior to their campaign in north Manchuria, the Japanese imperialists had set the intelligence services of the Kwantung Army in motion in order to break up the Northeast Army politically and disrupt its brigades by bribing them or plotting against them so as to make them suspect one another and fight for power. When attacking Ma Zhan-shan, they drew Su Bing-wen to their side; and, after defeating Ma Zhan-shan, they crushed Su Bing-wen; in this way they destroyed piecemeal the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese army units in north Manchuria.

The disintegration of these units in north Manchuria affected Wang De-lin in east Manchuria and Tang Ju-wu in south Manchuria.

Even though he had raised the banner of anti-Japanese national salvation under the influence of the people's revolutionary advance, Tang Ju-wu was acting cautiously, tending to swim with the tide.

Several of the commanders of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese army units such as Ding Chao, Li Du and Xing Zhan-qing were under the illusion that they could solve all their problems by relying on the League of Nations, and refrained from active resistance to Japan. They even said, "Zhang Xue-liang does not resist the Japanese army because he wants to wipe out the communist rebels. We can drive out the Japanese army only when we have wiped out the communist bandits. The communists invited the Japanese."

In the spring of the year when we were moving to south Manchuria Zhou Bao-zhong was taken captive by the Chinese self-defence army. At that time he asked the commanding officers of the army why they called their unit the self-defence army.

They answered, "Self-defence means defending oneself. How can we fight against the Japanese when it is difficult to preserve our own strength? If the Japanese do not attack us, we do not attack them. That is self-defence."

That was the way of thinking and political view of the self-defence army. Tang, who had been wavering without confidence in himself,

neglected the control of his unit. It was a timely measure for Commander Yu to send Liu Ben-cao to the headquarters of the national salvation army.

Our guerrilla army left Xiaoshahe on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June intending to march a short distance on the first day. Guided by the head of the Peasants Union in Shahe (Xi Xiaoshahe), we crossed the River Erdao and proceeded to the village of Liujiafenfang. We had planned to stay there overnight to conduct political activities.

The village had been known by this name from the time when a man with the surname Liu had set up a flour mill there.

After supper we lighted a campfire in the wide yard in front of the mill. At the news of the arrival of the guerrilla army, even the people from neighbouring villages came to Liujiafenfang. The organization heads of the village collected straw mats from several houses and brought dead trees and rafters for the people from the neighbouring villages to sit on. The people gathered in the yard numbered several hundreds. We huddled around the campfire and talked to them until midnight. They asked us many questions. I have conducted organizational and political work among the people all my life, but I cannot remember being showered with such a heavy barrage of questions as I was at that time. I talked to the people until I was hoarse.

The first question they asked me was what type of army our guerrilla army was and what the difference between it and the Independence Army was. They knew that an Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army had been founded in Xiaoshahe a month before. It seemed a simple, straightforward question, but it indicated their expectations of the new-born army and their uncertainty about its strength. If both the AJPGA and the Independence Army were fighting for the liberation of Korea, what was the need to complicate things by forming the former? Does the newly-formed guerrilla army stand a fair chance of defeating the Japanese army when the Independence Army has failed? If so, what is the guarantee? I think these were essentially what the people of Liujiafenfang wanted to know, the people who were exhausted with looking after the Independence Army and were filled

with crushing despair when they witnessed its failure.

I tried to speak in as simple and concise language as possible. I said, "The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army is not an extraordinary army. True to its name, it is an army of the people fighting against the Japanese imperialists. It is formed of the sons of workers and peasants like you as well as other young people, students and intellectuals. Its mission is to get rid of Japanese colonial rule and realize the independence and social emancipation of the Korean nation. It is an army of a new type which differs from the Righteous Volunteers and the Independence Army. Its guiding ideology is communism, whereas the guiding ideology of the Independence Army is bourgeois nationalism. To put it in simple terms, communism is the idea of building a society where everyone, irrespective of rank and wealth, leads a free and equitable life. The idea of the Independence Army is to build a society in which rich people are the masters; the ideal of the AJPGA is to build a society in which the toiling people are the masters. The Independence Army has regarded common people such as you as its supporters and sympathizers; we regard you as the masters in carrying out the anti-Japanese revolution. The Independence Army has expected a great deal from outside forces and tried to liberate the country by drawing on their strength; we are going to liberate the country with greater confidence in ourselves and by our own efforts. While it is true that the Independence Army, following the Righteous Volunteers' struggle, has borne the brunt of the bloody fight against the Japanese aggressors in Manchuria and the northern area of the homeland for the last ten or so years, its strength has waned to the point where its very existence is now threatened. That is why we have formed a new army. We have formed the AJPGA with the determination to accomplish the noble cause of national liberation, which the Independence Army has failed to do."

When I finished the speech, a young man from the village asked me how many thousands of soldiers there were in our army.

I told him that the number did not amount to thousands but to a few hundreds, for it was still young, and that sooner or later it would

amount to tens of thousands.

He asked me what procedures he should follow to join the AJPGA.

I answered that there was no special procedure or formality, and that any young person who was determined to fight and was physically strong enough could join it. I emphasized that one could join it either by being recommended by one's revolutionary organization or by reporting to the army to volunteer in person.

Several young men surrounded me and asked me whether I would accept them there and then if they volunteered.

What luck!

"Yes, I will," I said. "But you'll have to do without guns for the time being. You must obtain guns for yourselves on the battlefield. If you still wish to join, we will accept you right now."

They agreed, and we recruited them. This batch of young men was a surprise gift from the village of Liujiafenfang to our young guerrilla army. We were beside ourselves with joy. Just imagine how we rejoiced over the recruiting of nearly 10 young men, at a time when we sometimes had to sacrifice two or three comrades to gain one revolutionary comrade.

We revolutionaries who tread a thorny path, allaying our hunger by licking a snowball and sleeping in the open, can feel pleasure that the bourgeoisie and philistines can never feel. It is the spiritual fullness we experience when we gain new comrades-in-arms. When new comrades joined us, ready to lay down their lives, and when we helped them put on their uniforms and shoulder their guns, we felt an ennobling and thrilling joy that could never be experienced in the mundane world. We believed the joy to be unique to us.

That night we put on an entertainment in honour of our new comrades. Cha Kwang Su and I sang a song.

That piece of good luck came to us because the AJPGA had been the focus of public attention after the September 18 incident. Since Japan swallowed up Manchuria and the Korean people could not live in peace there, either, young Korean people in general were

determined to fight a do-or-die battle with the enemy.

We sat up talking until the small hours, and spread straw mats around the campfire towards daybreak to sleep in the open for the first time since the founding of the AJPGA.

The villagers chided us, saying that it would be a disgrace for them if they let the guerrillas sleep outdoors in a Korean settlement, but we slept in the open, declining with thanks to be billeted on them as the organization heads had arranged. We declined their kind offer out of our moral sense of duty, that we must not encroach on the people's interests, but I think we preferred a bivouac to a warm room out of a romantic feeling as revolutionaries.

On our way back from south Manchuria we slept overnight again at this village. There was an old potato cellar by the house of an old Chinese man named Lu Xiu-wen. We covered the walls of the cellar with corn straw, built a fire and slept there.

Seeing that we had eaten in the open and were going to sleep outdoors, the old man had told me that at least the commander, if not the whole unit, should sleep in his house.

"It would be a different matter if you, Mr. Kim, and I were strangers to each other, but we have known each other since the days in Jiuantu, haven't we?" the old man said in persuasion.

I declined, and he said how sorry he was that I was so obstinate.

True, he and I were old acquaintances. When my family had been living in a room at Ma Chun Uk's inn in Jiuantu, I had seen him now and then. The lively and passionate temper he had shown in those days had left a strong impression on me.

Asking us how he could sleep under a quilt with a light heart when the soldiers on their way back from an anti-Japanese campaign were sleeping in the open, he kept us company until late at night.

He was responsive to the trend of the times, as were most of the villagers in Liujiafenfang. He knew that the Japanese army after the September 18 incident had invented a puppet state called Manchukuo, made Changchun its capital, renaming it Xinjing, and put Pu Yi on the throne.

I still remember what he told me about An Jung Gun. He said the great man he respected most of all the martyrs of Korea was An Jung Gun.

“An Jung Gun is a great man of the East,” he said. “Even Generalissimo Yuan Shi-kai composed a poem in praise of his heroic deed.”

His words impressed me very much. An Jung Gun’s shooting of Ito Hirobumi made him a legendary hero among the Chinese people of Manchuria. Some public-spirited Chinese people hung his portrait on the walls of their houses and worshipped him as a god.

As the old man was speaking with so much affection for An Jung Gun, I asked him casually: “You are not a Korean, so how do you know so much about An Jung Gun?”

“There is no one in Manchuria who doesn’t know of him. One man even proposed to build a bronze statue of martyr An at Harbin Railway Station. I still say to my children that they should become such a revolutionary as Sun Yat-sen and such a great man as An Jung Gun. Commander Kim, now that you have formed an army, why not slay such bigwigs as the commander of the Kwantung Army?”

I could not help smiling at his naive suggestion.

“What is the use of killing a man like him? As a new Ito Hirobumi appeared after Ito Hirobumi was slain, so a new Honjo will emerge if we kill Honjo. Terrorism cannot serve a great cause.”

“How, then, are you going to fight?”

“They say that the Kwantung Army numbers 100,000, and I will fight them all.”

The old man was moved deeply by my answer; he gripped my hands and would not let go of them.

“Wonderful, Commander Kim! You are another An Jung Gun.”

With a smile on my face, I said:

“Thank you, but I am not worthy of your compliment. I am not as great as An Jung Gun; but I will not live as an enslaved Korean.”

When our unit was leaving the village the next day Lu Xiu-wen, sorry to be parting with us, followed us a long way to see us off.

Whenever I think of Liujiafenfang, I recollect with emotion my talk with the old man.

After leaving Liujiafenfang, we bivouacked overnight near Erdaobaihe. Then on our march along a highway we encountered a scouting party from a Japanese army unit moving from Fusong in the direction of Antu. As usual we had posted a scouting party of three or four ahead of the main body on our march. The two hostile parties began to exchange fire.

Frankly speaking, I was confused, for it was our first encounter with the Japanese army since the founding of the AJPGA and, furthermore, an encounter with the Japanese army which boasted of its victories in battle. During the Xiaoyingziling battle we had had a detailed plan for attacking our enemy in an ambush, so we had been able to destroy them by surprise, but things were different here. Here the enemy was not the slovenly puppet Manchukuo army, but the shrewd, well-trained Japanese army with vast fighting experience. By contrast, we were beginners who had fought only one battle. We did not know how to handle the encounter. In view of the purpose of our campaign and the basic principles of guerrilla warfare, it was advisable to avoid, as far as possible, an unprofitable engagement which might have an unfavourable influence on our long-distance expedition. An ancient book on the art of war said that one should avoid a strong enemy and attack a weak enemy.

What was to be done? The whole unit turned to me with a tense look. They were waiting for my decision. It flashed across my mind that occupying the vantage ground before the main force of the enemy could close in on us was the best way of seizing the initiative in battle; I quickly moved my unit up to the northern ridge of the hill where the skirmish was going on and some of the unit to the south of the road. We mowed them down in a fusillade from both sides.

Soon a column of fully-equipped enemy soldiers appeared on the road. We estimated the enemy as being well over company strength. On learning that his scouts had been destroyed, the enemy was trying to encircle us.

Having ordered the men not to fire until I gave a signal shot, I watched the battlefield, waiting for the enemy to come within the range of our fire. We had not much ammunition. When I let off a signal shot, the whole unit opened fire. As I listened to the gunshots coming from all sides, I tried to imagine the men's mental state. Each gun report revealed their excitement and high morale as well as their extreme nervousness.

The enemy quickly dispersed in battle order and, relying on his numerical superiority, made a fierce attack on our position from both sides, in spite of having suffered heavy casualties.

I moved part of our main force posted north and south of the road to our two flanks. As soon as they had taken up their position they destroyed the flanking enemy with prompt and accurate fire.

However, the main force of the enemy continued to close in upon us. We held our position stubbornly, even rolling rocks down the ridge, but the enemy continued his charge.

During a lull in the enemy's attack, I gave the order for a counterattack. While the bugle call resounded, all the guerrillas fell upon the enemy, pursuing and destroying those who retreated. Only a few of the enemy's company escaped. Kim Il Ryong never stopped shouting the war-cry, "Another has fallen!" at the enemy soldiers.

We lost several men. After burying our dead comrades on the nameless hill, we held a funeral ceremony before their graves. As I looked at the sobbing soldiers, with their caps in their hands, I made a farewell address in a trembling voice. I can't remember what I said. I only remember that when I raised my head after my speech I saw the men's shoulders heaving up and down violently and that a shudder passed over me when I saw that our column was shorter than when we were leaving Liujiafenfang.

After a while I ordered the men to resume the march. All the comrades lined up along the road, but Cha Kwang Su was lying prostrate on a grave. He could not leave the graves no one would keep, the rough graves in which his dead comrades had been buried without coffins.

I rushed up to the ridge and shouted to him, shaking him by the shoulder: “Kwang Su, what’s this? Won’t you stand up?”

I shouted so loudly and so violently that he rose abruptly to his feet. I whispered to him: “The men are watching us. Where has your indomitable spirit gone?”

He wiped away his tears and walked silently to the front of the column.

Later I long regretted my behaviour that day. When I received the sad news four months after the battle on the border between Antu and Fusong Counties that Cha Kwang Su had been killed in battle, I was immediately reminded of what had happened that day. Why had I spoken to him in that way? Could I not have told him to rise in a kinder tone of voice?

After losing those comrades-in-arms I myself didn’t feel like eating or sleeping for several days. They were core elements and the backbone of our army who had shared joy and sorrow with me since the days of the DIU.

There would be no battle without sacrifice. The revolution always requires sacrifice. A loss of one kind or another is inevitable even in the peaceful effort to transform nature, so how can one avoid sacrifice in the armed struggle in which victory is won by employing all the weapons and other means available? However, we regarded the sacrifice in that battle as too cruel and too unfair. Granting that merciless sacrifice was inevitable in a revolution, how could we tolerate such an indiscriminate loss to our army which had just taken its first step—these were my feelings at that time.

One might say that the loss of less than 10 men was not a heavy loss numerically. Such a loss might seem next to nothing in a modern war which takes a toll of tens of thousands of lives in a single battle. But we did not count the loss of our comrades numerically. For us numbers were not a criterion for estimating the value of a man.

Each of the fighters who had trodden the path of the struggle with us was a priceless being to which nothing in the world could be compared. We believed that we would not barter one of our guerrillas

for 100 enemy soldiers. The enemy could recruit tens of thousands of soldiers in a single day by enforcing state laws and military mobilization orders and hurl them onto the battlefield, but we had no such physical or legal power. Even if we had it at our disposal, each one of our revolutionary comrades was worth his weight in gold. It needs painstaking efforts to gain comrades who have the same idea and purpose with us or to recruit comrades-in-arms who will share life and death with us and to rally them in an organized force.

Therefore, throughout the whole period of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle I did not take pride in a victory in a battle in which we killed 100 enemy soldiers if one of us was killed.

Historians speak highly of the battle on the Antu-Fusong border as a successful battle in which we destroyed an enemy company by an adroit counterattack. Of course, it was undoubtedly victory. The battle was significant not only because the young AJPGA destroyed a company of a regular army but also because we smashed the myth of the Japanese army's invincibility for the first time in our guerrilla war. This battle gave us the conviction that the Japanese army, though formidable, was neither matchless nor indestructible nor unretreating, and that we would be perfectly able to defeat the powerful Japanese army with a small force if we skilfully applied tactics suited to the characteristics of guerrilla warfare.

Nevertheless we paid very dearly in this battle, losing nearly 10 of the first sons of the DIU.

When leaving the battlefield over which gunsmoke lingered, I thought, as I looked back at the hill where my dead comrades lay buried, "We have lost nearly 10 of our comrades-in-arms in annihilating a company of the enemy; so, how much sacrifice do we have to make to defeat more than 100,000 Japanese invaders in Korea and Manchuria?"

After the first battle, we all realized that we would suffer much and pay dearly in the future course of the guerrilla war. The war against Japan we fought for more than ten years after the battle on the Fusong-Antu border was accompanied with suffering, difficulties and sacrifice which can never be measured by man's conventional concept of war.

#### **4. Is a Joint Operation Impossible?**

On the route of march of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army from Antu to Tonghua there were many steep mountains and deep valleys similar to those in the northern border area of Korea. The Changbai Mountains stretch from Antu to Fusong and the Longgang Mountains, where there are such steep ridges as Sanchaziling and Sandaolaoyeling, lie between Fusong and Tonghua.

We continued our arduous march across these mountains for about a month. In the daytime we marched along mountain paths, avoiding roads within the sphere of the enemy's observation. At night we billeted on villages inhabited by Koreans, where we conducted ceaseless political work and combat training.

We stayed in Fusong for a few days to work with the revolutionary organizations there. There I met Zhang Wei-hua. He expressed his regret that our stay was short, and entreated me to stay in Fusong for two or three days more, even if only for the sake of our old friendship in our school days. I was not loath to do so. In Fusong hundreds of things had happened to me.

But we set out after two or four days' stay there as scheduled. However dear the memory of the past was to me and however strong his kind feeling was, I had to part with him to meet Commander Ryang Se Bong, though I was sorry to do so.

The distance from Fusong to Tonghua was said to be about 125 miles. The farther we went, the steeper the mountains seemed and the more difficult the march became. The men were all exhausted from the long forced march across unfamiliar ridges and valleys. They fell ill one after another. I, too, was quite exhausted by the continued march.

When the unit was near Tonghua, Cha Kwang Su unexpectedly

hurried up to me and suggested that we rest at Erdaojiang for a few days before going on to Tonghua.

“We have marched for 125 miles, having refrained from staying longer in Fusong with a bad grace. Why do you propose a rest with Tonghua so near at hand? You are not like Cha Kwang Su.” I asked. I was unable to agree to his proposal, though I guessed why he had made it.

Cha Kwang Su removed his spectacles and began to clean them with his handkerchief before making a reply, as he usually did when he was going to insist on his opinion.

“The men are all utterly exhausted. You, too. You may deny it but you cannot deceive me. The sick men walk, supported by others. When we look so miserable, how can we meet Commander Ryang Se Bong?” he said.

“Ryang Se Bong is not so narrow-minded that he will fail to understand.”

“A commander with an appreciative eye may understand, but what about the eyes of his several hundred men? It would be bad if we were pointed at and whispered about as a rabble, wouldn't it? I fear that our long march over hundreds of miles might come to nothing.”

No one could refute Cha Kwang Su's argument.

I, too, thought there was some truth in what Cha Kwang Su had said. It was fully possible that if we cut a poor figure in Tonghua, the Independence Army men would make light of the People's Guerrilla Army. If so, our long-arranged plan for a joint operation might fail. It did not seem bad to do as Cha Kwang Su had suggested, so that we could march into Tonghua in orderly array, full of vigour.

I ordered the unit to stop and camp in Erdaojiang and sent an orderly to Commander Ryang to notify him that the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army which had left Antu to conduct a joint operation with the Independence Army had arrived and was resting near Tonghua.

We were billeted on the village of Erdaojiang waiting for the orderly to return and resting after our long journey.

The headquarters was at a miller's.

The old miller and his wife looked after me with all their hearts.

When he saw me giving a dozen of my men a political lesson on the rules of conduct necessary in working with the Independence Army, the miller reproached me for ignoring the sincere intention of the people.

He said, "An ancient sage said 'if one speaks too much, one will lose vigour. If one rejoices too much, one will hurt feelings. If one often grows angry, one will impair one's will.' It is a rule for good health handed down from olden times to think little, worry little, work little, speak little and laugh little. If you speak much, worry much and think much, how can you preserve your health and prevent sickness? Moreover, you soldiers are going to liberate the country, aren't you?"

The old man explained to me dozens of rules of health and repeatedly stressed the need to take good care of my health in consideration of the future, since a great cause could not be achieved in a day. So I had to stop my political lecture and entrust Cha Kwang Su with it. Listening to the old man, we learned that he was a worshipper of Ho Jun and that the rules of health he had explained to us were from the *Tonguibogam* (Handbook on Korean Medicine-Tr.). There was no knowing how and where he acquired the knowledge, but he was well versed in the regimen.

When we left Erdaojiang, the old man handed Cha Kwang Su several packages of pills of dried berries from the Chinese matrimony vine compounded with lotus pips and honey which he had kept in oil paper, and he said that he would be obliged if they were used to promote my health.

I politely declined his offer, for it was tonic compounded for the promotion of his own health.

"Old man, thank you for your concern, but I cannot take it. We young people will live without suffering from infirmity and anemia. You have failed to enjoy your life because of the various hardships you have experienced all your life. Please take the medicine and live long so as to witness the day of Korea's independence."

He was somewhat offended at this and forced the medicine on us, saying, “My days are numbered. Tonics are no good to me. You are vanguards in the fight to win Korea’s independence. If we are old trees, you are young, green trees.”

We left Erdaojiang soon after the orderly came back from Tonghua and conveyed the news that Commander Ryang had received my letter and would welcome the entry of our unit into Tonghua, and that he had told his subordinates to make good preparations to welcome the guerrillas. The men of the guerrilla army had their hair cut and pressed their trousers during their stay in Erdaojiang and, by order of their commanding officers, proceeded in an orderly manner to Tonghua, marching in step and singing revolutionary songs.

When the unit marched out onto the road, I entrusted Kim Il Ryong with leading the column and had a discussion with Cha Kwang Su about the plan for negotiating with Ryang Se Bong. I devoted my whole mind to the work we were to conduct with the Independence Army. Although the old man of the water mill had told me that it was the rules of health to think, worry, speak and laugh little, I could not observe such rigid rules. We had to think, care and discuss more than anyone else since what we did was a process to create everything from scratch and an original creative process of blazing a trail.

I was particularly concerned about what attitude Ryang Se Bong would take towards negotiations with the AJPGA. Cha Kwang Su was doubtful about the results of the negotiations from the beginning, but I was optimistic.

When the streets of Tonghua came in view, a pleasant anecdote about Ryang Se Bong suddenly occurred to me. It was an anecdote my father had told me and my mother when he, lying on his sickbed, recalled some like-minded people one by one.

On the eve of the March First Popular Uprising a project to turn dry fields into paddy fields was launched under the auspices of a mutual assistance team involving some poor peasants in Ryang Se

Bong's village. Ryang Se Bong's family joined this team. As he knew from common sense that paddy fields were more productive, he welcomed the project. But the old people at the upper level of the team stubbornly opposed the project on the plea that they were not sure about paddy farming. With spring sowing approaching the old people argued heatedly every day with the young people.

The young people could not break the stubbornness of the old people. When the sowing season came that year, the team planted millet and barley in the dry field which the young people had wanted to turn into a paddy field. The old people heaved a sigh of relief, thinking it good that the farming of the team was proceeding without a hitch as before, without being interfered with by the young people.

But Ryang Se Bong, the leader of the young people, waited for an opportunity to carry out a plan he had conceived. One night in the rice-transplanting season when frogs were croaking everywhere he went out to the field with an ox and, unnoticed, ploughed several plots that were green with millet and barley to make them paddy fields.

The old people were surprised to see that the millet and barley fields had been turned into paddy fields filled with water in a single night and thundered, "Scoundrels! May you be struck by lightning! You are ruining the farming of the team. If this year's farming fails, you shall become beggars."

That autumn Ryang Se Bong gathered 24 sacks of rice from the plots which had previously yielded nine sacks of millet or barley.

Marvelling at this, the old people of the team said, "What a praiseworthy fellow Se Bong is!" From then on the number of families engaged in rice farming began to increase drastically in Ryang Se Bong's village and the neighbouring villages. The old people who had lorded it over the team came to obey Ryang Se Bong meekly.

I wonder why the anecdote occurred to me with Tonghua near at hand. It is perhaps because I hoped that the negotiation with Ryang Se Bong would be successful.

Ryang Se Bong came to Xingjing County, in south Manchuria having left his birthplace, Cholsan, on the eve of the March First Popular Uprising. It was there that my father first met him.

At that time he was serving as a military inspector in Thongui-bu. After the birth of Jongui-bu he was appointed a company commander and became a leading cadre, winning the favour of Commander O Tong Jin. His company had been stationed in Fusong. So I had met him there.

Ryang Se Bong was transferred to Xingjing County again after we had moved to Fusong from Badaogou, and Jang Chol Ho came to Fusong as his replacement. When Kukmin-bu came into being as a result of the merger of the three nationalist organizations the leading cadres of the Independence Army entrusted the supreme command of the army to Ryang Se Bong who was upright, had great executive ability and was popular with the people. He had great influence not only in military circles but also in the Korean Revolutionary Party involving the veterans of the three organizations.

He loved me dearly as the son of his friend, always saying that Kim Hyong Jik and he were sworn brothers. Ryang Se Bong helped me financially in Jilin, together with O Tong Jin, Son Jong Do, Jang Chol Ho, Ri Ung, Kim Sa Hon and Hyon Muk Gwan.

After the Wangqingmen incident our feelings towards the upper level of Kukmin-bu grew worse and I for a long time failed to meet Ryang Se Bong, the brain of the military circles of the organization which turned reactionary, but I was convinced that Ryang Se Bong's love of and faith in me were constant.

All these were memories conveying to me an agreeable impression of Ryang Se Bong as a man and a patriot. I did not awaken memories which might cast a dark shadow over our efforts to conduct a joint operation. I tried to summon up memories which would brighten the prospects for our negotiations. This might be attributed to a defensive impulse to drive away memories that were unfavourable to our prospects for the negotiations.

Twenty counties of the eastern frontier region were under the

control of Yu Zhi-shan, garrison commander in the eastern peripheral territory. He had once been a general, appointed commander of the 30<sup>th</sup> army by Zhang Zuo-lin, but fell into disfavour with Zhang Xue-liang because he did a poor job of suppressing the revolt of the Broad Sword Society in June 1930. Yu Zhi-shan was the supreme ruler of the eastern peripheral territory, stationing the defence force of the strength of a brigade at strategic points in the area. After the September 18 incident he formed the public peace maintenance commission of the eastern peripheral territory and became its chairman, and he collaborated actively with the puppet government in Fengtian, maintaining contact with the brass hats of the Kwantung Army.

Assured by Yu Zhi-shan of his cooperation, the Kwantung Army did not throw large armed forces into the area and entrusted the maintenance of public peace there to the independent garrison, the Manchukuo army and police. In those days the main force of the Kwantung Army was thrown into north Manchuria.

Taking advantage of this opportunity the Liaoning people's self-defence army led by Tang Ju-wu and the troops of the Korean Revolutionary Army under the command of Ryang Se Bong surrounded Tonghua county town. The head, Okitsu Yoshiro, and other Japanese officials of the Tonghua branch office of the Japanese consulate and their families were awaiting rescue.

Although the headquarters of the Kwantung Army was informed that the lives of the Japanese in Tonghua county town were threatened, it sent there a rescue party of about one hundred policemen and waited for help from Yu Zhi-shan's troops, for all its forces were in north Manchuria. Yu Zhi-shan's troops, divided into two groups, closed in on the allied armies of Ryang Se Bong and Tang Ju-wu from the north and the direction of Fengcheng.

The Kwantung Army had its chief of staff Itagaki speak by radio, "Japanese in Tonghua, reinforcements from Fengtian will arrive tomorrow morning. Please hold out."

So, simultaneously with the dispatch of the fact-finding

commission of the League of Nations to Manchuria the armies fighting against Manchukuo and Japan in Fengtian Province were menacing the Japanese troops of aggression and the puppet Manchukuo troops everywhere. Morale was high in the Korean Revolutionary Army and the self-defence army holding the Tonghua county town.

The Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army entered Tonghua county town on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> of June.

The Independence Army welcomed our party in grand style, putting up the slogans "Welcome to the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army!", "Down with Japanese imperialism!", "Let us win Korea's independence!" throughout the streets. Several hundred men of the Independence Army and citizens lining the street welcomed us with applause and waved their hands. Ryang Se Bong seemed to have intended to make the entry of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army into Tonghua a turning point in the extension and development of the independence movement.

Our party from Antu was divided into two groups. Conducted by the representative of the self-defence army headquarters the men of the national salvation army led by Liu Ben-cao went to the houses of Chinese people to stay, and the men of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army led by me were quartered in the houses of Koreans.

Even after having conducted the guerrillas to their quarters, the Independence Army soldiers remained with us. Their reaction to our unit was better than we had expected. They envied us, saying that at the news of the arrival of a guerrilla army from Antu they had expected paupers carrying spears and matchlocks, but ours was a gentlemanly army.

That night I visited commander Ryang Se Bong at his home. He met me gladly. I first asked about his health and his wife's health and conveyed to him my mother's compliments.

"Mother often spoke about you, even after she had moved to Antu. Mother said to me, 'When your father passed away, Commander Ryang and his friends held a funeral for him and recommended you

to Hwasong Uisuk School. Don't forget his kindness.' ”

At this Ryang Se Bong said, waving his hand, “Your father and I were sworn brothers. Don't mention it. I shall never forget the encouragement I received from your father. How is your mother? I heard she has been suffering much from stomach trouble after moving to Antu.”

“Yes, she seems to be fairly far gone in her sickness. Recently she lies in bed more than she works.”

Thus our conversation began by our asking after each other's health. I told him about the impression I had got upon entering Tonghua.

“We were all moved to tears when we saw hundreds of your men welcoming us with cheers in the street. Our hearts were light when we saw the bright faces of the Independence Army soldiers.”

“Our men are not so good at fighting, but they do not neglect to offer hospitality.”

“You are too modest. Before leaving Antu we heard that your troop had surrounded and easily seized Tonghua county town in cooperation with Tang Ju-wu's Liaoning people's self-defence army.”

“That is not worth boasting about. The self-defence army is tens of thousands strong. If it cannot capture a walled town, how can it justify its existence?”

Nevertheless, he gave me a detailed account of the siege of Tonghua county town.

After thus talking with him that day, I stayed overnight in his house. I did not say why I had come and he did not ask. I felt a little uneasy about his not asking me the aim of our expedition, but I accepted his hospitality and renewed my hope that the negotiation would be successful.

After breakfast the next day we talked in real earnest.

Ryang Se Bong broke the ice, “As you know, now Manchuria has become a hornets' nest. A multitude of hornets have risen to sting the uninvited guest called Japan. Tang Ju-wu, Li Chun-run, Xu Yuan-

yuan, Sun Xiu-yan, Wang Feng-ge, Deng Tie-mei and Wang Tong-xuan—all of them are hornets in the eastern peripheral territory. How many hornets have also risen in east and north Manchuria! I think if we put up a good fight by pooling our efforts we will win. What do you think, Commander?”

What he said was in line with the aim of our expedition. He had expressed his desire for a joint operation of his own accord and had taken the initiative in proposing it, and I was grateful to him for it.

I admired his broad vision with which he viewed the independence movement from the national viewpoint and gladly accepted his proposal.

“I agree with you as to fighting in cooperation with each other. We came to you to discuss this matter. I think if the armed units of Korea form an alliance and the Chinese armed units join forces with one another, and the patriots and peoples of Korea and China fight in unity, we are fully capable of defeating Japanese imperialism,” I said.

Ryang Se Bong said with a smile, “If you agree, let’s discuss the matter in earnest.”

“But sir, the situation requires unity, whereas our nation is, to our regret, not united. Neither are the communists united nor are the nationalists. The nationalists and communists are not united with each other. How can we fight our strong enemy Japan in this way?” I asked.

“That is entirely because the Leftists are conducting a wrong policy. Since you’re also a Leftist, you must realize that. Because the Leftists pushed ahead with the struggle too vehemently, they lost the hearts of the people. They made peasants despots through a tenancy dispute and disposed of landlords on the plea of Red May or so. That is why the Chinese avoid Koreans. Those engaged in the communist movement are entirely to blame for it.”

This was a remark which could be heard only from those who were disgusted with every manner of violence organized by communists. But I did not think he had spoken thus because he was hostile to the workers and peasants and sympathized with the

landlords and capitalists. Before he joined the independence movement he was a poor peasant who had a hard time of it. He was a tenant farmer verging on being a debtor slave who was pestered and harassed by a landlord for the payment of a debt at the end of the year and a descendant of poor peasants who had miraculously survived the years of famine, living on barnyard grass gruel mixed with radish leaves.

I did not think that he denounced the violent struggle organized by the communists because he opposed communist ideas themselves or defended their antithesis, capitalist ideas. What he ridiculed and criticized was the form of movement and methods of struggle applied by some communists, not communist ideas themselves. But, the attitude and approach to methods could not but exert an influence on the attitude and approach to ideas. The Leftist errors committed by the early communists in the guidance of the mass movement resulted in dispelling the yearning for communism from the minds of many people who aspired after the new trend, to our regret. Through my talks with Commander Ryang Se Bong I again realized the great harm caused by the errors of the old-time communists.

I admitted that some communists had rashly committed Leftist errors in the mass struggle. Nevertheless, I thought it necessary to rectify Ryang Se Bong's biased view, according to which he described the whole of the mass struggle as a harmful act that destroyed national unity.

I said, "As you have said, it is a fact that the leading figures of the Korean Communist Party committed too much of a deviation in conducting the class struggle. To tell the truth we, too, suffered much because of their reckless Leftist acts. As a result, Koreans were even thought to be the stooges of the Japanese, weren't they? However, I think it inevitable that peasants rise against landlords. As you know, having been engaged in farming for many years, how much is given to the landlord and how much to the peasants in autumn? Because peasants find it hard to eke out a living, being deprived of what they have harvested at so much effort, there are tenant disputes as they

strive to survive. They can't be tarred with the same brush, can they?"

Commander Ryang did not respond, either because he was displeased with my arguing for the inevitability of the mass struggle or because he took my argument to be fair.

That day the troops of the Independence Army held a meeting of welcome for the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Among the men of the Independence Army there were many young people who were under the communist influence of members of the DIU and political workers sent by us from Liuhe and Xingjing. The meeting of welcome was held in grand style and an enthusiastic manner, having been arranged under the auspices of these young people. The meeting was attended by many Koreans resident in Tonghua county town.

Hosts and guests in turn made speeches and sang songs. During the meeting clear differences between the characters of the men of the guerrilla army and those of the Independence Army were revealed. The Independence Army men admired the guerrillas for their free and easy character, modesty, optimism, constancy, and vigour, as well as for the good order of their unit. They most envied the revolutionary songs our men sang and our Model 38 rifles.

Some Independence Army men were puzzled and said, "Where did such a sturdy army suddenly appear from?" and others said, "I hope that we reach an agreement as to a joint operation with you. What is the result of the talks with Commander Ryang?"

Commander Ryang visited the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army to inspect the soldiers I had brought. Our soldiers welcomed him warmly with applause and a military salute. But Commander Ryang made an anti-communist speech, which changed the welcoming atmosphere into a hostile one.

He said, "To win the independence of Korea one must first of all refrain from acts that benefit the enemy. But the communist party is now acting in the favour of the enemy. They set workers to fight with capitalists in the factory, peasants against landlords in the countryside and, advocating sex equality, wives against their husbands within the family. They sow the seeds of discord within the nation and set up

barriers of distrust between nations, advocating expropriation and the overthrow of oppressors on the slightest excuse.”

All our men were enraged at his speech. Cha Kwang Su turned pale and gazed at him with reproachful eyes.

I, too, disapproved of Ryang Se Bong’s speech which was run through with anti-communism. I wondered why he made such a speech.

“Sir, we are not doing things beneficial to the enemy. We fight for the liberation of the Korean nation and for the interests of the working people. To achieve the independence of Korea the struggle should be led by the workers, peasants and other working people. The efforts of a few patriots and heroes in the old fashion are not enough.”

When I made this remark, our men began to attack Kukmin-bu unanimously: Wasn’t it beneficial to the enemy for Kukmin-bu to have murdered six young patriots at Wangqingmen? How does the Kukmin-bu group dare to treat us roughly on the excuse of our so-called helping the enemy, after committing such a great crime before the nation?

Offended by this, Ryang Se Bong slandered us. He went so far in his attack on us and so departed from etiquette that I was astonished. The way he reproved us, losing his reason, seemed somehow strange to me. I wondered whether what I had said hurt his self-respect and whether someone undesirous of a joint operation had spoken ill of us to him. Anyway, there must have been a reason why he was so offended.

But I talked patiently to him, saying, “Sir, why are you so offended? It will take time for you to know what we are like, won’t it? I think your men and my guerrillas should meet each other frequently to gain a mutual understanding.”

Ryang Se Bong did not respond to this.

I returned to my quarters with a hope and the confidence that if we persuaded him patiently we would bring him over to our side, though he was firm in his anti-communist attitude. It can be said that a lack of belief in others is a manifestation of exclusivism, while belief in

others is the greatest manifestation of humanitarianism. I held that the best humanitarianism for patriots who were deprived of their country was to achieve national unity and deliver their parents, brothers, sisters and compatriots through the concerted efforts of the nation.

To achieve this aim I had visited Ryang Se Bong at the head of the unit which had been born just one month before.

Then on the day of the breakdown of the negotiations I was informed by a member of our organization in Tonghua that the Independence Army was plotting to disarm the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army.

I could not believe that Ryang Se Bong had hatched the plot, but we withdrew promptly from Tonghua as a precautionary measure. Thus I parted from Liu Ben-cao, too.

The men of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army were in a gloomy frame of mind when they left Tonghua to avoid a conflict with the Independence army, having failed to reach an agreement on a joint operation against Japan which was urgently needed. Cha Kwang Su trudged at the rear of the column in silence, looking into his memo-book in which an itinerary was written.

"Comrade Kwang Su, why are you so sulky and angry today?" I asked him with a smile, guessing his feelings.

He put the memo-book into his pocket and said in an angry voice, "Should I smile at this time? Frankly speaking, I am furious. We came 250 miles in haste, bleeding, but it came to naught."

"Why do you, the chief of staff, regard the negotiations with the Independence Army only as a failure?"

"So they were a success, not a failure? Anyway Commander Ryang intended not to conduct a joint operation but to disarm us, didn't he?"

"You, the chief of staff, saw only the looks of those at the higher level, and not those in the lower echelon. How the Independence Army soldiers admired and envied our guerrilla army! I attach more importance to that than to a rumour about disarming us. What is important is not the looks of those at the upper level but the attitude

of those in the lower echelon. In this I see the future joint operation.”

Though I said this, I had no firm confidence in the future alliance. I only expressed my presentiment and hope.

In fact I was in mental agony. I was pained at the thought: Why is it so difficult to agree to a joint operation of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and the Independence Army who are of the same nationality, while cooperation between Commander Ryang and Tang Ju-wu and that between Commander Yu and us who were of different nationalities were agreed upon? Is joint operation with Commander Ryang impossible?

Whether the Independence Army had plotted to disarm us or not remained unknown for a long time. Although I thought the information was true because it was supplied by a member of our organization, I hoped it was groundless. Even if it was true, I had no mind to blame Commander Ryang for it. A man's thinking has limitations and it takes enormous time and experience to overcome them. Therefore, when we left Tonghua then, I did not draw a hasty conclusion that cooperation with the Independence Army was impossible.

I rather hoped that some day Commander Ryang would understand our real intention and the time would come when he would open the door to cooperation. Patriotism can be compared to a stream flowing into a sea called alliance with communism.

Commander Choe Yun Gu of the Independence Army who defected to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army at the head of his troops many years later wistfully recalled with me the summer of 1932. According to Commander Choe it was not Ryang Se Bong but a staff officer under him who plotted to disarm the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. Commander Ryang wanted to agree on cooperation with the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army but the staff officer spoke ill of us behind our backs, advocating anti-communism, and together with his trusted henchmen hatched a plot to disarm us.

Choe Yun Gu's remark entirely cleared our suspicion of

Commander Ryang. When I heard that Commander Ryang was constantly pained because of the rupture with us and that he was not involved in the plot against us, I felt relieved. It gladdened me that I could again confirm that he was a pure patriot and had an unstained sense of duty, though he is now dead. I am particularly happy when a man I have taken as good remains good even after decades and my good impression of him is not impaired.

Ryang Se Bong's error was that he had failed to see the enemy's evil design. He was upright and resolute, but did not know that the staff officer under him was plotting to wreck cooperation with us. Commander Ryang failed to see his ulterior design in viciously slandering us. He died regrettably because he was taken in by an enemy's trick.

It was in his latter years that Commander Ryang Se Bong switched over from anti-communism to an alliance with communism. The situation in the Independence Army was then very complicated. The subversive activities of the secret agents and their corrupt henchmen became grave and the numbers of stragglers and deserters increased from day to day. On the other hand, the voices calling for cooperation with the communists grew louder.

Ryang Se Bong could not ignore the communists any more. Admitting that an age of upheaval had come in which the communists had appeared as the main force of revolution in Korea and China and were exerting a great influence, he reviewed his attitude to communism and in the course of this decided to cooperate with the communists.

Commander Ryang, who had failed to decide on cooperation with us, falling prey to a misunderstanding of communism and unintentional hostility, switched over to an alliance with the communists. It was a remarkable event not only in his life but also in the history of the struggle of the Independence Army. That he abandoned anti-communism and chose the path of cooperation with the communists can be proved by the fact that he conducted a joint operation with Yang Jing-yu. He had a mind to cooperate with us as well.

The Japanese imperialists were particularly fearful that Ryang Se Bong's army would join hands with us. A joint operation of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the Independence Army would mean the political and military unity of communists and nationalists in the national liberation struggle in Korea. This was a great threat to the enemy.

The Japanese military police, police and secret service hatched a plot to murder Ryang Se Bong and break up the Independence Army from within. The plot was carried out by the military police in Fengtian and the Fukushima Agency under the government-general in Korea. The "flying corps of the secret service of the Kwantung Army in the eastern frontier region" also kept watch on and shadowed Ryang Se Bong.

Over 100,000 *yuan* is said to have been appropriated as secret funds for the operation to murder Ryang Se Bong. Secret agents in Xingjing, including Pak Chang Hae, were enlisted in the operation.

After having worked out a scheme to lure Commander Ryang, the enemy dispatched the traitor Wang, who had cooperated with the Independence Army and maintained contact with it at ordinary times. One day Wang visited Ryang Se Bong and said that the Chinese anti-Japanese army wanted to meet him to discuss helping the Independence Army. Foolishly believing him, Ryang Se Bong went with him to Dalizi where he was told the anti-Japanese army was waiting for him.

Suddenly on the way Wang produced his pistol and shouted, "I'm not the Wang Ming-fan of old. Surrender to the Japanese if you want to stay alive."

When Commander Ryang took out his weapon and shouted at Wang, the enemy who were lying in ambush in a sorghum field shot him to death.

As Choe Il Chon said, "Pak Je Sang's advice to prefer punishment by Korea to serving the Japanese Emperor" was the spirit of the late Commander, and it struck terror into the hearts of the enemy.

I sometimes think that if he had taken the path of an alliance with

communism his fate might have been different. Of course, I say this out of my lingering regret over his death.

“I die and cannot fight Japan any more, but you remain alive and seek and go to Commander Kim Il Sung. That is the only way to survive.” Leaving this instruction to his subordinates, Commander Ryang closed his eyes. It was a declaration of cooperation with the communists made by a patriot on his death bed, removing the barrier of anti-communism.

Over 300 men of the Independence Army who had welcomed us in the streets of Tonghua came to Mt. Paektu, led by Commander Choe Yun Gu four years later, to join the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army. I met them in Huadian.

The Koreans in Huanren County buried Commander Ryang’s remains in a grave that was level with the ground so that the enemy would not find his body.

But the Japanese troops and police found his body and dug it up, beheaded it and hung the head up in the street.

Commander Ryang’s bereaved family were very badly treated. Persecuted by the Japanese and Manchukuo troops and police, they changed their surname Ryang into Kim and led a secluded life in a mountain village in Huanren over 250 miles from a railway.

After liberation I sent people to south Manchuria and had Ryang’s bereaved family brought to the homeland. His wife Yun Jae Sun, his son, daughters and sons-in-law returned to the homeland.

“Old lady, having lost your husband and having been persecuted by the Japanese troops and police, you must have had a hard time of it.”

When I greeted her with these words, she wept, her shoulders shaking.

“General, now that I have seen your face I feel as if all my sorrows have vanished. Being driven from place to place is no great trouble. But you must have had a hard time of it, driving out the Japanese.”

“I failed to get in touch with you because I was busy fighting the enemy. Excuse me.”

“General, don’t mention it. We in the mountains heard news of you. When I heard news of you I inwardly reproached my husband for having died in a foreign land without following you.”

“However, Commander Ryang put up a good fight without yielding to his last days.”

Later we sent his son Ryang Ui Jun to Mangyongdae Revolutionary School.

Kim Ku who visited the school on the occasion of the April Joint Conference of the Representatives of Political Parties and Social Organizations of North and South Korea was surprised to see Commander Ryang’s son there.

“I never imagined that the north Korean authorities would educate the son of the Commander of the Independence Army in this school where the sons and daughters of guerrilla fighters are being educated,” he said.

“This school is attended not only by sons and daughters of guerrillas but also by those of the patriotic martyrs who were engaged in the trade union and peasants’ association movement in the homeland. We make no distinction between the patriots who laid down their lives for the country, whatever group they belonged to,” I said.

Moved by this, Kim Ku said, “The school is the symbol of national unity.”

Ryang Ui Jun became a political worker in an air force unit after leaving school, but he was killed in a plane crash after the war.

I was very saddened by the news. I feared that Commander Ryang’s lineage might be broken.

Fortunately Ryang Ui Jun left a son behind him. He was named Ryang Chol Su. But he was crippled with polio.

The Party saw to it that he was given the same education at primary school, senior middle school and then university for 14 years as other, healthy, boys were. His comrades carried him on a wheel chair to and from the classroom on the 17<sup>th</sup> floor of the university building every day for four years while he attended Kim Il Sung

University. Our second and third generations' respect for the patriotic martyrs was thus manifested in the warm affection shown for the crippled grandson of the martyr.

Ryang Chol Su has become a fully-fledged writer for the Republic and creates literary works in bed.

He has two sons and a daughter. They are Ryang Se Bong's great-grandsons and great-granddaughter. On harvest moon day they and their parents visit their great-grandfather's tomb in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery. They probably do not know what distressed and anguished their great-grandfather during his lifetime.

I hope that the burden of the question—anti-communism or an alliance with communism—will not weigh on these innocent children.

## 5. With an Ideal of Unity

We speeded up our march towards Liuhe. Liuhe, along with Xingjing, Tonghua, Huadian and Panshi, was widely known as an important operational base of the Korean independence movement in south Manchuria. Many fighters of the new generation who aspired to communism, as well as the independence fighters of the previous generation, were operating in that region. The Sinhung Training School which was famous as the first military academy in the history of the independence movement of Korea was located in Hanihe, Liuhe County, in south Manchuria.

We had decided on Liuhe as our destination in order to conduct extensive political work for expanding the mass foundation of the AJPGA in that area. We had also intended to launch an intensive campaign to give the masses revolutionary training and expand the ranks of the guerrilla army not only in Liuhe but also in Sanyuanpu, Gushanzi, Hailong, Mengjiang and other places on our way back to Antu. This was one aspect of the strategy of our campaign in south Manchuria.

On our way we stopped at Sanyuanpu, Gushanzi, Liuhe and Hailong to work with the revolutionary organizations there.

After the September 18 incident the revolutionary organizations in these areas had been severely disrupted by the enemy's white terrorism. Most of the organizations which the communists of the new generation had formed over several years at the cost of their blood and sweat had been disrupted or disbanded. Some organizations would never be reactivated because all their members had been killed or arrested.

Hailong had suffered most because of the September 18 incident. The Japanese consulate was situated there and the enemy had struck

deeper root there than in any other area. Everywhere we went, there were people who had been trying hard to re-establish contact with their organizations.

In all the places where we stopped we met members of the primary party organizations which had been expanded from the first parent party organization, as well as core members of the YCLK and the AIYL and leaders of the Peasants Union, the Anti-Japanese Women's Association and the Children's Expeditionary Corps. We acquainted ourselves with the activities of these organizations and discussed with them the immediate revolutionary work and fighting tasks. In the course of this I learned that there were some problems that could not be overlooked with regard to the tendency and way of thinking of the members of the revolutionary organizations in these areas.

The first problem was the defeatist tendency which had become widespread as a result of the September 18 incident.

This tendency found expression first in the fact that people were thinking that things were hopeless since Manchuria had been occupied by Japan. Quite a few people were thinking that it was useless to wait for Korea's independence, or that there was no knowing when Korea would become independent, because Japan, who had defeated Qing and Russia, the largest country in the world, and occupied Manchuria, was now casting her covetous eyes on China proper, because the US and British armies, powerful as they were, would not be a match for the Japanese army, and because Japan might even occupy the whole world. The illusion about the Japanese army that had been created by its victory in the Sino-Japanese war and the Russo-Japanese war became exaggerated and widespread around this time.

Some people even thought that it was empty talk to say that the Korean nation could defeat Japanese imperialism on its own. Such an opinion might lead to a capitulationist idea that there was no need to fight for the revolution when there was no hope of success.

Without overcoming this defeatism, it was impossible to rally the

people and enlist the broad patriotic masses in the revolution.

We selected the commanding officers and men who had been well-qualified politically and practically, and sent them among the masses to give them public lectures and explanations on the subject of the September 18 incident and the future of the Korean revolution.

The audience was interested mainly in news of our battle against the Japanese, and particularly in the size and the tactical and strategic principles of the AJPGA. I repeated the speech I had made to the people in Liujiafenfang and the audience applauded.

The most popular topic in our lectures and conversations was the story of the battle on the border between Antu and Fusong counties. When compared to the victory of Japan in her sweeping conquest of Manchuria that resulted in the setting up of Manchukuo, our victory in the battle that destroyed a company of the enemy was insignificant. But the people listened to our account of the battle with the utmost interest. They were struck with admiration at the news that the young AJPGA which had just made a start had destroyed a company of the Japanese army on a road in broad daylight when Japan was lording it over Manchuria.

They wanted to know all the details of the battle, even how the enemy had given up resistance to our counterattack and run away. They showered us with a barrage of questions. We had to repeat several times the same details in the same place.

When I reviewed the people's impressions of the result of the battle on the Antu-Fusong border, I realized once again that actions were more effective than words in convincing the people of the possibility of winning independence by the efforts of our nation, and that it was important to demonstrate the strength of the guerrilla army through actual battles.

Another problem arising in the people's tendency was that some young people, with the founding of the AJPGA, regarded the armed struggle as absolute and underestimated the underground revolutionary activities. They were neglecting their organizational life, thinking that it was pointless to hold meetings and discussions

and scatter leaflets every day at a time when the enemy was crushing anything with its tanks, artillery and aircraft, and that it would be more worthwhile for them to rise in arms and kill even one Japanese than to conduct underground activities.

They did not realize that the armed struggle was undertaken by nuclei trained in an organization and that it was impossible to form armed forces and expand their ranks without a large organizational reservoir. It could also be called an aftermath of the Left infantile disorder resulting from the September 18 incident.

It was not very difficult to bring home to them the fact that the reservoir of the AJPGA was organizations, that a revolutionary struggle was inconceivable and could not be carried out without the organizations, and that if the organizations were not active, the life of the gigantic organism called the revolution would come to an end. We tried to convince them that the Korean communists were able to form AJPGA units in various parts of Manchuria and launch the armed resistance entirely because the revolutionary masses had carried out their activities faithfully in their organizations.

Another problem with the people in south Manchuria was the tendency to respond to the terrorism of Kukmin-bu with terrorism. In those days the Kukmin-bu reactionaries were intensifying their terrorism against the communists in south Manchuria and the progressive nationalists who were attempting to alter its principles.

The members of the YCLK and AIYL in the Liuhe area insisted on responding to the Right-wingers of Kukmin-bu who had indulged in terrorism. They would not accept our reasoning that it was harmful to react to Kukmin-bu terrorism with terrorism. They insisted that if nothing was done by force to deter them from committing terrorism, it would only encourage them to further terrorism.

I had to explain at length why terrorism in return for terrorism was not just and proper and why it was reckless and would do great harm to the revolution.

I told them to this effect: Needless to say, Kukmin-bu, by killing patriots, is committing a serious crime that can never be redressed,

and losing stalwart patriots at the hands of our compatriots is a tragedy for us all, a tragedy which we can do nothing to stop; for this crime Kukmin-bu will be cursed for ever by our nation and by posterity; of course, I understand why you have labelled it as a gang of murderers and resolved to take revenge; but we must think deeply why something so disgraceful happens before we take up an avenging sword; we must not assume that all the people in Kukmin-bu are evil on the ground that it has degenerated into a den of Right-wing nationalists; the problem is that the Japanese imperialists, in order to make it reactionary, have smuggled their agents into it and are plotting ceaselessly to break it up; alarmed at the emergence of a new progressive group in Kukmin-bu, they have been cunningly encouraging a split and conflict within the organization; if we destroy Kukmin-bu by terrorist means, only the Japanese will be happy and benefit from it; therefore, we must ferret out the Japanese agents in it and lay the enemy's plot bare while isolating its reactionary upper level; let none of us forget that unity is the guarantee of national resurrection.

At this the young people nodded. While correcting these tendencies, we gave the comrades in south Manchuria the tasks of restoring the disrupted organizations as soon as possible and rallying more people around them, of training hardcore elements and sending them to the armed force, of expanding the party organizations by recruiting young communists of worker and peasant origin who had been tested in the practical struggle, and of improving the work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese armed units.

When we were staying in the areas of Sanyuanpu, Gushanzi, Liuhe and Hailong, many young people volunteered to join the army. This could be called a result of the political work we had conducted in south Manchuria.

In order to solve the difficult problems in promoting the revolutionary movement in Liuhe, we had to enhance the role of Choe Chang Gol and other members of the first party organization and the hardcore members of the YCLK who had been sent to work

in this area. Therefore, we tried hard to discover the whereabouts of Choe Chang Gol with whom we had lost contact the previous year. If we met him, we could hold a serious discussion on intensifying the revolution in south Manchuria to suit the new situation in which Japan had occupied Manchuria and we had started the armed struggle. We could show him the direction for his work. Choe Chang Gol was our representative in south Manchuria, so to speak.

Liuhe was the area in which Choe had operated, according to the decision of the DIU, and a place with which he was greatly associated. He had served as a soldier of the Independence Army there and had been recommended to Hwasong Uisuk School by Ryang Se Bong. After the closure of the school, he went back to his former company and, serving as adviser to the Independence Army, devoted all his energy to expanding the DIU's influence in Liuhe and in the wide area of south Manchuria. In Liuhe he took part in a raid on the branch of the Japanese consulate in Jinchuan county town.

The rapid expansion of the ranks of the DIU in Liuhe, Xingjing and other places in south Manchuria could be attributed not only to the unremitting efforts of Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su but also to the titanic struggle and the efficient and seasoned working ability of Choe Chang Gol who could be called the master of that area. He went into the Independence Army, a forbidden area for the new ideology, and did not hide the fact that he was a communist while he lived among them; on the contrary, he actively awakened the progressive Independence Army soldiers to consciousness and transformed many of them into adherents of communism. He conducted work with people on so large a scale and in so daring a way that his superior officer connived at it, instead of reporting him to his seniors, even when Choe did political work for months 4 kilometres away from the area where his unit was stationed.

Liuhe had been under the strong influence of the factionalists and the conservative nationalists who were indulging in an anti-communist conspiracy. Those from the M-L group formed an organization called the Residents' Association in Panshi County in

opposition to the nationalist organizations in south Manchuria. Inside the Independence Army which was on the verge of division because of the antagonism between the progressive group and the conservative group, some Left-wingers who aspired to socialism, joining hands with the Tuesday group and the Seoul-Shanghai group, were speeding up their efforts to form a national single-front organization.

Hyon Muk Gwan, Ko I Ho and other conservatives launched a wide reactionary offensive against those aspiring to communism. In this complicated situation Choe Chang Gol formed an AIYL organization in Liuhe and expanded it rapidly.

The factionalists tried to find fault with him, saying that the AIYL in Liuhe was not a proper organization since the General Federation of Korean Youth in China was the one and only organization of the Korean youth in China. The factionalists from the M-L group infiltrated alien elements into the Liuhe AIYL to break it up from within. They recruited dozens of young men from Panshi and summoned them to Danigou to form a terrorist organization called Cudgel; then, they gave the police the false information that the Independence Army was plotting a riot in Sanyuanpu and, in cooperation with the police, attacked the cadres of the AIYL.

Choe Chang Gol checked their shameful act and rescued the hardcore members of the league from the assault.

He did not retaliate against the provocations of the factionalists by resorting to arms. By nature, he was broad-minded in his approach to people and in handling affairs. When he met me in Kalun later, he said that he was very surprised that he had not lost his reason and had refrained from opening fire when he saw AIYL members spitting blood and having their flesh torn by the cudgels of the factionalists.

Cha Kwang Su was most delighted at our going to Liuhe. He did not hide his delight, looking forward as he was to seeing Choe Chang Gol. Cha Kwang Su, like Choe Chang Gol, knew Liuhe. When Choe, with a pistol at his side, had been working under the command of Ryang Se Bong, Cha taught the children there. At that time they had

become comrades sharing the same idea.

“I am fastidious about people, but I lost my heart to Cha when I first met him. He appears boisterous, but he is a man. He has ten Karl Marxes in his head.”

Once Choe Chang Gol said, jokingly, as he recalled their first encounter:

“If I were a girl,” Choe continued, “I would not hesitate to marry that boisterous fellow. It seems the girls in Jilin are all blind.” Cha Kwang Su smiled at his joke.

In his days in Jilin Cha Kwang Su was still a bachelor. Choe Chang Gol always said he would arrange a match for Cha and lead his horse to his bride’s house on his wedding day.

Whenever they met they would joke openly with each other, one claiming to be older than the other, so the other should respect his elder. Their friendship was intimate and deep enough to stir the envy and jealousy of everyone else.

It can be said their friendship was further strengthened during the days when they were expanding the ranks of the YCLK and the AIYL in the areas of Liuhe, Xingjing and Tieling. Choe Chang Gol, with Cha Kwang Su, formed the Gushanzi branch of the Young Communist League of Korea and set up enlightenment organizations called the institute of social sciences in Xingjing, Liuhe, Panshi and in several other counties in south Manchuria, with Wangqingmen as the centre.

The institute had the mission of studying and propagating Marxism-Leninism and the guiding theory of the Korean revolution. Its mode of operation was similar to that of a correspondence course today. It summoned young people and gave them lectures for about a fortnight at the end of the farming season and enlightened its members by giving them lessons at home once every few months and by posting the necessary study materials to them for the rest of the year. The members of the institute studied by themselves what they had learned in the lectures, referring to the materials, and held a discussion once a week; they fully digested the materials by a

question-and-answer method through correspondence if there was a subject that was difficult to understand.

When I heard Cha Kwang Su's explanation of the activities of the institute of social sciences in Liuhe in the autumn of the year when the conference of the General Federation of the Korean Youth in South Manchuria was convened, I could only admire the original and fresh mode of its operation and I praised the three comrades (Choe Chang Gol, Cha Kwang Su and Kim Hyok) who had been running the institute as people who had done a lot of creative work. The method they had created in practice showed that, if we racked our brains, we would be fully able to educate the young people to make them pioneers of the times and trailblazers of history even in the difficult circumstances in which we were conducting an underground struggle.

As I led the column towards Sanyuanpu, looking forward to meeting Choe Chang Gol soon, I felt my heart beating no less than Cha Kwang Su.

Two years had passed since we parted with one another after forming the first party organization in Kalun. In those years he had formed party organizations and expanded various mass organizations in the wide region of south Manchuria including Liuhe, Xingjing, Hailong, Qingyuan and Panshi, and commanded a unit of the Korean Revolutionary Army, busying himself with recruiting men and making the material preparations that were necessary for building a standing revolutionary armed force. In the spring of 1931 he had renamed the Jijiang command of the KRA the eastern revolutionary army and taken command of it. The liaison officer who had brought this news to me from Choe Chang Gol had told me that Choe had been having a great deal of trouble in his conflict with the reactionary group of Kukmin-bu.

Communications with Liuhe had been broken since then. I had been feeling anxious about this. I was uneasy not only because he was an inherent adventurer and optimist who would devote himself unsparingly to any task, but also because he was a communist operating under the eyes of the reactionaries, within the frame work

of Kukmin-bu which had begun to regard terrorism as an all-powerful means. He was on Kukmin-bu's blacklist, so to speak.

Towards the end of the year when the Wangqingmen incident happened, the Kukmin-bu reactionaries had attempted to arrest six young communists, including Choe Chang Gol and Choe Tuk Hyong, and execute them at Daniugou. This is recorded in history as the Liuhe incident.

Since this incident the progressive forces within Kukmin-bu who had been aspiring to the new ideology had denounced the reactionary group bitterly. Choe Chang Gol, who might have been a victim, had been furious, saying that he would take revenge on the fascist leadership of Kukmin-bu.

On being informed of the incident, I had sent Pak Kun Won to Liuhe with a letter which read: "A clash with Kukmin-bu, in any form, will be utterly destructive. There should not, and cannot, be bloodshed among compatriots who are opposed to Japanese imperialism. We endured with tears in our eyes the grief of losing six of our comrades in Wangqingmen. Be cautious in everything and do not act on impulse."

After the Liuhe incident Kukmin-bu had split into two camps at an executive committee meeting and a conference of the Korean Revolutionary Party held in August, 1930. Hyon Muk Gwan, Ryang Se Bong, Ko I Ho, Kim Mun Go, Ryang Ha San and others persisted in their conservative policy, whereas Ko Won Am, Kim Sok Ha, Ri Jin Thak, Ri Ung, Hyon Ha Juk, Ri Kwan Rin and other young figures, opposing the implementation of this policy, had labelled the Korean Revolutionary Party as a fascist political party which opposed the people's views, and proposed a new, innovative principle that the party should be dissolved and that the proletariat should be made the vanguard of the class struggle so as to provide leadership for the Korean peasants in Manchuria.

Owing to their contradictory ideals, the two groups had fought to bring down and bury each other.

The Kukmin-bu group had, with the connivance of the Fengtian

provincial administration, even bribed Chinese officials and the military police and enlisted them in purging the anti-Kukmin-bu group by terrorist means. They had assassinated five of their opponents, including Ri Jin Thak. In retaliation the dissidents had raided Kukmin-bu headquarters and shot Kim Mun Go, the 4<sup>th</sup> company commander, to death. Later the dissidents had announced their secession and formed an anti-Kukmin-bu committee with the aim of toppling Kukmin-bu.

My worries about the safety of Choe Chang Gol were founded on this political base. At a place not far from Sanyuanpu I gave the order to speed up the march. Our anxiety to see Choe as soon as possible spurred us on.

In Sanyuanpu we were struck dumb when we heard the news about him. The organization members there said that he had been killed. According to them, he had been arrested by the Right-wingers of Kukmin-bu while guiding the work of the Gushanzi branch of the YCLK and had disappeared. A young man called Pak from the Gushanzi branch of the YCLK confirmed this story. He had come to us after hearing the news of the arrival of the AJPGA. He told us that the Kukmin-bu terrorists had lured Choe to Jiangjiadian in Jinchuan County and killed him, and had spread the rumour that they had executed him because he was a secret communist agent. Some said he had been killed while operating between Hailong and Qingyuan.

Anyway, it seemed that there was no doubt that he was dead. I was so furious that I could neither speak nor cry. How could he, one of the builders of the DIU who had at all times been passionate and considerate, leave us without a word of his death! This caused further overwhelming grief for us after our bitter experience on a nameless hill on the border between Antu and Fusong counties. The death of such a loyal comrade-in-arms as Choe Chang Gol at the historic juncture when the armed struggle had started with the birth of the AJPGA and when the rumbling of its guns was heralding the advent of a new era over the vast area of Manchuria, was a heart-rending loss to our revolution.

Cha Kwang Su, sitting beside me on the grass that had withered under the scorching sun, was shedding copious tears.

I wanted to see the bereaved family of Choe Chang Gol, so I led the unit to Gushanzi. His wife, along with his son who could not yet even toddle and his younger brother, greeted us. The widow was a strong-hearted woman. She did not weep in front of us. On the contrary, she requested my permission to join the guerrilla army to fight against the Japanese imperialists with arms in hand and fulfil her husband's unfinished cause.

We altered our schedule and stayed overnight with the bereaved family.

The next morning when we were leaving Gushanzi the widow accompanied us for a long way to see us off. I did not know how to console her; I held her son in my arms and stroked his cheeks. The boy, who had cut only two teeth, was the perfect image of his father. He said, "Papa!" "Papa!" as he touched my face. His mother shed tears for the first time at the sight of this. I also felt like crying and, pressing my cheek against his, I gazed quietly at Gushanzi village for a while.

"Madam, let us bring this boy up excellently so that he can succeed his father."

I became too choked to say anything more.

When we had marched about two kilometres from Gushanzi, Kim Il Ryong, seeing me so depressed, proposed that we fire a volley in memory of Choe Chang Gol. He seemed to think that I might brighten up if a volley was fired for him. This was thoughtful of Kim Il Ryong, who had himself suffered manifold hardships and difficulties.

I said, "I don't want to believe the rumour that he was killed. How can we fire a volley for his death when we haven't seen his body?"

When we arrived at Liangjiangkou, after passing through Mengjiang, we received the astonishing news that about 20 Independence Army soldiers who had been hiding in the Fusong area, in cooperation with a Chinese armed unit of about 70 to 80, were

plotting to raid our unit and disarm it. This plot had been hatched by the Independence Army under Kukmin-bu. They had discovered the route of the march of the AJPGA from Mengjiang in the direction of Liangjiangkou and then informed a Chinese nationalist army unit that our unit was the main force of the communist army. The Independence Army soldiers and the Chinese armed unit were waiting for us in the village we were to pass through.

Those who gave us this information were the Young Communist League members of Liangjiangkou. There were many organization members and young people there whom I knew. It was immediately upon our arrival in Liangjiangkou that they gave us this information.

The guerrillas were furious, saying that we should annihilate the Kukmin-bu terrorists to avenge Choe Chang Gol's death. Even those comrades who had joined me in soothing the young people in Liuhe who were calling for taking revenge on the Kukmin-bu terrorists who had killed six of our comrades in the Huaimaoshan valley when the General Federation of the Korean Youth in South Manchuria was at conference and who had killed Choe Chang Gol, came to my headquarters and suggested that we fight a glorious battle to teach them a lesson, saying that there was a limit to our patience. It was easy to speak about teaching them a lesson, but it was not a problem that could be solved so easily. In the first place, the balance of forces favoured them.

But what mattered was not their superior numbers. The most awkward thing was that our opponent was not our enemy. It would amount to foolishness that could only be produced in the chaos of the early 1930s for two armed forces that professed the common cause of anti-Japanese national salvation to exchange fire. It was ridiculous for the AJPGA and the Independence Army to commit fratricide, and it was just as absurd that the Chinese anti-Japanese armed unit and the Korean Independence Army in cooperation would attack the AJPGA.

Needless to say, there would be an outcome if we fought. But in this sort of fight neither the winner nor the loser would escape moral condemnation. No one would crown the victor with laurels or cry

over the death of the loser.

If by mistake we provoked the Chinese armed unit, a great obstacle might be laid to our activities. The allied front with the Chinese national salvation army formed through painstaking efforts would be broken, and we would have to retreat to the early days when we had been idling away the time cleaning our weapons in the back room of someone's house. Attacking the Independence Army unit would give rise to no less serious consequences. If the communist army attacked the Independence Army, the people would turn away from us; and the anti-communists would take advantage of it to slander the communists.

That was not what we wanted. It was unimaginable for the AJPGA and the Independence Army to fight a bloody battle, levelling their guns at each other. Nevertheless, the Independence Army was preparing for a bloody battle on the other side of the River Songhua.

When I recollect the summer of 1932, I am reminded of the situation at that time before anything else. I spent a sleepless night racking my brains to find out a way to deal with the awkward situation, a solution that conformed with the principle of national unity and the great cause of anti-Japanese national salvation. I think I aged ten years because of this affair.

I myself could not repress my surging indignation at, and hatred for, the Kukmin-bu army which had not even fought a proper battle against the Japanese army, our common enemy, and which did not hesitate to commit bestial, shameful acts against us. All the commanders were unanimous in saying in a black rage that we should deal with the Kukmin-bu fascists severely.

Cha Kwang Su, with his eyes flashing with fury, said, "Let us teach them a lesson so that they do not provoke us again, a good lesson, even if it means their being killed, so that they stain their hands with no more of the blood of their fellow countrymen."

He went on to say that the time has now come to take revenge on Kukmin-bu for the death of our comrades at their hands. All the armed forces around us were our enemy. The Korean Independence

Army, the Chinese national salvation army, the mounted bandits, the Red Spear Society, the Broad Sword Society—they were all our enemy. The AJPGA was in such adversity because we did not have Liu Ben-cao with us to testify that our unit was a special detachment of the national salvation army. We had succeeded in making our unit legitimate thanks to the good offices of Liu Ben-cao, but we were in danger of being attacked from all sides if we did not take such a powerful surety as Liu Ben-cao along with us.

During our campaign to Tonghua, Commander Yu's unit had withdrawn from Antu and, along with Wang De-lin's unit, retreated deep into Ningan County. Antu had become a free zone. The self-defence army units had surrendered to the Japanese army in succession without having fought a proper battle. Some of the units were already reactionary at that time, having abandoned their anti-Manchukuo, anti-Japanese principles, and had been dancing to the tune of advisers from the Japanese army. It was because it had become a reactionary armed unit commanded by the Japanese army that the Chinese anti-Japanese armed unit dared to think of destroying our unit, which was known as the main force of the communist army.

Blinded by the anti-communist propaganda of Kukmin-bu, the remnants of the Independence Army who were ignorant of our real intention were trying, in conspiracy with the reactionary elements of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units, to challenge us. I thought the matter over and over again. Although they were a Right-wing military clique who had become bandits, we could not allow ourselves to retaliate or punish them by military means because they were our fellow countrymen and had been fighting to save the country. We had to dissuade them from their challenge by political means. Thus did we regard the anti-Japanese united front as absolute. So, Pak Hun and several other comrades under his command left for Erdaobaihe where the Independence Army soldiers were stationed.

“Comrade Pak Hun, today your mouth, not your gun, is your weapon. You must persuade the Independence Army soldiers by words, not bullets. You are an eloquent man of a pleasing character.

So you will be perfectly able to dissuade them from committing fratricide. You must on no account resort to arms. Bear this in mind. A gunshot now would mean the end of our united front with the nationalists. What do you think? Do you think you can do it, though it does not seem a task that is suited to your character?" I asked. Pak Hun scratched his head, smiling.

"It's a difficult task, but I will try."

After Pak Hun left on his mission, I walked up and down the bank of the River Songhua for a long time. I prayed silently that there should be no gunshot that night. Would Pak Hun succeed in dissuading the Independence Army soldiers? I asked myself anxiously.

Of course, he was an able man, an able motivator. But the furious temper of the man who, if angry, would behave like a bear, paying no heed to the consequences, worried me. I knew his weakness, but I sent him on the mission to the camp of the Independence Army without hesitation because there was no abler man than he in my unit. Cha Kwang Su was his equal in this matter. Judging purely from the situation, Cha Kwang Su was the right man to meet the challenge. But he had been shaken by the news of the death of Choe Chang Gol.

I kept looking in the direction of Erdaobaihe, wishing Pak Hun success. Fortunately, nothing tragic happened that night, no unhappy incident, to my relief. The Independence Army soldiers were moved by our comrades' earnest appeal for the unity of the patriotic forces. They confessed that they had been unhappy with the policy of their headquarters and had been dubious and hesitated over what to do. They resolved that they would hand over their weapons to the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army and fight in cooperation with them.

The high-ranking officers of the Independence Army refused to join us, but the rank-and-file soldiers felt the need to cooperate with us and joined hands with us. This was the beginning of their merger with us.

In this way we got over another crisis without difficulty. It was fortunate that we, young people in our twenties, could display such

magnanimity and perseverance for the purpose of great national unity at a time when our hatred and spite for Kukmin-bu was surging after we had broken with Ryang Se Bong and heard of the death of Choe Chang Gol. If we, thirsting for revenge, had destroyed Kukmin-bu or had an armed conflict with the Independence Army soldiers, we could not have faced the younger generation with a clear conscience as we do today, and we could not have witnessed the historic event of about 300 soldiers of Commander Ryang Se Bong coming over in the dead of winter to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, under the banner of cooperation.

No feeling in the world is greater, more ennobling and more sacred than patriotism. The spirit of national unity can be called the lifeblood and essence of patriotism. The Korean communists, since the first day they set sail for national liberation, have invariably been holding the idea of national unity dear at all times and in all places, and have not been sparing in their efforts to make the idea the reality.

## **6. Together with the National Salvation Army**

When we were staying in Liuhe, I dispatched a liaison officer to the Panshi area to establish contact with Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang. At the time when we were returning from our south Manchurian expedition, they were waging a guerrilla war. The Armed Red Guard (another name for it was the dog-hunting troop) which they had formed after the September 18 incident in order to fight against the stooges of the “defending-people society” and other pro-Japanese organizations was reformed into the Panshi Worker-Peasant Volunteers in September 1932. This volunteer unit was made up of young Koreans who had been tested and trained through mass struggles of different forms such as seizing food from the enemy, punishing stooges and capturing weapons, as well as through anti-Japanese uprisings. Since the summer of 1932 Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang had struggled to establish anti-Japanese guerrilla zones.

They displayed great ability particularly in the struggle to punish stooges, and were much talked about.

I wanted to meet them, not to pay a courtesy call on them, the masters of south Manchuria, and exchange greetings, but to discuss our views. Above all, I hoped we would swap fighting experience.

My next concern was what view and attitude they had concerning the prospects for the Korean revolution. I wanted to inform them of my views and attitude on the immediate tasks facing the Korean communists and to hear their opinions.

What was most important was to discuss with them practical matters on how the Korean communists who had launched an armed struggle scattered across Manchuria should keep in contact, how they should effect coordination and how they should realize cooperation, concerted action and joint operations. I also wanted to discuss such

matters with Kim Chaek, Choe Yong Gon, Ri Hak Man, Ri Ki Dong and Ho Hyong Sik in north Manchuria. The guerrilla units in south and north Manchuria flanked us. How to cooperate with them was an important factor that would greatly affect the development of the armed struggle as a whole.

The liaison officer who had been to Panshi returned to the unit when we were staying in Mengjiang after leaving Hailong. He reported to me that he had failed to meet Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang because they were away from their unit, conducting political work in the villages, and that he had left my letter with the underground organization there.

So I put off my meeting with them and concentrated on military and political activities in Mengjiang. The major objective of our operations in this area was to obtain weapons and expand our ranks. To this end, we had to launch military and diplomatic activities along with active political work.

Mengjiang was favourable in several aspects for us in achieving our aim. Many of the officials in Mengjiang were my schoolmates from Yuwen Middle School. They had been scholarly men who had buried themselves exclusively in studying without conducting any political activities, either Leftist or Rightist, but they now held the reins in Mengjiang. After leaving middle school they had worked in the county office of the Kuomintang and, when Japan invaded Manchuria, joined the self-defence army holding high-ranking posts. There was staying in Mengjiang even the representative of the headquarters of the self-defence army led by Tang Ju-wu which operated in the Tonghua area. So there was the possibility of obtaining weapons by negotiating with the representative through the good offices of my schoolmates. After taking stock of the situation I decided to keep in close touch with the self-defence army in Mengjiang. At that time our commanding officers were not much interested in winning over the self-defence army. Most of them considered it an adventure to have contact with them. They said: The talks with Ryang Se Bong broke down because we have different

ideas, though he is a Korean as we are. So it will be totally impossible for us to obtain weapons from the self-defence army. What is worse, the self-defence army is now breaking up. We were told that some units had Japanese instructors in their command structures and were plotting with them to sweep away the communists. So we cannot agree that you, our commander, should walk into such a trap.

I replied to them, “We should not be afraid of Japanese instructors who are entrenched in the self-defence army units. They put out feelers to discover communists, whereas we have courage with which to go into their units, deceiving the Japanese instructors, and talk to the commanding officers of the self-defence army. The disrupted nature of the army may favour us in attaining our object. They will consider it better to hand over their weapons to us who are fighting against the Japanese than to the Japanese or bandits or throw them away. We succeeded in our negotiations with even so obstinate a commander as Yu. So, why shouldn’t we be able to win over the self-defence army?”

The commanding officers said earnestly: It was by a chance in a thousand that you, Comrade Commander, succeeded in your negotiations with Commander Yu. If Mr. Liu Ben-cao had not been there we would not have been successful. You would do well to think more carefully about going to the self-defence army units.

So I retorted, “Saying that something is right or wrong, sitting in an isolated room without making an attempt, is not a characteristic of communists. True, we owed Mr. Liu a lot in making our guerrilla army legitimate. However, it is unscientific for us to consider our success at that time as mere chance. If we had not made positive efforts to remove the tension in our relations with the national salvation army, Mr. Liu could not have helped us. What is important is to work actively and with courage.” With this I left for the headquarters of the self-defence army accompanied by an orderly.

The barracks of the self-defence army were full of soldiers and ox- or horse-drawn carts were frequently going in and out of the gate, carrying military supplies.

At the gate a sentry ordered us to halt and asked in the Shandong

dialect, “What brings you here? Who are you?” He was scarcely interested in our faces, but gazed carefully at our guerrilla uniforms and five-pointed stars on our caps which were totally different from those of the self-defence army.

I replied in Chinese, imitating his Shandong dialect, saying, “We are a detachment of the national salvation army from Antu. I am detachment Commander Kim Il Sung. I have come here to meet your commander. Take me to him.”

“Kim Il Sung? The Kim Il Sung detachment is a communist unit, isn’t it?” Another sentry with pockmarks on his face looked at me suspiciously, muttering my name to himself. Apparently he had heard that Kim Il Sung’s unit was a communist army.

“We are a detachment serving under Commander Yu. Don’t you know Commander Yu?” I asked him.

“Oh, Commander Yu! I know him. His soldiers captured a machine gun from the Japs in Nanhutou. He is a great man,” said the sentry with pockmarks on his face proudly, giving us the thumbs up.

Anyhow, our mentioning Commander Yu produced a good result. His name was effective whenever we approached Chinese anti-Japanese troops. So when we were marching we always masqueraded under the cloak of “The Korean detachment of the national salvation army,” to avoid encounters with other anti-Japanese troops.

Then the sentry who spoke a Shandong dialect went to the barracks and returned with a man of noble bearing. In those days the national salvation army soldiers were dressed in old-style uniforms of Zhang Xue-liang’s army. But the officer who had just appeared with the sentry was wearing a short-sleeved shirt, breeches and canvas shoes. His hair was well-oiled and shining brightly.

“Hey! Aren’t you the librarian Kim Song Ju?”

It was my schoolmate Zhang from Yuwen Middle School who had been known as “tall Zhang.” He called me the librarian because I had been in charge of the library at the school. At school Zhang had been kind to me, calling me “librarian Kim” or “librarian Song Ju.”

Holding each other’s hands in joy we reminisced about our school

days for a good while. It was three years since we had last met. I regretted having left Jilin without saying goodbye to my schoolmates after my release from prison. But it had been unavoidable because I was terribly busy at that time running east and west with a determination to sacrifice all my private affairs for the revolution, but sometimes I felt a weight on my mind because I had been so disrespectful as to have failed to say farewell to the teachers and students at Jilin.

Meeting Zhang reminded me of various events in my days at Jilin Yuwen Middle School which I had almost forgotten, and of the romanticism of the students in those days. I felt as if I were standing in the garden of Yuwen Middle School which was filled with the fragrant smell of lilac, not in the grounds of a barracks where the sound of military boots was heard. It seemed that, if I left the barracks together with Zhang, I would be at Beishan, enjoying the cool of the River Songhua. This nostalgia made my heart tingle.

Zhang took my arm as he had done at school and guided me to his room laughing aloud frequently.

“I am sorry that your face does not appear in our graduation photograph from school.”

As he talked he offered me a seat.

“When we had our photograph taken after the leaving ceremony, we talked about librarian Kim. If you had not left school early, you would have won the first prize. Was it that the revolution attracted you to such an extent that you left school early?”

I answered his question with a merry joke.

“Of course it did. You were also attracted by the revolution and became an officer in the self-defence army with a Mauser in your belt, I think.”

Listening to me, Zhang blinked and patted the back of my hand.

“You are right. Before the September 18 incident we were stupid people who had lived with no knowledge of the world. Only when we saw the Japanese invading Manchuria did we awake from our sleep.”

“That was natural. Do you remember what I said at that time? A

man cannot live without politics.”

“I didn’t listen to you carefully. And I don’t see why the situation is changing so radically. This Manchuria is a dreadful sight, a land swept away by a sudden puff of wind.”

I thought that Zhang had analysed the situation correctly. The tide of history flowing across Manchuria brought great changes which shook the world. The changes were so cruel as to cause many vicissitudes in the life of the people. A short time before, Zhang himself had had an ambition to study history at Beijing University. But after witnessing the invasion of Manchuria by Japanese troops he abandoned his ambition from his school days and volunteered for the self-defence army. And who could have imagined that Mr. Liu Bencao, who had been talked of as a scholar among scholars and who would gently explain the pastoral poems of Du Fu, would become a chief of staff of the national salvation army and fight against the Japanese in the smoke of gunpowder?

“Look, librarian Kim. I have become a gallant man in uniform owing to the September 18 incident,” said Zhang with a sad smile.

“It is not only you who are in military uniform. I, too, have become a soldier and reached Mengjiang. It is not only as schoolmates but also as soldiers that we are discussing the general situation. Isn’t it a splendid work of fate?”

He said that it was a “benefit” granted us by the Japanese and that people had become somewhat clever owing to this “benefit.” I learned that there were many of my schoolmates from Yuwen Middle School in the self-defence army in Mengjiang. I talked with them until late at night. In our school days they had broken with politics and dreamt only of their careers and fame, but they were now hotly denouncing Japan and branding Chiang Kai-shek as the most terrible monster born of the Chinese nation. Such a change satisfied me.

We discussed joint action between the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army and the self-defence army until late at night. My schoolmates in the leadership of the self-defence army welcomed cooperation with our army. Thus I was able to get deep into the self-

defence army and also had an opportunity to meet the representative of its headquarters in Mengjiang.

One day, at the request of Zhang, I made a speech before the commanding officers of the self-defence army. The representative, too, attended the gathering.

I began by appealing to them, "Brothers, let's go together." And I continued my speech as follows:

"The self-defence army and the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army must make efforts to conduct joint action. Being hostile to the AJPGA, branding it as a communist army, is the way to obstruct the anti-Japanese struggle and help Japan. ... The AJPGA and the self-defence army must help the units of the Korean Independence Army and form a united front with them. We must sharpen our vigilance against the plot of the Japanese who are trying to rule over us by driving a wedge between the Korean and Chinese peoples and using their conflict to weaken both of them. ...

"The self-defence army must persuade the Broad Sword Society, the Red Spear Society and other militia organizations, as well as the bandits, to refrain from murdering and robbing innocent Korean and Chinese peoples and must enlist them actively in the anti-Japanese struggle. All militia organizations, small and large, must unite into a national salvation force. Some of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units reveal such deviations as retreating to China proper or surrendering to the enemy, being cowed by the strength of the Japanese troops. We must all remember that surrendering and giving up is the way to self-destruction."

The commanding officers of the self-defence army responded heartily to my speech. Following my speech the representative of the general headquarters handed dozens of weapons over to us.

We stayed for about two months in Mengjiang, and during that time we were able to carry out information work among the masses, conduct military exercises and expand our ranks with presentable young men, under the protection of the self-defence army. When we left Antu, our unit had numbered only 40, but now it was 150. Many young men in

Mengjiang and the surrounding area who had been told that Kim Song Ju had formed a strong army and was now fighting, called on us every day and petitioned us to be allowed to join the guerrilla army. In Mengjiang we worked freely, as if we were in power there.

The liaison officer who had been to Antu said that the situation in east Manchuria was good. From a letter he brought me from Kim Jong Ryong I understood that the rest of our unit, that was staying there, was growing all the time and that a guerrilla unit of more than one hundred men had been formed in each of Wangqing, Yanji and Hunchun.

I decided to move the stage of our activity to the centre (Wangqing) of east Manchuria where the guerrilla war had begun to develop into a full-scale struggle, and to extend the armed struggle there by combining efforts with units in other counties. One important lesson we had drawn from the south Manchurian expedition was that, at the present stage when our strength was weak, it was favourable and efficient to occupy a certain base of activity and wage a struggle by relying on it. We went straight to Antu from Mengjiang without passing through Fusong. On the way our unit met some bandits and the remnants of the defeated Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units several times. They tried to capture our new rifles because they were envious of them. So we were in danger many times.

At one such time a kind old man who had been connected with Chamui-bu suddenly appeared before us like a magician in a legend and guided us to Liangjiangkou, passing through the mountains. This march was training for us and made us ready for the long-protracted guerrilla war in the future.

When we were about to leave Liangjiangkou, the main force of a regiment under the command of Yu arrived. This regiment was known as Commander Meng's unit. Meng's secretary Chen Han-zhang had also come to Liangjiangkou, with his unit.

When he recognized me, Chen Han-zhang ran towards me shouting with joy, his arms open wide.

“Song Ju! It's been so long!”

He threw his arms around my shoulders and turned me round and

round as if he were meeting me after dozens of years of separation. I was seeing him for the first time since I separated from him when I had held talks with Commander Yu in Antu. It was a meeting after only three months' separation. But he gazed at me with affection as if the three months had been three decades. This meeting seemed to me to be a miracle taking place after a long separation, so I could not control my swelling emotions. In a man's lifetime three months is a short span of time, but I felt as if a long part of my life had passed in those three months. It is said that if one suffers many twists and turns one feels the time to be longer. I think this is true.

Chen introduced me to Commander Meng, and said:

"I didn't know where your unit was, so I asked many people about your whereabouts. I was told that you had gone to south Manchuria and back, but I couldn't find you. Fortunately a rumour reached our unit that a Korean communist unit started the merger with an Independence Army unit in Liangjiangkou."

"Thank you, Comrade Chen. I was also anxious to see you. By the way, what brought you here?"

"Wang De-lin ordered us to work in this area until next spring. What about you? Why don't you work together with us for a while in Liangjiangkou?"

Commander Meng, who was listening to Chen, supported his suggestion. I accepted their suggestion gladly in the hope that if we stayed there with them we could consolidate our common front with the national salvation army. Meng's unit was armed with modern weapons because it had deserted from Zhang Xue-liang's regular army. This unit had artillery as well as machine guns. It had an incomparably stronger combat ability than other national salvation army units which had only a few rifles, swords and spears as weapons. During our stay in Liangjiangkou, Meng's unit guarded the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army well.

In those days most of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist units collapsed or surrendered in the face of a strong attack by the Japanese troops, and were controlled by them. Only Wang De-lin's unit had

not surrendered and remained as a great force among the national salvation army units. But even his unit was retreating to Dongning, on the eastern border of Manchuria, or into the Soviet Union where the Japanese gunfire did not reach. The collapse of the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army units because of their own impotence caused distrust among our political and military cadres. Some of them said that it was useless to establish a joint front with them because we were in no position to remove the uncertainty and confusion prevailing among them, and others said that the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army should break its useless ties with them and fight on single-handed. Neither of these opinions could be tolerated.

Abandoning the anti-Japanese allied front meant surrendering a huge armed force to the enemy and falling in with the tactics of the Japanese imperialists to swallow the anti-Japanese nationalist armed units one by one.

The uncertainty and confusion of these units were attributed partly to the class limitation of their upper levels, but mainly to their fear of the enemy. In order to remove their uncertainty and prevent their destruction, it was necessary to work with them more actively and inspire them with confidence in victory by defeating the enemy.

From this pressing need, in Liangjiangkou we convened two meetings of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee which consisted of Chen Han-zhang, Ri Kwang, Hu Jin-min and other political workers who had been active in the national salvation army units and military and political cadres from different counties of east Manchuria, and at the meetings we discussed the measures to deal with the problems arising in the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese units. At the meetings a report on the work in the national salvation army units was given first, experiences accumulated in this process were swapped and the trend in the anti-Japanese nationalist units was analysed.

The people attending the meetings decided to attack Dunhua county town and Emu county town in a joint operation with Wu Yi-cheng's unit and Commander Meng's unit in order to deal a heavy blow to the Japanese who were expanding their occupation without

any resistance, with most of the anti-Japanese units having given up their resistance by retreating to safety or surrendering to the enemy and becoming a reactionary army, and thus to raise the morale of the patriotic soldiers and people.

Commander Meng welcomed our plan of action.

The two-thousand-strong national salvation army unit was divided into three groups each of which advanced in the directions of the Jilin-Dunhua railway and towards Yanji and Dunhua county town. Our unit, with Commander Meng's unit, arrived in the forest around Dahuanggou south of Dunhua having followed the road east of Fuerhe and the mountain pass east of Dapuchaihe. By dispatching a reconnaissance party to Dunhua county town we confirmed what Ko Jae Rim had told us about the enemy.

At that time there were stationed in Dunhua huge armed forces such as the Japanese garrison, the headquarters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jilin guard brigade of the Manchukuo army and its 4<sup>th</sup> regiment, 9<sup>th</sup> regiment and airport guards, the Japanese consulate police and Manchukuo police. The enemy's guard was very strict at every town gate and at the gate of the consulate branch building.

At 3 a.m., on the second of September, our allied forces launched an attack on Dunhua county town. Our unit attacked the south gate and the national salvation army unit led by Hu Jin-min dashed into the county town through the west and north gates. After breaking into the town our allied units raided the enemy's command post first, destroyed the brigade headquarters, the consulate branch and the police sub-station and dealt with the enemy's units under the brigade. Our forces held the initiative in the battle and the enemy fell into disorder.

To save themselves the enemy called up two planes to strafe and bomb our forces. This caused great confusion among the national salvation army soldiers. If day were to break while we were in this situation the battle would go badly for us and our forces would suffer a great loss. I explained the situation to Chen Han-zhang and Hu Jin-min and made the new tactical proposal that we withdraw from our present position and annihilate the enemy by luring them to

somewhere favourable for us.

According to my proposal, our unit took up position on the height southwest of the county town and the national salvation army units on a hill south of Guantunji. There we totally destroyed the enemy in an ambush. Seeing the sudden change in the situation, which they had considered unfavourable, the national salvation army soldiers' morale improved and they chased the fleeing enemy.

The publications in those days did not comment on this battle in particular, apparently because the control of the press by the Japanese authorities was strict. The people did not know that a battle was fought in Dunhua in the early autumn of the 22<sup>nd</sup> year since national ruin.

The assault on Dunhua county town was similar to the assault on Dongning county town in September 1933. As the former was fought in cooperation with the national salvation army, so the latter, too, was planned and resulted in success as a joint action with the main force of the national salvation army. These two assaults were similar in their scale, too. However, the assault on Dunhua county town was significant because it was the first battle of its kind in the history of the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples, in which the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army defeated the Japanese troops in a joint operation with the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist army.

"The Chinese people totally lost heart in the face of the military power of Japan which had defeated two major powers, Qing and Russia. But today they are free from such old-fashioned thinking. They have achieved a mental release prior to the liberation of their territory," Chen shouted, embracing me. His tearful face at that time is still fresh in my memory.

"Song Ju, let's follow this road together for ever!" he said, grasping my hand. When he said this road he meant the joint struggle. Chen Han-zhang remained faithful to his word until he died in battle.

About a week after this battle we raided Emu county town together with the national salvation army units. Our force was victorious in this battle, too. Though this battle was not well known in the world, the sound of the gunfire rumbled for a long time.

## 7. Autumn in Xiaoshahe

When we returned to Liangjiangkou, we summoned those who had not taken part in the expedition to south Manchuria which had started from Xiaoshahe, and reviewed our work during the six months since the foundation of the guerrilla army. Of course, the main part of the review was related to the expedition to south Manchuria. The guerrillas were unanimous in recognizing that our armed ranks had grown and developed rapidly over the six months and that, in the course of this, they had come to believe that they were able to defeat the Japanese imperialists through a guerrilla war.

In order to take the guerrilla struggle onto a new stage, at the review meeting we set our unit the following tasks:

First, to move the base of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army to the area of Wangqing.

Secondly, to conduct in greater depth the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese national salvation army.

Thirdly, to give correct guidance to the guerrilla struggle which had started to expand rapidly in east Manchuria, and hasten the establishment of the revolutionary base and firmly defend it.

The matter most heatedly discussed of these three matters was that of moving the operational base of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army to Wangqing.

We discussed this one question repeatedly over several consecutive days with the military and political cadres who had come from Antu, Yanji and Helong.

Those from Antu objected to moving the operational base to Wangqing. They expressed their disapproval by saying: "The guerrilla army which has been founded in Antu should remain in Antu. Why should it go to Wangqing? If the guerrilla army goes to

Wangqing, what will happen to Antu?” This was naive obstinacy permeated with regional feelings.

On the other hand, those from Yanji and Helong said that for the Antu unit, the seed of the guerrilla army, to move to the centre of Jiandao where Koreans were concentrated was natural and timely both from the strategic point of view and from geographical requirements. They asserted that if the Antu unit, which had the strongest fighting power, went to Wangqing, there would also be a great change in the activities of the guerrilla units in the neighbouring counties such as Yanji, Hunchun and Helong.

All those from Antu also admitted that Wangqing was the best place geographically. Above all else, Wangqing was good because it was near the homeland. The area of the six towns on the other side of the river had been greatly influenced by Jilin. So this area would be a reliable source of manpower and material support for the guerrilla struggle in the future. With the area of the six towns as our foothold, we could lead the revolution in the homeland to an upsurge. The masses in the area of Wangqing had remarkable fighting ability and revolutionary spirit. This they displayed to the full in the Battle of Qingshanli and the Battle of Fengwugou which can be regarded historically as the zenith of the armed struggle of the Independence Army. Wangqing was the base of operations for the political and military administration in northern area, and all the hundreds of the soldiers of the Independence Army and cadets who were operating there lived on food made of the grain grown by the people in the area.

But we could not move to Wangqing without making prior arrangements just because it was a good place. Therefore, day after day we deepened our discussion in two ways; whether we should establish the base in Antu County and conduct the guerrilla struggle by our own efforts, and whether we should continue our legitimate activities with the Chinese national salvation army, while surreptitiously building up the units of Koreans.

I considered that, although we would have to be somewhat restrained in our activities because of our joint action with the

national salvation army, it was important to consolidate still further the legitimacy of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army which we had risked our lives to gain and show our Chinese brothers who regarded the Koreans in Manchuria as the second Japanese that our nation was neither the lackey nor the scout of the Japanese imperialists, and that the armed group of the Korean communists whom they regarded as being pro-Japanese were thoroughly anti-Japanese.

Finally we adopted the proposal that we should continue to defend the legitimacy of the guerrilla army at the same time as conducting activities together with the national salvation army for the time being and that we should also increase our armed ranks by expanding our influence through a practical struggle and then, after the ranks had expanded, unite them.

After we decided on this plan we selected people and sent them to various parts of east Manchuria. We sent them to Yanji, Helong, and Hunchun and also dispatched many able political workers to the units of the national salvation army in Luoizigou. We also formed a flying squad and dispatched it to Wangqing. We left Kim Il Ryong in Antu. Our unit, which had amounted to well over a hundred people, was reduced to some 40 again.

As we frequently sent people from our unit to other counties like this, the cadres of the east Manchuria special district committee were pleased. On many occasions they had requested that, because ours was the main unit, we should choose good people from it and strengthen the guerrilla units in other areas.

Four months had passed since our unit left Xiaoshahe and started on its expedition to south Manchuria. The autumnal tints were growing richer and richer with each passing day in the rivers and streams, fields and mountains of Liangjiangkou. Fallen leaves lay everywhere and were covered with frost, warning of the approaching severe winter of the area.

With the season changing and the weather getting cold, I was inwardly worried about my mother who was in her sickbed. But I

only thought of her and did not dare to visit Xiaoshahe.

Although I eagerly desired to visit Tuqidian I continually put off meeting my mother.

With the approach of the day of our departure for north Manchuria, Cha Kwang Su brought me a packet of herb medicines and advised me to visit Tuqidian, taking it with me. When I hesitated, he criticized me, saying that it was not like Kim Song Ju to do so. He said that he would never again talk to me if I, their leader, neglected my mother.

So I left for Xiaoshahe.

Even as I walked with the package of herb medicines in my hand, I was anxious about one thing, that my mother, upon seeing the medicines, might again reproach me for being concerned about unnecessary things. However, I thought that my mother would be delighted to hear that the medicines had been procured for her by Cha Kwang Su.

The one *mal* of hulled millet which I had bought for her when I was in Xiaoshahe must have run out a long time before. My mother being unable to work, I wondered how and with what money she was now maintaining the household. Saying that spiders do not weave a web in a living mouth, my mother had told me flatly not to think of my family and to assume that I had neither a mother nor any younger brothers. However, it was not so easy for a man to forget his mother who had given birth to him, and his younger brothers, and not to think of his family.

Walking towards my home with the packet of herb medicines, my steps for some reason gradually became heavier as I approached Xiaoshahe. It was true that I felt uneasy for fear that my mother's illness might have grown worse. However, what I felt most uncomfortable about was the fact that I had returned from south Manchuria without forming a united front with Commander Ryang. I thought that my mother would be very sorry to learn of this. Although my mother was gravely ill, she had urged me to go to south Manchuria. I think this was because she was pleased and satisfied

over the fact that her son was going to collaborate with a man who had been his father's friend. My mother was not pleased with the fact that the young people were on bad terms with their seniors in the independence movement and found fault with their belief.

The most important thing was what my mother's condition was like. When I was leaving home my mother could not digest even thin millet gruel like ordinary water. If she had not improved during my absence, she might be in a critical state by now and in greater pain than before. I could not know what had happened.

Although I was quickening my pace, I could not dispel my anxiety. Even as I crossed the familiar log bridge in Tuquidian I could not rid myself of my uneasiness.

Each time I had crossed that bridge, my mother used to fling open the door of our home. My mother had a special sense by which she could tell which of her sons it was when she heard our footsteps. But, that day the door did not open, and no smoke was rising from the chimney, smoke indicating that my family was preparing supper; nor did I see my younger brothers going in and out of the kitchen with either firewood or a large bowl of dirty water.

Feeling such fear and tension that the blood in my heart seemed to freeze, I struggled to pull the door handle. No sooner had I opened the door than I almost fell down on the earthen verandah. My mother's bed was empty. The thought that I was too late flashed across my mind. Then, all of a sudden, Chol Ju came silently up to me and thumped me on the shoulder with all his might.

"Brother, why have you come only now?"

My younger brother was sobbing into my chest. He cried out bitterly in a hoarse voice, like a child.

Then Yong Ju, my youngest brother, appeared and took my left arm.

Dropping the packet of herb medicines on the earthen verandah, I hugged my two weeping brothers. Their sobs explained everything. So there was no need at all to ask whether my mother was alive or dead. I thought: "How can it be that this misfortune has

happened during my absence? Couldn't our mother enjoy even the final happiness of seeing the face of her son at her last moment? My mother, who was born into a poor family and lived all her life in poverty! My mother who, at the thought of the misfortune of the ruined country, bit her lip and gulped down her tears even when her husband died! Our mother who has passed away after dedicating herself body and soul not for herself but for the happiness of others!"

My mother had always been afraid that her son would make a mistake in his great work, swayed by personal feelings. Possibly she had died so early for fear that she might be a burden to me in my making of the revolution.

Stroking with my hand the door post which my mother held when she had admonished me for the last time, I thought how good it would be if I could see my mother once again in front of this door, even if I received a severer reprimand than that time.

"Chol Ju, didn't mother say anything at the last?"

To this question Mrs. Kim, who had entered the courtyard through the brushwood gate, answered instead of Chol Ju:

"This is what your mother said to me, '...if our son Song Ju comes after my death, please treat him as I would have done. If he comes when the Japanese are still in our country and without having achieved Korea's independence, you must not allow him to open my grave. You should not even let him into the yard. It is not that I am boasting of my son, but Song Ju will not return before the battle is won.' Having said this, she asked me to open the door. Then she gazed out at the log bridge over there for a long time."

What Mrs. Kim said seemed to echo from the distant "celestial country." But I could clearly understand the profound and touching meaning of each of her words, without missing anything.

Still holding my two younger brothers in my arms, I looked round at the log bridge.

I tried to imagine my mother's longing for her son and how she had felt when she was passing away without being able to see her

beloved son. But before I could pass through the gate of imagination, I burst out sobbing.

When I raised my head after weeping for a good while, I found Mrs. Kim looking up at my face with tearful eyes. The expression in her eyes was so tender and caring that I almost took her eyes for my mother's.

“Mrs. Kim, you must have had much trouble looking after my mother.”

Thus I recovered from my heart-rending sorrow and pain to express my gratitude to Mrs. Kim for keeping my mother company during her last days.

Then Mrs. Kim began sobbing sorrowfully and said, “Don't mention it. I failed to come often. As I failed to look after her well she herself had to comb her hair back. Your younger brothers were away from home, being engaged in revolutionary work. One day your mother asked me to cut her hair short, like a boy's, saying that her scalp was itching. ... But I did not dare to take scissors to her hair. How lovely and luxuriant her hair was! I said I could not do it. She entreated me to do as she asked. ‘If my scalp did not itch, I would feel like flying high into the sky,’ she said. So I cut her hair. ...” With this Mrs. Kim wept aloud.

It would have been better if I had not heard her story, I thought. I felt as if the story about her sad, last moments was tearing me apart inside. Mother had looked after her children all her life, but had they, who she had brought up in her lap, not the least filial piety to comb the hair of their mother in her deathbed?

When I was living in Fusong, I saw a boy of my age carrying his sick mother on his back from Nandianzi to hospital in Xiaonanmen, perspiring profusely. When we saw him, we all said that he was a filial boy. Mrs. Kim's story for some reason reminded me of that boy dripping with perspiration.

I had nothing to say, even if I was to blame for being an undutiful son compared with that boy. What had I done for my mother until I was over the age of 20? As a child I invited mother to sit in the

warmest part of the room and breathed on her cold hands when she returned from the well, to warm them. In the morning I used to feed the hens and fetch water in a pail to help mother.

I did nothing special for my mother after I embarked on the revolution. The old saying that there is no upward love even though there is downward love may have been meant for me. That there is no upward love is a truly wise remark. I have never heard of sons and daughters taking care of their parents with filial piety exceeding the love their parents showed them.

“Chol Ju, didn’t mother leave any word with you?”

Thus I asked Chol Ju again, wondering what might have been the last words she left.

Chol Ju replied in a husky voice, rubbing his eyelid with the palm of his hand, “She told us to help you, brother, well. If we help you well and become revolutionaries like you, she will rest peacefully in her grave, mother said.”

This shows how she expended all her spiritual strength only for the revolution until her last moment.

My younger brothers and I visited mother’s grave at once.

Mother’s grave covered with pieces of grass was on a hillside with a lonely old elm.

I took off my army cap and, with my brothers, bowed before her grave.

I murmured, “Mother, I have come. Pardon your unfilial son. I called on you, mother, coming belatedly from south Manchuria.”

As I knelt, murmuring, Chol Ju suddenly knelt down and picked up some pieces of turf.

“What are you doing?” I said, looking blankly at my brother, a strange thought occurring to me. Then Chol Ju, weeping, silently buried in the grave the packet of medicines I had brought from Liangjiangkou.

His silent act finally touched off the sorrow smouldering in my heart. I wept sorrowfully for a long time, kneeling down by the grave. I had become an ordinary man from a revolutionary. I felt as if all

things in the world had been transformed into the grave and all matters had been compressed into a tragedy, the loss of my mother. But the blue autumn sky over our heads looked down merrily as normal. I wondered how the sky could remain so indifferent to our grief.

So I lost my dear mother. The tragic event happened in the dismal summer of 1932, twenty-two years after the loss of the country. If the country had not been ruined, she would have lived longer. Mother's illness was caused by the hardships in her life which followed in the wake of the ruin of the country.

Mother went to untold trouble for her sons. If the filial piety I showed mother was taken for ten, mother's love for me was more than ten thousand.

Once four or five members of the Young Communist League and I were surrounded by the enemy when I was conducting underground activities in Fusong. We had to leave the walled city, even if it meant fighting out of the encirclement, but we had no weapons. So I asked mother whether she could fetch some weapons from our comrades in Wanlihe.

She readily agreed, saying, "I can do that. I will fetch them."

She went and returned home safely with two pistols from our comrades in Wanlihe, who had loaded and cocked them as she had asked. Mother had boldly approached the gate of the walled town, carrying on her head a wooden basin containing the two pistols hidden in some ribs of beef. When the police standing by the gate pointed at the basin and asked her, "What's that?" she replied with composure, "It' beef." The police then only lifted up the sheet of paper covering the basin to see inside and let her pass through the gate.

I was surprised to see the loaded and cocked guns.

"Mother, you might have got into serious trouble. Why did you have the guns loaded?"

"I asked your comrades to load them. If the police had tried to search the basin, I would have fired at them. Two or three men at

most would approach me, I supposed. I decided that if they came at me I would shoot at least one to death at the risk of my life.”

Mother’s remark was pervaded with a noble spirit which could not be fathomed by our experience and way of thinking. It was a manifestation of her courage and genuine love attended by an understanding of and sympathy with her son’s undertaking.

At one time we were living in a rented room in Ma Chun Uk’s house in Jiuantu. One day when our comrades were cleaning a pistol one of them fired it accidentally and wounded my mother in the leg. The bullet wound put her life in danger and required good treatment.

She was confined to bed. If someone asked, she told him that when she had gone out to throw away some dirty water she had fallen and had broken her leg. She did not show anyone her wound and lay in bed, covered by a quilt and being secretly nursed by uncle Hyong Gwon. But she did not think ill of us or show any sign of displeasure at the man who had accidentally fired the pistol.

The man who had fired it by accident felt so guilty that he even attempted to kill himself. On hearing of this she reproached him, saying, “That will not do. The accident happened because you are no good at handling a gun. But I was lucky. To think that a man attempts to kill himself because of such a trifle! Discard such an idea and think how you can keep the matter secret. If the secret leaks out, great trouble will befall you and this house. And you will fail in your cause.”

More than the bullet wound in her leg, she feared the fact that we had guns might be made known to the police.

Ma Chun Uk’s family, too, never spoke of the accidental shooting to others.

Mother’s noblest trait was that she loved my comrades like her own sons. Mother treated them like me. When they called at my house, she gave them funds for their work. She took this money from the money she earned by sewing and washing. The workers at a timber mill and seasonal labourers who went about to dig up *insam* (ginseng) often requested her to make clothes for them from some

cotton cloth they had brought. She earned 70 or 80 *fen* a day making clothes for them. At times she even earned one *yuan* a day.

Although she found it difficult to live she was liberal with her money. Having set aside money for the purchase of provisions, travel expenses and house rent, she did not stint the money she earned. When my comrades came, she would buy several dishes of noodles and several kilogrammes of pork for them and serve them with Chinese meat dumplings or soup with wheat flakes in it; she would also give them funds for their work.

When my comrades said, “Mother, your family, too, does not lead a comfortable life. If you give us all the money, how will you manage to get along?” she replied, “A man dies not because he hasn’t money but because he is mortal.”

Even when my comrades stayed at our home for several months, she was never displeased and she always treated them like her sons. So those who, while engaged in the youth movement in Manchuria, stayed at my home for several days did not call my mother “Song Ju’s mother” but “our mother.”

It is no exaggeration to say that she cooked meals for revolutionaries all her life. When father was alive, she was always busy cooking for the patriots, never taking a holiday. When we were living in Linjiang, she prepared meals for our guests every night. When we were about to fall asleep under our quilts, father’s friends would troop in, saying jokingly that it was no time to sleep peacefully and they slept in the front room. Then she would get up and again cook meals for them.

Mother herself took part in the revolution while looking after the revolutionaries. She started her revolutionary activities when we were living in Fusong. After joining the Paeksan regional branch of the South Manchurian Women’s Education Federation, she conducted enlightenment work among women and children. She became engaged in the work of the Women’s Association after father’s death.

Mother’s development into someone who conducted the revolution from someone who helped it is ascribable not only to my

father's and my influence, but also to Ri Kwan Rin's influence to a great extent. When Ri Kwan Rin was living with us, she persuaded my mother to participate in the affairs of the South Manchurian Women's Education Federation.

If mother had shown me only maternal affection, I would have failed to recall her with such warm affection. The love she showed me was not simply motherly love. It was true revolutionary affection with which she regarded me as the son of the nation rather than her own son and awakened me to the need to give priority to loyalty to the country over filial piety towards my parents. Her whole life served as a textbook for me in implanting in me a true view on life and on the revolution.

If my father could be compared to a teacher who implanted in me the indomitable revolutionary spirit of fighting through the generations and achieving national liberation, my mother was a kind teacher who taught me that a man who has embarked on the revolution should strive to the end to achieve his set aim without being swayed by temporary sentiments or whims.

If love between a parent and child is blind, it cannot be called solid love. Only when the spirit underlying the love is sound and noble can love be eternal and sacred. The spirit which underlay the love between my mother and I and my filial piety towards her in the days of the nation's ruin was patriotism. For the sake of this patriotism she renounced her right to call on her sons to practise their filial duties towards her.

I left Tuquidian valley without even setting up a tombstone by mother's grave. It was after liberation that a tombstone inscribed with my mother's name was set up by the grave. The people of Antu County set up a tombstone in her memory and inscribed the names of her three sons on it.

My mother's remains, together with those of my father, were brought to and buried in Mangyongdae in accordance with their wishes after the liberation of the country.

I failed to see to the graves of my parents for a long time, even

after my triumphal return home, the situation in the country being complicated and giving me too much work to do. In the mountains and fields of Manchuria in which we had spent our entire youth there were buried not only my parents but also numerous comrades-in-arms who fell in action going through the flames of the revolution together with me. In addition their bereaved children were there. I decided that I would not move the remains of my parents before I had found the remains of my late comrades-in-arms and brought them and their bereaved children to the liberated homeland.

Jang Chol Ho came to me and asked me to have the remains of my parents brought to the homeland.

He advised me to choose a suitable place for their graves in Mangyongdae, saying that he would move their graves. Among those who knew my family in my days in Manchuria, Jang Chol Ho was the only one who knew where my parents' graves were. He must have gone to a lot of trouble to move the remains of my parents.

While I was waging the armed struggle, the enemy searched persistently for the graves of my parents to exhume them. But the people in Fusong and Antu deceived the enemy and defended and tended the graves of my parents until the day of national liberation. Twice a year, on the 105<sup>th</sup> day after the winter solstice and on Harvest Moon Day, Kang Je Ha, my teacher from Hwasong Uisuk School, and his family visited my father's grave in Yangdicun, taking an offering of food with them, held a memorial service and cut the grass on the grave.

After mother's death I became the guardian of my two younger brothers and the head of the family. But the revolution did not allow me to play the part of a guardian and head of family. I left with a heavy heart for desolate north Manchuria, leaving my younger brothers weeping in sorrow in Xiaoshahé where the reeds swayed plaintively in the wind, giving them no promise to return.

## 8. On the Heights of Luozigou

The entry of the Japanese troops into the town of Antu was close at hand. The pro-Japanese landlords had prepared flags to welcome the Japanese. The national salvation army could no longer stay in Liangjiangkou. Regiment Commander Meng was ordered to retreat in the direction of the Luozigou and Wangqing areas, where there were grasslands surrounded by mountains. In view of the rapidly changing situation we decided to leave Antu with the national salvation army troops. This decision was taken at a meeting of the committee for work with soldiers convened at Liangjiangkou. Our general plan was to shift our operational base to Wangqing, but we decided for the time being to encamp in Luozigou where the retreating national salvation army units were assembling and continue our work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units. The troops of Commander Yu, too, withdrew from Antu to Luozigou.

While we were busy preparing for our departure for north Manchuria, my brother Chol Ju came to see me in Liangjiangkou.

“Brother, I would like to go with your unit. Without you I cannot live in Tuqidian any more,” he said before I could ask him why he had come.

I could understand what he meant when he said he wanted to go with our unit. It must have been unbearable for a sensitive boy of his age to be living off someone else in a remote village in Xiaoshaha after the death of his mother.

“If you leave Tuqidian, what will become of Yong Ju? The boy won’t be able to bear it alone.”

“The embarrassment is too much for me to endure. I feel that the two of us are hangers-on. If only Yong Ju stays with the villagers, it will be better, I think.”

While I thought that he was right in what he said, I could not agree to his request. He was 16, so he might come with the unit and serve as a soldier, provided he had a gun. He was big and sturdy for his age. But still he was no more than a boy and might be a burden to the guerrilla unit. Moreover, he was shouldering a heavy responsibility in improving the work of the Young Communist League in the Antu area.

“If you ask again in two or three years’ time, I will readily agree. But I cannot allow it now. Even if your situation is difficult and you feel lonely, endure it for a few years more. While working as a farmhand or doing seasonal labour, work hard to promote the work of the Young Communist League. Underground work is no less important than the armed struggle, so you mustn’t neglect it. Look to the Young Communist League and then, when it is time, join the revolutionary army.”

I soothed and humoured him to convince him. Then I took him to an inn by a pond. We entered a room. It was bleak in the room with the paper flaps at the edges of the window frames making dreary sounds in the cold draught of air. I ordered wine and some food. We were served with two plates of frozen bean curd and a bottle of wine. Seeing them, my brother’s eyes filled with tears. Knowing that I was sober in my habits, he seemed to realize the significance of drink.

“Chol Ju, forgive me for refusing your request. Do you think that I don’t want to take you along? Because I must leave you behind, I feel my heart is breaking. But Chol Ju, we must part here, though it is sad.”

I said this under the influence of the wine; I could hardly have said it otherwise. But I could not suppress the tears welling up in my eyes. I got up to leave, fearing that Chol Ju might see my tears, but he rose from the table, too, leaving his half-finished drink behind.

“Brother, I understand.”

With this, he came up to me from behind and silently took my hands in his for a moment. That was how I parted with my brother, never to see him again. Whenever I recollect the dismal and dreary

autumn by the pond, I deeply regret that I did not hold his hands longer and more warmly that day when he quietly took my hands for a moment before leaving. Looking back now, it was too sad a parting. If I had granted his request at that time my brother might not have died so young, before reaching 20. His life was but a flicker of light.

As soon as he reached ten years of age, Chol Ju began to follow the revolutionary organizations. In Fusong he was in charge of the information work of the Saenal Children's Union, and after going to Xiaoshahe he worked as the secretary of the district committee of the Young Communist League. After parting with me in Liangjiangkou, he trained many Young Communist League members and sent them to join the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. He took on the difficult task of working with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units of his own free will. He took part in the assault on the town of Dadianzi with the soldiers of a Chinese anti-Japanese unit. The Chinese anti-Japanese unit under the command of Du Yi-shun with which my brother had established contact fought well against the Jiandao punitive detachment of the Japanese army, it was reported.

After that Chol Ju assumed the heavy responsibility of working as the revolutionary organization's operational chief for work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units in Antu and worked with the anti-Japanese unit commanded by Xu Kui-wu which was stationed at Lulin, Cangcaicun in Fuyandong, Yanji County. Xu Kui-wu was a perverse and stiff-necked leader who proclaimed himself to be an anti-Japanese champion but was hostile to all the Korean communists. At first, he had been on friendly terms with Koreans. But after the members of the Anti-Japanese Women's Association in Fuyandong had rescued a Korean girl, a member of the Young Communist League, who had been detained by him as a concubine, he began to turn away from the Korean communists. She had been detained when she went to his unit with a group of entertainers to conduct information work through an artistic performance. Once she was captured by the man, no woman could get off unhurt unless she satisfied his desires. Xu Kui-wu had often used such means to change

his women. After the girl member of the Young Communist League had been rescued by the Women's Association, the Koreans could no longer maintain contact with his unit. Even those who had been on good terms with him would not go near him. Xu Kui-wu, maddened because of his unsatisfied lust, made his men maltreat and suppress Koreans.

Then my brother Chol Ju visited the unit of Xu Kui-wu, accompanied by Comrade Rim Chun Chu, a licensed herb doctor.

"I've heard, sir, that you are seriously ill, so I've come to inquire after your health," said Chol Ju courteously in fluent Chinese.

But Xu Kui-wu did not deign to look at him. He hated the sight of Koreans and did not want to talk to them.

"I've come with an able doctor to cure your illness. Please allow him to treat you."

When Chol Ju said this, he became more interested and said that he would try it if the doctor was skilled. After a few days' acupuncture treatment by Comrade Rim Chun Chu, he said with great delight that he had been suffering from migraine, but Doctor Rim had driven the motley ghosts out of his head. Chol Ju took the opportunity to stay on in the unit of Xu and work openly with the Chinese anti-Japanese soldiers. In later days Xu Kui-wu, having joined our route army, was appointed commander of the tenth regiment and fought courageously to the end. Previously he had led a decadent life saying that he could not live even for a single day without opium and women. But after joining the revolutionary army, he was even admitted to the Communist Party. When I, on behalf of the unit, congratulated him on his admission to the party, he said, "Comrade Commander, today I am thinking of your brother. But for Chol Ju, I would never have seen this day." Then he told me of how Chol Ju had come to him with Comrade Rim Chun Chu and cured him of his illness and how he had persevered in leading him back onto the path of the anti-Japanese struggle.

In June 1935 Chol Ju died heroically in the battle around Chechangzi. I was at Lake Jingbo when I received word of his death.

That is probably why even now whenever I see a large river or lake, I think of my brother.

After Chol Ju had been killed in battle, my youngest brother was completely without family. After the family of Kim Jong Ryong had gone to the Chechangzi guerrilla base, he wandered from place to place earning a living by baby-sitting and running errands for other people. The Kwantung Army was taking into custody anyone related to me in order to use them to bring me to “allegiance,” so my brother had to roam aimlessly, under a false name and by concealing his identity, about cities and villages all over the three provinces of Manchuria and even in China proper. He once stayed in Beijing for a while. After liberation I saw some documentary material concerning the search for my brother in the archives left behind by the Japanese police. When he was working at the Xinjing brewery, he became so homesick that he returned to the homeland and spent about three months there. He turned up in Mangyongdae wearing a black suit and white shoes. His appearance was so dashing that our grandfather even wondered if his youngest grandson had got a high public post and made his fortune. My brother wanted to set the minds of his grandparents at rest, so he told them he was attending university in Changchun. Since the police had a dragnet cast for him, and photographs of him had been distributed, he could not stay at Mangyongdae but stopped with my aunt. Then he returned to Manchuria.

After leaving Liangjiangkou, the 40 men of the Anti-Japanese People’s Guerrilla Army moved northward in the direction of Nanhutou along mountain ridges, via Dunhua and Emu. On the way we stopped at Fuerhe where I had spent my days as a “farmhand” and conducted political enlightenment work among the inhabitants. Also, our unit fought a fierce battle with a convoy of the Japanese army that was constructing the Dunhua-Tumen railway near Haerbaling, Dunhua County. After that battle I met Ko Jae Bong at Toudaoliangzi in the same county. He had left Sidaohuanggou where the enemy was riding roughshod over the people and come to Toudaoliangzi, where

he was teaching at the peasants' school run by the underground organization. It was only 7 miles from Toudaoliangzi to the county town of Dunhua. At Toudaoliangzi I met his mother, too. We distributed to all the houses there the flour we had captured in the battle with the Japanese army convoy. Then we prepared some food with it and had a meal with the people. The cotton cloth we had captured was handed over to the peasants' school to make uniforms for the pupils. Leaving Toudaoliangzi, our unit went farther north and conducted enlightenment work with the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units near Guandi and in the Nanhutou area. Then we moved into the Wangqing area, where we studied the activities of the party and Young Communist League bodies and mass organizations and made the acquaintance of people from all walks of life. This might well be called foundation work for establishing an operational base in Wangqing.

In Wangqing, too, we did not relax the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese units. I went to Lishugou to meet Guan Bao-quan's unit which had been attacked by a special detachment led by Ri Kwang for a few rifles. But Guan Bao-quan had abandoned the anti-Japanese cause and gone away. Frankly speaking, I had decided that, when I met Battalion Commander Guan, I would apologize to him on behalf of our comrades in Wangqing and discuss ways to conduct a joint struggle with him and thereby resolve the temporary discord and antagonism that had been created between the Korean and Chinese armed units. Although Guan Bao-quan had disappeared, I sent a message in the hope of meeting the other people who remained behind. Some 100 men of the Chinese unit came to us to see what kind of a unit was the Kim Il Sung unit which had smashed the Japanese troops at Dunhua county town. I admitted to them that it had been an unfriendly deed on the part of our Wangqing special detachment to have acted so outrageously against the soldiers of the unit of Battalion Commander Guan for the purpose of obtaining weapons, and spoke frankly about the joint struggle of the Korean and Chinese peoples and the mission of the Chinese nationalist anti-

Japanese units. My speech was received well by the men of the Chinese unit. A commanding officer named Kao Shan said after my speech that he had been thinking of abandoning the anti-Japanese struggle like Guan Bao-quan, but that he would follow the right path from then. After that he fought well on the anti-Japanese front as he had pledged to. Our relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese unit in Wangqing, which had been a great headache, were settled amicably in this way.

With the object of eliminating the Left deviation revealed in the work with the Chinese anti-Japanese units and bringing more of these units into the anti-Japanese united front, we called a meeting of the anti-Japanese soldiers' committee in Luozigou. At that time the national salvation army units concentrated in Dongning county town were preparing to retreat to China proper through the Soviet Union. We decided that the national salvation army must by all means be stopped from fleeing across the border and that they should join us in the anti-Japanese front, otherwise, our guerrilla struggle might face grave difficulties; the enemy's "punitive" forces that were scattered everywhere to destroy the Chinese anti-Japanese units would be concentrated on our guerrilla force that was no more than a few hundred strong and might destroy at a stroke our armed force that was still in its cradle. The balance of forces could turn decisively in favour of the enemy. At the time the Japanese army was stepping up its offensive against the anti-Japanese armed forces everywhere with the intention of occupying all the small towns in Manchuria. They even sought to seize all the county towns.

The meeting was attended by some 40 people, including me and Ri Kwang, Chen Han-zhang, Wang Run-cheng, Hu Jin-min and Zhou Bao-zhong. Ri Kwang and I represented our country and Chen Han-zhang, Wang Run-cheng, Hu Jin-min and Zhou Bao-zhong, China. The main item on the agenda concerned the measures to stop the desertion of the national salvation army and strengthen the anti-Japanese united front.

The meeting first discussed the mistake of the Wangqing guerrilla

unit. The mistake had resulted from the Kim Myong San incident, which had happened in the Wangqing unit. Kim Myong San was a Korean who had served in the “guard corps” in the days of Zhang Xue-liang’s army before defecting to the Wangqing guerrilla unit with six Chinese soldiers after the September 18 incident. Originally a master hunter, he was a good combatant. When he defected to them, the comrades of the Wangqing unit were overjoyed, welcoming his arrival as an unexpected fortune. But once one of the six Chinese men was sent on a scouting mission to an enemy-controlled area. He ate a plate of fried buns in a cookshop at Dakanzi without paying for it, having no money. After returning to the unit, he reported the fact honestly. The Left elements in the leadership of the county party committee labelled the Chinese soldier as an evil man who brought disgrace on the guerrilla unit and shot him to death. The number of Chinese guerrillas executed in Wangqing on the decision of the military department of the county party committee was more than ten.

Frightened by the atmosphere of terror, the other Chinese men who had defected with Kim Myong San deserted from the unit and joined the unit of Guan Bao-quan stationed near Macun. They spread the rumour that the guerrillas were killing Chinese at random. Alarmed at this, Guan Bao-quan moved his unit to a deep mountain recess a long way from the area where the guerrilla unit was stationed and watched for an opportunity to kill Korean communists. On the anniversary of the October Revolution, the people of Wangqing gathered to celebrate with primitive weapons such as spears and sticks in their hands. They carried such crude weapons in order to create a festive atmosphere. Thinking wrongly that the people were gathering to attack his unit, Guan Bao-quan flared up and had many Koreans shot to death. Among the dead were Kim Un Sik who, as chief of staff under Guan Bao-quan, had been enlightening the national salvation army men and promoting the united front movement, and other political workers including Hong Hae Il and Won Hong Gwon who had been dispatched from the guerrilla unit. It was a counterattack which, as the saying goes, “Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.”

Afterwards, Guan Bao-quan's men who had renounced their struggle, began to go by twos and threes to the area under enemy rule. The Wangqing guerrilla unit, on the pretext of stopping the surrender of the men of Guan's unit, disarmed them. Then, finally, they killed a few of the unit who had surrendered on the ground that they refused to give up their arms meekly.

With this incident as the start the members of Guan's unit went on a war of vengeance against Korean communists without discrimination. Whenever they met young Koreans who they imagined were involved in the communist movement, they caught them and shot them. The Wangqing guerrilla unit, which was only a few months old, suffered a great loss after being surrounded by the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese unit.

The tactlessness and indiscretion they revealed in their relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese unit rapidly undermined Korea-China relations and created an insurmountable pit in the way of the Korean revolution.

The people attending the meeting mercilessly criticized the commanders of the Wangqing guerrilla unit who had spoilt relations with the Chinese anti-Japanese units without being aware of the grave nature of their mistake and who were still insisting on taking reprisals. After a long debate they reached a common understanding on the principles and rules of action to be abided by in the work with the national salvation army.

The next question we discussed at the meeting concerned how to keep the national salvation army in Manchuria and induce it to continue with the anti-Japanese struggle.

At the time this army was tens of thousands strong, and yet they considered themselves incapable of standing up to the Japanese army. Taking at face value the story of the "invincibility" of the Japanese army spread by the Japanese themselves, they believed there was no force on earth which could match Japan and no army equal to the Japanese army, and they virtually gave up fighting. All they cared about was how to avoid being killed or captured by the Japanese

troops and how to escape to safety beyond Shanhaiguan where there was as yet no spark of war.

The Japanese army intended to concentrate its attack on the forces of Wang De-lin in Jiandao. Once its attack started, it seemed that Luozigou would fall into its hands sooner or later.

The people attending the meeting resolved to defend Luozigou at all costs together with the national salvation army. To defend Luozigou, it was necessary to dissuade Wang De-lin from fleeing to the Soviet Union. The national salvation army planned to go to China proper via the Soviet Union. It was then common practice among the leaders and soldiers of the Chinese anti-Japanese units to flee across the Soviet-Manchurian border. Li Du and Ma Zhan-shan who had tens of thousands of men under their command had fled to China proper by way of the Soviet Union. The only way to prevent the national salvation army from taking flight was to gain a crushing victory over the Japanese army so as to rid them completely of their illusions and fear of the “invincible imperial army.” Of those present at the meeting Zhou Bao-zhong was the right person to take on the job of talking to Wang De-lin. Zhou Bao-zhong had been authorized by the Comintern to work as adviser to Wang. I told Zhou to prevail upon Wang to stop his retreat and form a united front with the guerrilla units. I said:

“We are capable of a long-drawn-out guerrilla war based on the Korean population in east Manchuria. But this depends on the national salvation army, and you must persuade Wang De-lin to convince his men to remain in Manchuria and continue with the war of resistance to the last man. When they say they are going to the Soviet Union, they are not intending to make a socialist revolution in Siberia but hoping to make off to China proper by way of the Soviet territory.”

On hearing this, Zhou Bao-zhong shook his head and said that it was a difficult problem to solve.

“You talk like that because you don’t have sufficient inside knowledge,” he remarked. “The national salvation army is a horde of

cowards. I tell you they are a gang of fainthearts who will sneak away trembling at the mere sight of a Japanese plane that has come to drop leaflets. There is no way I shall be able to make them fight a battle. I have never seen such a dastardly rabble in my life. You are dreaming if you think that you can strike at the Japanese army in an alliance with the national salvation army.”

Many people insisted on the impossibility of an alliance as Zhou Bao-zhong did. So differences arose, and criticism was levelled at the people who clung to the belief that it was impossible. Everyone posed as a hero, a genius and a leader. The committee for work with soldiers of the national salvation army was a temporary organization consisting of people who were engaged in political work in the provinces and, therefore, had no definite leader. But at the meeting I took the chair, and it was conducted according to all due formality. I chaired the meeting not because I was a superior but because the Chinese comrades recommended me, remarking that Kim Il Sung was the best hand in dealing with the men of the national salvation army. That was the Luozigou Meeting. It was the last meeting of the committee for work with soldiers of the national salvation army. After the meeting the committee was dissolved.

According to the decision of the Luozigou Meeting, we—Ri Kwang, Chen Han-zhang, Zhou Bao-zhong, Hu Jin-min and I—divided between us the work with the units of Wang De-lin, Wu Yi-cheng and Chai Shi-rong. Wu Yi-cheng and Chai Shi-rong were subordinates of Wang De-lin. Later we received a report from Chen Han-zhang who had gone to Wu Yi-cheng’s unit. Wu Yi-cheng had promised to follow the line laid down at the Luozigou Meeting, which was good news. While I was negotiating with the unit of Wang De-lin, the Japanese army moved to threaten the Luozigou area. Alarmed at the prospect of our main unit forming a common front with the unit of Wang, the enemy pressed on with their attack in large numbers. Wang De-lin did not think of fighting but fled from Luozigou. Tens of thousands of troops rushed towards the Soviet-Manchurian border to escape the attack of the Japanese army like so

many fallen leaves being blown away by a gust of wind in the autumn.

A guerrilla force of only a few dozen men could hardly defend Luozigou. Therefore, we retreated towards Dongning County together with the men of the national salvation army. Even as we went to Dongning County I wanted to induce them to turn round. During our retreat we had to fight fierce battles against enormous odds, ours being a negligible force. So our retreat was difficult. As it was the eleventh month of the lunar calendar, many of the Chinese anti-Japanese soldiers perished from the cold.

As we retreated with the national salvation army, I persevered in trying to persuade Wang De-lin to change his mind. If he had listened to me, we could have formed a common front and waged the anti-Japanese armed struggle successfully in Manchuria. But he did not agree to my suggestion. He ran away to China proper via the Soviet Union.

We abandoned the negotiations with Wang and altered our course, heading towards the Wangqing area, which was our final destination. I had walked nearly a hundred miles from Luozigou, until I was in sight of the Soviet-Manchurian border, but I had to turn away without managing to persuade him. I felt indescribably depressed and gloomy. Now that the national salvation army tens of thousands of men strong has fled, finding it impossible to face the Japanese army, what shall our unit of only 18 men do to survive the winter? By what ingenious means can we get over the difficulty? I reflected. Eighteen men might well be regarded as next to nothing, "a drop in the ocean," which was an expression used by the Japanese. Our unit of 40 men had shrunk to 18 men for a variety of reasons. Some had been killed in battle and others had left due to illness. Yet others had been sent away because they were physically unfit or sent back home because they had confessed that they could not continue the struggle. The elderly people from the Independence Army and some young men from farming districts had succumbed to the difficulties most easily. The comrades who had been in the Young Communist League

organization and engaged in the revolutionary struggle since the time of Jilin stayed on in the unit to the last. What I realized once again as I headed for Wangqing, risking my life with my 18 men, was that only men who had been steeled in an organizational life could hold to their faith to the last and discharge their moral obligations as revolutionaries, however great the adversity.

On our way to Wangqing we happened to meet Wu Yi-cheng's orderly and he joined us. His name was Meng Zhao-ming. Initially our men questioned him, unsure of his identity. Because spies of the Japanese were prowling about everywhere, we were very wary of unidentified strangers. Meng Zhao-ming had a membership card of the Anti-Japanese Association issued by the agreement of the committee for work with soldiers of the national salvation army and the anti-Japanese nationalist army units. This membership card had been issued both to the guerrillas and to the soldiers of the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units. People with this card were entitled to the protection of and assistance from both sides. In addition to the card, Meng had a letter from Wu Yi-cheng to Wang De-lin requesting reinforcements. Thus he convinced us that he was Wu Yi-cheng's orderly. He was going to Tianqiaoling with good reason. He said:

“The fact is, I've been to Dongning to convey this letter, but it was a waste of effort because Wang De-lin had fled. When I returned to Wu Yi-cheng, I discovered that he had withdrawn in the direction of Hongshilazi, leaving only a battalion behind at Laomuzhuhe. And just fancy, I was even told that the battalion left behind at Laomuzhuhe had moved off in the direction of Xiaosanchakou (Tianqiaoling). So I'm now going after the battalion. I've to fight against Japan even if it should cost me my life.”

His determination to fight against Japan was very strong. Deploring the fact that there was no figure in the three northeastern provinces of China capable of saving the situation, he asked me: “Commander, who do you think will win, we or Japan?”

“I think we will win. A Western writer once wrote that a man is born to be a winner and not to be beaten. Aren't you and I pushing

our way through this snow for the sake of winning?”

I made up my mind to search, together with Meng Zhao-ming, for the battalion commander who was said to have gone in the direction of Xiaosanchakou. I pinned my last hope of a united front on this one battalion and decided that I must persuade them to continue with the fight. Meng came as far as Wangqing and joined us in the battle to defend Yaoyinggou. He was an unforgettable companion who helped us and went through thick and thin with us in the time of our direst distress. In 1974 he wrote me a letter reminding me of when we had met on the heights of Luozigou. Through the letter I learned that he, the orderly of Wu Yi-cheng who had become our friend and shared hardships with us in the past, was alive and that he was a farmer at the Dunhua cooperative society.

I think we had the hardest time of it when we went to Laoheishan. Up to Laoheishan the men of the national salvation army, though unreliable, had accompanied us and, therefore, we had rarely felt isolated in spite of the great hardship. But after they had all fled to the Soviet Union, there were only 18 of us left on the bleak, wild hills. Even Zhou Bao-zhong had slipped away somewhere, taking with him the small troop left behind by Wang De-lin when he fled across the border. We were now completely isolated and helpless. In the sky aeroplanes were flying around, dropping leaflets urging us to surrender, and on the ground hordes of Japanese soldiers mobilized for a “punitive expedition” were closing in on us from all directions. The sharp frost, not so severe even in the mountainous regions of Korea, and the waist-deep snow made it hard for our unit to advance. The provisions we had saved up with such difficulty from day to day, while barely managing to obtain enough to eat, had run out. The uniform I had been wearing since my departure from Xiaoshahe in May was torn, revealing the skin underneath.

Then we met a kind old man named Ma on the Luozigou heights, and he helped us through our distress so that we escaped death. It was the last day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar when we met the old man. He was ideologically without any fixed principle and was

affiliated to no party, but he detested the politics of the Kuomintang, calling it scandalous. However, he did not support communism either. In short, he was weary of the world. For all that, he was still a good-natured and humane person, so obliging that he was always ready to do a good turn to other people.

The old man had two houses. We were quartered in the lower house, and the upper house was occupied by stragglers from the national salvation army. These people were mostly anti-Soviet and had stayed behind in Manchuria because the Soviet Union was a communist state. Some of the stragglers had been the men of Battalion Commander Guo left behind at Laomuzhuhe by Wu Yi-cheng. Upon our arrival at the house Meng Xiao-ming volunteered to visit the stragglers in the upper house to sound them out. I told him to find out whether the soldiers of the national salvation army were willing to join hands with us and act in concert with us or not. Meng said he had many acquaintances among the men of Battalion Commander Guo and so, he suggested, he would get their opinion first and then if there was some prospect of success, I, Commander Kim, could go and enter into formal negotiations with them. But when he returned after meeting the remnants of the lost army, he said glumly with his shoulders lowered:

“Those villains are worthless, and there’s no chance of their forming a united front with us. They are talking about becoming bandits.”

The old man Ma told us that the stragglers from the national salvation army were plotting to disarm us. He said that they were planning to expand their marauding band with arms captured from us. In this situation we were all obliged to think seriously about our fate and the future of the revolution. When tens of thousands of soldiers from the Chinese nationalist anti-Japanese units had been swarming everywhere, we seemed likely to win battles easily if we faced up to the Japanese troops. But now they had all fled and, moreover, there were only 18 men left in our unit, so we felt entirely at a loss. Even if we went to Wangqing, what could we hope to do with just ten or so

rifles? As for the weapons in Yanji, they would amount to no more than a few dozen. Worse still, those benighted and shameless stragglers from the defeated army were seeking to rob us of our weapons. So what should we do now? We had come to a nameless hill in Luozigou, and we had no clear idea of how to get back to Wangqing. What should I do to cope with this plight? I asked myself. Abandon our weapons and return to the underground struggle? Or continue with the armed struggle, however difficult that may be? I wavered. If I deny this, it would be perverting the truth and distorting history. I do not deny it, nor do I need to conceal the fact that not only I but our whole group wavered.

Even steel, when it is rusted, is useless. Man is not steel; he is weaker and more liable to change. But it can be said that man is much stronger than steel. Steel cannot stop itself from rusting on its own, but man is capable of controlling and adjusting changes in his thoughts by himself. The question lies not in wavering but in how the wavering is overcome. Man is called the lord of all creation precisely because he has the unique ability to adjust, and revolutionaries are looked upon as great people because they are strong-willed, creative and selfless people who are capable of producing the things they need from nothing and turning an adverse tide to their advantage.

I was quite at a loss what to do. Even if the sky should fall and the earth cave in, the armed struggle had to be continued. But the men who remained with me were all rosy-cheeked youths of under 20. It could be said that I myself was still a greenhorn. When we were moving about in Jilin, writing leaflets and making speeches, we had all been heroes and great men. But here in this place we were all beginners. When we were conducting underground work, we had had many devices to resort to. But in a deserted place without our tens of thousands of allied troops and where there were only the remnants of a defeated army, finding a way out for the 18 men was a tough problem. The stragglers in the upper house were going to become bandits, but that was something we could never do. Some countermeasure could have been worked out if we had only gone

somewhere where the masses were organized, but it was about 50 miles to a Korean settlement and every valley on the way was infested with Japanese troops, so we were told.

The revolution is tough! I thought to myself. We had expected that our revolution would succeed in only two or three years, so why was it now at the edge of such a precipice? Would our ranks that had started from Antu in proud array with a flourish of bugles end their advance here on these desolate hills? How many meals I had missed and how many sleepless nights I had passed to form this unit! Hadn't I been absent from the bedside of my mother at the hour of her death and hadn't I parted with my beloved brothers with a broken heart for the sake of forming this unit? Hadn't Cha Kwang Su and Choe Chang Gol laid down their young lives for these ranks? Cha Kwang Su had been killed while out on a scouting mission in Dunhua. Looking back on the path behind me and thinking of the path ahead, I felt my heart as heavy as if it was weighed down by the whole mass of the Earth. I was sitting in front of the fireplace with my mind assailed by a thousand thoughts when old man Ma came up to me and asked quietly:

“Are you the person in charge?”

“Yes.”

“So why are you in tears, Commander?”

“I think it's because I've come in the face of the snow and wind,” I answered vaguely, to avoid an explanation. In fact, I was weeping from my anxiety about our future, not because of the snow and wind.

The old man stroked his long beard, his eyes fixed on me for a while.

“You seem to be worried about those ruffians in the upper house, but don't be disheartened. I'll take you to a good place tonight. Rest there for a few days. Study and eat there for about 20 days, and you'll find yourselves as bright as Zhu-ge Liang, I assure you.”

In the dead of night when we were fast asleep, old man Ma awoke us all and fed us with meat dumplings he had prepared for New Year's Day. Then he guided us to a mountain hut all of 12 miles

away. The hut was located in dense forest and was invisible even to aeroplanes. Its only room was barely wide enough to spread a reed mat, and there was a shed attached to it. In the shed we found frozen roe deer and hares the old man had caught, food grain such as wheat and maize, and a handmill.

“The room is rather small, but spread it with straw and it’ll be good enough for you to get through your difficulties, though it might be a little uncomfortable. Shelter here and recover your strength. I’ll come and tell you the news from the outside world once every few days. When you want to leave here, I’ll act as your guide.”

The old man said this as he made a fire to heat the room, and we all wept, feeling a lump in our throats out of our gratitude. We were lucky to have met such a kind and warmhearted man as old Ma on the bleak and deserted heights. All our men jested that “Heaven” was keeping its eye on us. We stayed in the mountain hut for over a fortnight, resting, studying and hunting roe deer. There were many books of the old man’s in the hut. They were stories, political books and biographies of great men. Although the old man earned a living by hunting in the mountains, he was a man of great learning. We vied with each other to read the books, and all the books eventually became tattered. We made it a rule to relate our impressions or hold a debate on a set subject after reading a book. We all became enthusiastic in our arguments, quoting propositions from Marx and Lenin. We learned by heart several propositions of the founders of Marxism and some excellent passages from famous writers. In those days, whenever young people got together, they even criticized Sun Yat-sen. It was the fashion of the day to worship someone and also to criticize a great man who was held in high esteem by all. Everyone was his own master. Everyone thought of himself as a genius, a hero and a great man. In that hut we held earnest discussions about our future course of action, too. Should we break up and go home? Should we go to the Korean villages in Wangqing and gather the special detachments there, so that we could expand our unit with them and continue the struggle? We all resolved to continue our

struggle, except for a comrade from Hailong who said that he did not think he would be able to continue the armed struggle with us because he was weak. It was true, he was not strong enough physically to engage in the guerrilla struggle. We did not cavil at his candid confession or call it into question.

“If you cannot go, it is better that you say so outright. No one can be forced to make the revolution. The revolution is something which a man cannot be made to do by coercion or threat. Therefore, if you wish to go, you may go, and if you would like to continue with the revolution, you should stay on and fight,” I told the men, making clear my view as the commander of the unit. I gave them all time to decide for themselves. A few days later we sat together again to hear their decision. Of our unit 16 men pledged to go on with the revolution, even if it might cost them their lives. But the other two asked for permission to leave the unit. The comrade from Hailong wanted to be sent back home, being too weak to continue the armed struggle. But he asked us not to regard him as a coward for all that. Because he could not go with us on account of his physical frailty, we could not ignore his request. I told him: If you find it hard to follow us, then go home. We won’t blame you for that. But you must not go looking as you do now. Your clothes are in tatters and you look like a beggar. You cannot go home to your parents looking so dreadful, can you? You may go, but go first to a Korean settlement to obtain travel expenses and get yourself some decent clothes.

The other comrade said he wanted to go to the Soviet Union and get some education. I told him:

If you go to the Soviet Union without any sponsor, you cannot tell if they will send you to school or make you work. You may as well go to Wangqing and work there for a while, and then when you have made contact with the other side, leave with a warrant from an organization. Isn’t that wiser?”

The two accepted my advice and said they would do as I had said.

After that we left the Luozigou heights safely guided by the old man Ma. He took us up to Zhuanjiaolou in Wangqing County. He

really was a kind, considerate and tenderhearted old man. A few years later, at the height of the guerrilla struggle when we were striking out mercilessly at the enemy from the guerrilla bases, I visited the Luozigou heights with some cloth and provisions. But the old man Ma was already dead and gone. Even now the image of old Ma remains in my memory as vividly as it did 60 years ago. Once I told our writers to create an opera or a play about the old man. The story of the old man is a good subject matter for an opera or a play.

It could be called a miracle of all miracles that we escaped death from hunger and the cold and were not killed by bullets in the remote mountain recess of Luozigou that winter. Still now I often ask myself what was the force that made us rise to our feet at that time, what was the force that kept us from being defeated or dropping out of the fighting ranks and made us continue to uphold the banner of the anti-Japanese struggle until we were victorious. Every time I answer my own question full of pride, "It was a sense of responsibility for the revolution." If it were not for that sense of responsibility, we would have remained cowering in the snow, never to rise again. At that time I was conscious that if we should be frustrated, Korea could never rise from the dead. If I had thought there would be people to save Korea after we had died, we would have been buried under the snow on the heights of Luozigou, never to rise again.

