

Editor's Note

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, the indomitable revolutionary fighter and anti-Japanese woman hero, was born into a patriotic and revolutionary peasant family on December 24, 1917 in Hoeryong township, Hoeryong County, North Hamgyong Province, in the mountainous north of Korea.

Early in her life she lost her parents and brothers beneath the bayonets of the Japanese imperialist aggressors. In the early 1930's, as a teenage girl, she embarked upon the road of revolution against the aggressors. She grew up as a member of the Young Communist League in the heat of the revolutionary struggle. In the Children's Corps and the Young Communist League she worked hard to train the young people and children, the future of the country, to be the reliable reserves of the revolution, and she rendered outstanding service in strengthening the guerrilla zone and laying the mass foundation for the armed struggle.

In the spring of 1935 she met the great Comrade Kim Il Sung, the peerless patriot and national hero, and this marked a milestone of decisive significance in her struggle and life.

Under the leadership of the great General Kim Il Sung she developed into an indomitable revolutionary and joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in September, 1935. From that time she fought alongside the Comrade Commander and defended the headquarters of the revolution at the risk of her life, setting a shining example of stoutly defending the Comrade Commander politically and ideologically.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was not only a brave fighter and crack shot, but also a seasoned political worker. She often crossed the heavily guarded border to rouse the people in the homeland to join the sacred anti-Japanese fight.

After the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule, she worked, body and soul, for the strengthening of the Workers' Party of Korea and for building a powerful and prosperous independent sovereign state, upholding the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's policies for building a new Korea.

She was a staunch revolutionary who did not quail in the face of severe trials and hardships and a noble-minded communist of a magnanimous, modest and simple character whose revolutionary comradeship was limitless and warm and whose love for the people knew no bound.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was the great revolutionary who brought up the dear Comrade Kim Jong Il amidst the flames of the anti-Japanese war and

worked with all her heart to ensure a reliable succession to the Korean revolution.

The noble revolutionary life of Comrade Kim Jong Suk ended at the age of 32 in September 1949.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk's revolutionary life was short, but hers was the noble life of the revolutionary soldier who fought devotedly for victory in the Korean revolution and for the prosperity of the motherland. Hers was a life that shone with enduring and worthy service rendered for the sake of the homeland and the people.

The editor publishes "The Immortal Woman Revolutionary", a collection of reminiscences of the revolutionary activities of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, the indomitable revolutionary, in various language versions on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of her birth.

Preface

It was during my days in the Children's Corps that I first became acquainted with Comrade Kim Jong Suk, the indomitable communist revolutionary fighter and anti-Japanese woman hero.

At the time Comrade Kim Jong Suk was engaged in underground activities in the Changbai area, helping to implement the policy of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung for establishing a base on Mt. Paekdu. She often came to Pinggange in Wangjiagou, Shiqidaogou where I lived to direct the revolutionary organizations in the village.

She helped me to understand the great aim of national liberation, learn the priceless virtue of the revolutionary cause and gave new life to the Children's Corps to which I belonged, the Anti-Japanese Youth League and other revolutionary organizations.

When I joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, Comrade Kim Jong Suk trained me to become one of the great leader's revolutionary fighters and showed meticulous concern for our work among the youth.

This encouraged the youth organizations within the anti-Japanese guerrilla army to organize and enlist young guerrillas in the struggle to carry out the General's revolutionary policy and inspire them to display heroism in the fierce fight to defeat the million-strong Japanese army.

After the liberation of the country Comrade Kim Jong Suk worked with devotion to rally patriotic young people around the banner of democracy and rouse them to build a prosperous and powerful independent sovereign state.

Indeed, the name of Comrade Kim Jong Suk is dear to the hearts of all our people, the young people and students in particular, and she inspires in us all a strong desire to follow the only path of the cause of Juche, and she will remain with us eternally in our advancing revolutionary ranks.

I publish this book, feeling it my duty as a soldier trained by her in my early years to recall a part of her shining and worthy service and noble qualities that I saw and experienced for myself.

March 1987

The author

1. The Day of Her First Visit to Pinggandge

It was an autumn day in 1936.

We, the children of Pinggandge, a remote mountain village in Changbai County, were playing football on the flat top of the hillock outside the village after a meeting of the Children's Corps. Suddenly a boy came running towards us from the direction of the village, panting. He told us that men of our army were in the village. Immediately we all started running back towards the village as fast as our legs could carry us. We were bursting with curiosity, for we had never seen our soldiers before.

As we entered the village street, I glanced at my house. I could see the kitchen door and the door of the party room opening and shutting incessantly and many soldiers coming and going in the yard. When I heard them speak Korean, tears stood in my eyes I could not say why.

I flew into the yard and, throwing open the kitchen door, dashed inside. In the house I was met by uproarious laughter. All at once it dawned on me that they were laughing at my absurd appearance. I looked down at my clothes to find them covered with mud and dripping wet. To make matters worse, one of my trouser legs had been ripped open somehow and was fluttering.

"Show them your manners, my boy. They're soldiers of our General Kim Il Sung," said my grandmother who was seated before a large scooped wooden bowl peeling potatoes.

I made a bow in their direction at no one in particular. They all laughed again.

There was a woman soldier crouching before the fireplace feeding wood onto the fire. Now she came up to me and put a basin before me filling it with water. She said I must have a wash and dry my clothes. I washed my face as

she told me to and sat by her side in front of the fireplace.

Usually the sight of a soldier gave me a fright and excited an inexplicable feeling of misgiving. But this woman soldier endeared herself to me at first sight and I felt quite at ease in her company. She raked the fire out towards me with a poker.

“Oh, what a boy to behave himself like that at the age of 15!” my grandmother muttered to herself clicking her tongue.

“But he’s now at the most unruly age,” the girl soldier said looking at me with kind eyes.

Now I studied her closely as if I was seeing her for the first time. Until then I had been inhibited from observing her carefully by the unexpected outbursts of laughter. She had meek and affectionate eyes. As a female soldier, a phenomenon I had never witnessed before, she cut a dignified figure.

Her demeanour charmed me and fired me with admiration.

Surveying her attentively, my grandmother asked her where she came from and if her parents were living there. The girl soldier replied that she came from Hoeryong and that her parents had both passed away.

My grandmother probably regretted asking her about her dead parents. She quickly changed the subject of conversation and said that Hoeryong was a nice place to live in and that people in her native place would accept girls from Hoeryong as daughters-in-law without even seeing them beforehand. At this, the girl laughed sunnily.

“It’s true. They say the water of your locality is so good,” my grandmother went on.

“Grandmother, is there any bad place in our motherland of Korea? Isn’t every part of it a good place?”

“Of course, my native village was also a nice place to live in. But for the Japanese fellows...,” my grandmother said, half to herself, bringing her hand to the corners of her eyes.

Our family came from Songjin (today’s Kimchaek) in Hamgyong Province. There was a thick forest and a limpid river in our native place, too, where our family had lived from generation to generation. But after the Japanese imperialists seized the country, everything that was precious in our native land was expropriated from us.

The people of our native place would not take the enemy’s monstrous tyranny lying down. In the closing years of the 1920’s an increasing number of people in our village started forming underground organizations to join the

movement for the independence of Korea. They were guided by the rays of light cast by the “Morning Star,” whose story assumed legendary proportions.

My eldest brother and uncle were among them. It was their influence that opened my eyes to the revolution.

After that, many underground anti-Japanese revolutionary organizations representing different social circles and groups were formed in our area and started to engage in vigorous activities. Oratorical contests and protest meetings were held frequently. Artistic entertainments and sports meetings were organized. A night school was opened. The revolutionary organizations campaigned for the “introduction of the three-and-seven tenant crop sharing system” and against the “half-and-half tenant crop sharing system” and against “usuries”. The workers fought for higher wages and an eight-hour day.

The revolutionary organizations did everything they could to procure weapons. People would awake in the morning to hear the thrilling news that a certain police station had been raided or that a certain cop had been relieved of his arms and sent to heaven.

The more the people rebelled against the Japanese and the revolutionary organizations stepped up their activities, the more the imperialists intensified their repression. They were hell-bent on ferreting out the secrets of the organizations. They even body-searched foot passengers on the roads.

About this time an unexpected incident took place in our village. Some young villagers were holding a conference at the house of the head of an organization when they were raided by a pack of “black dogs” (as the cops were called in those days). Fierce gunfire was exchanged between them.

This incident sent shock waves through the village. Many of the people, particularly the young, were in a turmoil of excitement at the discovery that our nation which they had thought empty-handed possessed guns with which to fight the Japanese imperialist bandits.

Around this time my eldest brother who had been absent for a long time came home. Seizing the opportunity, I asked him who the “Morning Star” referred to. He answered that the “Morning Star” was the highest commander of our national army who moves like lightning from place to place striking at the Japanese scoundrels. My brother told me he was the one who would restore independence to our beautiful three-thousand-*ri* land of golden tapestry and bring prosperity to all our people. He added that if I fulfilled my duties faithfully in the Children’s Corps organization, I could become his soldier.

From that day on, my young heart burnt with desire to become a combatant of Commander “Morning Star”.

After the members of the revolutionary organization left, our village and my home were placed under special surveillance by the enemy. Almost every day members of my family were taken to their post and beaten up; they were pressurized to reveal where those who had disappeared had gone. They were forbidden even to go outside the village.

That was 1932. In that one year we changed our abode several times trying to evade the persecution. Each time we moved out, our folks waited impatiently for word to come from my eldest brother or uncle who had gone to Commander “Morning Star”.

At last, in the depth of a winter night that year they came.

“Are we going to Commander ‘Morning Star’?” I asked them impetuously.

“Yes. Let’s leave in a hurry. If you go there, you’ll see Mt. Paekdu and also our army which is fighting for the independence of Korea.”

This was how our family came to leave their dear home village where they had lived for generations and crossed the Amnok River via Hyesan. We arrived and settled down at the village of Pinggange, Wangjiagou, Shiqidaogou, Changbai County. It was within shouting distance of Hyesan and Hoin in the homeland. To the north stretched a primeval forest. Visible in the distance from the top of the hill outside the village was Mt. Paekdu with its perennial mantle of snow and beyond, the mountains of the beloved homeland veiled in a bluish haze.

After we moved to this village, we learned that Commander “Morning Star” was none other than the great General Kim Il Sung. Every day brought news about the military achievements of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army and the policies of the people’s revolutionary government in the guerrilla bases of east Manchuria.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung set forth the policy of establishing the Paekdusan base at the historic Nanhutou meeting in February 1936, and instigated vigorous preparations for its implementation.

Consequently, the enemy’s administrative functions in the area of Changbai County were completely paralyzed due to the fierce political and military activities of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army, and the Paekdusan revolutionary base was established as the operational base of the Korean revolution.

As the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army stepped up military

activities and the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland (ARF) extended its organizational networks across wide areas, in accordance with the great leader's superb strategic and tactical policy, our village Pinggangde became the seat of the Changbai County committee of the Party.

In these circumstances, an inextinguishable fire of respect for the great General Kim Il Sung flamed in the heart of everyone in the village. This applied even more so in the case of our family because my uncle and brother were combatants directly in the service of the General.

Awake or asleep, I wondered when I would be able to join the guerrilla army. I was in a fret thinking, "If only I could grow taller quickly, I would be able to join the guerrilla army by lying about my age. But how vexatious I'm so short for my age! If only there was some drug that would make me taller quickly!"

So, words failed to describe my joy on that day when I saw with my own eyes the men of our own army whom before I had only seen in dreams.

I rose abruptly from my crouching position in front of the fireplace and asked, "Where is the General now?"

At this, the guerrilla girl gazed at me with sparkling eyes.

"Tell me, please. I'm the leader of the Children's Corps organization here," I said imploringly.

"Oh, are you? I didn't know that," the girl said with a smile and took me by the hand.

I moved up closer to the woman soldier who was peeling potatoes. I bombarded her with questions as to what I should do to meet the General and if I could go with the guerrilla army. She gazed into my face for a short while holding the potato she had been peeling in her hand. Then she said with a serious look:

"Comrade Leader, the Children's Corps work you are now engaged in is also meant to uphold the teaching of the General. You have not yet met the General, but I am sure it won't be long before you will. You must do your work well so that you can present yourself confidently before him when the time comes."

Every word she said struck home to my young heart with such a force that I could no longer pester her with my entreaties.

In the evening of that day our village folk were in a state of joyful excitement. All the people of Pinggangde and the neighbouring villages had crossed over from Korea either in quest of a living or like our family, to escape the brutal repression of the Japanese. They were enduring untold

hardships as tenant farmers. Therefore, they were unable to forget their homeland at any time and were eagerly looking forward to the day when they could return home. To them the mere word Korea was enough to elicit overwhelming emotion. Therefore, seeing the Korean soldiers this evening aroused them to a peak of excitement.

In particular, the appearance of women soldiers evoked great curiosity and some envy among the villagers. There were five of them. The children who had never set eyes on them before tagged along behind them when they went out to the well with water jars and took turns to peek through a chink in the door when they were washing up plates and dishes in the kitchen. The adults refrained from tailing behind them openly, but came to my house one after another to have a talk with them at least. They came in a stream, some bringing with them potatoes and others dried bracken and wild greens. They had heard all kinds of amazing stories that proliferated among the people about the army of General Kim Il Sung flying through the clouds on winged steeds, or standing lined up on top of a mountain one moment and mysteriously vanishing into thin air the next or crossing a hundred *ri* at a single stride by applying the magic of contracting space. So, the guerrilla army had already been a marvel to them, and now when they saw young women among the members of this phantom-like force, they were really overcome with amazement.

To our surprise, that evening the guerrillas gave an artistic performance on the threshing ground of the Chinese landowner. All the villagers, children and grown-ups, flocked there after supper. Hearing that General Kim Il Sung's soldiers were giving an entertainment, even an 80-year old grandfather came to see it in a white outer coat, supported by his grandsons.

We, the Children's Corps members, found seats in the front rows which afforded the best view of the stage. The performance was really impressive and stirring. True, this was partly due to the fact that our villagers were seeing a song and dance entertainment from our own army for the first time in their life. But it was far more because every item of the performance forcefully gripped the hearts of the audience. The songs, dances, poetry recitals, the mouth organ solo and every other item in the repertoire exerted a strong appeal.

Especially well received were the vocal solo "Song of Punitive Operations" and the gun dance. After an introduction announced that there would be a solo, the guerrilla girl who had been peeling potatoes in my house appeared on the stage. People clapped their hands enthusiastically. Nearly all

the villagers knew her already because my grandmother had praised her to everyone she met.

Mother, why do you cry?

Your tears make me cry.

...

People were shot or stabbed to death,

And your father is one of them.

Her voice, resonant yet full of pathos, penetrated deep into the sorrowful hearts of the spectators who had lost their homeland and their dear ones at the hands of the Japanese robbers. It was rather a blood-stirring appeal than a song; it dismissed the sorrow of the people and infused them with strength.

Then the gun dance was performed. The guerrillas danced skilfully moving their shoulders up and down with a rifle weighing seven or eight *kun* in their outstretched hand. Their lively movements lured all the inhabitants of the Pinggangde village including the children, to say nothing of the youths, into dancing buoyantly in spite of themselves.

The villagers were infused with boundless strength and courage at their first sight of the dashing and gallant figures of the Korean soldiers, the troops of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army organized and led by the legendary hero and iron-willed brilliant commander General Kim Il Sung.

When the whole place was reverberating with excitement a clear female voice called out suddenly, "All of you!" The eyes of the audience turned at once to the stage. I was surprised. Standing on the stage was again the woman soldier who had peeled potatoes in my home and who a short while before had brought tears to the eyes of the people by her song.

"All of you who are going through hardships in this alien land of west Jiandao, driven out of your dear native land by the Japanese imperialist robbers!

"We are soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army led by General Kim Il Sung. For us to spend a joyful time with you as we have done this evening makes us feel as if we were back in our home village and meeting our own flesh and blood.

"We are all sons and daughters of workers and peasants of Korea like you. Like you we lived in bitter tears. We too were subjected to oppression and exploitation by the Japanese bandits, landowners and capitalists until at last, unable to endure it any longer, we turned out in armed resistance.

“We express our heartfelt gratitude to you for all your help.”

With this the woman soldier made a polite bow to the audience, who applauded loudly.

The guerrilla girl came close to the young children seated in the front rows. Pointing to them, she continued:

“All of you, can you let these children live likewise in poverty and hunger, insulted and humiliated? No, absolutely not.

“That is why we guerrillas have taken up arms and are striking at the Japanese beasts.”

She went on to say that last May General Kim Il Sung formed the ARF and published its Ten-Point Programme. This Programme, she emphasized, was a great programme for the Korean people to crush the imperialist brigands and build a new society where the workers and peasants will be the masters.

In this Programme, she said, the General asked the 20 million Korean compatriots to come out for national independence. If our fellow countrymen are united in a body, they will have nothing to fear. Our people are a resourceful nation who for generations defended their country and repulsed all aggressors. General Kim Il Sung embodies the spirit and resources of Korea. He has assumed the leadership of the Korean people. The mere mention of his name is enough to set the Japanese bandits trembling, she said.

A tidal wave of emotion swept over the audience. The female guerrilla was seized with even greater passion when she resumed:

“Everybody, let us all rise in the anti-Japanese war following the leadership of General Kim Il Sung.

“In particular, the full-blooded young people should take the lead in this solemn struggle....

“A man will live and die only once. If you want to make your only life shining and your only death honourable, you should turn out in the struggle for national liberation.”

Then she shouted:

“Long live General Kim Il Sung!”

“Long live the Korean revolution!”

“Long live the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland!”

“Young Koreans, all turn out in the war of national liberation under General Kim Il Sung!”

Immediately the whole place shook with rousing cheers and shouts of

hurrah and slogans. The excitement and joy of the people were indescribable.

It astonished me that the woman guerrilla who was so kindhearted and endearing as a real sister to me should have such power as to grip the audience like that. I was not the only one who was surprised. The villagers expressed unlimited admiration for her. They were unsparing in their praises: she spoke so well that their mental depression was gone now; they had thought she was a good singer, but she was a still more wonderful speaker; she was the pride of Korean womanhood, flawless in appearance, in disposition and in her manner of working.

The next day the guerrillas departed. The villagers saw them off. At the thought of parting from the woman soldier, my throat tightened and my eyes dimmed with tears. She had treated me so kindly and tenderly, though just for one day, as a real mother or sister would. I yearned to go with her.

Perhaps she read my mind. She said to me we would meet again before long. She then told me to do the work of the Children's Corps still better and to study hard to become a fine revolutionary.

"Be sure to come again. I'll be waiting," I repeated this over and over again, hardly able to move from her side.

At this moment a grandfather came up to her with a sackful of glutinous millet in his arms. He said:

"Miss Hoeryong (Miss from Hoeryong), this is a mere trifle. But when you meet the General please be sure to give this to him."

The woman soldier gazed at the old man, her eyes wet with emotion. Then she said politely, "I'll take it since you ask me earnestly to present it to the General. Thank you." Then, she grasped his calloused hands and made a deep bow to him bidding farewell, "Grandfather, when our country is liberated in due course of time, let us enjoy a comfortable life talking about the old days."

The columns of the guerrilla army receded into the distance. The villagers stood and waved for a long time until the guerrillas disappeared from view behind a distant hill.

It was some time before we learned that the woman guerrilla was none other than the indomitable communist revolutionary fighter and heroine of the anti-Japanese struggle, Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

2. Among the Members of the Children's Corps

Precious Guideline

It was an early spring day in 1937. After dark, people began to gather at the outhouse of my home for a meeting. They were the heads of the Anti-Japanese Youth League branches, workers of the ARF and leaders of the Children's Corps organizations.

It felt rather strange to me. It was an important meeting, they said, and members of the ARF were posted to keep watch instead of children. And yet, we Children's Corps leaders were invited to it. I wondered why.

We could not understand the reason since we had so far taken it for granted that an important meeting would be attended by adults only.

As we were grappling with this thought, we heard some people approaching outside. Unexpectedly, we heard a clear female voice say, "Never mind. Please, you go in first."

Then, Comrade Kwon Yong Byok entered the room, followed by Comrade Kim Jong Suk. Nudging the comrade seated next to me in a flurry of excitement I whispered to him, "Oh, she's a political worker from the unit of General Kim Il Sung." Then I rose from my seat. The people of Pinggande were already acquainted with Comrade Kim Jong Suk, so they all rose and greeted her joyfully. The comrades from other villages stood up only in bewilderment.

"Comrades, it is good of you to have come. Please be seated," Comrade Kim Jong Suk said glancing round at the people in the room. Then, beckoning us forward, she said, "Comrades Members of the Children's Corps, please come forward to the front seats here."

Feeling the gaze of all eyes focussed on us, we were very embarrassed and wanted to hide ourselves in corners.

"What's the matter with you. Comrades? Come forward and sit here, please," she urged us again.

Although we were glad to hear her say so, we had never taken the front seats at a meeting before and so it was very difficult to bring ourselves to rise from where we were.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk gazed at us leaders of the Children's Corps organizations for a while as we were too shy to step forward without hesitation in the presence of the adults. Then she said, "Now, then, all of you stand up once and sit down again. Leaders of the Children's Corps organizations, step forward here into the lamplight."

Thus, we, the Children's Corps leaders, came forward and sat in the front

row. When everybody had settled down in their seats, Comrade Kim Jong Suk proposed to discuss ways of improving the work of the Children's Corps. She asked for the views of the heads of the Youth League branches first.

At her request a few Youth League workers rose and gave their opinions. After listening attentively to them she remained in thought for a short while. Then she said she would make a few remarks. We raised our heads and looked up at her.

"Let me begin by asking you a question. Well, Comrade Ma Guk Hwa, who has formed the Children's Corps?"

Guk Hwa stood up, but fidgeted in embarrassment. She just about managed to mumble, "Er-r-r... the district committee chairman came to our village and...." She must have known herself she was making a clumsy reply, so she sat down, blushing. The people in the room burst into laughter.

"Then, Comrade Head of the Youth League branch to which Comrade Guk Hwa belongs, you answer the question," Comrade Kim Jong Suk said.

Now a young man seated by a wall stood up and said "Yes". Then he hesitatingly added, "The county committee organized it."

Hearing this, the Chairman of the Zhongjiang District Committee of the Anti-Japanese Youth League uttered with a reddened face, "Well, because I've done my work poorly....," and looked at Comrade Kim Jong Suk with a sorry countenance.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk's face wore a very grave expression. She said:

"Comrades, do you know why I have asked you such a question? If you are to make a success of the work of the Children's Corps you should first have a clear understanding of what kind of organization it is. This is the reason why I have asked you the question.

"Our Children's Corps has been organized by General Kim Il Sung. It is the revolutionary organization of our Korean children which works precisely in accordance with the thoughts and teachings of General Kim Il Sung.

"You should commence your work with a clear knowledge of this above all else."

Her words made everyone raise their heads.

"The Children's Corps of General Kim Il Sung!" we felt as if we awoke from slumber and the scales fell from our eyes.

"Comrade Guk Hwa, are you clear now? The Children's Corps has been established by the General," she emphasized again. At this, Guk Hwa who was fidgeting with her coat string answered, "Yes, I am," and hid her face behind the back of the comrade sitting in front of her.

Everyone laughed. Comrade Kim Jong Suk who was looking at her tenderly continued:

“The work of the Children’s Corps is very important. To tell you how important it is, I would like to mention first the contents of the speech made by General Kim Il Sung at the conference of the workers of the Young Communist League held at Wangqing four years ago.

“At that time, the General said that the responsible guidance of the work of the communist Children’s Corps is an important guarantee for strengthening the Young Communist League organizations and, ultimately the anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

“He stated that the members of the communist Children’s Corps are the masters of the future. He pointed out that a revolutionary party of the working class cannot be founded on a firm basis without staunch and politically qualified members of the Young Communist League and that in turn there can be no organization of young communists without strengthening the communist Children’s Corps. Then he said that stepping up the work of the communist Children’s Corps now is tantamount to strengthening the Young Communist League and, further, laying the foundation of the party....

“This is why we say that the Children’s Corps is the school where the revolutionaries are taught how to walk. These comrades seated here will grow up to become fine revolutionaries in the future. If we compare them to babies, they are now at the toddling stage when they learn to walk. That is how important it is!

“There is a saying that the ways one acquires at three will last till eighty. This applies to life in the Children’s Corps. Only a child who is faithful to his duties here will live in a manner worthy of a revolutionary when he becomes a Party member via the Young Communist League.”

Comrade Kim Jong Suk broke off for a while.

This was the first time that we, the leaders of the Children’s Corps organizations, to say nothing of the heads of the youth organizations, had heard words which placed so much importance on the work of the Children’s Corps. We became tense and, at the same time, were overwhelmed with a strange excitement.

With a different expression Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked, “Comrade Leader of the Pinggandge Organization, did comrade head of the Youth League branch examine the plan of work when your Children’s Corps organization drew it up?”

I stood up with a jerk at the unexpected question, but I was unable to

answer because I had never made a plan of work and the head of the Youth League branch had never asked me to show him one.

“Who, then, is the head of the Youth League branch answerable for this Children’s Corps organization?” asked Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

A ripple of murmurs arose and whispering voices were heard in the room. Amidst the hum of scattered voices a young man rose to his feet slowly.

“Why do you stand up so ponderously?” she asked.

Nonplussed by her question, he could only stammer, “Er-r-r... I really...!”

There was a roar of laughter again. At this moment the district committee chairman of the Youth League came to his rescue, “He’s the elder brother of the Children’s Corps organization leader.”

“Do you find it embarrassing to give guidance to the leader because you’re his brother?” asked Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

“N...no. That’s not it, but...,” the young man faltered.

“All right. Now sit down please.”

When the sounds of laughter finally subsided, Comrade Kim Jong Suk resumed:

“I think the relations between the leader of the Children’s Corps organization and the head of the Youth League branch in Pinggange are typical of the relationship between their counterparts.

“You should not be overbearing or offer mindless obedience or shield one another under the influence of kinship relations.

“The thing is that the heads of Youth League organizations should help and guide the Children’s Corps organization leaders with the main emphasis on how to make a success of the work of the Children’s Corps.”

She went on to say that because underground organizations were formed primarily by the unit of village in the rural areas at present it frequently happened in the course of their work that family members and relatives would find themselves sitting face to face at meeting. It would not do, she explained, to allow kinship relations to interfere with work or personal regard founded on such relations to exert undue influence on matter connected with work.

“The work of the Children’s Corps,” she continued, “is not detached from but is a link in the chain of the work of the Youth League.

“Just as a child grows up to be an adult, so he grows up in the Children’s Corps to join the youth organization. Now, can we regard the affairs of the Children’s Corps as something foreign to us? No, they are precisely the affairs of our own home, our own affairs.

“How, then, should we guide the work of the Children’s Corps? The most important thing is to lead it to raise its members’ sense of organization and discipline and induce them to be faithful in their organizational life.

“You should ascertain correctly if the leaders of the Children’s Corps organizations have properly framed their plans of work, if they sum up the activities of the members and call the meetings as they should, and find out if they are getting to grips with the problems posed by work and life and learning how to solve them. You should teach them what they do not know and help them in matters which are beyond their power.

“Another important point in the guidance of the Children’s Corps organizations is to pay them due regard and make them display their independent character to the maximum, and guide them in a manner that is appropriate to their autonomous character.”

She illustrated her point by concrete examples.

“Suppose a need has arisen,” she said, “to send a Children’s Corps member immediately on a liaison errand to Banjiegou. Now, the head of the Youth League branch may either rush over to some boy and say thoughtlessly, ‘Hey, you, take this message to Banjiegou and hurry’, or he can call on the leader of the Children’s Corps organization first and tell him of the task in hand. Then the latter sends out the boy, a member of his organization, by ordering him, ‘Comrade So-and-so, carry out this important liaison mission.’ There is a difference between these two approaches.

“If a Youth League worker assigns a mission to a member of the Children’s Corps as he pleases, the Children’s Corps organization leader will be left in ignorance of what the member of his organization is doing and where and cannot be held responsible for any errors he may commit.

“And if this state of affairs continues, the leader of the Children’s Corps will be reduced to a figurehead.

“Not only that. The boy who is actually assigned to the task will himself take the mission more seriously with a due sense of organizational duty if it is given him by his leader. On the other hand he is likely to regard as a mere errand the bidding of the Youth League head, ‘You take this to such-and-such a place,’ in which case the boy may mess about on the way while carrying out the task or he may arrive late because he has allowed himself to be distracted and wasted time.

“This is just an example of sending out a boy on a liaison mission but the same principle applies in other matters.

“If things go off in this way, the Children’s Corps members will be

reduced to mere errand boys for the youths and the Children's Corps will lose its independent character.

"This is also true of criticism. Faulty boys should be brought to rectify themselves through criticism within their organization, but if individual Youth League workers go after them barking and shaking their fists, they will not readily admit their faults nor think to rectify them.

"Therefore, the question of fostering the independence of the Children's Corps organization is not merely aimed at ensuring the dignity of the organization itself. It is required in order to succeed in the revolution and to train the members of the Children's Corps well.

"The Children's Corps is a revolutionary organization of boys and girls. The children have not yet established a world outlook. They cannot, moreover, distinguish correctly right from wrong in considering things and events. But they are ready to learn anything. They are responsive to new things and will not remain quiet even for a moment.

"There is a saying that water and children will find their way through any opening.

"So, if their specific character is taken into full account and work is organized in a variety of forms and methods, the Children's Corps members will be kept happy and serve their organization more faithfully."

She spoke with a full knowledge of our shortcomings and so her every word touched our heartstrings and came home to us. With a bright smile she resumed:

"We have already conducted extensive Children's Corps activities in the east Manchurian guerrilla base.

"In those days the General personally set up a Children's Corps school and guided the work of the Children's Corps.

"Many of the Children's Corps members trained there are now fighting in the guerrilla army.

"It is my firm belief that the Children's Corps members of this Zhongjiang district including Pinggangde will all grow up to be fine members and join the Revolutionary Army without fail.

"Comrades Leaders of the Children's Corps Organizations, don't you think so?"

"Yes, we do," we responded enthusiastically, feeling fresh strength welling up inside.

"Look, how trustworthy our Children's Corps members are! So, our Youth League workers should earnestly help them and lead them forward.

They should seek every opportunity and devote every effort to rear them all to be worthy members of the great General's Children's Corps.

"What do you think? Can you do as I have told you?"

"Yes!"

The faces of the Youth League workers were flushed with a new determination. Comrade Kim Jong Suk went on:

"The reason why I have invited even the Children's Corps organization leaders to come here this evening is that I wanted the youth workers to get acquainted with them, their faces and names to begin with. Then when they meet them on the roads they can greet them with delight and teach and advise them. Even one small tip that is passed on during a brief meeting is worthwhile.

"Think of it please. You gathered here are all sons and daughters of Korea who have lost your country to the Japanese imperialist robbers. You have come here and are living in this alien land of Jiandao, enduring untold hardships, aren't you? Especially you are the vanguard of the children and youth of our country who have joined the communist Children's Corps and the youth organization with the high ideal to regain possession of the stolen nation and build a new society where the ill-clad and hungry workers and peasants will be the masters of the country, aren't you?"

"The great General always says that you are the masters of the revolution and the country.

"When our country becomes independent, who will be the ones to return home in triumph flying the red flags alongside the great General, who will always be at the head of our columns and who will always take the lead in the building of a new country? It will be none other than you, you who are gathered here.

"So, your relations are expressed in the one word, comradeship, but the true meaning of this word is profound. Comrades share life and death, joy and bitterness and sometimes lay down their lives to help and support each other. For this they should truly love, respect, prize, trust and take care of each other.

"In the underground struggle secrets are tantamount to the lives of comrades. So, we guard secrets to defend our comrades. Nevertheless, even the cadres engaged in youth work and the work of the Children's Corps glare fiercely at each other and use coarse language such as 'swine' and 'wretch'. Is this right?"

"Cadres who are old enough to be elder brothers have all the more reason

to refrain from behaving themselves like that towards their juniors who are like their younger brothers. And younger comrades, in their turn, should respect their seniors.

“Comrades, are my words clear to you?”

“Yes,” came the animated response from every person in the room.

All our hearts were opened wide like the blue sky on a bright, clear day.

“Well, let’s put this weighty topic aside for now and talk over interesting matters while eating roast potatoes,” Comrade Kim Jong Suk said.

Her words surprised us all. To have potatoes baked for us even before we knew it!

Just then the door opened and members of the Women’s Association in the village entered with large brass bowls and scooped wooden dishes full of roast potatoes and jars of pickled vegetable juice.

The tense atmosphere was dissipated now and everyone moved over to the vessels.

“Come now. Children’s Corps Members, help yourselves first,” the head of a Youth League branch said. To this a Children’s Corps organization leader answered, “You elder brothers should be first.”

We all laughed joyfully. As time went by, the atmosphere in the room became more harmonious and congenial. Oh, what a wonderful night it was!

I had not been very keen on meetings, but that evening for the first time I appreciated just how significant and important they are.

As we ate the potatoes, we talked in real earnest about ways of improving the Children’s Corps activities in future.

After the meeting was dismissed, we all walked home along the dark road hand in hand, leading each other along like real brothers.

The New Legend of the Changbai Area

Of a summer evening many children would come to my house and indulge in animated conversation.

Just like the grown-ups, our main topic was the legendary stories of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army which was known to be launching lightning assaults on the Japanese bandits.

In those days it was a great source of pride among the people of our village to know the news about General Kim Il Sung before anyone else. Whoever was first to bring the latest news became the envy of everyone as though he had some personal connection with the guerrilla army.

One evening Comrade Kim Jong Suk said to us:

“I was once as anxious as you to meet the great General Kim Il Sung. Then, when I really did meet him, can you imagine how surprised I was! When you meet our General some day, you too will be surprised. This is because the General is such an ordinary person.

“The General dresses like the ordinary guerrillas, he takes his meals with us, he joins us in studies and marches, and always stays with us. It quite often happens that when the guerrilla army passes through a village, the people fail to recognize the General in our midst. Then later, when he has left, they hit their knees in annoyance at missing the chance of meeting him.”

We could hardly believe our ears at what she said. Until then we had imagined that the General would not be easily accessible to ordinary people. We thought his clothes would be loud, studded all over with glittering star-like tacks and banded with red and blue stripes.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk continued:

“How is it that the General is such a simple person? It is because he was born a son of the people. Like you and me he comes from peasant stock. Even now his grandparents and relations back in his native home are following the plough under the tyrannical rule of the Japanese scoundrels.”

“Oh!” Our joyous cry resounded across the yard. We had assumed that General Kim Il Sung, the greatest commander ever known, was born of a special family. But he comes from a peasant family just like us. How wonderful!

As for me, until some time before I had often heard that General Kim Il Sung had been born on Mt. Paekdu. I had firmly believed therefore that Lake Chon on the mountain was a body of water that had gathered to commemorate the spot where he had been born and had first seen the light.

Now all who were sitting in the yard, both grown-ups and children, huddled round Comrade Kim Jong Suk wanting to hear the next story from her, their eyes brimming with curiosity.

“From childhood,” she continued, “the General grew up witnessing the hard life of our people including the peasants.

“The General’s family had been patriotic people for generations. His parents passed away in the process of fighting for national liberation. Our General left home, leaving his young brothers behind on their own. Even now, he often thinks of his brothers with a painful heart. When he left, his brothers insisted that they would come with him. But he came away without taking them along.

“When it came to the great cause of recovering the country he had to leave family matters out of consideration.”

A grandmother brought the hems of her skirt to the corners of her eyes, saying, “Such a great man to have a personal worry as we humble people did....”

“That is why our General has an inside knowledge of all the pains suffered by our people, and says he will liberate the country and stop at nothing to get the people’s grudges worked off.”

As we listened to her with bated breath, we became conscious of a question looming larger in our minds. We wanted to know how a person who is just like us can wage a great earth-shaking war, riding on a cloud or on a winged steed. Comrade Kim Jong Suk resumed:

“You say the General rides now on a cloud and now on a winged steed and moves like the wind contracting space. But in reality, he is a still greater man.

“National independence is not all that our General has in mind. He intends to wipe out the oppression and exploitation of man by man and build a new world where all people can live in abundance

“Since he always maintains the fight with these aspirations for the people in his mind he enjoys their support everywhere he goes and with their assistance always succeeds in battle.”

“Popular support is the heaven’s support. Who will not follow such a great man?” my father exclaimed. He was wrapped in excitement as if he had already become the soldier of the great man.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk continued:

“You must have often heard that our General appears in unexpected places at unexpected moments and vanishes now into the sky and now into the earth. One reason why such miraculous qualities are ascribed to him lies in the exceptional esteem in which the guerrilla army and the people hold him for his leadership in their struggle. The other reason is that he has mastered all the arts of war known in all ages and all countries, but, instead of applying them straight from the textbooks, he has assimilated them into his own unique tactics to make use of mountains and rivers, grass and trees, snow and rain, and even the moon and the sun in crushing the Japanese bandits.

“Therefore, whenever the General plans the operations and commands the battle, our guerrilla fighters think to themselves victory is assured even before the battle is started.”

Comrade Kim Jong Suk went on to relate the following story to us.

One night our guerrilla army was marching with enemy troops in pursuit when unexpectedly they encountered another batch of enemy troops in front of them.

Their path lay through snow and the enemy troops were attacking them fiercely both from the front and the rear. What was to be done? The guerrillas were perplexed.

Now the General divided the guerrilla unit into two. He ordered one section to fight the enemy troops in front of us and the other to deal with those coming in pursuit. In the midst of the battle, he suddenly gave orders for the guerrillas to plunge into the woods on one side of the path. Thus, the guerrillas vanished into thin air after exchanging fire with the enemy troops for a while, and left the field of battle to the two forces of enemy troops who had been closing in from front and rear respectively and who continued firing their guns with increasing intensity.

Meanwhile, the guerrillas climbed to the mountain ridge where they watched the delicious spectacle of the enemy fighting among themselves to their hearts' content. The frantic firing of the enemy troops continued throughout the night until the day broke and they discovered that they had been fighting among themselves. They howled with vexation, wondering if the guerrilla army had ascended into the sky or burrowed into the earth.

When they heard this, the people's admiration knew no bounds. They said that the General's tactics really were preternatural.

It was a thrilling story. After listening to it my father was carried away with excitement and said:

"Now that General Kim Il Sung, the most celebrated commander in the world who embodies in himself the will and wisdom of the people, has appeared in this land renowned from ancient times as a silk-embroidered land of three-thousand-ri, is this not the greatest good fortune for Korea?"

"After hearing the words of this political worker today, even this old man has conceived a desire to take up arms under his command.

"I entrust him with my younger brother, my son and, indeed, my whole family."

He spoke for all of us, we thought. At this moment, a guerrilla entered the yard and said something to Comrade Kim Jong Suk. She rose quickly from her seat and said that she had to leave at once to attend to an urgent matter.

"What? Where do you say you have to go in such depths of night?"

We were all surprised and could not suppress a feeling of regret. The

guerrilla noticed this and explained that the comrade political worker had to go without fail to attend to something and that so we should not detain her any longer.

We were unable to repress our sorrow. We asked her when she would come again and offered to accompany her to where she was supposed to go.

She smiled gently at this and said:

“I will come again soon. Meanwhile you should conduct the Children’s Corps activities more faithfully and study hard to become worthy soldiers of the General.”

We blinked our eyes in which the tears stood before we knew they were there. A Children’s Corps member piped up in a tone of earnest desire, “Oh, when will it be that we shall meet General Kim Il Sung?” My grandmother, too, uttered words that expressed her innermost feelings, “Indeed, how good it would be if I could see the General just for once in my lifetime!”

On hearing this, the guerrilla exchanged a meaningful wink with Comrade Kim Jong Suk and said, “Why, didn’t you, the people of this house, recognize the General when he stayed overnight in the upper room?”

“What?!” shouted the people, swept by an uncontrollable wave of emotion.

“Dear me, but do you mean what you say?” my father asked loudly, springing to his feet.

“Why should I tell a lie? The person whom Comrade Ju Hyon (the eldest brother of this writer and a commanding officer of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army—*Tr.*) brought to this house last autumn is none other than the General. On that occasion the General sat at that desk over there in the upper room and received the report of Comrade Ju Hyon, didn’t he?...”

“Then you mean we failed to recognize him! Can there be anything more sinful in this world?!” my father lamented, unable to control himself.

Her legs giving way under her, my grandmother flopped to the ground, saying:

“What shall I do then to make up for it? That day he stepped into the kitchen and told me never to use our rice for cooking their meals, and so I prepared their meals with the corn meal that the guerrillas produced.... What a thing to do to treat our General like that!...”

She became lost for words. Comrade Kim Jong Suk cast kind eyes over our family members. Then she said:

“It is a great honour for your family to have played host to our General even if for a short time. Don’t be too disheartened. At that time the unit’s

movement was a secret. Therefore our comrades could not tell you about it.”

At this my father looked somewhat calmer. He took Comrade Kim Jong Suk by the hand and entreated her:

“When you go to the General, please be so kind as to ask him to forgive this foolish man. There’ll be no such incivility in future, believe me please.”

“I see, Father,” Comrade Kim Jong Suk said and departed hurriedly following the guerrilla fighter.

Oh, dear General!

We could not fall asleep that night until daylight. The words of Comrade Kim Jong Suk that the General was as ordinary a man as any of our people were engraved on our minds with their profound implications, and the determination to dedicate our lives in the service of the great General, so modest and benevolent, became fixed as an unshakable faith.

Her Remarks on Time

I would like to recount an incident which occurred one day when in the presence of Comrade Kim Jong Suk we in our Children’s Corps organization criticized a comrade for a violation of organizational discipline.

One of the Children’s Corps members had leaked out the secret that the guerrilla army unit was to come to our village. This nearly brought disastrous consequences.

It was regarded as the most important aspect of organizational discipline in our Children’s Corps at the time to keep secrets, and so we called a meeting to criticize what had happened.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk presided over this meeting personally. Since it was an important meeting attended by her, I had told all our members to show up at the meeting place a little earlier than the scheduled time.

Nevertheless, when it was nearly time to start, one comrade had still failed to appear. We were nervously staring in the direction of the door, but she sat silently reading a book. Finally, it was the appointed time.

We told her that a comrade was not yet present and asked her what to do.

“It is not permissible,” she answered calmly, “to fail to keep to the time. Our Children’s Corps organization cannot accommodate itself to the person who arrives late, can it? Let’s begin.”

The meeting was opened. Our comrades rose and criticized the Children’s Corps member who failed to observe secrecy.

Some time after the meeting had started, the comrade we had been

waiting for entered the room quietly and sat down in a seat at the back.

As the meeting proceeded the atmosphere became increasingly tense and serious. Almost all the comrades rose and took part in the criticism. Some rose two or three times. Stimulated by the atmosphere, the latecomer, too, started criticizing the Children's Corps member who had let out the secret.

At this moment, Comrade Kim Jong Suk intervened. "You, sit down," she told the boy. "Sit down and reflect on yourself first." I could not understand the reason. I simply thought that the boy must have also betrayed a secret. The boy himself seemed confused. He glanced at us with a puzzled expression.

Shortly afterwards the criticism came to a close and the self-criticism of the comrade who had failed to maintain secrecy was also concluded. We looked at Comrade Kim Jong Suk. She asked the latecomer, "Are you ready to criticize yourself?"

Now the boy stood up looking bewildered and said, "Yes,... but I don't think in fact that I have ever let out a secret."

"You aren't aware of your fault yet. Sit down," she said. She glanced round at us and asked, "Comrades, what is the question placed before our meeting today?"

"It's the question of guarding secrets."

"That's right. It is the question of keeping secrets. This is central to the question of observing organizational discipline."

She emphasized the words "organizational discipline" and went on:

"Everybody knows about this comrade's mistake. He himself is well aware that he is in the wrong. So why have we called this meeting today? A member of our organization committed a very grave mistake and this indicates a lack of strict organizational discipline in our Children's Corps organization. Therefore, the aim of the meeting is to put all of us on the alert."

Then she called again to the boy who had arrived late and asked him:

"What is meant by observing organizational discipline well?"

"It means jealously guarding secrets," the boy answered forthrightly.

"Yes, guarding secrets is one aspect of organizational discipline. But there is another important aspect to organizational discipline. Do you know what it is?"

The latecomer was at a loss for a reply.

"It is keeping time," said Comrade Kim Jong Suk. "You are ready to criticize the boy who failed to keep a secret as a violator of organizational

discipline, but why aren't you prepared to criticize yourself for your failure to keep the time? Do you think this is not an infringement of organizational discipline? There is no difference between your fault and his."

We became tense. She regarded as equally serious the blunder of leaking out a secret which had resulted in the guerrilla army being compelled to change its plan of action and which might easily have resulted in putting the village in danger of destruction and the fault of arriving several minutes late at a meeting.

Her expression grew gentle again when she said she would adduce an example. This is the story she told.

A Children's Corps member set off on a mission of liaison, but he was delayed for a long time at the enemy's checkpoint on the way. Now he feared he would be hard pressed to reach the destination by the appointed time. So he was obliged to run. He ran and ran and managed to reach the goal in time. When he got there he collapsed with exhaustion. The message he conveyed was that the conference scheduled to take place in the district should be cancelled. The plan of the meeting had become known to the secret agent and so it would be dangerous for it to take place. Although the boy did not know the content of the slip of paper he was carrying, he did know it was the discipline of the Children's Corps to be punctual and so he made sure he was on time and carried out his assignment to the last detail. As soon as the message from the Children's Corps member was received, the organization concerned took the necessary measures. As a result, the comrades and the organization were saved.

Moreover, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that the General had taught that discipline is as precious as life, and emphasized that organizational discipline has many aspects but that its central core is the observation of secrecy and punctuality.

Her remarks were quite new to us. We were all ears. We were anxious not to miss a single word. She glanced round at us affectionately before she resumed.

The organization plans and conducts various kinds of activities in which time is of the essence— do something by a certain time, meet at a certain time, come at a certain time, and so on. But a person who is lax about organizational discipline usually fails to keep punctually to the appointed time. Nevertheless, he makes various excuses for himself. This sort of person always has lots to say by way of excuse.

Pretexts and excuses always come naturally to people who have failed in

their duties. Upright revolutionaries have nothing to do with them. People's true minds are manifested in the course of practice as clearly as their appearance is reflected in the mirror. We prize practice more highly than a thousand words and value a single report of good achievements more than ostentatious pledges.

Her words were engraved deeply in our hearts. She continued still more passionately:

“Our organization led by the General is the most glorious of organizations. To violate organizational discipline means that the person concerned has lost sight of what membership in this dignified organization implies for him. Therefore, you should always remember that punctuality is the first and foremost requirement of organizational discipline and observe discipline in your organizational life.”

What she said made us reflect seriously on our deficiencies in keeping time and make a firm resolve to be punctual at all times in our organizational activities.

Much water has run under the bridge since we received the valuable teachings of Comrade Kim Jong Suk on punctuality. But even now I cannot forget what she said. Today, as I recollect what she kindly taught us when we were innocent young children just starting out on organizational life, a thought comes to my mind, which runs:

“There is nothing in this world which is so precise, honest and tightly-gear'd as time. Therefore, her statement that punctuality is also an aspect of organizational discipline contained the important implication that we should lead our organizational life as honestly and methodically as time.”

The Qualifications of the Leader of the Children's Corps Organization

One afternoon, a guerrilla came and asked me to nominate a member of our Children's Corps organization to be sent on an important liaison mission.

That day Comrade Kim Jong Suk had come to our village, and so the day's schedule was crowded with meetings and various other plans. It was not easy to designate a member.

But since it was an important task of communication for the guerrilla army, I decided to send a young but most responsible member.

The sun was going down in the west and a snowstorm was starting. Although the Depth of Winter and the First Day of Spring were already

behind us, the late chill that year was severe. On such a mission all the way to Shangfengdong in such inclement weather it seemed to me that the most trusted comrade should be sent. That was why I assigned the task to the young member.

The girl was rather short in stature and slim, but she would carry out to the letter any task that was assigned to her with unremitting tenacity. For this reason the village folks were always singing her praises. They used to refer to her as the “guerrilla contact soldier” because she was often sent out to the mountains to deliver messages.

We believed that because she was such a “renowned” contact girl, she would accomplish the mission and return without mishap. As she was told it was an important mission, she departed without a moment’s hesitation.

Sometime later, however, Comrade Kim Jong Suk was inquiring about the preparations for the next day’s meeting when she learned that a young Children’s Corps member had gone on a liaison errand to Shangfengdong. She became very worried about this. She asked when the girl had left. I replied that she had departed just before sunset. She then asked if she had eaten supper before leaving. I replied that she could have her meal when she got back. She knit her brows.

“What kind of shoes is she wearing?”

“Straw sandals.”

“Does she wear padded socks?”

“No. Er... only foot-wrappers.”

I told her that we had no padded socks and so would mostly have our feet wrapped in winter.

“Did she go with a muffler around her neck?”

“She went with her ears covered with earmuffs of rabbit fur.”

“The girl can’t be adequately dressed if she has gone without even wearing padded socks, can she? Without eating supper at that... Shangfengdong is two kilometres off, I guess?”

“Yes.”

“I know the way to Shangfengdong. There is a steep mountain path on the way. What a hard time the young girl must be having in this snowstorm!”

She rose from her seat and gazed out of the window for a long time. A village elder who was by her side told her repeatedly not to worry herself so much about it. “Don’t worry,” he said. “That girl is capable of going anywhere.”

“Father, even if nothing goes wrong, what a hard time the young child

must be having out there! I'm sorry I failed to think of it before.”

Then, she got through the matter that was under discussion with a few people and adjourned to the upper room.

Soon afterwards a guerrilla man arrived in a hurry and asked where the comrade political worker was. I told him she was in the upper room, but he said she was not there and rushed out looking worried. Since he had accompanied Comrade Kim Jong Suk to the village he was responsible for her safety.

We, too, looked for her, but she was nowhere to be seen. Suddenly a thought flashed through my mind and I ran out to the entrance of the village. Sure enough, the youth who was standing guard in front of the village told me that she had gone in the direction of Xianxingcun village. She had said that she had some urgent business that was taking her in the direction of Xianxingcun and that therefore, if anybody should inquire about her, he should tell him to wait for her.

Xianxingcun was situated on the route to Shangfengdong. It was evident that she had gone after the messenger girl from the Children's Corps who had left for Shangfengdong.

I thought of the trouble she might be in caught up in the snowstorm in the dark night but I was at a loss what to do. I stood for a long time by the wayside staring in the direction of Shangfengdong.

It was quite a long time before the guerrilla man appeared with Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who was carrying the girl on her back. Villagers came running and relieved her of the girl, who was carried into the house and put to bed. She was frozen dark blue. Her hands, feet and face were blood-stained.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk had been hurrying towards Shangfengdong almost at a run when she saw something at the foot of the steep slope. When she went down to investigate she found that it was none other than the Children's Corps member who had been sent with the message.

On her way back from her errand, the child was exhausted from hunger. She had taken a false step and tumbled from the path down over the slope. If Comrade Kim Jong Suk had not rescued her in time, she would surely have died on the spot.

Throughout that night Comrade Kim Jong Suk remained at the child's bedside and maintained a sleepless watch over her. Her refusal to leave the girl's bedside till daybreak aroused our concern. I tried to console her by saying that it was not uncommon for people to lay down their lives in the course of the revolution, and so one had to expect incidents of this nature to

occur.

At this she changed colour instantly.

“Is it right for a Children’s Corps leader to say such a thing?”

I had never seen her look so stern before. I felt disheartened and hung my head. On second thoughts I realized that I had been wrong to pass such remarks.

After a while she said in a much softer tone of voice:

“The revolution is carried out for the good of the people. If everyone had to die, the revolution would be a pointless undertaking, wouldn’t it? Aren’t we now fighting on in the face of such hardships in order that people can live a life worthy of human beings?”

“True, there may be unavoidable sacrifices in the process of struggle. But lives are sacrificed only when there is absolutely no alternative. Revolutionaries are not supposed to risk their precious lives at random.”

I sat in silence unable to raise my lowered head. Comrade Kim Jong Suk continued:

“Today you have made a grave mistake. What is your mistake? First, your choice of the person to be sent on the errand was wrong. How could you send out a young comrade on a night errand in such cold weather?”

Only then did I remember that although I had thought of giving the assignment to another comrade, I decided on the young comrade who was most faithful in work and, moreover, meek and obedient.

“Secondly you did not take proper care of the one you appointed as the messenger. Didn’t you as Children’s Corps leader feel a pain in your heart to see your young comrade set out on her journey with her feet wrapped in such pieces of cloth on this cold day?”

“Look at this. In this unlined jacket and thin skirt...,” she turned away, unable to continue.

We Koreans were suffering the most abject poverty and our wretched plight was reflected in the young girl’s chapped feet and her thin skirt full of patches.

A burning lump came into my throat. The figure of the girl who had been inconspicuous before tore at my heart that night.

“We are now engaged,” resumed Comrade Kim Jong Suk, “in the revolution to make all the Koreans so prosperous that they will be the envy of the whole world. It is precisely for this reason that our young comrade undertook to journey through the harsh blizzard.

“So, who is it that should protect these valuable people? It is none other

than ourselves and our organization. I am telling you that it is the responsibility of the Children's Corps organization to afford protection to its members.

"The leader of the Children's Corps organization should understand this above all else. One who has no love for his comrades is not qualified to be the leader of the Children's Corps organization. It is the leader's duty to guide his members and look after them kindly.

"If you work haphazardly without maintaining a high regard for the Children's Corps members in future, I will not, on any account, forgive you."

These were stern words and I sensed that she meant them, but her tone conveyed warmth also. I raised my face to her. My eyes were wet with tears. I vowed to her that nothing like this would ever happen again.

"Be sure to remember. The revolution begins with prizing the people," she said touching my heartstrings once more.

I learned a really great thing that day. The general outline of our revolution, arduous yet glorious, why it has started, what its ultimate goal is, and its profound message became imprinted on my young mind.

Looking back, what I learned that day constituted precisely the new meaning and lofty ideal of our revolution based on the man-centered Juche idea.

Without knowing this correctly, a revolutionary cannot follow the right path of struggle and, further, any person in charge of an organization will be incapable of discharging his duties properly.

The Talk by the Spring

It was early morning on the day following the conference to discuss the question of improving the work of the Children's Corps in our village. I was still half asleep when I heard voices from the kitchen. Startled, I pricked up my ears.

"So, please don't do it any more."

"Nonsense. Carrying a water jar on my head for the first time in so many years has given me so much pleasure. Please let me do it once more."

It was the unmistakable voice of Comrade Kim Jong Suk. I came to myself with a start. I could see her through the half-open door. She was leaving by the twig gate with a water jar under her arm.

I was delighted and proud that she had stayed the night at my home, but I was also sorry that I had been asleep at the time and not known. Immediately

after the conference the previous night we had returned home. But she had stayed behind to deal with many things. She had then come to my house after I had fallen asleep.

I sprang out of bed and ran off to the spring. Comrade Kim Jong Suk was dipping into the spring with a gourd when she saw me. With a look of delight on her face she asked why I was up so early. I apologized for sleeping so late without knowing that she had stayed the night at my house.

She laughed lightly and told me not to mention it. Then she said it was a rare opportunity for us to sit face to face in the early morning when the air was fresh and everything was quiet and suggested that we studied together. With this she sat down under a tree by the side of the spring.

I did not want to study, so I felt a little unhappy, but showed no outward sign. "All right", I said halfheartedly.

She smiled endearingly and asked:

"Well, what are you studying these days in the Children's Corps?"

"Studying? Well, we're studying everything we're told to. We do the homework we're given at night school, too."

"Everything you're told to? Well, then, tell me what you're studying."

I told her the subjects we were doing at the moment, including "The Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland", "Why Are We Poor?" and "What Is Capitalism?"

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that what we were studying was very useful and asked if we had learnt everything thoroughly.

"Yes," I replied rather diffidently.

She seemed to notice nothing of my great agitation, and asked with a still brighter smile:

"All right. Then I'll ask you a question. What are the Children's Corps members fighting for?"

"Naturally, they're fighting for the independence of Korea."

"That's right. And what's to be done to win the independence of Korea?"

"We must fight."

"How?"

"The twenty-million Korean people should all turn out together and fight," I answered, remembering the first line of the Song of the Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland.

"Right. And what does it mean to turn out together? Does it mean that everybody should go and line up in the street like the one over there, or that all of them should rush out when someone blows a bugle?"

“It is...er...”

I could not answer. I had repeated the words “turn out together,” but did not know what they really meant.

“See how little you know. It’s because you’re neglecting your studies...”

With this she looked at me, her eyes overflowing with indefinable tenderness and concern.

“In short, to turn out together means holding the great General Kim Il Sung in high esteem and fighting in unity around him.”

She went on to say:

“What is it that sticks paper together? It is paste. What is it that fastens wood together? It is glue. What is it that welds pieces of iron? It is molten iron.

“What then is it that unites people? It is ideas that unite people. Therefore, bringing the twenty-million Korean people to turn out together means infusing them with the General’s thoughts and making them fight in unity around him according to these thoughts.”

Inwardly I shouted for joy. Looking up at Comrade Kim Jong Suk who had taught me something of profound importance in such plain and simple language, I was struck with boundless admiration for her.

“So what should the Children’s Corps do? It should implant the ideas of the great General in its members. Thus, all the children of the country will unite into a single body.”

“I see,” I answered full of joy and confidence.

After a short pause, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that she had another question to ask. She wanted to know if Comrade Yun from our Children’s Corps organization was faithful to his duties and what I, as the leader of the organization, thought of him. Wondering why she was so interested in Comrade Yun, I told her my opinion.

His parents hated the Japanese imperialists, but had not joined the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. So, their loyalty to the revolution was halfhearted. For this reason, I was not happy even with Comrade Yun, to say nothing of his parents, and, because I did not regard him as trustworthy, I would steer well clear of him if at all possible. I considered that this was the way to maintain a firm class stand.

She pondered for a while after she had heard this, and then asked me if there was not some discrepancy between making the twenty-million Korean people turn out in full force and shunning Comrade Yun. It was a difficult question which I could scarcely answer with my limited knowledge. I hung

my head unable to say a word in reply.

Her eyes rested on me for a while before she said that when a person fails to do study diligently, he will come across problems in his work. She added:

“The aim of studying is to help in one’s activities. We study to make a success of the revolution rather than just to cram our heads with knowledge as was done in the old-fashioned village schoolhouses in the past. Therefore, we must have a clear knowledge of everything that may be of practical use.

“Is it right, in particular, to study the General’s teachings in the manner of licking the outside of a watermelon without grasping their real meaning?”

My head drooped still lower. She remarked that in order to mobilize all twenty-million Koreans it was necessary to understand fully the standard of unity and that the General had taught that the anti-Japanese spirit was this standard.

“The attitude towards Japanese imperialism is the yardstick for measuring the people to be called out in the war of liberation. We must unite with anyone who hates and is ready to fight against Japanese imperialism, regardless of his property status, religious belief, sex and age.”

With this, she told me that when we study the General’s teachings, we should examine them phrase by phrase to understand their deep meaning, otherwise we would always encounter difficulties or commit errors in practice.

I had never realized that the aim of studying was to carry on the revolution successfully and, moreover, had never done my studies diligently, examining the meaning of each phrase. So, for the first time in my life I became aware of what was the attitude that a student should adopt.

This inspired in me a still greater respect for Comrade Kim Jong Suk and I was overcome by a tide of thoughts of wonder about where she had studied so much to gain such a great store of knowledge.

Somehow I forgot my awkward position and asked her outright:

“Comrade Political Worker! Is there a school in the guerrilla army, too?”

She said yes and told me that in the future when I joined it, I should find out for myself that the guerrilla army was actually as good as a university, where everything from marksmanship and cooking to the difficult principles of revolution was taught.

“Where does the teacher come from?” I asked, and she answered emphatically:

“General Kim Il Sung is our teacher.”

“Hurrah!” I let out another cry of joy.

I felt an irresistible longing for the anti-Japanese guerrilla army commanded by the General, and was seized by a burning desire to join it.

“When will I be able to go to the guerrilla army? Aren’t comrades of my age already in it?”

“You want to study there?”

“Yes, I’ll study and fight the Japanese rogues at the same time.”

“The guerrilla army doesn’t admit just anyone who turns up. If you want to join the guerrilla army, you must prepare yourself well. Your present life in the Children’s Corps is precisely the preparation you need.

“I was also admitted to the guerrilla army through the same process. You should therefore be more faithful in fulfilling your duties in the Children’s Corps in future.

“To do so, above all else you should study hard.”

It was my greatest desire to join the guerrilla army and her remarks that I must study diligently went right to my heart. What her teaching boiled down to was that I could get nowhere without studying.

After a short while she asked me what kind of books I was reading at home. I was ashamed to answer. There was no other book in my house except the “Primer of Chinese Characters” which my father was using to teach me. But I found the Chinese characters so difficult and stale that I loathed even opening it and always regarded it as an ugly customer to deal with.

On hearing my words, she smiled broadly at me and said that a knowledge of Chinese characters would also be needed in the revolution in the future, and told me to learn them well now.

Soon the morning mist which had been lying thick over the whole village began slowly to lift and the red sun rose over the top of the mountain to the east. Comrade Kim Jong Suk stood up quickly, saying that she had to leave our conversation and go and prepare breakfast, and she hurried back home with the water jar.

But I found it difficult to drag myself after her, because what she had taught me beside the spring had given my mind a violent jolt.

Several days later, a guerrilla fighter paid a short visit to our home; he was returning from a mission in the homeland and had come via Taoquanli. He gave me a package, saying, “Unwrap it and see. It’s a present to you from the political worker.”

As I untied it, I was beside myself with joy. Inside I found many notebooks and books for me to study. The moment I saw the books, I recalled what I had said to her concerning the lack of any book at my house except the

“Primer of Chinese Characters”. It had only been a casual remark, but she had remembered it and personally obtained and sent me these precious books.

Today, books are so easy to obtain that few people realize how precious they are. But in the past poor people like us were rarely able to get a book.

I could not restrain the tears that welled up in my eyes. Then a little while later, Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to my home and asked me if I had read all the books she had sent me. With this she took out a black fountain pen from her inside pocket. This was what she said:

“I’m giving you this as a souvenir in the hope that you will study hard in the future, and so please take it. Just as a man cannot survive without food, so a revolutionary cannot take part in the revolution with an empty head.

“General Kim Il Sung has said that to study is the first and foremost duty of revolutionaries. We should have those words engraved on our hearts and learn and learn again.”

Listening to her, I took a firm pledge to study hard at all costs and become a fine revolutionary.

I devoted myself wholly to my studies using the fountain pen, books and notebooks. Even when I joined the guerrilla army later, I always carried the fountain pen and books with me. In particular, I prized the fountain pen highly, as did my guerrilla comrades, and we would use it in turn among ourselves.

But to my regret, I lost it in the summer of 1938. One morning, the political instructor asked to borrow it and used it to write, but he dashed into a battle before he could return it to me, and in that battle he died heroically. That was how I lost both a revolutionary comrade and a fountain pen.

But together with the precious teachings she gave me by the spring, the noble instructions contained in the books and the fountain pen Comrade Kim Jong Suk presented to me so that I might learn what I needed to learn for the revolution and live on for ever as a faithful soldier of General Kim Il Sung are preserved in the depths of my heart to this day.

Braving Strict Watch

First Assignment

Vapour was rising leisurely from the earth, which had begun to thaw after the severe winter.

One afternoon when I was about to go out to the field, Comrade Kim Jong

Suk called and told me to present myself that evening at the house of the chief of the branch of the ARF. She informed me that I was to be given an important assignment which she expected me to carry out with credit.

After dark I called on the branch chief.

When I opened the door, Comrade Kwon Yong Byok told me to come in. He interrupted his conversation with the branch chief to turn and gaze at me for a while. He seemed to be measuring me up to see if I would be equal to the assignment intended for me.

At last he spoke. He told me that there was information about enemy movements that had to be collected from Hyesan. I was to accompany the branch chief in going for it. He said that it was decided to send me on the recommendation of Comrade Kim Jong Suk. I felt my heart swell as I listened to him. The assignment was a very important one, I thought. I was touched that she had such faith in me as to recommend me for it and by the warm solicitude she was showing for me.

He explained to me in detail everything I needed to bear in mind to maintain caution in carrying out the assignment.

I was listening carefully, determined not to miss a single word, when Comrade Kim Jong Suk unexpectedly entered the room.

She looked at me with trust in her eyes. She told me to discharge the task assigned by Comrade Kwon Yong Byok with credit.

“The assignment is a very important one which will be reported to the General. So you should give a good account of yourself and show a proper sense of responsibility.

“Learn everything you possibly can so that in future you will be capable of acting on your own.”

I listened to her attentively. Her words sharpened my appreciation of the importance of the task and the faith she was placing in me.

She advised us to cross the Amnok River carrying firewood on our backs to avoid suspicion. She urged us to act with boldness and tact and display presence of mind when unforeseen eventualities cropped up on the way.

The following morning we each gathered from the mountain a load of firewood on our backs and set out on our journey.

As we left the village, we passed the waste land studded sparsely with birches and Korean poplars which used to be carpeted with wild strawberries in summer. We were about to enter a downward path when we saw the unexpected figure of Comrade Kim Jong Suk standing in our path.

She came up to us and told us to take off the A-frames that we were

carrying on our backs for a while.

“Why have you come all this way? What’s happened?” the branch chief asked, in alarm. He had not expected to find her here.

“Nothing. I just thought of you setting out on a long journey carrying firewood on your backs and felt uneasy. So, ...

“Lessen your loads, please. As far as possible only carry light bundles.”

She made me take off the A-frame and began to untie a bundle of firewood.

The branch chief told her that there was no need to do so but she insisted. She pointed out that it would be hard for us to travel a long distance carrying a heavy load and, besides, this might delay us. So she made us reduce our bundles. She made her farewells to us for a second time and we resumed our journey to Hyesan carrying the diminished loads of firewood.

She stood and watched us until we were out of sight.

We looked back and waved.

As we went down the hill, we gestured to her to go back and signalled our assurance that we would fulfil our assignment with credit and return safely.

That day we covered eight kilometres before we knew it and reached the approach to the bridge across the Amnok River.

The blue stream of the Amnok River seemed to carry the bitter tears of the Korean people in its flow and echo their sobs.

We walked nonchalantly up to the Japanese policemen at the checkpoint.

They asked us where we were going. The branch chief answered that we were going to sell firewood.

At this, one of them sneered: “You bumpkins, you are so keen on money-making, aren’t you? The price of firewood has just about doubled at Hyesan market these days, I hear. Hum!”

Another did not bother to question us and only searched us.

I was nervous. I remembered that the branch chief had thrust a slip of paper into my bundle of firewood.

But they failed to find it.

We passed the checkpoint without any trouble. We were searched and questioned minutely at the other side of the river facing Hyesan but they could find no grounds for suspicion.

We succeeded in passing ourselves off as country dealers in firewood.

Once again I became acutely aware of the value of the warm solicitude that Comrade Kim Jong Suk always showed.

If we had not carried firewood on our backs, it would have been hard for

us to pass the checkpoint and hide the slip of paper.

It was evident that Comrade Kim Jong Suk had already known the price of firewood at Changbai and Hyesan markets.

I knew that previously the price of firewood had been one or two *chon* higher in Hyesan but no one crossed the Amnok River for the sake of one or two *chon*. But now, as its price there was as much as double, quite a few were crossing the river carrying firewood like us.

We reached a noodle house near Kwaegung Pavilion in Hyesan, where the branch chief picked the slip of paper out of my firewood bundle and handed it to the manager.

The manager, a middle-aged man called Comrade Choe, spread the slip of paper and read it. He beamed with gladness and thanked us for our trouble. Then he showed us into the back room for a meal and served us rich starch noodles.

Afterwards he told the branch chief to take a rest and took me to a photographer's shop some distance away. He handed the slip we had brought to the wife of the photographer. He told her to take me to Kolchigi, which was eight kilometres away from Hyesan. When we arrived there, she went into a shop.

She said to the shop keeper, "Uncle, this boy has come on an errand for my husband," and handed the slip of paper to him.

After reading it, he invited me in. "How is your master these days?" he asked.

"Fine," I replied.

I spent that night at the home of the shop keeper. When I awoke next morning, I was surprised to find the branch chief there.

The shop keeper told the branch chief that he wanted to choose a pair of shoes for the boy. Then he took me to the counter.

I told him I had no money and, besides, there was no need to buy a pair of shoes. I urged that we should make a quick return.

He said with a smile that the political worker had already paid for the shoes and showed me the slip of paper that was familiar to me.

I cast a quick glance over it.

It read: "Buy a pair of rubber shoes for my younger brother please. Pay for them out of the money I sent you the other day. 'K'".

I was bewildered.

To think that the communication slip I had carried all this way with so much effort contained nothing more than an instruction to buy a pair of

shoes!... It was simply too absurd to think about.

I was riveted to the spot. I looked down blankly at the shoes laid out on the stall.

My bewilderment must have shown in my face. Amused glances were exchanged. I was laughingly informed that I had a long way to go and it would not do to become dejected at the first step. The shop keeper told me I should put on some new shoes first so as to continue my journey. Then he hurriedly put them on my feet.

I did not know what it all was about.

I left for Opungdong with the branch chief. I walked in silence, buried in my own thoughts.

Whenever I looked down, my new rubber shoes immediately caught my eyes.

I was born the third son in a large poor family. I had grown up without a mother. All my clothes were handed down to me after others had outgrown them. The shoes I had been wearing were ones that had been mended after my elder brothers had outgrown them. On rainy days they had let in water. On fine days dust used to filter through the tears to smear my feet.

Under normal circumstances I would have been thrilled to receive a pair of brand new rubber shoes. But under these circumstances they became objects of suspicion rather than pleasure. "How do you like your new rubber shoes? The other day the political worker noticed your worn-out shoes and decided to buy you new ones."

The branch chief explained that on a recent visit to our home, Comrade Kim Jong Suk had observed an extremely sorry looking pair of shoes that had been left in the garden and had asked whose they were.

I felt the emotion welling beneath my eyelashes.

Her kind image flashed in my mind's eye and I was moved to tears.

"Where are we to go after visiting Opungdong?" I asked, when my emotions had subsided. He replied that we were to arrive at Pinggande that day. He then referred to what I was extremely curious to know.

On this occasion Comrade Kim Jong Suk had assigned two tasks to the branch chief. One was to convey the information to be reported to the headquarters. The other was to train me.

She told him to hide the slip of paper in my wood bundle so that I would be undaunted by those scoundrels at the checkpoint. She had deliberately arranged for us to visit the noodle house and the photographer's shop in Hyesan and the shop in Kolchigi before receiving the information in

Opungdong so that I should become acquainted with possible points of future rendezvous.

“The slip of paper conveyed another directive as well as a literal request to buy a pair of new shoes for you,” he said.

As I listened to the branch chief, I became really pleased that my task had been to convey that slip of paper.

A man who looked about thirty greeted us warmly in Opungdong. He unexpectedly removed one of the shoes from my foot. To my astonishment he slit the patch on the shoe and took out a small pad of paper.

The branch chief spread the paper out and they both read it with satisfaction. Then he suggested that we return quickly.

He returned the slip and we hid it again in my shoe. Then we walked on to the noodle house in Hyesan.

The manager of the noodle house gave me a bundle of starch flour. He told me to serve the “master” a dish of noodles.

I sensed that this meant sending it to the guerrillas and placed it on the A-frame.

After crossing the Amnok River, we dropped in at a farm house near the town of Changbai County. There we acquired paper, copying ink and some cloth. We made bundles of them. Shouldering our heavy loads which made our shoulders ache, we resumed our journey.

The sun seemed to look down with anxiety on us as we hurried along. Then it slipped out of sight behind the hills as dusk began to fall.

We walked on briskly without a break in order to keep the appointed time. At last we reached the approach to Pinggange.

My load was weighing heavily on me. I was finding it hard to keep going. The branch chief insisted that we must endure and press on because there was not long to go before the time set by the political worker.

I accepted this as part of my training. I braced myself and trudged on.

Eventually the house of Comrade Ma Dong Hui came in sight.

The roof came into view first, then the pillars. Finally we could spot a mortar on the verandah floor.

“Look, our comrades are coming!” We could hear Guk Hwa’s clear ringing voice. Doors were flung open and several persons burst out. To our surprise, we saw Comrade Kim Jong Suk in the forefront.

She greeted us warmly. “Thank you,” she said. “You have taken a lot of trouble.”

She eased the load from my shoulders. Then she went into the room.

She inquired if my new shoes had given me blisters on my heels. I replied that I was perfectly alright. But she insisted on examining my heels. Her face clouded over.

Only then did I realize that there were blisters on my heels.

The compulsion to hasten on with my burden added to my delight at having new shoes on had made me impervious to the pain in my feet.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk made me wash my feet and personally applied the paste made of rice to the painful swellings.

The pain in my heels eased at once.

We left our loads at Ma Dong Hui's and set out for home. Comrade Kim Jong Suk accompanied us. As we went along she received the branch chief's report on the accomplishment of our task.

He informed her that I had done all that had been asked of me with credit. She was glad to hear it. She asked him if I had been afraid crossing the bridge and whether I had taken in the situation readily and given the appropriate answer when it was said I came on the master's errand.

She said to the branch chief, "The load was too heavy to carry. I tried to lift it myself. You seem not to have spared him."

"I don't mind. I felt invigorated...." I answered without hesitation.

"Indeed, that will do for training, but in addition to the blisters on the feet...." Her last words came out in a blur.

"Today you have really done a big job," Comrade Kim Jong Suk said. "The chairman of the Children's Corps has excelled himself. Today the chairman of the Children's Corps has brought starch flour, the weight of which signifies the strength of the Japanese troops which have newly arrived in Hyesan. What an important job he has done! Tomorrow the information will reach the unit and be reported to the Comrade Commander himself. It will be a great help to the unit in its operations. The supplies you have brought will be conveyed to the headquarters. You really have done an excellent job," she praised us again.

I was very happy. In fact, I had never experienced such pride and happiness before.

Until late that night Comrade Kim Jong Suk kindly went through in detail again the different points that have to be borne in mind when engaging in underground activities.

That day I had put on new shoes and trod the soil of the motherland and returned after fulfilling my first liaison mission for the guerrillas. That night I could not fall asleep.

Second Assignment

One day I received word from a messenger that a guerrilla in the school village in Wangjiagou wanted me. I hurried there and was given a task that had been assigned by Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

The task was to call on the manager of the noodle house in Hyesan in company with a girl member of the Anti-Japanese Youth League and obtain information from him about the strength of the Japanese troops stationed in Kwaegung Pavilion, their equipment, the place and method of their training and the organization of the barrack guard.

This was shortly before the historic Battle of Pochonbo.

The guerrilla passed on to me detailed advice from Comrade Kim Jong Suk as to what dangers I should look out for and what precautions I should take. Then he handed me the slip of paper, which I was to present to the manager of the noodle house.

I slit the edge of the sole of my shoe and hid the slip in it as I had done before. We decided that I should pretend to be going to Hyesan to obtain drugs for my ailing father and that the girl who was of a lively temperament and older than I was should answer at the checkpoint.

However, things did not run smoothly at the outset. That day the policemen at the checkpoint were extremely capricious.

On the slightest hint of suspicion anyone was likely to be marched off indiscriminately.

Soon it was our turn.

The girl was in front of me. A policeman glared at her and roared unexpectedly: "Hey there! Produce a communication slip before I find out..."

Confronted with this unexpected situation the girl became tongue-tied and just stood there like a fool.

I became nervous. Hesitation could easily arouse suspicion. In such cases insistent pleading was called for, but the seconds were passing and she just stood there breathing hard.

The policeman shouted at the silent girl.

"You wretched girl, out with it. I know it all and my advice to you is to meekly...."

The tension was rising. Different ideas flashed through my mind (What to do? Run away or insist doggedly?...).

All of a sudden I recalled the words of Comrade Kim Jong Suk that

sudden emergencies call for cool, incisive, and quick-witted action.

I suddenly stepped forward and said. "Gentleman, this girl is dumb...."

I am still not sure how it was that these words burst from my lips. What I am sure of is that they had the desired effect.

They believed me and made no further inquiries. We passed through the checkpoint without any further trouble and arrived at Hyesan.

The manager of the noodle house was pleased to see us. When he had read the slip of paper I gave him, he gave us the information he had acquired.

He said that the garrison stationed in Kwaegung Pavilion was 50 strong or thereabouts. Recently several dozen troops would arrive from somewhere and leave again. New officers had been seen among them.

"As I am almost entirely ignorant of military matters, I can give no accurate idea about their weapons. The day before yesterday they had shooting practice on the hill at the rear of their barracks. Then I saw three or four firearms which had two supports that balanced on the ground. Others were carrying something that resembled the five-round magazine rifle. Another thing, in the morning they drove in lorries in the direction of Sol Pass and Kapsan and back, I don't know why."

Then he said he had no clear idea of the organization of the guard or particulars about the barracks. Recently they had blocked off traffic along the road that passed by the barracks and barred access to them.

After some discussion we decided that we would try to pass by the barracks pretending that we were country people who had taken the wrong road.

I was to say that I was going to visit relatives in Kolchigi. She was to answer that she was returning from her uncle's home which was beyond Kwaegungjong Pass. Then we went into action.

They allowed us to pass without checking. They probably assumed we were just innocent country children.

We were able to find out that the big gate in front of the barracks was guarded by a sentry, that the small back entrance was not guarded, and that a store-like temporary structure stood at a distance of 50 metres or so from the sentry post by the front gate and a sentry was posted there.

We had done a big job, the manager of the noodle house said.

We boasted that we could do this sort of scouting while humming a tune.

In fact, we had carried out the assignment without difficulty.

We were in high spirits on our return journey.

The girl approached the checkpoint, ready to play the mute again, but

fortunately there were none of yesterday's policemen. That day was market day and there were many marketers. Consequently it was easy to pass through.

She and I passed safely, saying that we had been to the market.

That evening the guerrilla who gave us the assignment took us to Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

She greeted us cheerfully, saying, "Thank you for your trouble."

We handed her the information we had obtained.

After reading it, she asked for further particulars about it.

Then she asked in detail how we had crossed the Amnok River, how we went and came back, whether we observed anything suspicious either on the way to the destination or coming back and whether there had been any carelessness.

We got off scot-free, they took my word for it that she was dumb, we even played tag on our way back, I said, carried away as if we had accomplished some big job.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk listened to our account attentively. Then she suggested reviewing how we had fulfilled our task.

I corrected my carriage, perking up my shoulders in spite of myself.

Contrary to our expectation, she sternly admonished us. She remarked that although we had been sent on an important mission, we had been careless and nearly caused serious trouble on several occasions.

First, we should always have kept in mind the fact that she had pretended to be dumb at the checkpoint on the Amnok River, but we said we had been to the market on our way back. This could easily have landed us in serious trouble with them. Still worse, we had been having jokes on our way back but secret liaison missions cannot be carried out for fun, she warned sternly.

Besides, she went on, there were many informers around. And just suppose that anyone, not necessarily an informer, noticed that she was not dumb and mentioned this around and it had somehow come to their ears that the girl who had passed through the checkpoint pretending to be a mute spoke or cried out when she was playing. What might have been the consequences? She was supposed to go on more liaison missions in the future. If they remembered her and found out that she was not dumb, what would it lead to? It was really a very serious matter, she reasoned with us.

We felt utterly ashamed.

We had carried out the liaison mission larking about as we did in the village. What stupid Children's Corps members we were!

Pointing to the need for us to be well versed in scouting methods, Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked what we would have done if the manager of the noodle house had not acquired beforehand the information about the strength of the Japanese troops in Kwaegung Pavilion.

“I would obtain it by observing their morning exercise or drill,” I replied.

“Accurate figures cannot be obtained by such a method. The best way is to find out how much rice is boiled in a day or for a meal in the kitchen of the mess hall,” she said. “One can find out by talking to the odd-job men who frequent the soldiers’ mess hall. These inquiries should be made not once but two or three times at intervals of several days. One can ask about breakfast, dinner and supper rations, and one must always remember to ascertain whether the figures coincide.”

She said that we had also revealed shortcomings in ascertaining how the guard was organized. We should have found out where the sentry was posted and when he was relieved, she taught us.

“One cannot form an accurate idea of the troops’ equipment through one observation of their drill. It is better to ascertain this when they clean their weapons or when they carry out manoeuvres.”

We listened to her, unable to raise our heads.

In fact, Comrade Kim Jong Suk had passed on through the guerrilla detailed advice which should always be borne in mind during scouting, but we had disregarded it and carried on as we pleased.

High praise on the fulfilment of the first assignment seemed to have turned our heads but that would not do, she remarked.

Once people rest on their laurels they are apt to become remiss and in the end are spoiled. I wish you to bear this in mind constantly and steadily remedy your shortcomings, as you review your daily, monthly and annual work. That is the way to become an ever-shining revolutionary star like the stars in the sky, she said.

Then she added, “When polished, iron glistens. Likewise, self-improvement makes people noble. For this reason, I have severely criticized your shortcomings today, although you have taken a lot of trouble.”

I repented my faults bitterly. I said I would not commit such errors again. In future I would carry out any task given by the organization earnestly with a due sense of responsibility.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk grasped our hands warmly, saying that to acknowledge our faults would do.

Through the process of carrying out the tasks she used to give us in those

days, we members of the Children's Corps were able to steadily improve ourselves and each of us began to learn how to make revolution.

Third Assignment

The news that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army under the command of the great General Kim Il Sung had won a brilliant victory in the Battle of Pochonbo aroused great joy and excitement among our people.

The news traveled fast. In due course it reached the village of Pinggangde.

Wherever people, young and old, gathered, they engaged in heated discussion telling each other the story of the Battle of Pochonbo. They were obsessed with the thought that the liberation of the homeland was just around the corner.

Old folk in the village took down their horsehair hats from the wall and dusted them, saying that they would soon be going home. Everyone was in high spirits.

Then, alarming tidings reached our village.

It was said that the Japanese imperialists were mobilizing huge armed forces to "suppress" the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, that the headquarters of the Japanese Kwantung Army were going to set up "concentration villages" in the Changbai area in an attempt to expedite their long-cherished "stable village" scheme, and that forts were being built in key places and more checkpoints set up.

One day Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to the village. She detailed what each revolutionary organization should do to counter the prevailing situation. Then she called me in separately. She told me to go straight away to the secret meeting place near Deshuigou.

I made haste to get there where I found the guerrilla political worker whom I already knew.

He told me to go to Hoin that day and visit the head of the rice mill who used to frequent Pinggangde at his home first and then on the way back call on the waiter at the Chinese restaurant in Banjiegou and bring information from him.

He said that he was sending me on this liaison mission at the suggestion of Comrade Kim Jong Suk and that I should go and get ready.

I returned home immediately and hurriedly got ready to set off.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk personally called at my home. She checked that I

was suitably attired and told me to be on my guard at all times because they were keeping a strict lookout and informers were on the rampage everywhere.

She advised me to take an outer jacket with me as well in case of emergency. She told me that if I was picked up I should pretend that I was on my way to Hoin for medicine to cure my father of frostbite.

She said, "Now they are keeping strict watch. But you have experience. Bear in mind that you go alone but are by no means alone.

"Many revolutionary comrades and people are behind you.

"If you rely on them, you will be able to cope with any contingency."

I thought about what she had said to me as I hurried along, leaving Pinggange.

I reached the rice mill in Hoin late at night.

I told the master that I had been sent by the organization. He asked me whether it was all right there.

I answered in the affirmative.

He was glad to hear me.

I stayed the night there. Early the next morning I left for Banjegou, taking with me the correspondence slip he gave me.

I went to the Chinese restaurant and met the waiter. He told me to wait outside after I had had my dinner.

Sensing that the restaurant, too, was under surveillance I hastily ate a dish of Chinese noodles and came out.

After a while, he called me saying, "You boy, won't you split firewood for us?"

I joined him in the backyard.

He first inquired about our village's situation and asked me to take good care of the political workers.

While I chopped firewood, he drew up the report I was to take.

After a while he handed me an envelope and some money.

I hid them in my bosom and departed for Pinggange.

I had been walking for quite a time when I heard footsteps behind me. I looked round. Two men were walking in my direction. They looked at me, said something and hurried toward me.

I strained every nerve. Had they got wind of my mission? If so, what was I to do with the important letters? I wondered.

It was no problem to conceal the tiny slip I had received in Hoin, but the envelope I had been given in Banjegou was another matter entirely.

I quickened my step and turned over in my mind what I should do next. The men were getting closer. I could now hear what they were saying to each other.

Finally I reached the ridge of the hill. It would be awful if I were to miss this opportunity.

Hastily I took the outer coat out of my bundle, slipped the envelope into it and hid it under a bush by the roadside. Then I took off my shirt and put it into the bundle to make it look as big as before and carried it in my arms.

I slackened my pace and then went under the shade of a tree as if to take a rest. I could not go on because I had to take the letter.

When they reached the ridge, they saw me. They asked me where I had been and why and where I was going.

I replied that I had been to see someone in Hoin to try and get medicine for my ailing father but I had not been able to get any and now I was returning home.

“What medicine?”

“Medicine for frostbite,” I instantly replied.

I had remembered what Comrade Kim Jong Suk had said to me. When seeing me off, she had told me to pretend that I was going for drugs for my father.

“For whom is the medicine for frostbite intended?”

“It is for my father. Towards the end of last year he got his feet frostbitten while carrying loads for the Japanese troops,” I replied without hesitation. Then they asked me what was in the bundle.

Untying the bundle, I took out the shirt and showed them it and said that was all.

“Hey! Now you know who we are, don’t you?”

Then they searched me and suggested going to my home to see if my father was really frostbitten.

I agreed to go without hesitation.

But the letter hidden under the bush was a problem. I became nervous. After much thought, I said I needed to take more rest first and plumped down on the spot. They sat down on a nearby rock.

Suddenly a stranger appeared coming straight towards us, breathing hard.

I was wondering how I could obtain help from him when all at once he came to a halt in front of me.

He suddenly shouted at me, “Hey you! What do you mean by sitting around like this? Your father is impatiently waiting for you.... Did you get

medicine?”

I looked at him in surprise and then I saw him wink at me.

I was so glad. I stood up and replied with an innocent look, “They said they have no medicine.”

“Then hurry up. You ought to go home and tell him that. Are you going to loiter here till the sun sets?” he rebuked me.

“I have sore feet and want to rest a little more,” I said.

Hearing our conversation the men asked him whether he knew me.

This boy lived in Pinggangde and had been to Banjiegou to get medicine for his father who got his feet frostbitten towards the end of the last year, he replied.

He told exactly the same story as I had. I looked at him again to see if I recognized him from somewhere. But he was a total stranger to me. I wondered how he knew it all. Then all of a sudden it dawned on me. He had been sent by the political worker. I was so grateful that I nearly dissolved into tears.

I took his hand meaningfully and threw a stone towards the bush where I had hidden the material.

“Uncle, I will go now. Otherwise, I will really be turned out of doors,” I said.

“Hurry up. Did you have dinner?”

“Yes, I had a dish of Chinese noodles in the Chinese restaurant in Banjiegou and chopped firewood there.”

“What for?”

“I sold them firewood the other day. They told me to split it as I had not done so then.”

“Did they pay for it?”

“Yes.”

“So it’s because you go about making money, you are late for home. Hurry up.”

I suggested to the enemy agents, “If you want, let’s go to my home.”

“It’s alright. Off you go,” they said as if their suspicions had been dispelled. They rose and retraced their steps.

We had emerged from this critical situation without too much trouble.

While walking side by side with him, I asked the stranger, “Uncle, how do you know me?”

“I know everything,” he replied with a merry laugh.

“Uncle, tell me the truth. The political worker sent you, didn’t she?” I

asked him earnestly.

“You’re right. It was an important task. As grown-ups are being kept under strict watch, it was decided to send you and I was told to escort you.

“She said that the information you’re bringing with you today is needed for the operations planned by the headquarters and that the liaison person carrying such important information ought to be escorted.”

I felt a lump rising in my throat.

When he had accompanied me as far as the approach to Pinggange he turned back saying that he had other business to attend to.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk read all the information I brought and praised me. She said I had taken a lot of trouble and done an excellent job.

She told me I had acquitted myself well when I took the letter out of my bosom and hid it on encountering the enemy agents.

She cast an affectionate gaze over me for a while. Then she announced with satisfaction, “You have matured a lot now. You were able to carry out such an important task alone....”

I could carry out the task because the political worker sent an escort for me but otherwise I could have not managed it, I said.

This was a fact.

How could I have made it back safely if Comrade Kim Jong Suk had not taken every precaution in anticipation of possible contingencies that might arise in the course of accomplishing my task?

I felt a lump in my throat as I looked up at her.

I had grown not only in stature. I was more ready for revolutionary tasks and to find courage in fighting the enemy. Now I was qualified to be a member of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, she said.

“We have tested you out in practice, so to speak. Of course, we did not give you the task just to test you. But in performing the task, you have trained yourself and had the organization test you.

“I intend to recommend you to the Anti-Japanese Youth League, in the belief that you will be unswervingly faithful to the revolution in the future.”

“Comrade Political Worker!...”

Warm tears drenched my cheeks in spite of myself.

I was so grateful to her for leading this anonymous member of the Children’s Corps along the arduous road of revolution step by step and bringing me up to be a fully fledged member of the Anti-Japanese Youth League that I could not hold back the tears.

3. Increasing the Strength of the Youth

Be in the Van of the Youth

After the historic Nanhutou Meeting (February 1936) the Young Communist League was reorganized into the Anti-Japanese Youth League. The league's organizations were faced with the important task of rallying together all the youths from every sector of society for the revolution, giving them a proper education and rousing their commitment to the sacred war of national liberation in conformity with the requirements of the revolutionary situation.

However, quite a few organizations of the Anti-Japanese Youth League failed to meet this requirement adequately.

This was mainly because the Anti-Japanese Youth League, a mass organization for patriotic young people which was reorganized from the Young Communist League, was faced with many new and significant problems in its revolutionary work and lacked well-qualified youth workers capable of dealing with them.

At about this time Comrade Kim Jong Suk arrived at our village to uphold the noble intentions of the great General Kim Il Sung. She gave valuable instructions regarding the need for the workers in the Anti-Japanese Youth League to have a due sense of responsibility and play a more significant role.

I cannot record her words in full here because I only heard them at second hand and it was a long time ago.

I would just like to touch on a few issues which are still vivid in my memory, reviving the excitement and emotion I experienced in those days.

She said that the prerequisite for success in working among the youth was, as in every type of work, good leadership. She clarified how those in charge of youth work should set about their tasks.

This is an approximate rendering of what she said:

“First I would like to discuss how youth workers should approach their work.

“ ‘On my own I can accomplish nothing. Whatever I do I must pool my efforts and wisdom with those of other comrades.’ That thought must be preeminent in the minds of all youth workers. In all the work that they do they must place reliance on the masses. Only then can they avoid the wilful thinking and arbitrariness which some workers display and forcefully promote revolutionary work, making it the concern of the masses themselves.

“So youth workers should mix with members of the youth league. If they are always with the members, the youth workers will gain a clear understanding of what is on their mind, what they want and whether anyone is suffering because of problems at home.

“Only then can every word uttered by them reflect the views of the members of the youth league and can they do all their work efficiently, accurately reflecting the desires and needs of the masses.

“They should not only clearly understand how the masses feel and what their needs are, but also carry out the revolutionary tasks that have been appointed, relying on their own strength and wisdom.

“The General has always told us that there is a very old saying in our country, ‘A general without an army is no general’, and that we should always remember this.

“However clever and witty one may be, one can achieve nothing alone. The masses have the strength to move the world and the wisdom to create anything.

“Therefore, youth workers must concentrate, above all else, on enlisting the great strength and wisdom of the masses.

“They should realize that when they speak to the masses, it should not be to give orders but to rouse them to action.

“Suppose, for example, that a higher organization has set the task of giving military training to all members of the Anti-Japanese Youth League. This would be no problem for the guerrillas, but in areas held by the enemy, it would not be easy. What then should the youth workers do? They should not set a date by which the people must learn how to shoot a rifle and how to handle a weapon, but discuss the matter with the young people.

“Some young people may suggest learning these things from the political workers from the guerrilla army coming to the village.

“This really is a good idea.

“Not only that. The suggestion may be volunteered that handling weapons should be taught in several stages because of the differences in the working hours and circumstances of the young people.

“I think this is another good idea.

“In fact, in areas held by the enemy, it is a problem to observe secrecy and it is scarcely possible to gather all the young people together at one time because they live and work over a wide area.

“If this is the case, then the youth workers should take the people’s suggestions into account and find a satisfactory solution to the problem of

giving military training by first teaching one or two people, so that these can then go and teach others.

“Next, youth workers should apply revolutionary and political methods in their work.

“If any revolutionary task is to be fulfilled successfully, priority should be given to political work. Political work means making people aware of the importance and significance of any given assignment, showing them how to carry it out and encouraging them to use their initiative.

“If political work is to be done well, it must be done through persuasion and education. No amount of coercion or giving of orders will ever rouse young people to action.

“Essentially, revolution breaks out and is led to victory only through the struggle of the people who have been made aware of the situation and are politically conscious.

“Young people have a strong sense of justice and are enterprising. When they know what justice is, they tend to march boldly on, afraid of nothing. When we make them realize why we are suffering and how we can win back our lost country, they will undertake the struggle themselves and fight through thick and thin.

“We need no other method than persuasion and education because we are in the right. Everyone who is not an enemy can be won over to the side of the revolution through persistent persuasion and education.

“Youth workers should be persistent in their education of comrades and bring them to identify their errors and correct them, just as a mother admonishes her son, and bring them all up to be fine young communists.

“If youth workers do this political work well through persuasion and education and mix with and lead the members of the youth league, they will be doing everything well, just as the General wants....”

Then Comrade Kim Jong Suk spoke about the need for youth workers to have a correct attitude towards their work (At that time work style was often referred to as attitude towards work).

She first taught them about the importance of the attitude towards work that one should have.

We are now fighting for a new world that has never been known nor seen in our country’s history of thousands of years. The aim, faith, theory and practice we have are all just and correct. But this alone cannot rouse the people to action. Why? Often people are moved not by reason but by who one is.

For instance, the words of workers of a noble character and who have a good attitude towards their work carry strength and weight and they can lead the masses, but the words of those who are self-important, throw their weight about, shirk hard work or look down on the masses are not accepted, however good they may be.

This shows how important the work attitude is.

The most important thing in acquiring a correct attitude towards work is to work in a way befitting a revolutionary. And the most important thing here is to fight in the vanguard carrying out the instructions of General Kim Il Sung to the letter.

You should faithfully follow the General and abide by his instructions through fire and water, in life and death. We guerrillas defend the Comrade Commander with our lives.

If you want to be true revolutionaries, you should learn from the example set by the anti-Japanese guerrillas.

Youth workers should be persistent and courageous and once you have started something you must persevere with it until it is completed.

You should always take stock of the things you have started and what has been finished and those things that have made little progress and are still to be completed. It is not those who make a good start, but those who finish off their work neatly who are good workers.

Youth workers should be in the van of the Youth League members in all matters. The General is always at the head of his men and commanding officers and he leads them by setting them an example. The General bears the brunt of the hard battles and dashes forward in a shower of bullets in front of everyone else at the critical moment. When the unit arrives at camp after a march, he goes to where we women guerrillas are to cook the rice and sets up a cauldron and lights a fire for us.

Youth workers must learn from the General's attitude towards his work.

Youth workers should behave well. You should be modest, simple and courteous. You should love your parents, wife and children, respect your elders, live simply and be always modest.

In this respect, youth workers should learn from the General. As you have heard and know well, the General is so humble and modest that when the unit is billeted in a village, people often fail to recognize him as the General.

What can we learn from this fact? It is that revolutionaries who are genuinely working for the people have the popular character. You should wear the same clothes and speak in the same way as the people and be

exemplary in observing etiquette and customs. For example, you should refrain from calling out aloud to old people, nor should you take up your spoon and chopsticks before them when eating a meal together, nor reproach them to their face in the presence of their inferiors.

You should also refrain from addressing women as comrades, as it is a new form of address, and you should not joke or talk rudely with them in the presence of the parents of their husbands.

You should be highly cultured. It is only when you study harder and know more than anybody else that you can tell the young people about the books you have read, answer their questions and get to know the young people from all walks of life without constraint. Also, you should know how to sing and how to teach music.

If youth workers act like old men and sit absent-mindedly at public meetings, putting on airs, no young person will open his heart to them, but they will steer well clear of them, regarding them as tedious people who do not understand their feelings. Then they will be unable to work among the young people.

You should be kind-hearted. There was a man in one village who had the nickname “cold-blooded animal”. He was born into a well-to-do family, and studied for a long time in Seoul. So, he kept himself to himself, thinking that he could get along without turning to others for help. He never visited any sick people, nor offered a spoonful of food to a hungry man, nor visited a family in mourning in the village to offer his condolences to the principal mourner, but kept to himself.

So the villagers began to keep away from him and did not exchange greetings with him when they met him in the street. People called him “cold-blooded animal”.

And then one autumn day his house caught fire. The “cold-blooded animal” ran out, shouting “Fire, fire!” for all the village to hear, but no one took any notice of him.

He tried desperately to put the fire out on his own, but eventually he was burnt to death in the flames.

I tell you this story because a man should be kind-hearted and live by the love of other people. Others will do to you as you do to them.

A man should be warm-hearted. In particular, we young communist revolutionaries should love our comrades and the people with a warm heart. Those who love others are loved by them.

We youth workers should take loving care of our comrades and people

and thus rapidly advance revolutionary work, always enjoying their love, respect, faith and protection.

I wish you to fulfil the role of fighting in the vanguard of the sacred war for national liberation by making every effort to rally the ranks of the Anti-Japanese Youth League formed by the General, using a good method and style of work....

Fifty years have passed unnoticed since we received Comrade Kim Jong Suk's instructions.

As I think about it now, her instructions in those days concerned the questions which our Party has stressed to all its workers and which have become well known to us through constant studying.

But it is almost impossible to describe in full the strong feelings and excitement with which we young people learned the great General's ideas and noble intentions which shone as bright as the sunlight in those days when we were groping for the right path in the darkness of Japanese imperialist rule.

The instructions she gave to the youth workers were a great help to strengthening the organization and ideology of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, increasing its fighting efficiency and preparing the youth workers well, but I shall not refer to that.

In conclusion I want only to stress again how well informed Comrade Kim Jong Suk was of the great leader's outstanding ideas and theory and the reasoning that lay behind what she taught us for leading our youth and children's organizations.

In Such a Way as One Person Rouses Ten People to Action

I first heard the words "hard core" when Comrade Kim Jong Suk talked with the person in charge of the Anti-Japanese Youth League in Zhonggangqu.

She talked with him during her journey to Wangjiagou from our village. We were accompanying her as guides.

Telling him about the situation in Changbai County, Comrade Kim Jong Suk referred to the need to push on forcefully with work among young people and children. As part of this she said that only when hard core members were registered and their numbers steadily increased, could overall success be achieved in the work.

Intrigued by the words “hard core”, which we had never heard before, we listened to her attentively.

She asked him how many hard core members there were in the league organization. He replied that there were 15.

Then she asked him what type of young person he deemed hard core.

He looked dubious and asked whether youth cadres weren't hard core members. He thought she was asking a question to which the answer was obvious.

With a smile she said that his words were not far from the mark and that youth cadres, too, were hard core, but if cadre meant precisely hard core, what was the use of a phrase other than hard core.

She went on: “Young hard-core members are committed youths with a firm class stand who are prepared to fight to the finish for the revolution.

“If the ranks of the Anti-Japanese Youth League are to be made more solid, the organization must contain hard-core members.

“Everything in the world is composed of a core and flesh around it. Only when the revolutionary organization has strong hard-core ranks can it play its proper role,” she remarked.

She went on to say the following:

“Suppose you are building a house. If you are to build a house, you should first lay the foundation stones and erect pillars, the main beams and other essential elements and then the rafters and other things in succession.

“The same can be said of the revolutionary organization. If the organization is to be steadily expanded, the hard core should be firmly established and, on this basis, the ranks should be ceaselessly expanded and strengthened.”

In addition Comrade Kim Jong Suk said:

“In this way the question of the hard core represents the question of the pillars of the revolutionary organization. So, you must always make it the first consideration.

“Furthermore, now that the Anti-Japanese Youth League has admitted not only erstwhile members of the Young Communist League but also a large number of anti-Japanese patriotic-minded young people from all walks of life, it is particularly important to build up solid ranks of hard core members.”

Only then did I fully realize what was meant by the hard core and how important it was to strengthen their ranks in order to make the revolutionary organizations stronger.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk gave detailed instructions as to how to foster hard core members and increase their ranks.

To this end, she said that it was necessary first of all to strengthen the ranks of cadres properly and, with them as the backbone, increase the hard core membership steadily in such a way that one hard core member fostered many others.

She offered a detailed explanation, likening it to building a snowman.

To make a snowman, a small snowball must first be shaped in the hand.

When it is rolled in the snow, it gradually becomes larger until at last it can be made into a snowman.

More snow is stuck to the snowball by the water when shaping a snowball and rolling it.

Likewise, it is necessary to foster hard-core members by training them in revolutionary practices and increase their numbers in such a way that one person rouses ten people to action and ten people a further hundred.

In addition she said that there were many young people and children to be brought up to form the hard core as our village showed. She cautioned us not to confine ourselves simply to registering them, but to give them ceaseless practical training and firmly abide by the class principle lest chance elements should worm their way into the ranks of the hard core.

In this way Comrade Kim Jong Suk clarified all the problems arising in registering hard core members and increasing their ranks and at the same time personally brought up many young people in our village to be hard core members by training them efficiently.

There is a story related to those days when the youth organization in our village were fostering hard core members under her guidance.

One day the youth organization gave one member the task of obtaining plimsolls and salt at Hyesan market and bringing them back.

In those days plimsolls and salt were controlled goods. So, it was a difficult task which might have cost him his life if he was not careful.

But the youngster took the task given by the organization very seriously and strove hard to carry it out.

He got to Hyesan by breaking through the enemy's strict cordon and managed to buy plenty of plimsolls and salt, using his enthusiasm and intelligence to the full. That night he returned with a sackful of relief supplies on his back by crossing Yongrimchang barrage.

The youth workers who were awaiting him on the other side of the barrage, met him and asked how he had managed to carry out the task so

quickly. "At first I was trembling a little, but the thought that the organization believed in me gave me strength. I'll go again, if I'm told to," he said.

That evening Comrade Kim Jong Suk together with the youth workers called at his house. She was delighted to see the relief supplies he had brought.

Moved by her unexpected visit, the youth told her that he would fetch more as soon as they were needed.

At this she said, "That is quite a lot. You did an excellent job by bringing such a large amount through the strict cordon. Please do this kind of work as well in the future, too, and be in the forefront of helping the guerrillas."

Then she asked whether he had been frightened about crossing the Yongrimchang barrage, with a knapsack on his back.

He replied that at first he had been a little frightened, but had gained in confidence.

At this she said, "Listen to him. Only when one tries will one hit upon a good idea and gain courage. Are you sure you can face up to and get rid of the Japanese when the time comes in the future?"

"Silly Japs. If they turn on me, I'll get rid of them."

Inspired by her words, his reply was confident.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk expended great energy on fostering hard core members from among the members of the Children's Corps.

One day she entrusted an important liaison mission to a young member of the Children's Corps.

She encouraged him by saying that the members of the Children's Corps were doing even more important work than the grown-ups by going on secret liaison missions.

She warned him about the danger he would face when going through streets that were strictly guarded by the Japanese to reach the place of rendezvous. She told him to think boldly because timid behaviour would make the enemy smell a rat. She suggested that he pretended that he was on a visit to his relative's, should he encounter the enemy. He should discover whether the enemy was shadowing him and throw him off the track any way he could if there was anything at all suspicious, she told him.

Bearing her detailed words about caution in mind, he left alone for the rendezvous eight kilometres away.

He met a policeman on his way, but deceived him neatly with the show that he was going to his relative's and he returned after successfully completing the assignment.

When she saw him after his return, Comrade Kim Jong Suk was extremely pleased and said: “See what a great job this member of the Children’s Corps has done; because he completed this liaison mission, we have obtained a lot of relief supplies, haven’t we?”

Meeting youth workers that day, Comrade Kim Jong Suk spoke about the need for the Children’s Corps to foster many hard core members in the course of practice. As long as fostering cadres is an important work to train people, workers should study regularly, give an assignment to each man to suit his character and preparedness, promptly review how it had been fulfilled and then give him another more difficult task and train him in this way, she stressed.

Taking her words to heart, we paid scrupulous attention to the work of fostering hard core members in the youth and Children’s Corps organizations.

As a result, many young people and children in our village grew up to be pillars and hard core members of the revolutionary organization and later carried out the tasks given them by the anti-Japanese guerrillas and underground organizations with credit.

If Work Is Entrusted, It Must Be Completed

Comrade Kim Jong Suk attached great importance to running the village night school, and showed great concern for its proper management.

She said: “Night school is an important centre of mass education. If a village is to be organized and revolutionary, the night school should be better equipped and education there improved.

“Above all else, night school teachers should be properly selected. The standard of the students depends entirely on that of the teachers. Night school teachers must be qualified, have a wide general knowledge and be well equipped with revolutionary theory.

“If a night school is to be run properly, good study facilities must be provided. Blackboards, chalk, sand tables and other equipment must be supplied and the classrooms kept tidy and warm.

“If a night school is to be run properly, discipline must be observed. Attendance must be checked every day and examination be held now and then.”

In this way, she gave detailed instructions concerning all the problems that arise in running a night school. Despite the claims made on her by her

busy life, she personally selected a teacher for the night school, guided him to do his work well and obtained teaching materials for us.

She said that as long as the night school pupils were mainly young people and children, the youth organization must take charge of its running, and saw to it that, for the time being, efforts were concentrated on equipping the classrooms better in cooperation with the ARF, the Children's Corps and the Women's Association.

The head of the youth organization undertook the equipping of classrooms as she had instructed. After consulting with the heads of other organizations, he decided to entrust the plastering to the Women's Association, the sand tables to the ARF and the Children's Corps and the repair of the blackboard to the youth organization. He assigned the task of mending the blackboard to members of the Anti-Japanese Youth League. He briefed them as to who was to make the new blackboard with boards, who was to paint it black and who was to make the blackboard duster.

After a few days the head of the youth organization reviewed the results of their efforts.

A few had failed to carry out their assignments satisfactorily.

Particularly those who had been entrusted with the painting were slow in their work. They had not even obtained ink stick to paint the blackboard and had taken no steps to prevent the paint from smearing.

The head of the youth organization arranged to review how the assignments had been fulfilled again a few days later.

Even then those members of the youth league entrusted with the painting had failed to complete the task properly.

The head of the youth organization confined himself to urging them to hurry up, so as not to offend them, for he himself thought it was difficult to obtain paint.

Several days later Comrade Kim Jong Suk visited the village.

On entering a newly equipped classroom, she looked with satisfaction at the well plastered walls and standardized sand tables and then turned to the unpainted blackboard on the wall.

Embarrassed, the head of the youth organization told her that he would soon see that the blackboard was finished.

She said with a smile that she thought making sand tables was difficult and asked why the repair of the blackboard had been delayed.

Those days notebooks were in short supply at our night school. So sand tables were used to practise writing. Each pupil used a sand table he had

made himself, and none of them were the same size. So new, standardized sand tables had been made for them.

So it was more difficult to make standard sand tables for them all rather than make one blackboard.

The head of the youth organization told her the whole truth.

Hearing him out, she said that the problem from those who had been given the task seemed to be to acquire black pigment and to prevent it from smearing; she said that she would try it herself, and suggested that the repair of the blackboard should be completed that day.

She went immediately to the kitchen of the house which was used as a classroom and removed a pot from the oven and scraped the soot off the bottom of the pot into a wash basin.

Calling the head of the youth organization, she told him to mix it with thinned paste and plaster the blackboard with the mixture and, when it had dried, to coat it with a mixture of egg white and garlic juice.

After receiving her instructions, the young villagers set to work and painted the blackboard promptly.

After a while Comrade Kim Jong Suk visited the night school classroom again.

We were all elated and told her that we had done as she told us and the blackboard was all right.

We had gone to a lot of trouble and the villagers would be pleased to see it, she said with a smile.

She was thoughtful for a while and, then, settling her features, she said she had something to say.

We became attentive and stood up straighter.

She said in low, yet calm voice.

“I have just a few words to say to you.

“It is that you should not substitute discussion for work. We do not give assignments for no reason....

“You should make a clear distinction between a personal request and an assignment given by the organization.

“The occasional miscarriage of a personal request is no problem, but if one fails to fulfil an assignment given by the organization, it will not do. Those who fail to carry out an assignment given by the organization for whatever pretext, in effect, cannot be said to be members of the revolutionary organization.

“It is because this act shows that their attitude towards the organization is

not good and that they have no regard for it.

“What is an assignment? It is a revolutionary task that is given by the revolutionary organization.

“How can the revolutionary organization tolerate those who neglect their revolutionary tasks?”

While listening to her, we felt our cheeks burning. Particularly those who had been told to repair the blackboard but failed to do so for a variety of reasons could not hold up their heads.

The head of the youth organization, too, felt great remorse. After giving assignments to the members of the youth league, he had not guided them to carry them out on time, but only urged them on. When they complained about bad conditions, he yielded and sympathized with them.

After running her eyes over us for a while, she took out a chalk box from the bundle she had brought with her and placed it on the lath nailed to the bottom edge of the blackboard. Then she asked how things had gone with those who had been told to make a blackboard duster.

One comrade stood up and handed her the duster he had made.

At the sight of the duster, we felt slightly relieved.

It was fairly well made and would please her, we thought.

However, she examined it closely and taking out a needle and thread, sewed the handle on properly.

We bowed our heads.

She went on to say:

“Night school is intended for learning. Here one learns not just how to write, but everything. Therefore, everything should be a model, beginning with the teacher’s behaviour, speech, etiquette, handwriting and even the blackboard duster.

“If the equipment is made in a slipshod manner, it is apt to encourage people to make things or work in a slipshod manner.” This made a great impact on us.

Once again we realized the attitude we should adopt in receiving an assignment given by the organization and in carrying it out.

With her face beaming with generosity, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said:

“Excuse me for the unpleasant remarks I have made today.

“I said them because the people engaged in the revolution must train themselves politically and ideologically and grow up to be fine revolutionaries through fulfilling the assignments given by the organization.

“You should bear this in mind in the future, too, and acquire the habit of

carrying out the assignment given by the organization to the end.”

“Understand.”

Our reply showed our firm resolve born out of deep remorse.

Everything was all right and we had taken a great deal of trouble in improving the night school, she remarked. Furthermore, she said she would give a lecture at the night school that evening.

“Oh!” cries of joy burst from us.

Listening to her words that were permeated with precision and warm love for us, I renewed my resolve to carry out any assignments given by the organization in earnest with a sense of responsibility.

The Lesson of a Sports Meeting

One day soon after the *Tano* festival, having been told that our village had lost a tug of war contest at the *Tano* festival sports meeting, Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked the reason.

I answered that we had not practised much.

“You could have won, couldn’t you?” She said, sounding regretful.

During the *Tano* festival there was a big sports meeting on the Zhujingdong village sports field.

There were three major competing teams, one from the village of Hamhung, another from Zhujingdong and the third from Pinggange and Shangfengdong. The contestants from the small villages of Xin-chuande and Longhedong were divided among the three other groups so as to make the numbers equal.

This sports meeting was arranged by the Association for the ARF, the Anti-Japanese Youth League, the Children’s Corps, the Women’s Association and other organizations, according to instructions given by Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

She said that this sports meeting should contribute to strengthening friendship and solidarity between the villages, the revolutionary organizations and their members and establish in everyone a firmer conviction that if they fought in unity the revolution would emerge victorious. She attached great significance to the sporting events.

She said:

“These *Tano* sporting events are to be held to mark the first anniversary of the foundation of the ARF by the General.

“To some people they might appear to be a celebration of *Tano*, but we

must organize them as an important event to display our people's strength, united under the banner of the ARF.

"Let's also make a success of the games by organizing boisterous cheering, so that the Changbai area rings with the sound of cymbals."

Afterwards each organization made detailed preparations for the meeting as she had said. Towels, shoes, notebooks, pencils, handkerchiefs, bowls, large deep bowls, and the like were prepared as prizes. Even a pig, albeit a small one, was made ready.

On hearing a rumour that a pig was included in the prizes, all the villages grew enthusiastic.

At first the organizing committee intended to give the pig to the man who won the wrestling. But Comrade Kim Jong Suk said it would be better to give it to the winning of tug-of-war-game team instead.

She said:

"A tug of war is a team game which displays the combined strength of many people. Isn't it a better idea to honour the team with a stronger esprit de corps by giving it the major prize rather than honouring an individual with great strength?"

So it was announced to the villages that the winner of the tug-of-war-game would have the pig.

This caused a great stir in the villages, and they chose the team members and practised every day.

The people of my village were so delighted that it was as if they had already won the pig.

This was because there were many strong young men in my village.

At the time the tug of team numbered 13 in all. They were so sturdy that they were the hope and pride of the village.

Though poor, the villagers cooked rice-cakes for the players and bought them toffee, bragging that the pig would be theirs.

However, our team was soundly beaten.

That day Zhujingdong won the swinging and singing contests, and Hamhung village won the tug of war and was first overall. But we won only the game of playing at soldiers.

Seeing the pig with its neck and body bedecked with flowers going to Hamhung village, everyone in the playground shouted that the Pinggandge pig was going to Hamhung village.

On hearing all this, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said:

"You must always practise with a clear purpose.

“A tug of war is not a simple contest of strength but a sporting event for displaying combined strength.

“Therefore, pulling the rope must not be done blindly. The emphasis must be put on uniting the strength of the team members.

“The same is true in the actual contest.

“You must use your strength as one in the same direction, breathing at the same moment.”

Listening to this, we could clearly understand why we had lost the game.

The team members from my village had only paid attention to using their strength, thinking that strength alone would win the contest; they didn't pull the rope with united strength with the same breath in the same direction and at the same moment. So we lost although we had great strength.

Looking at us, she said that although we had lost the tug of war, we should learn an important lesson from it.

She continued:

“Unity is strength. Disunited strength is useless.

“The same can be said of the revolution.

“Just as when competing at tug of war, our people must unite their mind, their breath and their strength to produce great strength and defeat the enemy.

“No matter how proud the Japanese imperialists are of the ‘one-million strong Kwantung Army’ armed with the latest weapons, it is no match for our united people.

“We must unite, unite and unite.”

She said that what the enemy feared was the people's unity and told us that, therefore, the enemy was scheming in every way possible to estrange the people and destroy their unity.

We resolved to exert every effort to promote unity in whatever we did in the future not forgetting the lesson learned from the tug of war, and proposed holding another sports meeting at the coming *Chusok* festival.

Smiling, she said that we should be confident of winning next time, and suggested holding a sports meeting in the homeland in the presence of the General after the liberation of the country, as a means of celebration.

Our hearts swelled greatly. We could picture a great sports meeting, a red flag flying in the clear, blue sky of the fatherland, cheerers' songs reverberating in accompaniment to gongs, cymbals and *saenap*, and our teams marching past the platform where the General was standing.

Whenever I watch a tug of war at an athletics meeting, I am reminded of the sports meeting held at the Changbai area to mark the first anniversary of

the foundation of the ARF. I feel as if I was hearing the villagers shouting that the flower-bedecked pig of Pinggande was going to Hamhung village and the voice of Comrade Kim Jong Suk saying, "Unity is strength".

She was right. I always remember the lesson of the tug of war, the lesson she gave us, because it was valuable advice which has served as a guide not only in sports meetings but also in our revolution and construction.

She Told Us a Tale

One day some women, while shelling kidney beans, talked about a girl who had been frightened on seeing a snake's "legs" a few days before.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was among them and heard it.

One day three girls from the village were returning from their sentry posts.

They were walking on a sandy beach under the scorching sun. All of a sudden the girl in front uttered a piercing shriek. They could see a grass snake creeping along.

The girls ran far away from the appalling snake. When they stopped, the girl who had shrieked first was muttering to herself.

One of her friends asked her what was the matter. Looking sad, the girl answered:

"I have seen the snake's legs. Only those who are to die the next day can see them, so I have been told."

The other two girls, laughing, retorted that it was foolish of her to believe it.

At that moment the girl they were talking about came to fetch her brother's wife who was shelling kidney beans.

All the women laughed at her.

She had the suspicion they had been gossiping about her, but seeing Comrade Kim Jong Suk, she greeted her politely.

With an affectionate smile Comrade Kim Jong Suk returned her greeting and asked her to take a seat.

Then the girl beside her told her that they had been talking about the snake's legs. The girl blushed.

At that time we in the organization were waging a strenuous campaign against superstition. So as she, a member of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, had acted out of superstition, she felt ashamed and moreover Comrade Kim Jong Suk was aware of it. She explained that she had said what she did

because it was what some grandmothers had told her.

As if trying to save her from a dilemma, one grandmother said that it seemed that God actually existed and that one Chi from Zhujingdong village had set up a kind of a shrine and had been praying for a son every day. Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked with a smile whether the shrine was still there.

One comrade answered that Comrade Chi had been criticized for it recently and that they might have destroyed it. She added that as there were some who were behaving superstitiously and a few young people who were repeating old people's words like that, the organizations were now waging a large-scale struggle against these practices.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk shelled kidney beans for a while without saying a word, and then she said that although the problem of superstition could not be solved in a few days, the young people must take the lead in solving the problem by means of tireless education and effort.

She said:

“If you are superstitious you will lose your strength and spirit. If you know nothing about the laws of nature and think that God is almighty, then you will be unable to work for the revolution.

“The Japs are running amuck to exterminate the Koreans. If we put this down to ‘fate’ and ‘God’, will anyone make us a gift of the liberation of Korea?”

“We are opposed to superstition because it corrodes the revolutionary spirit and makes a fool of people.”

And she said that she would tell us a story.

We were delighted and asked her to tell it.

The tale is as follows.

Once upon a time there lived an old peasant couple in a village; they had one daughter, who was very beautiful and well-behaved. So everyone with a son of a marriageable age was interested in her.

One day a man from a wealthy family in a neighbouring village came and said that a fortune-teller had told them that the daughter of this house should marry their son or else she would die.

The old couple were very worried and repeated this to their daughter; but she replied that she would rather die than marry him.

The rich man was so miserly and so ill-natured that he had not one friend in the village, and his son resembled his father and was totally disreputable.

So the old couple were at a loss what to do.

The rich man, who learned about this after a while, again sent a man with

a message that they should have their fortune told at the next opportunity.

So they went to the fortune-teller, who said that everything would be alright if their daughter married the son of the rich man, otherwise their daughter would die and the family would go to ruin. The fortuneteller went on:

“Just see what happens if your daughter is not married to him by this autumn. Your daughter will die on the very day the leaf on the top of the paulownia tree in your back garden falls.”

The old couple returned with heavy hearts and took to their beds that day.

The girl, too, was bedridden after hearing this.

Soon the news spread among the villagers.

They felt very sorry that such a misfortune had happened to this family who were hard working and kind-hearted.

A boy living near the well heard of it. He was in love with the daughter.

Although he was poor, he was clever and good at everything he did.

All night he thought about how he could save her. At last a bright idea occurred to him. Everything seemed to depend on the leaf of the paulownia. If the leaf did not fall, the girl would not die.

That night he went into the back garden of the girl's house and climbed the tree. Then with a needle and thread he sewed the leaf to the top of the tree.

Autumn came and the leaves began to fall from the trees.

The girl's family wept as they looked at the paulownia tree every morning.

However, the leaf on the top did not fall even in late autumn.

Winter came. It snowed, but the leaf still didn't fall.

There was a snowstorm, but the leaf still remained there.

One night the boy climbed the tree and hid himself. He shouted that God had changed his mind and wasn't going to give the girl of this house to the rich man's son and that she was free to choose her husband.

Her parents believed it to be a divine order. They were so pleased that they danced.

From that day the girl began to bloom again with beauty like a peach blossom.

Her parents bowed to tree everyday. They thought what God rested there.

One day as the girl was looking up at the tree, a straw sandal fell all of a sudden in front of her.

She gazed at it in surprise and discovered that it was the sandal of the boy

who was living near the well. She thought:

“Why on earth was the boy’s sandal hanging on the tree?”

At this time the rich man from the neighbouring village was writhing in annoyance.

In fact, he had hatched the plot with the witch, but as the leaf of the tree had still not fallen, they were afraid, thinking that it was apparently a punishment of God. Nevertheless, he wanted to take revenge on the girl for the failure of the plot.

So, after pondering for a while, he decided to cut down the tree to which the girl’s parents were said to be bowing every morning and evening.

The next day the rich man took an axe and began to cut down the tree, saying that God had ordained that misfortune could be driven away from his house by making a dinner-table with this tree.

The paulownia tree was cut down.

The girl wanted to keep the old yellow leaf which was still hanging to the top of the tree, thinking that the leaf probably had some special value for her.

She tried to pick it but to her surprise it was fastened firmly with thread.

Only then did the girl understand why the boy’s straw sandal had been hanging on the tree.

She undid the thread, and on her way to digging broad bellflower roots she gave the leaf and the worn-out straw sandal to the boy.

With a broad smile on his face the boy told her that it was he who had shouted from the paulownia tree and that the rich man and the witch had hatched a plot.

The girl was angry with the rich man who had deceived her. She was grateful to the boy.

The girl and the boy got married in the autumn of that year. All the villagers congratulated them on their marriage.

On the wedding day the boy said to the villagers.

“Dear Villagers,

“The rich man said that there would be a death when the leaf of the paulownia tree fell. But we are getting married, although the tree itself has been cut down. Let us not be deceived by the rich man’s lie, but live sober-mindedly.”

In conclusion, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that some people would believe in the existence of God because they were ignorant of natural and social phenomena and that fortune-tellers and witches were wicked people who, taking advantage of this, tricked other people out of their money and

property.

She added that the rumour that a person who saw a snake's feet would die could probably be explained by the fact that seeing a snake's feet meant being so close to it that the seer might be bitten or frightened enough to fall ill.

She went on:

“Old people may talk about ‘fate’ or ‘God’ because they are ignorant, but young people and the members of the Children’s Corps must not believe this.

“There may be secrets of nature that are yet to be discovered by the people, but no superstition. Superstition means ignorance.

“General Kim Il Sung has said that, believing in ourselves, we must liberate the country and win freedom and happiness on our own.

“We must understand the laws of nature and lead a worthy life even if we have only one day to live.”

Listening to her, we reflected once again, and we fully understood how to wage the struggle against superstition in the future.

The Secret Leaks Out through the One Who Knows It

“People who divulge secrets cannot become involved in underground work.

“Secrets are what keeps our comrades and organization alive.

“The keeping of secrets must be a quality of the revolutionary.”

This is what Comrade Kim Jong Suk told us 50 years ago.

Whenever I remember these instructions, I am taken back to the events that made me realize how important it was for a revolutionary to keep a secret. They are as fresh in my memory as if they had happened only yesterday.

One day we received a message that some guerrillas were coming to our village the next day.

The villagers were delighted and prepared to receive them. At that time the organization decided to slaughter an ox to give the guerrillas to eat.

A few members of the A RF were given the task of slaughtering the ox at the house of the branch head that night and of boiling the meat at his and my houses.

The head of the branch of the Anti-Japanese Youth League posted guards around the village. The guards were members of the league and of the Children’s Corps. The members of the Women’s Association were busy with

the cooking. Girls were sewing handkerchiefs and tobacco-pouches, presents for the guerrillas.

At noon the next day, the appetizing smell of boiling beef and other kinds of food filled even the front yard, just as if it was a wedding house. Happy children were romping around.

I, too, was very happy. I thought that when the guerrillas came to the village I might see the General.

With this happy thought I toured the guard posts and had just returned home, when the head of the branch of the ARF ran into the house, shouting:

“Police! They are coming! Hide the food!”

Surprised, I shouted to the kitchen and the other room:

“The police are coming. Hide everything quickly.”

There was a lot of scurrying in the house, the large wooden bowl containing the rice-cakes was removed and the frying-pan in which they had been making pancakes hidden. All the food except the meat disappeared instantly.

The problem was where to hide the boiling meat.

There was no time to think.

We scooped out the boiled chunks of meat and hid them amongst the straw in the stable, and poured away the boiling soup at the back of the kitchen.

The village settled down again. The mill, the detached house where the women were embroidering and the kitchen where the food was being cooked were all as quiet as normal.

Soon the policemen arrived. They shouted at everyone for the meat.

Apparently they had smelt something on their way. But we said that we knew nothing.

Then they threatened the “leader of the ten-house neighbour unit” to make him produce the beef. They put a sword to his throat and said that if he did not obey they would cut off his head.

However, he was not the kind of man to yield. On the contrary he attacked them verbally and said they were talking nonsense.

They searched the house, but they could not find the meat.

The police left.

We informed the guerrillas of this as soon as they arrived.

Under the circumstances the guerrillas we had been eager to see decided not to come to our village.

The villagers were not only sorry that they couldn't receive the guerrillas,

but nervous because of the surprise police raid.

It was clear that the secret had been leaked, but by whom?

Each organization held a meeting and the matter was discussed earnestly over several days.

Then we received a message from our men who had been working in an enemy institution, and in the course of examining ourselves we uncovered the leak.

The trouble had been caused by a member of the Children's Corps.

When he had been on duty on the outskirts of the village he had boasted to a member of the Children's Corps of the neighbouring village that the guerrillas would be coming to our village and because of that we had butchered an ox. He believed that it wouldn't matter because the other boy was also a member of the Children's Corps. But no sooner had he heard it than he told his family and the members of his family had passed it on to the villagers, and finally an enemy agent had heard.

In the long run pride went before a fall.

Then, Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to the village.

She called all the heads of the organizations to a meeting. She looked unusually serious.

The meeting opened.

She told these comrades that they were the first to blame for the incident.

She said that whenever we organized something we must first take measures to prevent the secret being divulged, instead of simply telling everyone to keep it a secret. She added that because of the absence of any detailed arrangements the boy on guard duty had revealed the secret and invited the enemy.

She continued:

"Today, keeping a secret is vital for victory in the great cause of the revolution.

"What does it mean to keep a secret?

"It means precisely defending the General.

"The ultimate objective of all the enemy's efforts is to obtain secret information to destroy the headquarters of our revolution.

"Awake or asleep, we must always remember this."

Then we realized where our duty lay.

The information that keeping a secret meant safeguarding the General touched our hearts.

Saying that the Japanese imperialists and their stooges are making

desperate efforts to undermine our revolutionary ranks from within as they are thrown into consternation by the coming of the favourable revolutionary situation and the people's revolutionary advance after the historical battle at Pochonbo, she stressed that in order to safeguard our organizations and continue to advance the revolution vigorously in this situation we must keep the secret more strictly.

She went on:

“Every aspect of underground movement must be kept secret. Therefore, primary attention must always be given to secrecy.

“You must always remember that a secret leaks out through the one who knows it.”

Therefore, she stressed, those who know a secret must be well educated to keep it, and the officials who are present must first of all be aware of the principle of keeping a secret and then educate others in the same way.

She continued:

“First, the man who knows the secret must not divulge to anyone unless he is told by the organization to do so.

“You must not pass on the secret to anyone without instructions from the organization, no matter how eager you are to speak and no matter how trustworthy the man may be.

“Someone has said that the boy who passed it on did not know that it was a secret, but since all the activities of the organization are confidential, any matter concerning the organization must on no account be discussed.

“Secondly, you must not try to know a secret if the organization has not informed you of it.

“If it is necessary for you to know, the organization will tell you. It is an indisiplined attitude to ask one way or the other about a matter that is not your concern.

“A disciplined man will stop those who try to tell him a secret. He should say: ‘I don't need to hear about it, so don't talk about it’. This will neither damage their comradeship nor disgrace the man who has been given the warning. Rather he will reproach himself for nearly making a mistake and will trust him still more.

“If you have let a secret out by mistake, you must report it immediately to the organization.

“If anything serious happens because you have not reported it for fear of recrimination, you will incur revolutionary punishment rather than comradesly criticism.”

She looked at us sitting around her listening attentively, and continued:

“Once on the revolutionary path a revolutionary can uphold his honour only by working for the revolution throughout his whole life. In a sense a revolutionary career is a process of keeping secrets.

“A revolutionary must keep a secret in everyday life and particularly at arduous moments when his life is at stake. At such moments serious question arises: which to defend his life or the secret.

“In this situation a revolutionary must keep the secret. The life of a man who yields up the secret is the life of a betrayer and a traitor. It means death.

“That is why we revolutionaries, keeping the secret of the organization, mount the scaffold proudly, and, if necessary, kill ourselves to keep the secret, in order to safeguard the interests of the revolution and the safety of the headquarters.

“Comrades, we must all guard the secret of the revolution with our lives and become vigilant guardians who defend the General.”

Her words moved us deeply.

It became engraved on our hearts that keeping the secret was not a simple matter of being talkative or taciturn, but the most responsible and the most noble duty for defending the headquarters of our revolution and the great General Kim Il Sung.

Afterwards we were more careful about keeping secrets.

In the case of our village at that time, a large part of each family belonged to underground organizations: father to the ARF, mother to the Women’s Association, sons and daughters to the Anti-Japanese Youth League or to the Children’s Corps.

So matters discussed at a meeting of the youth league often became known to the family, as did happenings in the Children’s Corps.

This was because everybody repeated at home what had happened in his or her organization.

However, after Comrade Kim Jong Suk had given these valuable instructions concerning keeping secrets, we established a strict discipline whereby nothing was talked about if it was considered a secret, even to our family members.

One day a husband asked his wife when she was going to the meeting of the Women’s Association. He was going to babysit during her absence.

But not realizing his intention, his wife did not reply, believing that the time of the meeting was secret.

He thought that she had not heard him, and asked again when the meeting

was to begin. She still did not answer and suddenly she asked him in turn why he was being so inquisitive. Then he got angry and raised his fist. He was displeased because she was asking him question instead of answering him.

Nevertheless, she did not relent and asked him why he was intimidating her to discover the time of the meeting, which was a secret.

So there was an unexpected quarrel between husband and wife.

On hearing about this later we doubled up with laughter.

But we were very happy to feel from this fact the unprecedentedly high vigilance of the villagers.

Even the women were now becoming vigilant, those women who had been in the habit of gossiping at the dinner table, in bed and at the well about who had been criticized and about what had been discussed in their organizations. Indeed, the instructions of Comrade Kim Jong Suk had been engraved on the hearts of everyone in our village.

When the question of secrets arises even today, the words of Comrade Kim Jong Suk which she spoke so earnestly occur to me: a secret leaks out through the one who knows it.

Love amidst the Flames of the Revolution

One day at the house of the branch head of the ARF which was also used as a night school, some girls and women were making handkerchiefs to be sent to the guerrillas.

An excellent handkerchief could be made by cutting a white cloth squarely and decorating its borders after pulling off a few threads from around the edges, and embroidering a rose of Sharon in the centre.

All the women who were good at sewing had gathered and were working with devotion.

I had gone there to call a woman comrade and had been watching them work for a while. One of them jokingly suggested making me a present of a handkerchief and asked which of them would give it to me.

Some of the girls said "No." I blushed.

Then it was Ma Guk Hwa's turn to answer.

"No. She has someone else to give it to," a woman said.

"Oh, my!" Ma shouted.

"Is that so? Who is he?" the girls asked in a chorus.

"She knows," a girl who was taciturn said, pointing at a little girl.

Everyone looked at the little girl. She flatly denied it, but another girl tickled her to make her speak.

She was so tormented that she turned round and round, and at last almost shouted, "It's Kim.... Oh, Kim Se Ok!"

"Are you mad?" Ma retorted at a loss and then laughed to herself.

The room burst out into noisy laughter.

While they were talking and laughing noisily, Comrade Kim Jong Suk arrived.

I was standing on the verandah watching them, and when I saw her I meant to go into the room and stop them.

She waved her disapproval to me and she herself entered.

The noisy women were surprised to see her and stood up to greet her.

She asked why they were laughing so merrily, and sat down among them. The elderly woman told her that they had been joking and glanced at Ma.

Sensing the atmosphere Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, "It seems Comrade Ma Guk Hwa is the topic of conversation, aren't you?"

Ma pinched the arm of the woman beside her to hint that she should not talk any more about her.

"Ouch!" the woman cried.

The laughter which had been suppressed burst out again.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk laughed with them, and then called Ma over to her.

"Well, Comrade Ma, you have to go on an errand immediately," she said. The room fell silent.

"Comrade Kim Se Ok has returned home," she said. "Tell him that I am here, and go to Shangfengdong with him. Kim will tell you what to do."

"Oh, how wonderful!" everybody exclaimed.

Ma, who had been standing with a red face, bowed to her and hurriedly left the room.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk saw that the women were suppressing their laughter, and asked:

"Well, what's the matter? What are you keeping to yourselves?"

I felt sorry for the women who were just smiling and making no reply.

"They say that Ma Guk Hwa has a boy friend," I said.

"You mean Comrade Kim Se Ok? You all laughed when his name was mentioned."

Loud laughter burst out again.

Then a girl said in embarrassment.

“No. We were joking. Somebody might get into trouble.”

She explained that it couldn't be true because Comrade Kim Se Ok was a guerrilla.

Until then people always thought ill of young people in love.

Particularly the old people of our village who were very feudalistic frowned even when young men and women sat together, saying that they were ill-mannered and that they took to amour. As those who had indulged in love affairs in the past mostly chose their lovers arbitrarily contrary to the wishes of their parents, a love affair itself was seen as bad conduct.

On top of that I believed in those days that the revolution and love were incompatible.

I thought that once a man embarked on the road of revolution with determination, he should think only about the revolution and that when he thought of a woman it meant he was corrupt.

Therefore, it was quite probable to deny the rumoured love affair between a guerrilla and a village girl.

In fact, they were in love. The little girl who had carried their letters was the first to sense the beginning of love. Kim Se Ok often came to this region from the guerrilla unit on missions to do underground work. He frequently gave a letter to the little girl to take to Ma Guk Hwa.

At first she assumed it was a business letter and conveyed it to her without a second thought. Then on one occasion she conveyed to Ma Guk Hwa a pamphlet called “Inaugural Declaration of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland”; and at that Ma's face had become so red and she looked so happy that the little girl sensed something strange.

Ma studied it so hard at night school that she learned it by heart ahead of all the others. And she did not part with it even for a moment.

The intimacy of their relationship was sensed by others and became now generally known.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk praised the women for making handkerchiefs and told them to help the guerrillas still more in the future, and she said:

“Seeing that you are talking about love between young men and women today, I would like to tell you what I think about it.

“People usually don't think well of lovers. I don't think there is any harm in being in love.

“A grown-up man or woman has to choose his or her companion for life. Since communists are also human beings, it is only natural for them to feel affection towards the opposite sex when they are young.”

The eyes of the listeners opened wide and they stared at her.

They had never heard such a thing before.

Smiling, she continued:

“I think there is no more beautiful and noble love in the world than love between our young men and women revolutionaries.

“First of all, love between our young revolutionaries is motivated by the noblest of aims.

“We anti-Japanese guerrillas and other young revolutionaries are fighting for the independence of our country and for communism. Can there be a higher ideal and aim in life than this?

“There are wicked people in this world who live at the expense of others for their own comfort and pleasure. Because their aim in life is to live more happily by trampling upon others, their love also is motivated by this aim. In brief, they do not love the other person concerned but their money and high position. So, this is not love.

“In contrast we young revolutionaries love the finest and the most beautiful people in the world, the people who are dedicated to the independence of the country and to the revolution. How noble their love is!

“The love between our young revolutionaries is also a genuine love that benefits the revolution.

“In the anti-Japanese guerrilla army there are some who love each other, but they place the interests of the revolution above their own personal interests and their own personal desires.

“They express their love for their comrades by setting fine examples in battle, on the march, and in their daily life.

“To be honourable in the eyes of their lovers, they try to take the lead in everything. So their love is of great benefit to the revolution.

“At meetings to review a battle, we often see such comrades standing side by side being praised by the General. We feel delighted at their citation and applaud them heartily. The General, too, is very satisfied and pats them on the back.”

Hearing this, we could picture such a scene.

She looked around at us, but her face clouded, and she continued in a low voice:

“But sometimes we lose one of them. The day before they were both praised, but today we fire a volley for one of them at his funeral service. We feel broken-hearted.

“On such occasions the General grieves most bitterly. He encourages us

to be more ferocious in our destruction of the enemy in order to fulfil the fallen comrades' desire and avenge them.

"We raise our fists high and make a firm determination to fight to the end for the victory of the revolution.

"Because our love is so ardent, our hatred for the enemy is so much stronger.

"A man who truly loves his country and his people, his birthplace and his family, and his dear comrades and his lover hates the enemy and takes hundred- and thousand-fold vengeance on him who tramples underfoot what is dearest to the man.

"Love between our young revolutionaries is the love of a new type which is unprecedented in the relationship between people.

"The new type of love grows not on the basis of egoism and other outdated and backward ideas, but on the soil of love for the collective and the masses.

"It is no true love to hide each other's mistakes because they are in love or to sacrifice others for the good of their own.

"Let me tell you a story.

"It happened when food was running short. A girl cook at the guerrilla unit was serving the men with maize gruel, but, when sharing it out, she discovered that there was not enough.

"So after thinking for a moment, she called out a man guerrilla with whom she was on intimate terms and told him that there was not enough gruel. So, each of them drank just a bowl of water for supper.

"That night she could not sleep, because it pained her to think that the man who was more stout than the others and who had a great appetite would go hungry for the whole night. But she regarded him as part of herself and had made up her mind not to give him the gruel because she trusted and loved him most.

"What a praiseworthy deed!

"My view is that in this sense it is good, and not bad, that those who devote their all to the revolution are in love."

We looked up at her in delight.

Since the love of revolutionaries is such, who on earth could reject or oppose it?

If love between young people makes such a contribution to the revolution and further becomes the strength to advance it, this must be held dear and supported earnestly.

We felt ashamed of our wrong views of the past concerning those in love. Our hearts also swelled when we learned about the true world of the revolutionaries.

Later, the love between Kim Se Ok, a guerrilla, and Ma Guk Hwa, a member of the Anti-Japanese Youth League and our fellow villager, blossomed.

Ma Guk Hwa was always eager to join the guerrillas, and we would tell her that she ought to and how good it would be for the lovers to fight shoulder to shoulder! She would feel abashed, but a happy smile would play at the corners of her mouth.

At last Ma joined the guerrillas.

In the guerrilla unit their love grew stronger.

They held each other dear and loved each other and took part in bloody battles and went through the trials of the revolution together.

Kim Se Ok fell in the battle at Taehongdan and Ma Guk Hwa, too, died a heroic death in battle.

On the day when they buried Ma Guk Hwa in an anonymous valley the guerrillas wept most bitterly as they opened her knapsack. In it they found a large quilt cover she had embroidered in her spare moments, in order to keep a promise she had made to Kim Se Ok that they would marry after the liberation of the country.

Kim Se Ok and Ma Guk Hwa, who whispered their love while devoting their youth to the revolution, are no longer with us.

However, they have left something very valuable behind them.

They showed us that young love will shine on the road of revolution to liberate the country and to bring freedom and happiness to the people and that the love between young revolutionaries is the noblest and most beautiful love.

4. Streams Flow to the Sea

An Intellectual Becomes a Night School Teacher

Comrade Kim Jong Suk united the people from all walks of life under the banner of the ARF, and devoted special efforts to improving work with intellectuals.

At that time, the intellectuals, mostly born of rich families, had a number of restrictions on account of their social and class backgrounds, and the

attitude of many of them was irresolute, and they simply watched how the revolution was developing.

But, being the intellectuals of a ruined nation living abroad, they harboured discontent about the Japanese imperialist aggressors' policy of national discrimination and held a certain degree of revolutionary consciousness opposed to imperialism because they had learned the scientific principles of nature and society.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk obtained a deep insight into these characteristics of our intellectuals, and put unstinting efforts into winning them over to the side of the revolution.

In our village there lived an intellectual called Yun Bong Jun who was about 40 years old. He had studied hard in Seoul and had once been involved in the communist movement.

He fostered a misguided idea about communism after witnessing the strife between the right and left-wing opportunists that took place in the unsettled period of the early years of the communist movement. In addition, as the Japanese imperialist oppression became more vicious, he abandoned the "noble ambitions" he had harboured in his early years and came to west Jiandao, where he led the life of a recluse.

The revolutionary organization concerned tried to persuade him more than once to work with it, but he turned a deaf ear to the pleas.

On being informed of his attitude, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said to us that as he was apparently hesitating at a crossroads, we should induce him, through a great deal of persuasion, to take the revolutionary path.

After that the branch chairman of the ARF visited him and asked him again to teach at night school, but he refused this, too, on the pretext that he was ignorant.

Disliking his attitude, the branch chairman said in an angry tone that he would never meet him again.

Afterwards, Comrade Kim Jong Suk, a kind smile on her face, told him that it was not so easy to educate people, and she added:

"He's an intellectual. So will he comply readily with the request you made in so few words? Intellectuals will only behave properly when they receive a logical explanation."

She said in earnest that the General had instructed us to rally everyone, except a handful of pro-Japanese elements, for the restoration of the fatherland, and that we must, therefore, make every possible effort to bring the intellectuals over to the side of the revolution.

This was during a midday break. Going into the yard after finishing cutting the grass on the hill, I saw something surprising. Comrade Kim Jong Suk was soothing a baby on her back that was crying and was talking to the leader of an underground organization.

She saw me holding a handful of dock leaves. "Oh, how lucky. Let him have some," she said, turning the baby towards me.

I chose one quickly and gave it to the crying baby, and asked her whose baby he was.

"Why, don't you recognize him? He's Yun Choi's baby...."

I was surprised to learn that he was the youngest son of Yun Bong Jun. I had never dreamed that she would be carrying the Yuns' baby on her back. Her back was tear-stained, finger-marked and soiled, so the back of her shirt was as wet as if it had been a warm day.

She resumed talking to the man, gently patting the baby who was sucking the dock in his hand.

I felt unhappy to see her troubled with looking after the child of a family which had turned its back on our revolutionary organization. I looked reproachfully at the child on her back for a while before she asked me to rush to the Yuns' millet field and tell them that their baby was being looked after here.

This was how it had happened: she was walking into the village when she heard a baby crying at the side of a millet field. She ran to it and found the baby wailing; he was very hot in the blazing sun and was being bitten by ants. Unaware of this, his parents were busy weeding long furrows of the field beyond the slope. So she quickly carried the child to the village on her back. I told her that I would take him back to the field.

"He's been left crying in the sun. So why make him cry again? As I can work with him on my back, leave him with me," she said adding that I should tell them that their baby was being looked after by a grandmother, so that his parents would not worry.

I went to the field and told them that their child was at my house, and the Yuns treated me very kindly. They probably thought I had done it for them. As a matter of fact, I thought badly of them, and they were also unfriendly towards us. This was because Yun Choi, the second son of Yun Bong Jun, had joined the Children's Corps in spite of his family's objections. The Yuns believed that I had tempted him away into roaming around with me. So they looked at me disinterestedly each time I called on them.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk did her best to look after the child, although she

was busy in talking to the revolutionary from the homeland about an important matter. She soothed the crying baby on her back and cooked porridge to feed to him. Then she cleaned the ants' bites and sores on his head with salt water. And she bathed him, washed his clothes and hung them out on the straw fence to dry before letting him sleep in her arms.

For a guerrilla fighting in the mountains, how skilful she was in taking care of the child! Both I and the man thought so and cast an admiring look at her. "It's wonderful. The child's already fallen fast asleep," said he, with an expression of surprise on his face.

Gazing at the face of the sleeping child for a while, she said, "Each time I see children, they always remind me of my nephew and whether he is safe or not", and she suddenly turned her moistened eyes away.

"Why, what has happened to your nephew?" the man asked anxiously.

"No, it's nothing.... At the moment there are no Koreans without worries, are there?" she replied, as if shaking herself free of her thought, and she stopped speaking.

"She must have some secret problem," I thought, but I dared not ask her to tell the whole story.

A little later the mother came to take her child.

"Gracious me! What has happened?..." the woman was at a loss what to do, for she had never dreamed that it was the political worker from the guerrilla army who had been taking care of her child.

As I have said, in those days the Yuns had not joined the revolutionary organization, nor did they mix with the villagers, so no one treated them kindly. As a result, though a good neighbour is better than a distant brother, they spent their days in hidden solitude and sorrow, turning their backs on their neighbours.

One day it happened that Yun Choi's mother had dropped her head-pad while putting a water jar on her head at the well, but no one had picked it up for her, so she wept in her heart. To this woman, the unexpected tenderness that day gave her a feeling that was too good to simply express her gratitude. The woman bowed and bowed her thanks.

With a warm look in her eyes, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said to her that she had not done so without reason, and that since they were all living in an alien land, deprived of their country, no one would survive unless they helped each other. She went on to say:

"Having seen this child today, I am ever more determined that we should never let our children undergo the same hardships as we're now suffering."

To this the woman, her head bowed, agreed, but she said that she was very worried because she believed that things would not turn out well no matter how people like them wanted it.

“In fact, things will not turn out as one wants, of their own accord but they will be brought about by hard work. Who on earth will present us with freedom and independence? We must win back our country by ourselves. That’s why we’re all fighting now.”

As she was saying this, the woman said: “Well, the thought of fighting people makes me...,” and stopped. She seemed to have something on her conscience.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk urged her to go home quickly and fetching the baby’s clothes which had been hung out on the fence, placed them into her arms.

The woman repeated that she was very much obliged to her, and left in a hurry.

That night the Yuns talked a great deal about what had happened that day. Yun Chol chatted about the guidance given by Comrade Kim Jong Suk to the work of the Children’s Corps and about various statements made by the villagers concerning her, spoken with respect and affection.

The mother explained again how Comrade Kim Jong Suk had cooked porridge for the baby and washed his clothes and said that it was none other than a political worker of General Kim Il Sung’s units who had not only soothed the crying child but also looked after him with motherly affection. She could not suppress her admiration, and only said how commendable the members of the unit were.

A little later that night I went to their house to return the waist band which Yun Choi’s mother had left when she carried the baby away. The Yuns kept me there for a long time to ask many questions about Comrade Kim Jong Suk: whether she still stayed at my house; what food she liked; where she had her meals; and where she slept....

I answered their questions in detail, and added that because she was very busy, she would be staying in the village for only a short time.

“Does she always come here straight from one of General Kim Il Sung’s units?” asked Bong Jun, who was sitting quietly, cleaning his pipe.

“Yes, that’s right. She comes here on the General’s orders,” I said, pretending to know.

“Hum!” Yun Bong Jun looked serious, holding out his pipe and tapping it.

As Comrade Kim Jong Suk told me before leaving, so I said to Yun Chol that the Children's Corps had decided to help them weed his millet field the next day.

At this the boy jumped with joy and said proudly, "Mother, the Children's Corps will help us with our weeding tomorrow."

"What, help with our weeding?!" His mother, too, could scarcely hide her excitement.

Actually, Yun Bong Jun did not know how to farm. As he had no experience of farm work, the crops they raised each season were always late, and that summer, too, they were the last in the village to weed their millet field.

"Why do you want to weed our field? It's because the political worker has told you to do it, isn't it?" asked the mother.

"Yes, that's right. Today she saw Yun Choi's field and was very concerned, so she told us to help you." I said, as we had been told.

"How! She is...." Yun Choi's mother felt truly grateful to Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

Yun Bong Jun remained silent, which spoke volumes.

The next day I went out to Yun Bong Jun's millet field with several members of the Children's Corps. The villagers looked at us in bewilderment.

There was even someone who asked me what had caused the Children's Corps to weed the Yun's millet field as it belonged neither to the family of a guerrilla nor to that of the ARF.

"This, too, is a Korean field, isn't it?" I replied, suddenly remembering what she had said, and the man was dumbfounded and could only smile weakly.

A short time after lunch that day Comrade Kim Jong Suk came without notice to the field where we were working. The Yuns were at a loss what to do, but she simply picked a furrow and started weeding. Yun Bong Jun ran to her and bowed, and tried earnestly to dissuade her.

"I'm also the daughter of a peasant. I've grown up, tilling the soil," she said with a hoe still in her hand.

Thus, great progress was made with the weeding. Moreover, we and the Yuns were all surprised to see how skilfully she weeded, leading us. It was true that she was a woman who knew about the soil and the hoe.

"Wonderful! When did you learn how to do farm work?" Yun Bong Jun asked, clicking his tongue.

“Father, my little ribs were hardened with work in the fields,” she replied, her head down.

Yun Bong Jun then asked her where her home was, where her parents were living and whether she had any brothers or sisters. These were questions he had always wanted answering.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk thought for a while, drawing a line on the ground with the point of her hoe, before she replied that her home was in Hoeryong, but that no relatives of hers were living there because her parents had died, and her brothers had all been killed.

“Why, what happened to them?” he asked her again, his face immediately clouding over. She raised her head and asked, “Did you witness the sea of blood in Jiandao, Father?”

“No, we’ve only heard about it.”

“Then, you may not know what devils those Japanese robbers are.

“Like Yun Choi, I had a father, mother, brothers and a charming nephew. We were poor, but lived happily. However, I lost everything in a single day. Because of the enemy’s ‘punitive operations’, my house was burned down, during which my mother and brothers were killed.

“A younger brother remained alive, but even he was shot to...” she left her words hanging in the air.

“So, then, you’re all alone?...” Yun Bong Jun was stuck for words.

My heart was beating fast. We had never heard about this before.

Yun Bong Jun rustled some tobacco and his wife wiped her eyes which were filled with tears with her coat string.

I sniffled and my eyes were blurred with tears. Why had she suffered such misfortune, when she was so kind-hearted and gracious?

Nevertheless, she did not display any emotion. She approached us, with a smile on her face. She was so compassionate and emotional about others, but so hard-hearted on herself. Why? The more I thought of it, the more I felt as if my heart would break.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said calmly, “Do you think it’s only me who’s suffered this sort of sorrow? We Koreans have lost too much. We’ve been deprived of our motherland as well as our families....”

Yun Bong Jun’s face hardened; it looked like a statue’s with no blood and no warmth.

After a while, she went on: “Father, who can be sure that such tragedy as I’ve experienced will not happen here? The mere thought of it makes me shudder. Should our fellow-countrymen be floundering in a sea of blood and

dying? I'm sure you know how to answer this, for you've read a lot, and are knowledgeable about the world."

At these words, his cheeks quivered, and his hands seemed to be trembling slightly.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, once more with a kind smile on her face, asked him why he had refused to teach at night school, when the branch chairman had asked him.

Yun Bong Jun looked startled and said that he had refused because he had thought it would serve only to disturb the peace of mind of the people, although it would be a different matter if it would achieve something important. He added that he had taught at night school before, argued about "principles and theories" and distributed leaflets, but he had realized that it was pointless to stand against the armed attacks of the Japanese imperialists.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said with a smile: "I don't know anything about theories or laws, for I've not received enough regular education. But I'm fully convinced that we will win victory."

Yun Bong Jun gave her a very inquisitive look.

She continued: "The Japanese imperialists are aggressors, but we are masters. If all 20 million Korean people rise up, in no way will it be a small force. As you know, it's natural for a flame to spurt from a spark, and truth always triumphs. As the saying goes, the voice of the people is the voice of heaven. This means that the people follow the truth and no one can check the strength of their advance, I think. So, if the 20 million Korean people all join the struggle, we shall be the victor, not the enemy."

Yun Bong Jun nodded several times before he said again in despair, "Well, it stands to reason, but how can a stateless 20 million people ever revive? If they'd had strength, they wouldn't have been swallowed up in the first place."

"Right. We were deprived of our country by the Japanese gangsters because at the time we were powerless. And that is not all. Many virtuous people have shed their blood in vain in the struggle to restore the country since we became stateless, and large numbers of people engaged in the communist movement have not known which road to take, simply because we were weak. But now we're strong. You've read the Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland', haven't you?"

"Yes, I have."

"What did you think of it?"

"It's a truly brilliant, great programme."

“Everyone who’s concerned about the destiny of the country and the nation has been inspired by it. What do they think when they look forward to the future? In part they feel attracted to the truth in every sentence of the great programme, but what’s important is the happiness and emotion of our nation to have a leader they’ve wanted for ages, I think. It is because General Kim Il Sung is leading our nation and we have a programme formulated by him that we hold the key to victory in our struggle. The 20 million fellow-countrymen who had neither a centre of unity nor a leader to follow in the past were like scattered grains of sand, but the present strength of our people who are rallied around an outstanding leader is as solid as a rock that can never be broken however violent the storm. No one can match our people who’ve risen up, following the great General Kim Il Sung.”

Her words rang with confidence.

Yun Bong Jun was regarding her with fascination and asked excitedly, “Political Worker, you’re a truly great theoretician. What you’ve just told me includes profound philosophy and a revolutionary theory. Where have you learned all this?”

“How can I be called a theoretician, Father? I’ve only repeated what the General has taught us.”

Yun Bong Jun was moved to say, “Your words today have given me a lot to think about. You’re very young, but you’ve told me something I’ve never heard before. It’s not contained in any book, but no doubt it’s true, a light to awaken all the people!”

He was extremely excited. Indeed, her noble personality, her reasonable and perfect logic, and her modesty and sincerity, for her young age, all this was a new glimpse of the true and modern revolutionary, entirely different from those “revolutionaries” whom Yun Bong Jun had met previously.

She was a political worker from a unit under General Kim Il Sung; her small bones had been hardened on the soil and her idea perfected in the flames of war!

It was not a “theory” spoken at a desk or on a comfortable sofa, but the truth with which she awakened the people gently while weeding a field!

It was like a streak of fiery light piercing his dim heart filled with hesitation and wavering, reconciliation and despair. He clearly perceived that his beliefs, which had been hardened over the years, were starting to melt irresistibly away in this light.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk looked at him inquiringly. She told him that the night school had not been kept open as it should since the last teacher had

joined the guerrilla army, so she would be very pleased if he would come to the school once every few days, though not every day, to teach about the military exploits of our famous generals.

He told her how he could possibly refuse her request, and insisted on going to the night school that very evening.

"I'm grateful. If you go, every villager will come to learn from you. Thank you very much," she said bowing politely.

Yun Bong Jun was embarrassed. He sprang to his feet and also bowed to her.

That night the classroom was packed with people. At the news that the learned Yun would be telling stories about patriotic generals, large numbers of young people, women, and even the elderly, to say nothing of the Children's Corps members, arrived early.

After a while he began to speak. His tales about Ulji Mun Dok, Kang Gam Chan and Li Sun Sin were erudite and interesting, and instantly gripped the minds of the people.

People were drawn into his story-telling despite themselves, and began to regard him in a new light.

What could have brought this man, who had always worn a sullen look and been unwilling to mix with anyone, to speak so fluently and smile casually in front of the crowd?...

Shortly after he had finished his stories, Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who had been sitting quietly in the back row, stood up and stepped forward. She said to him that she had heard some very interesting stories that evening, and then asked the villagers if she could raise another matter. There was general consent among the audience.

"How about accepting Yun Bong Jun as night school teacher from now onwards?"

Then there came an outcry of agreement and applause.

Though she had already discussed the matter with the chiefs of the organizations, she had presented him to villagers in this manner, so that he would be encouraged to work at the night school. He just blinked without saying a word.

Thus he became the night school teacher of our village.

Afterwards, Comrade Kim Jong Suk gave Yun Bong Jun warm encouragement and convinced him that his role was of great importance, that he was making a great contribution to the cause of national liberation by teaching many people, and that since the night school was a revolutionary

school which inspired people to join the revolution, the night school teacher himself must be the first to become a true revolutionary.

In addition, she brought him many revolutionary publications, including the “Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland”, “Outline of Socialism” and “Samil Wolgan”, and helped to improve his ideological education. And she took meticulous care of him by mobilizing the organizations in the village to prepare his firewood and assist him in his farm work.

In this way, Yun Bong Jun became a new pioneer who aimed to lead a large number of people along a revolutionary road under her warm care, and who finally grew to be a true revolutionary devoting his all to the sacred war of national liberation.

Singing the “Song of Women’s Emancipation”

This happened at a recess after lunch one day in early spring. Comrade Kim Jong Suk met the chairwoman of the Shangfengdong Women’s Association at a house (then the night school) situated at the entrance to Mulbanga Valley, Myongsangdong.

A member of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, she had been elected to the chairmanship to improve the work of the Women’s Association.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk told her that the previous chairwoman had failed to draw up plans because she was illiterate and had not organized meetings properly and that from then on she should press ahead with the work of the Women’s Association.

She also told her in detail about some matters that were particularly important when working with women.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk stressed that women must, above all, be taught to read and write, but that they should not be forced to start learning immediately. However, they must be made to understand the reason why they had so far lived without knowing how to write their own names. She went on to say that the chairwoman must teach the women why they should learn their letters, and that she must encourage women to realize by themselves how and when to study by citing examples of those who were studying hard at night school.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk gave her detailed instructions concerning how to conduct revolutionary education among uneducated women.

She said that it would be good to awaken women to class consciousness

and instil in them revolutionary consciousness by teaching them songs and telling them old tales. She urged that for this, the chairwoman should not simply order the women to meet to learn songs, but she should use various opportunities—going picking wild vegetables, working at a mill or at a washing place—to teach them the songs, explaining the meaning of the words and to tell old stories.

She said that the most important aspect of the work with women was to arrange a good time to meet. She went on:

“Women are always busy with housework. So, you should decide a suitable time for them to meet. You should consider which hour of the day is most convenient for the women and then appoint the time of the meeting. And at the meeting discipline should be established so that no one has to wait or kill time.”

She added: “Our women are lacking in discipline and organization because they are still not politically and socially aware. That is why it is difficult for them to get together and leave punctually. Those who work with women must bear this in mind and ensure that they stick to the times of arriving and leaving. Some people still do not understand how women can contribute to revolutionary work, so they may feel reluctant to see them going to a meeting and, furthermore, criticize them if they stay at the meeting for a long time. However, quite a few women are wasting time, gossiping about various happenings in the world even after a meeting has finished. We must not turn a blind eye to this. This explains why their husbands and parents-in-law believe that the meetings last a long time. Therefore, you should see to it that the women go home as soon as the meeting has ended. This is important not only because it will free their families from any possible worry, but also because it will induce them to think about time, and control and train themselves conscientiously.

Listening to her, the chairwoman could not repress her admiration for Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

She was deeply impressed by the scrupulous attention Comrade Kim Jong Suk paid to the life of women.

In order to work well with women, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, we must understand their position in the family and their special qualities. Then she continued:

“A woman can be the mistress of household, a housewife, a mother and a daughter-in-law according to circumstances. All household matters are associated with women. Everything—each family member’s food, clothes,

sleep and even their mood—is tied to the women. Therefore, she cannot laugh or weep for her own sake.

“We must be well acquainted with the true situation of every woman, too. Some may worry because their husband is ill, others may be anxious about their naughty children or may be unhappy about being scolded by their parents-in-law, and still others may be concerned about a ceremony that has to be celebrated.

“So, women with many domestic problems express their feelings differently. Some of them speak their mind frankly, and others suffer in silence even if they are experiencing great difficulties.

“Therefore, if we are to work properly with women we should be well informed not only of their home affairs but also of their personality and state of mind.”

She then told her, by way of an example, about how to make women prepare their school things.

If you order them to prepare notebooks and pencils immediately and declare that you will check them later, what will happen?

Probably, there will be some absentees on the day when the check takes place. This is because they might have failed to get their notebooks and pencils ready. As it is difficult to provide them for the children, it is no easy task to get more of them for the mothers. So, some women might lose their desire to study.

We should not force them to prepare their notebooks and pencils without considering the matter first, but encourage the Children’s Corps and the Anti-Japanese Youth League to prepare wooden trays with sand in for instance, so they can practise writing. Then the women can study as much as they want, without any problem.

As she was listening to this, the chairwoman’s eyes were bright with joy. Every word was truly poignant and fresh. Everything she said was a concrete and clear-cut instruction for her to determine how to work from then onwards.

Telling her that those who work with women should always set an example to them in their work and daily life, she concluded:

“Those who work with women should keep their homes clean and cheerful, and also be neat and tidy in their dress and behave well.

“They should also be polite. They should respect each other, their elders in particular, and speak courteously.

“Generally, people gain an impression of the Women’s Association

through the people who work for it.

“Therefore, you, women workers, should speak and act in a way that others will follow.”

What Comrade Kim Jong Suk said during her heart-to-heart talk with one chairwoman was, indeed, a valuable truth which touched her heart and an important guideline that should always be followed, rather than an articulate theory on the qualifications, manners and method of work of those in the Women’s Association.

It was something which could not be bartered away, something based on her rich experience gained over many years of conducting political work with the masses and underground activities.

That was why the chairwoman of the Women’s Association expressed her deep gratitude to Comrade Kim Jong Suk who had given her such precious and useful advice.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk also talked at length with other women in the village.

First of all, she asked each woman assembled about the situation with her family. Most of them found themselves in a strange, alien land, having left their beloved home villages behind, following their parents, husbands or sons. There were some who were living alone, with no one to rely on, having lost their whole family to the Japanese “punitive troops”.

Thinking with distress about the misfortune they had experienced, Comrade Kim Jong Suk told them that they were not the only ones to have suffered, and that all the women of Korea were crying out in misery. She told them that, come what may, we must unite and display our strength and build a new world for ourselves.

Encouraging them in this way, she suggested singing the “Song of Women’s Emancipation” and began to do so.

*In capitalist society that deprives women of their rights,
Our youthful, red flowers wither.
Do you know our grievances?*

Her voice sounded low and gentle in the room. Other women joined her in song. They were moved to tears in spite of themselves. They appeared to feel sorrow for having lost their country, their homes, their rights and their freedom.

She saw the tears welling in their eyes and together they sang the second

verse and on to the fifth.

*Women, our comrades, rise up,
Let's take up arms against the bourgeois regime
And for equal rights.*

Touching the sorrowing hearts of the women, she pronounced every syllable with passion and emphasis.

She sang the fifth verse again and others did the same. The women felt as if something like strong pillars were filling their empty minds and their eyes shone bright with tears.

After the song had finished, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said:

“As the song says, our women must rise up and join the revolution.

“It is only when we conduct a revolution that the independence of Korea will be won quickly and a new world free from oppression and exploitation will be brought quickly to reality.

“If we join the revolution, then half of our population will be contributing its strength. Therefore, if Korea is to demonstrate its united strength, our women must become aware of and take part in the revolution. Not only that. When women advance along the road of revolution, their children and mothers will follow them and their husbands, too, will derive strength from it and work harder for the revolution. So, our active participation in the revolution means that the whole family and the whole country will rise up in the fight to regain the lost country.”

Her words gave them new strength and encouragement.

She said that at the moment many women were fighting bravely for the revolution, while offering sincere help to their husbands in the same undertaking, and cited an example.

There was a woman whose husband was involved in underground activities. One day the enemy launched a surprise attack on her house in an attempt to arrest her husband. She let her husband climb up into the attic and remained alone in the room. They ransacked the house, but in vain. They interrogated her. She did not say a word, but just shook her head.

Enraged, the enemy tortured her. They twisted her arms and broke her knees. The pain was unbearable, but she kept her lips tightly sealed to suppress her cries of agony. She was afraid that her husband might come down from his hiding place if he heard her.

They committed every possible outrage upon her, but left the house

empty-handed.

Her husband hurried down.

Alas! She had already died of her dreadful injuries.

She had given her life for the sake of her husband and his revolutionary work.

She added:

“From ancient times we, the women of Korea, have remained faithful to our principles and displayed great patriotism and fighting spirit.

“Now there are many women in our guerrilla army who are fighting in arms. Some have gone to the mountains to fight, leaving their babies by the gates of others’ houses in the hope that the owners might take care of them.

“Why then have they come here leaving their dearest babies behind with no guarantee that anyone would take care of them? Was it that they didn’t hold their own children dear or feel misery on their behalf? No, it was not that. Even today whenever I see those women tossing and turning in their beds at night, thinking of the children they have left behind, I feel a lump in my throat, thinking that there are no more strong-willed women in the world than the Korean mothers. They realize through their own experience that their fate and their children’s can be saved only when they take part in the fight for the country’s liberation led by General Kim Il Sung.”

Winding up her speech, she urged them to sing in chorus the “Song of Women’s Emancipation” once again.

The courageous, loud singing of the song moved them greatly, as it unfolded before their eyes that day in the near future when the emancipation of women would come.

Although it was the first day they had met her, that day the women of the village considered her to be quite extraordinary. So, they were eager to know where she came from and who she was, and finally summoned up the courage to ask:

“Today we have heard things we have never heard before and you have shown us the way to survive. We would like to know your name, Comrade Political Worker.”

“Thank you, but it will be of little help to you, I think.” Lowering her head slightly, she hesitated about revealing her true identity, and after a while she said quietly: “Please call me Om Ok Sun”.

Om Ok Sun!

Every woman repeated the name under their breath and gazed at her with

respect.

This was a name she used out of necessity in those days when she was carrying out underground work in the Changbai area.

From that time, the women of the village became prepared rapidly both from the class point of view and the socio-political point of view, and were exalted as proud revolutionaries in the guerrilla units and in underground work, and even today many of them hold important posts in the revolution.

Reflecting on the honourable road of the revolution they have travelled, they still remember the priceless teachings of Comrade Kim Jong Suk who indicated the best road for the emancipation of women.

“If I Had Known This, Would I Ever Have Dreamt of Not Sending Them?”

If you are asked what the “malady” of old men is, you may answer that it is obstinacy.

This is true.

When we were working among the masses in Changbai, we had terrible problems with die-hard old people. It was very difficult to change the minds of these people who, once involved in an argument, would not hesitate ever to insist that a wall was a door.

However, even these people would take their hats off to one person, Comrade Kim Jong Suk, an anti-Japanese heroine and distinguished political worker.

There are numerous anecdotes that demonstrate her skill in dealing with old people.

I shall tell you just one impressive anecdote about her, about how she opened the eyes of a die-hard old man in a single night.

While checking how many people were present at night school, she found that Comrade Chon and his brother, both members of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, had been absent from time to time.

This was because of their grandfather.

When his grandchildren were going to night school, this old man, who was in his 70s, opposed them stubbornly, saying that what was the good of learning how to read and write when they had to earn a living by digging the earth like a mole. He told them that if they had time to spare for such things, they could use it better by sleeping or weaving a little more straw rope. The old man was even more strict with his granddaughters. He did not allow them

to go out at all, saying: "If girls know how to read and write, they will become frivolous and then their family will go to ruin."

Judging from his dogged opposition to attending school, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, he was probably ignorant of the good done by education. She sent a message to the old man to meet her at the night school that evening.

"I could call at his house myself and persuade him," she said. "But it seems it would be too difficult to persuade him now, simply by talking. An object lesson is much better than words for such an old man."

She said that it should not be any young man, but the head of the branch of the ARF or an elderly man whom the old man could trust, who was sent on the errand to fetch him. She added that the old man should be told that he must come because a matter of great importance was going to be discussed.

She explained that the same words would carry different weight depending on the speaker and that if a young man such as his grandson was sent for him, he might not come because he would think that he was being dragged out by the young man.

"Not one but two men should be sent for him, but separately," she went on. "First, the head of the branch of the ARF should go to him and then another should go and tell him that he was instructed to visit him by the organization. If the organization exerts its influence in this manner, any hard-headed man will change his mind."

Her supposition was correct.

Inwardly we were worried about his reaction. To our surprise, he came to the night school without any complaint.

When he appeared, the people were very surprised and treated him cautiously in case some slight mistake hurt his feelings.

With a broad smile on his face, a young man rose and offered him a seat, saying, "You are welcome, Grandpa!"

But turning a deaf ear to him, the old man looked round the room and made for the door again, saying, "I came here to meet someone, not to study."

At that moment, Comrade Kim Jong Suk entered the room.

Going up to him, she bowed: "Grandfather, how do you do?" Then she invited him to sit down at the front in the belief that he was looking for a seat.

"No. I'm going." With a haughty look on his face, he grasped the door handle.

But she did not stop him and simply followed him, saying how could he go alone on such a dark night.

Though she was a stranger to him, he was quite pleased by her kindness, and thanked her. He did not refuse her help.

“Grandfather,” she said, caressing his hands, when the old man stepped out through the verandah. “This evening we have invited you because we really need your advice on our work. We have no knowledge. You may feel uncomfortable, but please stay here just for this evening and correct the mistakes we make in our lesson.”

Soothed by her polite words, he said he would sit down and watch for a while.

Then she told the teacher to start the lesson.

“Today we will divide the class into two groups and let them ask questions and give answers to each other.” The teacher began his lesson in this manner. “Those from the upper village, take your seats on this side, and those from the lower village, on that side, please.”

Curious about what was going to happen after the bustling change of seats, the old man sat down near the door.

She sat down by his side.

A pupil from the lower village asked a question first: “Why do we have to live here away from Korea?”

A young man from the upper village rose to his feet. He explained by citing examples, that the Japanese robbers had seized his country and were lording it over and maltreating the Korean people and that landowners and capitalists were harsh in their oppression and exploitation of the workers and peasants.

The teacher said that the answer was absolutely correct, and then told the pupils from the upper village to ask a question.

“How can we defeat the wicked Japanese imperialists and win back our country?”

A young man from the lower village answered cogently that as General Kim Il Sung had said, the twenty million Korean people should rise up as one man and overthrow the tyrannical rule of the Japanese imperialists and that, to this end, they should learn how to read and write at night school and join the organization so as to increase in strength.

At first the old man did not seem very attentive, but by and by he became interested in what they were discussing because their message was profound and excellent.

Sensing this, Comrade Kim Jong Suk wrote something on a piece of paper and sent it to the teacher.

The teacher read it and said that now the questions should be answered by a pupil named by the other side.

The question “Why was our country occupied by the Japanese imperialists?” was put to a young man from the upper village. He answered it correctly.

Now it was the turn of the lower village to answer.

Then Comrade Chon, the grandson of the old man, was picked to answer the question: “What is the obstacle that stands in the way of the liberation of the country?”

The grandson hesitated for a while, and then scratched the back of his head.

Seeing his embarrassment, his friends urged him to at least say something.

The old man shared their feelings.

But his grandson could not utter a word.

In the end, the question was answered by another man.

Having commented on the answer, the teacher said gently that although Comrade Chon had been good at school work, he was unable to answer because he had been absent on several occasions.

The old man felt the prick of conscience.

Then the lesson was combined with some singing.

Pupils were picked to sing a song and explain its message.

This method of teaching was interesting not only for youngsters but also for elderly people.

Marvelling at the school work, the old man listened to the songs and their explanations.

In the course of this, his granddaughter was picked. She rose to her feet, but could only stand blinking her eyes, instead of singing.

“Oh, you don’t know it, because you have been absent,” was the protest from her fellow students.

His granddaughter sat down almost in tears.

The old man felt terribly ashamed.

Another child rose and sang in her stead:

...

*My parents, your brother and his wife and children
Bled at the point of the enemy’s bayonet.
My home and your crops were set on fire*

And turned to ashes and wilderness by the enemy.

The song had a strong impact on the pupils because it gave vent to their grievances and misery.

The gentle and sorrowful melody was followed by a short but oppressive silence in the room.

Presently, the teacher asked the granddaughter to explain the words of the song.

She explained the “Song of Anti-Japanese War” with tears in her eyes.

The song told of the misfortunes and sufferings of all the Koreans, particularly of the old man’s family.

His eyes were moist as he listened to his granddaughter.

The girl’s explanation was loudly applauded.

The old man, too, clapped his hands in spite of himself.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk watched him with delight. She had used various ways and arranged the opportunities for his grandchildren to speak in order to help open his eyes. Her methods had proved very successful.

Although the class was still going on, she asked him whether he would like to go home, in case he should feel tired by sitting there too long.

He stood up reluctantly.

When they were out in the courtyard, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said to him politely that she would be grateful if he would advise her on how to correct any mistakes that might have been evident in their class work.

The old man said that the class work was very satisfactory and that he had no other comment to make.

With a smile on her face, she asked why he had kept his grandchildren from coming to night school.

“I really did not know that they were learning the sort of thing they have learnt today,” he answered frankly.

She asked again what did he think they had been learning.

After an embarrassed pause, he said that there was an old saying that at seven a boy and a girl should not play together, but nowadays youngsters did get together, singing songs every night, and that he had feared that the effect on his grandchildren would be harmful.

He added that he had thought that little girls were supposed to follow their parents, young women their husbands and old women their sons and that if they were taught how to read, write and sing, they would write love letters and get into the habit of talking back to the other members of their family.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk thanked him for his candid reply.

She said:

“Grandfather, that was how it was in the old days, but times have changed.

“Sons and daughters are the same human children. It wouldn’t be right to discriminate against the girls.

“Look at what the Japanese imperialists are doing. Do they kill only the sons and spare the daughters? No, they kill both men and women. Under these circumstances how can the daughters do nothing, when the sons are fighting?

“If all the Koreans, men and women, young and old, are to fight, they must learn.

“They must learn who the enemy is and how to deal with him.

“To this end, everyone, men and women, must come to night school and study.”

“You’re quite right. I was mistaken,” the old man said sincerely.

She went on:

“Our parents and grandparents used to ride donkeys, chanting the old saying that forbade young boys and girls to sit together while others were making motor vehicles and aeroplanes. In the end they ruined the country.

“We must not lag behind. So, the young people should study harder than anyone else so that they know how to deal with the world, liberate the country at any cost and build a new country which will be the envy of the world.”

After listening to her in silence, he asked:

“How old are you?”

“Twenty,” she answered, hesitating for a moment at the unexpected question.

“Twenty?! You aren’t living in this village?”

“No.”

“Then, where are you from?”

“Well... from Mt. Paekdu.”

“Mt. Paekdu! Let me have a look at you.”

Caressing her hands, he said:

“Although you are now twenty years old, you are far advanced in intelligence for your age. Judging from what you have told me, I can say that you belong to a distant future, because I can judge a person by what he says.

“You say that you have come from Mt. Paekdu. Then, are you the one

under the command of General Kim Il Sung who is said to be coming to our village every night?”

To this, she smiled brightly.

“Grandfather, have you heard about the General?”

“Yes. He is the peerless and most brilliant commander Korea has ever produced. He is a man of noble personality and lives in every Korean’s heart,” he said, pointing to his heart.

“Grandfather, teaching people at night school is the idea of the General himself.

“General Kim Il Sung has said that everyone should go to night school and learn how to read and write and study many more things so as to develop the strength to liberate the country.”

He was surprised by this.

“Why are you telling me only now? None of the young people in this village has ever come and told me about this.

“If our General has said so who can dare say no? If I had known this, would I ever have dreamt of not sending them?”

Having said this, he asked her over and over again to forgive him.

She apologized about the young people of the village still being inefficient in their work and told him that she hoped he would help them as he would help his own children.

He agreed to this and said that from the next day he would attend night school with his wife as well as his grandchildren.

She thanked him and then enjoyed a long and delightful walk with him.

This was how the die-hard old man set out on the road of revolution under her warm care.

The Admiration of a Landowner Who Hated Japanese Imperialism

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung said:

“The countries and nations which approach the Korean national-liberation movement with sympathy and in good faith should be regarded as our friends and those which help the brigandish Japanese imperialists and are opposed to the Korean nation should be treated as our enemy.”

The most difficult matter in building up the Changbai area as an invisible

fortress at the Paekdusan base was to educate and remould the people from all walks of life to join the battle against the Japanese.

The great leader said that regardless of property status and religious beliefs, all forces, except a tiny handful of pro-Japanese elements and traitors, should be rallied to the anti-Japanese struggle.

Regarding his teaching as a guideline for underground operations, Comrade Kim Jong Suk devoted all her efforts to winning the people from every background over to the side of the revolution.

In particular, the story of an anti-Japanese-minded Chinese landowner who was embraced by the revolution and led to take the revolutionary road comes vividly to mind as if it happened only yesterday.

At midnight, someone knocked at the kitchen door of my house. That night Comrade Kim Jong Suk was sleeping in the kitchen. So all my family were awake and on the alert. When the door opened, a political worker from the guerrilla army entered.

Entering the kitchen he said he wanted to talk to her immediately.

We asked him urgently whether the police were coming.

“No, but I have something to tell her as soon as possible,” he said.

As soon as the whole family had gone outside to another building, he told her the reason why he had come at dead of night.

That evening he had come across an old friend, who had pressed him to have a drink. As they drank one cup after another, their conversation got deeper, and in the course of it, he realized that his friend had become a special agent of the Japanese imperialists.

Because his disguise was that of a member of the self-defence corps, his friend might have considered him to be a man trusted by the Japanese imperialists and had opened his heart through being proud of himself. He said that the Pingsangde village seemed to be in collusion with the guerrillas and that he had discovered a clue to this a few days before.

The landowner in this village was Chinese.

The friend had gone on to say that the landowner apparently knew the secret about the village, so he was planning to arrest and torture him to make him talk. If he got nothing he would kill him.

Telling his friend that it was no simple matter, the guerrilla political worker had asked him not to tell anyone, in an attempt to keep him quiet, and to leave the matter in the hands of his self-defence corps so that it could perform “meritorious service”.

At this, the man had spoken with an odious smile on his face, “It’s a good

idea if you want to try it. I'll not tell anyone. So you must try and display your 'skill'." That was why the political worker had come in such haste to receive instructions from Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

After being lost in thought for a while, she asked him who was a good friend of the landowner. The worker replied that my father knew him quite well.

A little while later she met my father, and he told her everything he knew about the Chinese landowner.

The landowner lived about a hundred metres behind my house. So, father visited his house fairly often.

All the villagers except him, were Koreans. That's why he liked talking to my father.

Father could easily understand what he wrote and said because he had studied Chinese. Father visited his house for the opium fields.

In order to secure relief supplies for the guerrillas in those days, we needed plenty of funds. My father was asked to approach the Chinese landowner, with a view to solving this problem of funds using his opium.

Father asked him to lend him some opium because he wanted to make some money.

Zhao Luyu (the name of the Chinese landowner) was a learned man and so he was not ignorant of worldly affairs. Although he clearly knew that my father did not want the opium to make money, he willingly complied with his request, saying that if he was going to use it himself, he could not refuse.

In return for this, he asked my father, who was a good writer with a brush, to write letters on hanging scrolls and celebration lanterns and to tell the guerrillas when they came that he, too, hated Japanese imperialism.

In fact, he hated the Japanese bitterly. Being a landowner, the Japanese policemen and agents and villains would often visit him, but he treated them off-handedly, never speaking of the internal situation in the village. After they had left, he would spit on them and condemn them as thieves.

After carefully listening to this description of his feelings, Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked what the landowner thought of the guerrilla army. My father told her that the landowner and his son had been tied up in my kitchen the previous autumn, when the guerrillas had visited the village.

The young people of our village had done this on the grounds that the landowner was the most dangerous person there when it came to keeping the secret about the guerrillas, but they had released them after they had left.

However, he had not been greatly offended, because he could not feel any

responsibility nor feel any fear for his own safety, if he was able to say that he had been arrested by the people, when the enemy came later to distinguish which side the people were on.

He even stated that when the Japanese came, they would butcher his cows and pigs to eat and rob him of his wine and rice, but that the guerrillas would never touch one single item of his property. He added that, therefore, the guerrillas were preferable.

After hearing my father out attentively, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that his arrest must not be allowed. At this, the political worker insisted that since he was a landowner, his arrest by the Japanese imperialists would do us no harm.

She advised him not to think that way, and continued, "We must learn to view people in the correct light. The Comrade Commander has instructed us to distinguish between friend and foe on the basis of their anti-Japanese idea."

She added that though he was a landowner, he hated Japanese imperialism and had national conscience; he did not think ill of us; we had to win him over and join hands to oppose the Japanese imperialists; we should never allow him to be taken by the enemy.

At the same time, she made him realize that the agent, the political worker's old friend, would not keep quiet without "reporting merits" to his senior, and pointed out that it might all be a plot to discover the true colour of the worker, so the agent should be disposed of at the same time as drawing closer to the landowner to encourage him to join the anti-Japanese national-salvation struggle.

After listening to her advice, the worker left the village.

The next day the word went around the village that a man had died. Apparently the previous night a man in Western clothes had drunk too heavily and fallen into a ditch and died.

We knew that the agent had been killed. This was a timely measure.

The agent had approached Zhao Luyu in a cunning way. A few days before he had visited him with a bottle of wine. He told him that some time earlier his friend had been arrested by the police on the charge of being "a disturbing element" and had been beaten to death. According to his story, his friend had asked that he be avenged. Saying that this had made him determined to join the guerrilla army to gain revenge on his friend's enemy, he implored him for information about how he could join the army.

Zhao Luyu, unaware of his deception, had been very sympathetic and

promised to do all he could to discover the means.

If we had kept him alive, therefore, Zhao Luyu himself could have been caught in the trap and taken by the enemy, to say nothing of the great harm that might have been done to the guerrilla army.

After that, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that Zhao Luyu should be informed of the agent's true colour to ensure that he was not deceived again by the enemy.

When he heard, he realized that his life had been placed in great danger and could not hold back his indignation about the Japanese imperialists' cunning scheme, and was grateful to the revolutionary organization in the village for saving his life.

Furthermore, when he was told of the fact that the matter had been handled by the political worker from a unit under General Kim Il Sung, he was really carried away with emotion, thinking to himself that though he had known about General Kim Il Sung he could not imagine that he would take such care of someone who was entrenched in the deep valley of Wangjiagou without making any contribution to the anti-Japanese cause.

A few days later, he called at my house.

After saying that he had been thinking the incident over for several sleepless nights, he was unable to simply forget about it and wanted to send some rice and meat to the army of General Kim Il Sung.

At the same time, he said he wanted to meet the political worker from the General's unit and offer his greetings to her, as it was his lifelong desire to meet her.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk complied with his request and visited his house in person.

With lanterns brightening the wide yard and red lamps lit at the gate, Zhao Luyu received her reverently. Comrade Kim Jong Suk greeted him very kindly and politely.

He stated that at first he had imagined the political worker to be a giant because she was from General Kim Il Sung's unit, and that he could not but be surprised to see such a young and pretty woman worker.

He praised her highly for her flexible tactics and bold and intelligent conduct, although she was only a girl of the same age as his own daughter. He went on to say that Chinese as he was, he was fully aware of the agony of the Korean people and how the army of General Kim Il Sung was fighting.

He knelt on the floor before saying, "In fact, you saved my life. Otherwise, I would have been killed by the Japanese. In order to remember

this kindness for ever I wanted to see the face of my benefactress. And you have come to see me in person, so I am deeply grateful to you.”

In reply to this she said the following: “You are Chinese and we are Koreans. But we are all sufferers who have been deprived of our countries by the Japanese imperialists. We hold you in high regard because you sympathize with and support our Korean People’s Revolutionary Army and our people that hold their homeland and nation dear, and are shedding their blood in the sacred war against Japanese imperialism and for national salvation.

“We are sincerely grateful to you for helping us materially and morally. We hope you will also follow the right road in keeping with your national conscience.”

He replied very excitedly that he would assist the anti-Japanese struggle with all sincerity in the future.

From then onwards, he passed on to the organization a variety of information concerning the enemy’s movements: at what time “punitive operations” would be launched against our village; who were enemy agents; which policemen at a certain police station were responsible for our village; which people the police were searching for and so on.

Around that time, information was received to the effect that the police were inquiring about a man called Kim Su Nam.

This was the alias of Kwon Yong Byok who was in charge of party work in Changbai County in those days. All the time he was staying in our village of Shiqidaogou under that name.

So the organization was able to take steps in advance and avert the impending danger to Comrade Kwon Yong Byok.

Not only that. Zhao Luyu exerted an active influence on propertied people whose status was similar to his own so that they rendered material and moral assistance to our guerrillas and revolutionary organizations.

In this way, he made a great contribution to exposing and smashing the plots of the Japanese imperialists and their stooges.

What a heart-moving story, in which it was not a Korean or an exploited and oppressed worker but a Chinese landlord who was brought over to the side of the revolution!

This was the fruit of the conspicuous activity of Comrade Kim Jong Suk who carried out underground work zealously, upholding wholeheartedly the General’s instructions to distinguish between friend and foe from the level of their anti-Japanese feelings and to unite all sections of the people on the side

of the revolution.

5. The Brilliant Image

The Bodyguard

One day, not long after the historic Battle of Pochonbo, we were filled with emotion and excitement.

The great leader had come to Zhujingdong, our neighbouring village, at the head of a unit.

The people of our village were unable to sleep and talked with animation about the General.

The longing of our Children's Corps members to see the General grew all the more intense because we had heard a lot more than anyone else about him, from Comrade Kim Jong Suk and had always wanted to see him. We spent the whole day gazing towards Zhujingdong in a state of high excitement, constantly itching to run there.

A guerrilla came to see us. He called me and said that he had a liaison mission to entrust to me.

Thinking that it must be an errand in Zhujingdong, I leapt forward and urged him to assign the task to me at once.

How envious our villagers were to see me going to the General!...

At the very thought of it I felt as if I could float on air.

"Go immediately to Xiaodeshui with this slip of paper. This is a very important task, so you must go there and back without any trouble."

This came as a complete surprise to me.

"You mean Xiaodeshui?"

I was dumbfounded and looked at him blankly. I had expected to be sent to Zhujingdong, but now had to go to Xiaodeshui in the opposite direction. I was terribly depressed.

"They say that the others are going to meet the General soon. I beg you not to send me."

These words almost passed my lips.

But, considering the importance of the task, I thought there was no help for it.

As soon as I had been given the message, I started to run. I thought that as things had happened in this way, the best thing to do was to go and get back as quickly as possible.

While running, I often looked back towards my village.

I had the feeling that the General had arrived at the entrance to my village at the head of his unit and that the young men and members of the Children's Corps in the village had already greeted the guerrillas and were dancing and singing.

Meanwhile, I had already passed through a deep forest and reached the edge of a millet field which afforded a view of the place that I knew from before as a contact point.

Now, all I had to do to get to the spring appointed as the contact point was to go to the edge of the field and turn the corner where there was a rock.

At that moment I saw on the plain at the foot of the hill opposite a woman gathering herbs with her back to me, bending and straightening herself.

All my senses were alert. It was unusual for there to be a stranger so near the contact place.

Approaching the spot, but still some distance from it, I looked over the side of the spring to see if anyone was there.

There was none. Pretending to tie my shoelaces, I sat down and looked again over my shoulder, but still I could not see anyone.

I was puzzled.

At that moment, I heard a voice calling my name. Startled, I stood up quickly and looked around.

No one had appeared, but the woman who had been gathering herbs had taken off her bluish kerchief and was waving it, calling to me, "Come here."

Only then did I realize that she had been looking for me, and I went over to her.

(Well, she is so careful that she has not gone to the rendezvous, but has been watching it and waiting.)

With this thought I walked along the foot of the hill where the shrubs grew thick and she, too, came down towards me.

But I had a sudden surprise and came to a standstill.

It was Comrade Kim Jong Suk who was coming towards me.

I had no idea at all that I was to meet her there; I had assumed that she was in Zhujingdong.

With no thought of courtesy, I asked: "What's brought you here, Comrade Political Worker?"

"Why are you so surprised? Is it wrong for me to come here?"

With this she grasped my hand.

"Oh, Comrade Political Worker, the General has come to Zhujingdong.

Perhaps, he is now in our village....”

In spite of myself I burst out with this, carried away once again by my eagerness to see the General.

“The General has come?...”

Quickly she looked towards Zhujingdong as if she already knew.

“I thought you would be there, too. Let’s hurry there. The whole village is in a turmoil.”

I gave her an erratic description, even with gestures, of the ebullience in our village.

Smiling at me, she asked me to go and cool off in the shade of a nearby rock.

At this I looked down at my sweat-stained clothes and followed her.

There was a spring by the rock and it was cooler by its side than other places, because of the wide shadow cast by the rock.

I drank some water from the spring and washed my hands and feet while she read the slip of paper which I had brought. Her face was brighter than ever before and was lit by a broad smile.

Is there good news?

Although I had no way of knowing the contents of the message, on seeing her happiness, I chuckled to myself as well.

The job of a messenger is indeed strange. If the addressee is pleased with some glad tidings that he has brought, he, too, feels happy, believing that his job is worthwhile, but if he is the bearer of bad news, when he sees the recipient becoming gloomy, he feels he has done something undesirable.

Seeing the great delight of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, I felt that I had not come for nothing and that I had done my bit in creating some pleasure.

After a while she burnt the slip, and said to me:

“It is the greatest pleasure to me to hear that the Comrade Commander is in good health.”

Pleasure shone in her eyes.

Only then did I realize why she was so jubilant.

Impelled again by an ardent desire to meet the General, I urged her by saying: “Now, let’s go quickly to see the General. You gave me your word the other day, didn’t you?”

She gazed at me for a while and smiled without saying a word.

There was some truth in what I had said to her. When she had come to our village before, we pestered her with questions about what we could do to meet General Kim Il Sung.

In reply she said that if we did our tasks well, she would take us to some place in the Changbai area where we could see the General, and not necessarily Pinggangde.

Now, she had the opportunity to keep her word.

Apparently she remembered her promise, for she said, sounding perplexed, "Well, that's true.... But there's nothing I can do now."

"Why can't you go? Why do you say you can't go when the General is so close?"

I was frustrated and agitated. In silence she rose to her feet and looked up to the sky.

Beneath the sky where she was gazing, there lay Zhujingdong where the great General was.

She must have been anxious to rush to the Comrade Commander whom she had been longing to see even in her dreams, and to her dear comrades.

In the days of her underground activities when ordeals and danger were her constant companions, she had been unable to forget the General for a single moment.

Suppressing my emotions, I looked up at her.

I was amazed.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was standing motionless, gazing at the sky and tears were welling up in her eyes. A sudden feeling of sadness came over me.

Before long she said in a low voice.

"My home is over there where the Comrade Commander and our comrades are.... I really do want to go there.

"But how can I go and ignore the duty assigned to me by the Comrade Commander? It is when we soldiers do the tasks assigned by him well that we give him pleasure."

There was nothing I could say.

Brief as they were, her remarks made a great impression on me.

Settling my mind, I told her that I would go back if there was nothing else to do.

Laying a hand on my shoulder, she gave me this advice in earnest:

"The Japanese imperialists have been engaging in even more cunning schemes since the Battle of Pochonbo.

"The most important thing at the moment is the security of the headquarters.

"As long as the headquarters is based here, all work in Changbai should be aimed constantly at protecting the General."

She urged me that upon my return home, I should strengthen vigilance and watch any stooges closely, instead of simply thinking about going to Zhujingdong.

Then she told me that though the guard company played its part, we, too, should keep a close watch even as far as two and four kilometres from the village so that no bad element could get into Zhujingdong. She asked me to pass this on to Comrades Kim Se Ok, Kwon Yong Byok and Choe Gyong Hwa.

I replied that I would certainly do as she had told me.

She gazed at me with compassion for a while and straightened the wrinkled collar of my coat and dusted my mud-stained trousers, before telling me to go back.

However, it was not easy for me to leave for home. Somehow my eyes were blurred and I could not move my feet.

I felt heartbroken at the thought of leaving her alone on this mountain.

She also seemed loath to part with me; she wavered for a while and looked at me with her gentle eyes, and said, "Comrade Leader".

For a moment it appeared that her heart was too full for words.

"Say... the General likes noodles...." She could say no more.

"I see. I will go and tell my grandmother...." I was stammering somehow.

Once again she looked at me in concern and said: "He likes garlic. I hope he will be given noodle soup seasoned with a garlic sauce." With this she turned her face away.

I was overcome with emotion and a lump rose in my throat. "I'm sure...." I replied and turned round, unable to stay there any longer.

Only then could I bring myself to move.

When I had walked a short distance I heard her call: "Just a moment, stop there."

I looked round and saw her running towards me.

She said she would accompany me just a little way, took my hand and walked beside me.

Her longing for the dear General had impelled her to go nearer to him.

On the way she picked flowers to make a bouquet. We arrived at a fork in the road before we realized it. She suggested that we parted there and gave me the bouquet, saying:

"Take this with you and set it on the table if the General comes."

I received it politely and bowed to her. Comrade Kim Jong Suk stood still for a long while. At the thought that I was carrying with me a token of her

warm affection for the General, I felt my eyes moistening and my heart swelling with emotion.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was not only devoting herself to the revolutionary task assigned by the General and to his safety, but was also offering him a greeting in this nameless secluded forest and resisting the most ardent of desires!

It seemed to me that the passionate sincerity of her emotion and the imperishable image of her would live in my memory for ever.

I returned home and reported for duty to the guerrilla who had assigned me the task.

When I informed him of the instructions of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, he immediately held a meeting of leaders of the Anti-Japanese Youth League and Children's Corps and took careful measures to ensure the complete safety of the General while he was in Zhujingdong.

Then he hurried to the headquarters with the slip of paper she had sent.

As she had instructed, we sent him noodles and garlic sauce which we had taken special care to prepare.

At the same time, our Children's Corps held a meeting, where we gathered around the bouquet that Comrade Kim Jong Suk herself had prepared.

I informed my comrades of what she had said about doing our tasks well at our posts, and that the Comrade Commander expected this from us and would derive great pleasure from it, and I stressed that we should render devoted service to him as Comrade Kim Jong Suk did.

They vied with one another in making resolves.

A few days later the great General left Zhujingdong and headed towards Jiansanfeng.

Although they had been unable to meet the General, our villagers took great pride in the fact that the whole village had turned out to stand guard, and in this way rendered devoted service to him by day and night.

Shortly after the General had left Zhujingdong, Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to our village.

The villagers greeted her, expressing their regret that if she had intended to come, she should have come while the General was in Zhujingdong.

With a silent smile, she said that anyway, she was here. And she inquired in detail about what had happened during her absence.

That day she called the chief of the ARF chapter and leaders of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, Children's Corps and Women's Association in

Zhujingdong to the parlour of my house and made a detailed study of the situation in Zhujingdong since the departure of the headquarters.

And she heard the opinions and views of the villagers and got a picture of the enemy's movements through a member of our organization who had served as a servant at the Banjegou police station.

Then she called up to her the leaders of all the organizations in our village and the neighbouring villages such as Zhujingdong and Shangfengdong and said:

"Today the situation is very serious. The enemy is hell-bent on destroying the headquarters by mobilizing massive armies in an attempt to make amends for the ignominious defeats at Pochonbo and Kouyushan.

"Therefore, we should be on our guard so that the enemy might not learn the fact that the headquarters passed this place.

"Under no circumstances should anyone suffer pain because the General has visited this place.

"You must know that to keep secret the name of the place visited by him is to protect his authority."

We lowered our heads.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk never quitted her place the day before, concerning herself with the direction the headquarters had to take, and now had come hurriedly to set matters right after its departure!

She was crossing high mountains and treading rugged paths, unseen, in defence of the headquarters, the brain and heart of the Korean revolution, and no word could describe her noble mind.

She was really a paragon of loyalty and the most faithful of bodyguards and an example for us all to follow forever.

The Promise

It was a hot, sticky morning, but in the afternoon the sky clouded over and a wind rose, suddenly thunder rolled and a shower started.

That day, Comrade Kim Jong Suk had come to the village to hold a meeting of guerrillas such as Kwon Yong Byok, Kim Se Ok and Ma Dong Hui, and the cadres of the local organizations of the ARF who had come over from the homeland also attended.

Because we members of the Children's Corps were on guard duty together with members of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, I had no way of knowing what was discussed at the meeting, but it went on for a long time.

The village had to prepare noodles for the people attending.

In my kitchen, members of the Women's Association sifted flour to make noodles and I lit a fire in the fireplace.

At that moment Kim Se Ok left the assembly room in the middle of the meeting and hurried into the kitchen. He told us that Comrade Kim Jong Suk had skipped lunch to come here, and asked us to pay particular attention to preparing the noodles which she would be served that evening.

Thinking that she must be terribly hungry, the members of the Women's Association suggested to him that they boil potatoes and send them to the assembly room. But he said there was no time. And he asked us again to prepare the supper well, and left hurriedly.

There was a great deal of scurrying in the kitchen so that she could take her meal immediately after the meeting.

In the meantime the meeting closed. Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to the kitchen and greeted those who were in a sweat preparing supper. And she said that she was sorry to have troubled them once again.

With an apologetic air she begged us to give her comrades a good meal of noodles because they had to go a long distance on an important mission that day.

The women nodded and urged her to go into the sitting room and sit at the table.

At this she said that she had to go and attend to something, and again urged us to feed her comrades well. With this she left through the kitchen door.

In a flurry, they rushed after her and entreated her to come back, saying that they would be terribly sorry if she did not have supper, as it would not take her long to eat it.

"Thank you, but there's nothing I can do because I have an appointment."

Saying this, she went down to the courtyard.

"Oh dear. I've never heard anything like it. I hear you missed lunch, yet you're going to skip another meal. Please grant this old woman her dearest wish and come in."

This time, my grandmother was speaking imploringly.

At that moment, lightning flashed and the rain became heavier. Puddles were forming on the ground, the rain was coming down like stair rods and already in the courtyard the water was flowing along furrows with a gurgling sound.

"It's a sudden shower, so while it lasts you can eat. Come in please. How

can you possibly leave in this heavy rain?"

This was what my father said from the upper room, and his words were echoed by the guerrillas who had been in his company.

"Thank you all very much. But I have something to attend to and must arrive on time. Some other day I'll come and eat my fill, so let me go now without delay."

"You skipped lunch and now you don't want supper. I'm afraid you'll catch cold."

Reluctantly my grandmother let go of her hand.

My father was at a loss and fetched a paper umbrella from the upper room.

As for this umbrella, it was worm-eaten and I had no idea how long it had been in my house. It was the only wet-weather gear in our family and my father always patched it and looked after it carefully.

"Will you use this umbrella, please?"

She took it and said that she was worried that her things might get wet in the rain, and so this was a help to her. Then she wished us all good-bye and went hurriedly through the gate.

Seeing her off was an emotional experience for us all, whether in the kitchen, on the earthen verandah or at the edge of the courtyard.

"What business can be so urgent?" someone said.

"Well, that's the way she is. She must have some sort of appointment. Once she has made a promise, she never breaks it whatever may happen."

With this, Comrade Kwon Yong Byok drew a deep breath.

At that moment grandmother clicked her tongue, saying, "Goodness. I forgot to make a parcel of noodle cake and give it to her...." Everyone nodded excitedly.

As soon as my grandmother had spoken I went to the kitchen and made up a package of several noodle cakes and then ran after her in the rain.

It was some time before I spotted her forcing her way through a ditch waist-deep in water.

She was reeling, unable to keep steady in the angry torrent.

I wondered if she had had breakfast. In any case she must be utterly exhausted, forcing her way like that without taking any lunch, and now dusk was falling at that. This thought made tears come to my eyes. I rushed to her as fast as I could and offered her my arm.

"Oh, it's you."

She was surprised and in fact she needed all her strength to help me.

After we had crossed the ditch I offered her the noodle cakes and urged her to take them.

But I was embarrassed and abashed to think that I had come all that way with nothing more to offer her than coarse noodle cakes.

“Why, it’s noodle cake.”

She was delighted. At this I was overwhelmed with gratitude.

Although the food was plain, it was the sincere feelings of the villagers ingrained in it, which she valued.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk told me that as I had brought it, we should eat together and she offered me a cake and took another one herself.

I felt an even greater sorrow on seeing her eating that coarse noodle cake with relish, out in the cold rain.

Presently, she said that she felt invigorated by the tasty noodle cake, urged me to go home without worrying about her and resumed her trip.

But I could not leave before she had vanished from sight in the rain....

Even now, when it rains, I look over the street through the window of my flat.

In the rain it is bustling with happy people, coming and going, in their fine, colourful boots under patterned umbrellas.

Whenever my eyes rest on such a scene, they become wet with hot tears.

I am filled with great emotion and recollect Comrade Kim Jong Suk walking a hilly road under the pouring, cold rain, with a worn-out umbrella in her hand and soothing her appetite on a noodle cake.

And what she said in those unforgettable days comes back to me: “You should not make a promise which you cannot keep. You should be true to your word.

“Abiding by one’s promise appears to be simple, but ultimately it becomes a serious question of carrying out the pledge one has made for the revolution. Only when one is true to one’s word can one be true to one’s comrades, the organization and the revolution.”

In the Cold Rain

I had been carrying aid supplies all day long. It was evening and, after my supper, I felt utterly exhausted and was about to go to bed early when suddenly I heard someone calling me from outside.

Opening the door, I was surprised to find Comrade Ma Dong Hui calling me impatiently; he was standing outside the brushwood gate, and had not

even entered the yard.

He urged me to hurry to the approaches of Deshuigou and invite Comrade Kim Jong Suk to stay overnight at my home.

“She has been organizing the sending of supplies to the mountain all day long. You must invite her!”

He shouted to me again as I was walking away quickly.

I realized that day, too, a great deal of supplies had been delivered quickly due to her help and I hurried along with my fists clenched. I hurried to Deshuigou deep in thought; it was over four kilometres away from our village and when I reached it I looked round, but found no one.

Before me lay only a narrow mountain path that led to a charcoal burning shed. The path led up into the mountain. I wondered whether she had gone up the forbidding mountain on such a dark night.

I hesitated for a while, but then I remembered the words that I must invite her to my home. Bracing myself, I took the mountain path. I threaded my way up the mountain; even in daylight it made one’s hair stand on end. Then I heard barely audible human voices. I strained my ears and trod stealthily. I could hear the voices of men as well as women. There seemed to be several people. I went nearer and, to my surprise, I found guerrillas there, among them Comrade Kim Jong Suk. I greeted them, delighted.

On hearing why I had come, she said in blank amazement, “So Comrade Ma sticks to his guns.”

Pointing to a nearby rock, she told me to cool myself and rest after my journey as I had taken so much trouble to hurry there.

It was only later that I learned what had happened that evening.

The supplies intended for the guerrillas had been kept in two places. The organization decided to carry the supplies in our village by enlisting only the members of the Anti-Japanese Youth League to maintain secrecy.

But she had said that enlisting youth league members alone would not ensure secrecy and it was important to transfer the supplies in the shortest time possible. And she suggested enlisting members of the ARF, the Children’s Corps and the Women’s Association along with the members of the youth league.

All family members would be enlisted, so secrecy could be more assured and it would be inspiring for them to work together, she said.

Thus, that day all the aid supplies in the village were carried away without any hitch in a short time.

But the delivery of supplies in another place presented a problem.

They were kept in a deep mountain recess far away from the village and it would take the whole morning to go there.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk turned the problem over in her mind. After supper she summoned the guerrillas who had come for the supplies separately.

The volume of goods to be transferred the next day was smaller than that already delivered, but they were kept a long way away, so it would take much longer to carry them, she said. If we go tonight to Comrade Li's house which is near where the supplies are stored, even if it is slightly difficult to do so, stay there overnight and fetch them at dawn, it will mean the supplies are delivered much sooner, she added.

She was right, the guerrillas thought. But when they realized that she would have to make another long journey after carrying sacks of salt and rolls of cloth all day long, they could not comply readily with her suggestion.

"Don't worry about me. I'm sorry that you can't rest. It can't be helped. We have to put up with more than the villagers, don't we?"

With these words, she left, taking Ma Dong Hui, Kim Se Ok and two other guerrillas with her. When they arrived at Comrade Li's house, her company unexpectedly found guests there. His married daughter had come home to have a baby, accompanied by her husband. So, the single-roomed hut was packed.

His family were so pleased and awestricken to see Comrade Kim Jong Suk that they were at a loss what to do. Comrade Ma Dong Hui who was accompanying them as a guide was embarrassed and unable to explain why they had come.

"Mother, we've dropped in for a cup of water on our way," Comrade Kim Jong Suk said abruptly.

"How in this dark night...?"

With these words the mother offered her a bowlful of water and invited them in. But she said that it was cool outside and they would rather stay there; then she whispered to the guerrillas sitting on the earthen verandah. After a while her party left the house.

All the guerrillas had been looking forward to staying at the house and so were disappointed to find it in such a state; Comrade Ma Dong Hui felt small.

After a lot of thought he suggested they should all return and at dawn the next day he would undertake the delivery of the supplies with the help of some young villagers. But she said it would not do and went on:

"That would only complicate matters. As we've started, what about going

straight there? We left the house because we didn't want to inconvenience the family. So, should we go and wake other people?"

They took the mountain path, knowing well that she never went back on her resolution.

With matters taking such a turn, Comrade Ma Dong Hui, who had taken them to Comrade Li's house, excused himself and returned to the village, promising to send a replacement. That is how he came to call on me.

After taking a short rest sitting on the rock, I suggested that she should come to my home. The guerrillas, too, advised her to do so. She said, smiling with warmth in her eyes, "Do you think I'm so weak-minded?" Instead she suggested that I should return home, taking a woman guerrilla from her party with me.

At this the woman guerrilla, who had remained silent until then, said, "Why am I to go alone? I won't go." And she started to walk, leading the way for the rest of them.

I, too, said that I would go to escort the political worker and would not go anywhere alone. Then she smiled and suggested that we should all go together. Thus I set out on a night journey as one of the party escorting Comrade Kim Jong Suk. We went deep into the mountain recess, talking about many things on the way.

As the night wore on, the cloudy weather became a drizzle. Someone said that he disliked that sort of drizzle and preferred a shower. But someone else said that it was better than getting drenched.

After a long walk we arrived at our destination. There was a hut beside a fallen tree. It appeared to be a hunter's hut. A silver fir as tall as me stood twenty steps north of the hut and beside it there was a mud cellar covered with grass. Hidden there were packages of valuable medicines, different yarns for sewing machines and other supplies, a load for four or five men.

Not knowing what they were, I was about to pick one of the packages up when Comrade Kim Jong Suk said it was a package of medicines. She advised me to hand it over to another man and carry the bag of yarns instead. She feared that the medicine bottles might break if not enough care was taken.

After packing the supplies, we took a short rest in the hut. At first we felt chilly sitting on the heaps of grass, our clothes soaked by the drizzle. Soon we felt our limbs becoming languid from fatigue and we were overcome with drowsiness.

Sensing how we felt, she suggested taking a nap before leaving. As if they

had anticipated this, the others closed their eyes, their packages in their arms. She waited for the others to fall asleep and then stealthily rose and left the hut.

I wondered why she had gone out. But I took the opportunity to quickly change her knapsack for mine. Her knapsack contained medicines, so it would be difficult for her to sleep leaning on it, I thought. I waited for her to return, wondering whether she would notice that her knapsack had been changed. Some time passed, but there was no sound of footsteps.

A strange thought occurred to me and I went outside. She was not there. Feeling anxious, I walked around the hut looking for her. Then I heard her voice from the undergrowth, "Why have you come outside?"

I found her sitting beside a small rock a short distance away.

"What are you doing here?" I asked in wonder.

"I'm not doing anything. I prefer to rest in the open air," she said in a friendly way. "Why are you out in the open, in the rain?" I asked.

She probably wanted to give more room to her comrades in the hut, I thought. I advised her to go into the hut, telling her that there was enough room. She put her finger to her lips as a signal to me to keep quiet and said, "The comrades are all sound asleep. It will not do for everyone to sleep, will it? We must always be on the alert."

Oh, I see. She has come outside to stand guard! As soon as this thought flashed across my mind, I felt deeply moved. To think that even in such a deep mountain recess she stood on guard in the rain for her comrades! I wonder whether the comrades sleeping in the hut know this....

I could not sleep. I wanted to be beside her. I sat beside her, telling her that I could not sleep, presumably because I was not used to the place.

Unfortunately, there was no letup to the drizzle. Taking off my coat, I hung it on a branch above her head.

"You needn't do that. I'm already wet." Telling me that I would get ill, she took my coat off the branch and put it across my shoulders. "I don't mind the drizzle. The people on the mountain have a harder time."

With these words she looked through the branches towards the distant night sky. She seemed to be thinking of her unit and comrades.

"Do you think the men in the unit are sleeping now?" I asked.

She did not reply immediately. She had a far-away look in her eyes, and said, "I'm not sure. They would like to sleep, but they may be on the march or in the middle of a battle."

The unit and her comrades were always on her mind. Comrade Kim Jong

Suk remained deep in thought for a while, looking up at the sky. Then she told me a story about the days when she was fighting in the mountain.

“This happened right after I was transferred to headquarters.

“One day towards evening we set up camp after a hard day’s march.

As soon as we were all billeted, we fell sound asleep. For some reason I awoke in the small hours of the morning. Going outside, I found the General standing at the front of the camp, exposed to the cold dew. Even in the mountain he was standing on guard for his men.

“I looked with reverence at the General who was passing a sleepless night for the sake of us all. Afterwards I discovered that the General never slept at night. He could not sleep peacefully, with the responsibility for the whole unit, nay, for the whole country, on his shoulders.

“We talked about serving a special meal to the General in recognition of the pains he took in not sleeping peacefully for a single night. Suddenly the idea of wild strawberries occurred to us.

“Getting up at dawn, we went to the strawberry patch we had spotted during the day and picked some strawberries. After washing them, we served them with a little sugar to the General. But afterwards we discovered that young orderlies had eaten them all.

“I felt so sorry that I rebuked them roundly. They could not raise their heads for a while, but said that the General had given them to them, so they could not help eating them.

“‘At the moment I cannot give you an apple but when we win independence and are better off, I will provide you with plenty of delicious fruit,’ the General had told them and distributed the strawberries evenly amongst them, they said.

“On hearing this story, I wept inwardly. I wondered how we could ever fathom the depths of the magnanimous heart of the General who always thought of our people and when we could ever repay his great kindness.

“Perhaps tonight, too, the General cannot sleep, thinking about the ravaged motherland and nation.

“In my mind’s eye I can see the lighted tent of his headquarters.”

Her voice became slightly emotional.

I realized how noble she was to hold the General in such high esteem.

After a while she asked me whether I felt drowsy.

I replied that I felt quite bright.

At this, she smiled and said that during moments of boredom it was a good idea to sing to yourself.

“Sing a song. If you sing all the songs you know and repeat them, you won’t notice the time passing. When I feel drowsy or bored, I always sing. Do you want me to teach you to sing? When you take singing lessons, you won’t notice how quickly the time passes.”

“Yes,” I replied absent-mindedly.

After some thought she asked me whether I knew the song “When I left home”. I had not heard of the song until then. She told me that it was a good song and one the General liked to sing.

I asked in surprise, “Does the General, too, like singing?”

She smiled brightly and said, “The General is the best singer in our unit. His family used to enjoy singing and sang well. His father composed many songs, I hear.”

“Oh, yes?”

My heart was filled with feelings of reverence for the General.

After Comrade Kim Jong Suk had sung one verse, I sang one bar after another, following her. That evening I learned from her how to sing “Nostalgia” which is now popular among our people.

Tears came to my eyes unbidden that night as I was being given a singing lesson on the mountain, exposed to the rain.

After giving the lesson, she said:

“When I sing ‘will return’, the last words of the song, I always feel very moved.

“Then I become firmer in my resolve to win victory and return home and I am seized by the thought that the time will come when we recall these hardships and think of them as a fairy tale.

I warmed my heart to hear her say this.

I became firmer in my resolve to devote myself to the sacred war of national liberation and return home.

The rain had stopped unnoticed. The dawn seemed to be nearing and the tree tops loomed blue.

“It seems to be dawn. Don’t you feel tired?”

“No. I feel refreshed.”

“Maybe. When a man is doing what he wants to, he does not find it hard. That is why our comrades in the mountains live with hope in their hearts, facing up to all manner of hardship, and sing songs with their heads held high even when falling victim to the enemy,” she said with elation, looking up at the dawning sky.

Soon the eastern sky was tinged with red, dispelling the darkness around

us. Then she went into the hut and suggested to the men that they should go down to the village for breakfast with their loads.

Then they got up, making a fuss. They were amazed that she was up so early, unaware that she had stood on guard for them all night.

I hinted to one guerrilla the reason why she had passed a sleepless night. This put him at a loss, and his face went red.

When Comrade Kim Jong Suk was about to take up her knapsack, he took it from her forcibly. Shouldering two knapsacks— one, his own and the other, hers, he went off, leading the way.

“Why?” she asked.

“Leave me alone please. Let’s go as we are.” With these words he quickened his step.

“Are you trying to make a fool of me?”

“It’s me who’s the fool.”

He could not show his face, seized with remorse for having slept peacefully without realizing what was happening.

We set off down the hill immediately, accompanying her. In the distance the village came into sight.

Also, Comrade Ma Dong Hui and many other young villagers could be seen hurrying along the road. These were the comrades and revolutionary people she always took care of at the risk of her life.

Warm Heart

Material for Clothes

One morning the young people of the village were leaving for the mountains to deliver aid supplies.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was studying the people who had been chosen when suddenly she asked why Comrade Kim was absent. The head of the Anti-Japanese Youth League branch looked troubled and told her that she had been omitted from the company at her own request.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk looked surprised and asked if this was true. Comrade Kim had shown more enthusiasm than anyone else for carrying the aid supplies. Usually the young people of the village who carried the aid supplies would be met by guerrillas at the designated spot, so they would volunteer for the job as it gave them an opportunity to meet guerrilla fighters.

Comrade Kim was no exception. For fear that she might be omitted

because she was a girl, she had approached the organization many times and asked to be included in the number. After the list of people to go to the mountains had been drawn up, she had twice confirmed that her name was included.

So, Comrade Kim Jong Suk had changed the original plan and included Comrade Kim and many other girls in the party to be sent to the mountains.

And now this girl, who had asked in such earnest to go, had withdrawn that request! It really was very strange.

After thinking for a while, Comrade Kim Jong Suk told us to send for her immediately. The girl who was sent soon returned and said that she would never go. Comrade Kim Jong Suk became more serious and asked her what she thought was the reason. For a while the girl was perplexed but then said that she had refused to go because her jacket was too shabby to wear and that she was now weeping by the chimney.

All eyes turned to the chimney of Comrade Kim's house which was not far away, where the girl could be seen standing, weeping with her back to them.

After gazing at her for a short time, Comrade Kim Jong Suk told us to wait where we were for a few minutes and walked off towards the girl. Seeing Comrade Kim Jong Suk approaching her, the girl squatted down on the spot and cried miserably, covering her face with her hands. We could see her trembling shoulders from where we were.

At the age of 17 she had no decent clothes and this made her too shy to meet people. From a poor family, she had many brothers and sisters and always wore hand-me-downs. And even these clothes had been patched over and over again.

Hearing that the young people were going to meet the guerrilla fighters, she was the first to ask to go. But when the morning came for them to depart, she abandoned the idea because her clothes were too shabby.

Walking up to her, Comrade Kim Jong Suk silently helped her to her feet and went into the house with her. A little while later, the kitchen door opened and the girl reappeared. But she seemed to be hesitating and would not approach us. At that moment a girl said in a shrill voice, "Why, isn't she dressed in the clothes of the political worker?"

We stared at her again, our eyes open wide. Surely, she was in the white jacket which Comrade Kim Jong Suk had been wearing just before. Comrade Kim Jong Suk herself approached us, leading the hesitant girl by the hand. Then she said, "Now off you go at once. Comrade Kim, take this with you."

And saying this, she quickly lifted a rucksack and put it over her shoulders. She was trying to distract the mind of the girl who was still feeling disconcerted because of her clothes.

But in the act of shouldering the rucksack, she put it down on the ground and said, “Comrade Political Worker, I will go in my own clothes.” This moved Comrade Kim Jong Suk. Stifling her emotions, she said:

“Why do you insist? Please imagine I’m your sister. Don’t you ever wear your sister’s clothes? You’re going to meet comrades from the General’s unit and I’m so glad that my jacket, if not myself, can go and see them. Hurry up and go please.”

With this she again put the rucksack on her back and sent the party off.

Walking on, the members of the party hardly spoke because their hearts were filled with warmth by the great kindness of Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

Meanwhile, Comrade Kim Jong Suk sent members of the ARF from the village to purchase aid supplies at the market, and told the head of the branch, who was the father of Comrade Kim, that he must buy material for some clothes for his daughter. They were going to buy the goods with money they had raised themselves. Therefore, in no way would it be harmful to the organization if he bought dress material for his daughter.

That evening the people returned from the market. Comrade Kim Jong Suk called on the girl’s father and asked if he had bought the dress material. He raised his hand to the back of his head, and said, “Since I happened to find some good salt today...,” but was unable to finish what he was saying.

His wife overheard his reply in the room and had to wipe the tears from her eyes. She had heard what the political worker had said that morning, and had been waiting all day for her husband to return home with the dress material. But he had returned not with cloth but heavily burdened with salt.

After supper the branch head told his grumbling wife, “Now tell me, do you think the country will win independence and we shall be well off only if the lass is dressed in new clothes all of a sudden? Do you have any idea how the people in the mountains are faring now? You say that when the political worker is kept on the run just for a handful more salt?!” This stopped his wife talking about clothes any more.

On hearing his words, she bowed her head. She thought how shameless it was to speak of clothing while sitting in the warm room when others who had left their parents, wives and children behind at home were risking their lives in the fight for the country and experiencing indescribable hardship in the mountains!

In fact, everyone in the village wore patched clothes and ate foxtail millet gruel and dried vegetable-leaf soup at best. Even so, when they happened to obtain a little money, they would always think of the guerrillas first, and give no thought to using it for their own housekeeping. They spent every penny on aid supplies.

“Only when we have our own country will we have our homes and a household” was the thought running through our minds when Comrade Kim Jong Suk was guiding our activities.

The next day Comrade Kim Jong Suk called a member of the Women’s Association who was going to the market for aid supplies and instructed her to purchase and bring back some dress material for a girl. The woman thought that she wanted the material to wear herself and took the instructions very seriously. Other people returned to the village empty-handed, unable to buy salt due to the enemy’s strict controls, but the member of the Women’s Association went all the way to the market in Changbai County town, where she bought some jade green silk for a jacket and black cotton serge for a skirt.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was highly delighted with the materials. That evening she took the cloth to Comrade Kim’s house. The family of the branch head was extremely pleased that she had called, but, at the same time, they were embarrassed to show her into the shabby and untidy house.

The usually lively girl remained huddled up in a corner of the room with her head lowered, remembering that she had worn her jacket the day before. Comrade Kim Jong Suk unwrapped the cloth she had brought and asked the girl’s parents to use it to make some clothes for their daughter. She said that if she had had enough time she would have done the sewing herself, but the situation was growing more serious and she feared she might not come again, so she had brought just the material. Then she said she wondered if they like the cloth.

The branch head sat upright and said, “If we let you do this, we shall never be able to show our faces again, shall we? Even if we can’t help those who are fighting in the mountains, we can’t possibly just stay in this warm room.... Please keep it and use it in your operations.” So saying, he pushed the cloth over to her.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that it had not been taken out of the aid supplies, but had been bought with her own money and that, therefore, there was no need to worry. She added:

“You, Comrade Branch Head, are so concerned about the comrades in the mountains that you don’t buy cloth for your own daughter and you go all the

way to the market in Hyesan without having lunch, which you could buy for only five *chon*. If they knew of your devotion, they would not be satisfied even if they dressed your daughter, Comrade Kim, in gold clothes, would they?"

Then she told the girl:

"Now wear your new clothes to go to the swinging site or the market place freely. Because you've always been self-conscious about your clothes, you've hesitated to be seen by other people. And that has pained me most."

Suddenly the girl burst into tears. Approaching womanhood, she would always feel small because of her poor attire; when others would run off laughing merrily to see some fine entertainment, she would return home in tears, looking down at her miserable appearance.

Her mother stroked the cloth for a while before saying, while wiping away the tears that ran freely down her face, "The very idea, that the likes of us should wear such fine material! I wonder if this isn't a dream!"

Comrade Kim Jong Suk spoke to them:

"In fact, this cloth is not very good. But when we win national independence and become more prosperous we will surely see to it that the long-cherished desires of every mother in the country are realized.

"Whenever he sees people who are badly-dressed, the General says that before long he will dress us Koreans in the finest clothes so that the whole world will marvel at us.

"Let's look forward to that day and all fight on without yielding."

Her remarks moved the branch head still more deeply. Feeling ashamed, he said, "I don't think you, Comrade Political Worker, have such funds.... Really I feel I'm doing you a great disservice."

At this Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, "I am delighted to have met people who are more concerned about the country than about their own children. When I return to the mountains I will be sure to tell how each pair of shoes and each handful of salt have been obtained." She added that then the guerrillas would perceive the affection of their own people in the sincerity of their feelings and fight more courageously.

The branch head could not sleep that night. In every inch of his body he felt the unbounded warmth of Comrade Kim Jong Suk's affection and her immeasurable sense of duty to her revolutionary comrades, and mentally he marked his respect for her.

After that the situation became more serious just as she had foretold, and the village was burnt down by a "punitive force" of the Japanese imperialists.

The village people fled from the sea of flames and blood into the depths of the mountains. Comrade Kim escaped this danger, holding the dress material given her by Comrade Kim Jong Suk tightly in her arms.

When she came to the mountains she found her appearance too miserable to describe. Her already ragged clothes had been burnt in the fire and torn to shreds so that they could no longer cover her body. So, she had no choice but to make her clothes with the material which she had hoped to keep as a rare treasure all her life. But she had neither scissors, nor needle and thread. No one had a pair of scissors; all had run for their lives from the scene of disaster.

At his wit's end, the branch head cut out her dress with the sickle which he had carried with him, holding the cloth with his daughter, and made the clothes with the only needle and piece of thread they could find among all the people.

The cloth, which was token of the great kindness of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, gave the girl a new appearance after she had had her first experience of the flames of war.

Unbounded Devotion

It was one day in early spring when Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to our village. At my home we were talking seriously about whether my father's frostbitten feet should be amputated or not.

Father had already been receiving medical treatment for several months, but the injuries had only got worse and his suffering was increasing daily. So, my father insisted that his feet should be amputated because there was no longer any hope of them healing. But the rest of my family took the more positive attitude that he should consider every form of treatment and that amputation was out of the question.

When she heard this discussion, Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked how my father's feet had been injured. I described to her the shocking circumstances in which my father had been abandoned by the fiendish Japanese imperialists to get frostbite in his feet.

It was before New Year's Day that year by the lunar calendar. The Japanese imperialists had sustained several ignominious defeats in various battles because of the furious military activity of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, including the Battle of Komuigol a few months previously. Nevertheless, they had again launched "punitive" operations

against the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, employing the vicious tactics of using a large number of local people as their shields against bullets.

My father was among the people who were herded out as such shields. But General Kim Il Sung saw through this wicked ploy and employed tactics that were flexible enough for the guerrillas to deliver a crushing blow to the enemy, and yet not a single one of our people was hurt. After this latest severe setback brought about by the extraordinary tactics of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, the Japanese imperialists herded together the people they had taken with them instead of sending them home and bound them tightly to big trees in the deep forest by way of revenge before taking flight. They expected them to freeze to death as the cold was so extreme that even fallen birch trees would freeze and crack.

So my father and many other people found themselves facing death on the trackless mountains. They struggled and shouted for help all night long but finally fell into unconsciousness.

That very night General Kim Il Sung called a few men to him and told them that he was wondering if the people who had been dragged out to the battlefield that day as shields had got home without mishap, and told them to go back and look round.

In this way my father and many other people were saved from certain death. But the frostbite he had caught was proving difficult to heal.

Listening to my story, Comrade Kim Jong Suk was evidently moved. Then she asked to see his frostbitten feet. Our family tried to prevent her. We thought it embarrassing for her to see his horribly maimed feet. But she took no notice of us and went into the kitchen where she boiled some salt water, poured it into a bowl and went to the patient.

Then she carefully cleansed the injured part which was oozing pus and smelling bad and scrutinized it closely. We felt a deep sense of gratitude and, at the same time, embarrassment that she was so sincerely concerned and kindly examining the sore, although she was not a specialist. Therefore, we asked her not to concern herself so much and told her that we were terribly sorry to see that she was caring about such a trifling matter when the injury would heal in due time.

When she heard this, she said with a kindly smile:

“His life has been saved by the General and therefore he should recover quickly to repay his debt to him, shouldn’t he?”

After examining the sore, she said that as she was not a doctor she was unable to make an accurate diagnosis, but she had seen some cases of

frostbite being treated while she was fighting in the mountains, and so could say that good care might heal even such a serious case without any need to amputate the feet. So she said that we should do something positive to treat the feet. Then she continued:

“The most important thing in medical treatment is the heart. The General has said that if the patient is stouthearted and the doctor is devoted and their two hearts are united, any disease can be cured.

“Let us remember his words in our hearts and do whatever we can to heal the sick.”

Her remarks made the whole family feel a warmth in their hearts. My father repeated, “Thank you. Thank you very much.” The sore had been so painful and there had been so little hope of recovery that he had made up his mind to amputate his feet.

After that, Comrade Kim Jong Suk devoted herself heart and soul to caring for the sick. Until then we had really only confined ourselves to some folk remedies when treating him; it had never occurred to us to consult a doctor or buy expensive medicines. But she sent for a doctor who was a member of the ARF and let him examine the patient carefully. Then on discovering which medicines were needed, she obtained them with the help of the organizations.

When someone had to be sent to the county town to buy medicines, she would generally entrust the assignment to a member of the Children’s Corps. Since the Japanese imperialists exercised strict control not only on salt, rice, work shoes, paper and other carefully selected goods, but also on medical supplies, it was far safer and more convenient for children to go and buy medicines than adults. And even when members of the Children’s Corps were sent on such an errand, she made several children go in turn and buy a little each instead of one boy or girl going many times.

The “Yongcheng Chemist” in the county town was run by a Chinese man and he had rather progressive ideas. So, the members of the Children’s Corps were able to buy the ointment “Taeulgo”, the tincture “Okgyesu” and other medicines without any problem.

In the meantime, Comrade Kim Jong Suk showed a great interest in preparing drugs herself.

“The drugs sold at the pharmacy are also made by people. If we choose to do so, we can make even better ones.”

Saying this, she obtained the recipes of drugs known for their special virtues with the help of many people and managed to procure the ingredients

needed to make them with the help of the organizations in the village.

In those days the members of the Anti-Japanese Youth League, Women's Association and Children's Corps in our village would often go to the Xiaodeshui, Hyesan and Erdaogang areas on communication or reconnaissance missions. Every time they left on such journeys, Comrade Kim Jong Suk would give them assignments to obtain the ingredients to make drugs.

When a reasonable quantity of good materials for drugs had been obtained, she would roll up her sleeves and set about preparing the drugs. When water in an enameled iron pot had boiled for some time, beeswax and pine resin were put into it and the water was again boiled until everything had dissolved. Then perilla oil was added and the mixture left to boil once more, and the sediment was strained through fine hemp cloth. The liquid obtained was mixed with the powder of some medicinal herbs and put in cold water. The moment it sank it congealed into something similar to jelly. This was a good medicine for frostbite.

She gave instructions that the preparations be applied to the sore after it had been carefully cleansed with boiled salt water and disinfectant.

The next morning my father felt fine. He said that he thought the ointment personally prepared by Comrade Kim Jong Suk was most efficacious and added joyfully that the previous night he had slept peacefully for the first time in a long while.

When we heard this, my family told her that now we felt relieved and that we could treat him and knew enough to do so and so she ought not to concern herself any longer. However, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that the unguent might work well for the moment, but a different drug would be needed at the next stage of recovery and she obtained for us various other kinds of ointment, oral medicine and even injections and a syringe through the organizations.

Moreover, when the sore, which had been so difficult to cure, grew less serious and the condition of the patient improved, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that glutinous rice would help form new skin over the affected part and instructed members of the Women's Association to obtain it.

Thanks to such devoted care, my father got well and finally left his sickbed. My father, whose mental agony had been greater than the physical pain when faced by the question of whether or not to cut off his feet, was now his old self again. So how happy and excited he must have been!

The warm affection of Comrade Kim Jong Suk had healed my father

when he seemed doomed to be a cripple! It was indeed benevolent care, an unbounded devotion to the simple and modest people, which was strong enough to make a flower bloom even on a rock.

The Daughter of the People

The bonds that held Comrade Kim Jong Suk and the village folk together were unbreakable as if they shared the same flesh and blood. The people loved and respected, and prized and cared for her with their whole hearts as they would a blood relation. This was a demonstration of the genuine and warm feelings entertained for her deep in our hearts and a unanimous feeling which nothing could quench.

The people do not lie or act unreasonably. Their love, respect and adoration are rewards for the single-minded efforts one makes and devotion one shows for them.

Those who were never acquainted with Comrade Kim Jong Suk will be unable to gain a clear idea of her noble character even if we use the finest expressions and best style to describe her. Be that as it may, I have one story which I can not leave untold. I would like to tell it here.

It had been raining all day. People stayed indoors, unable to go out to the fields. A little after midday, Comrade Kim Jong Suk entered our yard. She had no umbrella, so she was drenched.

My family asked her to come quickly into the house, but she just stood there wiping her head and face with a handkerchief and made no move to come inside. It was only then that we realized that she was reluctant to come into the room because of her wet clothes.

We searched the house looking for dry clothes for her to change into, but our livelihood was such that we had no spare clothes, and so we were in no position to offer her anything decent.

Then my grandmother rummaged in the wicker trunk and produced the dark blue skirt and yellow jacket which my sister-in-law had worn in wedding. They were the only garments we had that were not completely worn out. Looking at them, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, "Oh don't, Grandmother! They're the only special clothes your family has, so how can I wear them?"; she entered the kitchen.

There were still some red embers in the hearth as we had been burning wood just before to heat the floor. She raked the fire with a poker and sat on the pile of firewood in front of it. Steam rose from her clothes.

After watching her for a while, my grandmother muttered that if she was going to stay there without changing her clothes, she might just as well have remained outside and not come to our house. Hearing this, she seemed to think there was nothing else she could do and asked my grandmother if she had a spare coat to lend her. So, she put on my grandmother's wornout, spare winter coat and sat down again in front of the fire.

Looking at her sitting in the patched cotton jacket and loose skirt of an old country woman, we felt very moved. My grandmother told her anxiously that she should have rested when it was so rainy and asked why she had started a journey in such foul weather.

Poking the fire with a stick, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that it was the people in the mountains who were more exposed to the rain and that staying in the village, she did not think that getting wet mattered.

"Grandmother, if I can hasten national independence by getting soaked in the rain, I would choose to be exposed to rain all the time," she remarked.

My grandmother said that the people in the mountains were exposed to the rain because there was no help for it, but when she was in the village she should use an umbrella, and she might catch a cold by going out in the rain all the time.

Her answer to this was that since on such a day the enemy's watch would be relaxed and there were few travellers, the weather made it easier for her to move about, and she added with a smile that a cold would be driven away by good food.

Her words reminded me suddenly of something that had happened in the early spring. It was a nasty day with sleet coming down. In the dead of night Comrade Kim Jong Suk arrived. Without entering the house she told me that she was expecting to meet an underground fighter at our house, and asked us to send him outside if he was already there. Her clothes had been drenched by the sleet.

We told her that no one had come and that if she was to go somewhere with him, she should dry her clothes while she was waiting for him. But she asked only for a bowl of hot water to drink and went away then and there.

Some time later the guerrilla fighter she was expecting appeared and ran off quickly after her. Very late that night, there was a sound of knocking at the door. I awoke to find Comrade Kim Jong Suk and the guerrilla fighter outside.

"I'm very sorry to disturb you so late," she said apologetically.

Our family told her not to mention it, but come inside. She thanked us and

came into the kitchen after hanging up her muffler on the post at the entrance.

The guerrilla fighter was looking concerned and asked us to take good care of her even though it might be some trouble because she was running a high fever and found it difficult even to speak. Because we were not yet fully awake, we had not noticed the state she was in. Only then did we busy ourselves and prepare a bed near the fireplace and boil water.

My grandmother took her hand and, stroking it, reproached her for having gone away without coming inside when she had been here before and so become ill by overexerting herself. Hearing this, the guerrilla said, "At the time she felt she would collapse immediately if she entered the warm room. So she left because she believed she must go in order to finish her work." Then he muttered, "Now that you are through with your work, go to bed and have a good rest!" With this he left.

She had carried out her task at all costs, enduring great pain, before coming down sick. Watching her lying there suffering from a high fever, we all felt a lump in the throat. All night she was unable to sleep, groaning with the fever, and only at dawn did she drop off into a doze. In the morning she left her sickbed and folded up the bedding.

But she still looked very unwell. Her lips were cracked and her face was noticeably emaciated. She was still feverish and her throat was swollen, so that she even found it difficult to speak.

My grandmother was laying the table for breakfast and said:

"A cold will be driven away by good food. Please help yourself. Come now, this old woman knows best."

When at last she sat down at the table, we again felt a pain in our hearts. There were only radish pickles, dried vegetable leaf soup and, as a special treat, boiled barley mixed with a little broomcorn millet, on the table. How nice it would have been if only there was one egg! Although we were embarrassed because the fare was so plain, we served her.

She took a glance at her own and our family's bowls and said that she did not like boiled broomcorn millet. With this she drew a bowl of boiled barley in front of her.

No rice was grown in our village at the time, and so broomcorn millet was the best cereal we had. And even this was scarce. That morning, therefore, a bowlful of broomcorn millet had been put on one side of the pot in which the barley was to be cooked, for her to eat. This small bowl of broomcorn millet was pushed backwards and forwards across the table several times.

In the end, she ate barley.

After the meal she got ready to leave. Our family was surprised and tried hard to dissuade her. We said, “Where on earth are you going to drag your weak body? Your fever hasn’t yet abated, and if you push yourself too hard again, you’ll fall seriously ill.”

Laughing, she said:

“Now my temperature is lower and I feel fine. As I’ve had dried vegetable leaf soup with relish for the first time in a long while, I feel quite all right. Indeed, it looks as if a cold is driven away by good food....”

After this, in spite of her weakness, she set out again on the hard task of underground operations.

Immersed in this thought, I looked at her figure and felt a surge of emotion as she sat on the kitchen floor drying her wet clothes.

On that day in the past, I thought to myself, she started on a long journey in spite of her fever, and today I wonder where she has been, soaked to the skin by the rain. Last time she would not eat boiled broomcorn millet, and today she has refused to take dry clothes, fearing that she might cause some slight inconveniences to the people! Could there possibly be another person like our political worker in this world?

After a while my grandmother put some potatoes on the fire in the hearth, thinking that she might be hungry. Comrade Kim Jong Suk said anxiously that it seemed that the condition of the year’s crop was not very encouraging, so that each peasant household’s food situation next year would be a cause of great concern. My grandmother remarked that whatever happened, the people would not starve and that she was very grateful to those who were fighting in the mountains for the concern they were showing for the farming in the village.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said:

“How can we remain unconcerned about farming? The apprehension of the people is automatically our apprehension. Do you know where our comrades get the strength to overcome all the hardship in the mountains? They are strong because they are firmly convinced that through their suffering, the day will surely come when our people will be living prosperously.

“As I was getting wet in the rain, I, too, thought, ‘I will be exposed to more rain. Then the day of independence will come sooner.’ This was what I was thinking, you know. As I picture to myself our people shouting with joy on the day when our country wins its independence, I feel, nothing is tough or trying.”

At this, my grandmother said, dabbing her eyes with the end of her coat string, "Oh, how noble you are! To think of dedicating yourself body and soul for the good of the people!"

"Grandmother, I'm not the only one. You, too, are thinking in the same way, aren't you? Why are you drying my clothes like this? And why do you allow your family to go into the mountains and to take part in the work of the organizations in the village? You are doing this simply so that we can win back our country under the leadership of our General, aren't you? That's why we cannot pass by suffering people when we see them on the road, and we share the single purpose of valuing and caring for one another."

Her voice was filled with great warmth. After some time, she peeled the roast potatoes and ate some of them. In the meantime, her wet clothes had almost dried and the rain had eased.

"Grandmother, I think I must go again," she said and changed her clothes. She left our home at once.

After pausing for a brief moment in a corner of our wretched kitchen to dry her clothes that were soaked with the cold rain, she had again left for the people who were awaiting her.

That evening my father was very angry and called the family together. He felt that the way we had entertained Comrade Kim Jong Suk was scandalous. By nature he was not at all quick-tempered, but that day he was furious.

"Who is she? She's one of General Kim Il Sung's soldiers, I tell you. Yet, when she comes here you don't even give her a decent meal and offer her a good bed.

"It is not his outward appearance that makes a man. He should possess a sense of duty. Just think how much our family owes her!"

We all listened to father with bated breath. On reflection, we were really under a very heavy obligation to her. Apart from anything else, she had cured my father's frostbitten feet, saved my younger brother's life, would always take care of the families of soldiers in the guerrilla army and attend to the affairs of the villagers. No end of instances could be cited.

But until then we had simply been spoiled by her generosity and had given little thought to returning even the smallest part of her kindness.

That night we discussed how we could look after her with greater care. We decided that the best way was to make her some candy with a starch base. We thought that this would help her stave off hunger at least while she was on the move, even though we could not serve her warm foods while she was making such long and dangerous journeys in the rain and snow.

Candy would last her a long time and quickly relieve her fatigue. Moreover, we could prepare and keep it to serve her even when she came unexpectedly.

We also decided to prepare a pair of rubber shoes for her. Her own shoes were worn and heavily patched, and this had been weighing on our minds.

We prepared five or six *kun* of candy from kaoliang and kept it on the shelf and bought a pair of rubber shoes at the market. We waited impatiently for her to come again.

It was a day in early summer when the sombre mountain ridge and blue forests were turning fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine. That day Comrade Kim Jong Suk, whom we had been awaiting with such eagerness, came to our home. When we met her, we felt a joy in our hearts that we had never known before.

When she had entered the room, my grandmother went quickly out to the earthen verandah and compared the new shoes with the old ones she had taken off and left there. They were exactly the same size.

“Oh, how lucky!”

My grandmother came back into the room with the new shoes. Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked her if we had had any problems.

“I’ve got a new pair of shoes for you, and I was so worried about whether they would fit you or not that I even dreamt about them! Now I’m so relieved!” With this she placed the shoes in front of her.

“Dear Political Worker, this is only a small present. Compared with the gratitude I feel, this is too humble a thing. But kindly accept this as a token of my good wishes.”

Then she brought down from the shelf the large wooden bowl containing the candy. She placed it in front of the guest, telling her that as she was constantly on the move, she must often miss her meals, and when this happened, she should eat some of the candy to stave off her hunger.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk slowly raised her head and looked my grandmother in the face. It seemed to me that there were tears in her eyes.

“Grandmother!” With this she looked away. Her graceful yet detached air instantly changed and she looked like a simple and innocent little girl. Usually she was so bold and undaunted in the face of the enemy and her numerous difficulties, but now she was embarrassed and perplexed.

Quickly she wiped away her tears and said calmly:

“Grandmother, I’ve often come to your home at unexpected hours and I always cause you so much trouble. Yet, you’re so kind and do this for me. I

don't know how to thank you. Every time you village folk treat me so kindly, I always think of my old house in my home village.

"You offering me sweets like this today remind me of my mother. One day when I was still in the Children's Corps, I was sent a long distance on a liaison mission. Worried that I might get hungry, my mother gave me scorched rice from the bottom of the pot, wrapped in paper. In those days we used to go without lunch. We only had breakfast, and it seemed that the scorched rice was left over from it. My mother used to add water to it and eat it as her morning meal. But that day she didn't eat it, but gave it to me instead.

"The sight of sweets reminds me of that scorched rice. How like my mother you are, offering me sweets because you are worried...." She could not go on.

One day, a short time later, Comrade Ma Dong Hui called at our home and said, to our surprise, "Grandma, thank you! I enjoyed your sweets very much." We were struck dumb with amazement. Looking at us in a daze, he grinned and told us this story.

A few days before, the guerrilla fighters Ma Dong Hui and Kim Ju Hyon had met Comrade Kim Jong Suk. The times when she met revolutionary comrades from the unit in the deep forests were the happiest and most memorable moments for her. She inquired after the General. When she heard that he was in good health and was preparing a new campaign, she was extremely delighted. After hearing about the various things that had happened in the unit during her absence, she produced a bundle which she had brought with her.

"Comrades, this is candy sent to you by Comrade Ju Hyon's grandmother. She has sent it because she is concerned that you might skip a meal sometimes because you're always away on missions," she said.

She divided the flat cake of candy between the two men. When they asked her why she had divided it into two instead of three, she replied that why she should bring her share of the candy so far instead of leaving it behind at her base. This was how she had given them the candy.

When we told him that that was not the true story about the candy, he could not say a word. He seemed to be taken aback.

When the rubber-soled shoes were mentioned, he said that she had given them to the bereaved family of a revolutionary.

"So, that means she has given away everything she received here to her comrades and the people!" I said, unable to suppress my feeling of

disappointment.

My family and the guerrillas were moved to tears as they thought once more of the noble qualities of Comrade Kim Jong Suk. My grandmother said, "That political worker is a genuine human being. Can there be anyone else in this world but she who shows so little concern for herself?" She praised her, saying that she was undoubtedly the heavensent soldier of the heaven-sent General.

How could she be a person of such noble character! Everyone was loud in her praise, and Ma Dong Hui said:

"By carrying out the General's teaching to the letter, she has become a certain type of person."

"And what did the General tell her to do?"

"General Kim Il Sung told her to be a daughter of the people."

A daughter of the people! We repeated the words. Comrade Kim Jong Suk always shared the good times and the bad with the people, silently getting over her personal sorrows and troubles in the cause of their freedom and well-being and unflinchingly followed the revolutionary path. And this noble character of hers was closely associated with her unshakable loyalty to uphold the high intentions of the great General.

6. "We Should Follow Only General Kim Il Sung"

It was early July 1937. The weather in the Changbai area was hot and sticky.

One day an unexpected meeting of the leaders of the Anti-Japanese Youth League and Children's Corps was called. I rushed to the secret meeting place, and found that many people had already arrived. The atmosphere seemed tense.

I stole a glance at Comrade Kim Jong Suk. She looked more serious than I had ever seen her before. I took a seat to one side, feeling tense in spite of myself.

After a while, Comrade Kim Jong Suk stepped forward to face us.

"Comrades," she began, "the Japanese imperialist burglars have finally started their invasion of China proper. They have mobilized a huge army and are now plunging the whole of China into a terrible war, burning down villages and slaughtering people at will.

"Our struggle is now facing severe difficulties."

Her words went right to our hearts. "You scoundrels! At last you have

revealed your evil intentions,” I said to myself, clenching my fists. People could be heard breathing heavily in the room. She went on to say:

“Now we must begin a new fight. Now that they have launched themselves into a brutal war in the vast land of China, the Japanese imperialists will make desperate attempts to intensify the ‘punitive operations’ against the anti-Japanese guerrilla army in order to protect their ‘rear’ and will make vicious attacks on the villages where our people live.

“Therefore, we shall once again have to pass through a sea of blood.”

She sounded bitter. I felt in every part of my body that unimaginable ordeals and dangers were approaching. Her stern eyes flashed as she looked round at us. She continued:

“Nevertheless, we should not waver or fear. The Japanese imperialists’ invasion of China is their final death throes. Near the end of winter, furious snow storms rage. In the same way our enemy is now running at us more rabidly, and this shows that their days are numbered.

“This time General Kim Il Sung has taught us something important. He has stated that Japanese imperialism would finally collapse and that we should achieve national independence within some ten years.

“Comrades, have faith in this prediction. In ten years or so we will be able to go back to our homeland.”

A tide of emotion swept over us. She had said that it would not be long before we would return to our motherland, something for which we had been longing and dreaming; the thought of returning to our dear home villages which we had never forgotten, made our hearts swell with unimaginable joy.

“You should join us on the path of struggle for the independence of Korea without fearing any sacrifice or sorrow. If you follow General Kim Il Sung you will be on the road leading to the independence of Korea, and if you follow the road of crumbling in the face of difficulties, you will be playing into the hands of the Japanese imperialists.

“Which road will you take? tell me.”

We all stood up and spoke loudly in unison:

“We’ll follow General Kim Il Sung.” “We’ll win the independence of Korea even if it costs us our lives.”

As she stood watching us, a gentle smile crept over her face. She said passionately:

“Yes, we should follow only General Kim Il Sung. That is the path to victory and glory. But there is no royal road to victory. Our path ahead lies over high mountains and through deep seas and fierce snowstorms. But we

must follow that path to its end. This requires a strong will that won't be shaken by any storm or stress. A strong will means the revolutionary principles that must not be forsaken even in death.

“Our life should be absolutely pure even if we live for only one day, and our one death should be beautiful. If we sell out our country and comrades for immediate personal benefit or safety, we shall be cursed and condemned for eternity by the people. This is more dreadful than death itself.

“You must always remember this and not betray your revolutionary principles, even if it costs you your life.

“Let us fight on together without yielding until the day of independence, holding General Kim Il Sung in high esteem!”

We applauded loudly. Our hearts were ablaze with a determination to remember her words and dedicate our lives unhesitatingly to the sacred war of national liberation.

After the meeting, Comrade Kim Jong Suk called the heads of the organizations in turn and explained to them in detail the plan of campaign and gave each of them assignments to cope with the Japanese imperialists' new counterrevolutionary offensive.

She gave me some important instructions. Her instructions were to be particularly vigilant in guarding Punggangde village in anticipation of a possible “punitive operation” by the enemy and to ensure that the people were fully prepared; I also had to strengthen the organizations with core members and give every member clear assignments in the light of the emergency situation; and in the event of a raid by the enemy, I had to evacuate the people along certain routes and by certain methods and prepare somewhere in the mountains for them to live.

Her instructions served as a valuable guideline which, if strictly adhered to, would help to protect the people and strengthen the revolutionary organizations to meet the sudden change in the situation.

After talking to me, Comrade Kim Jong Suk shook my hand warmly and said that she believed in me and hoped that I would fight well as befitted a soldier of the General, remembering what I had learned while growing up in the Children's Corps. She seemed to have great trust in me.

I had the feeling that I might never see her again and told her with tears in my eyes that I would surely live up to her expectations.

A few days passed. And just as she had foreseen, our village fell victim to the fiendish “punitive operations” of the Japanese imperialists. They ravaged and burned down everything in our village.

But as we had carefully taken the necessary measures in advance as Comrade Kim Jong Suk had instructed us, we were able to evacuate the people to the mountains without suffering any serious loss.

That night we had a get-together to discuss the problems confronting us, and resolved to take revenge a thousand times on our enemy, when the kind hand of Comrade Kim Jong Suk reached out to us again. She sent a political worker to us to make clear the future course of action and duties of the revolutionary organizations in the village and gave instruction to several young people, including myself, to join the guerrilla army.

It seemed like a dream to me. To become a guerrilla was something I had longed for ardently, and I was being sent to the embrace, to the broad fold of the General, whom I could never forget whether waking or sleeping. I was carried away with emotion and excitement.

The other young people and I left home that very night with a warm send-off from the villagers. Even the impenetrable darkness, the dangerous rocky path and the deep forests could not stop us as we went hurrying to the General. We pushed on through the night along the perilous path and at last reached the secret camp at Zhiyangjie.

Soon, we were taken to the great General Kim Il Sung. It was a brilliant morning, with the sunrise tinting the eastern sky red and lending a touch of mystery to the vast virgin forests.

In the rays of the morning sun which was coming up beyond the forests bristling with silver firs, birches, alder trees and the like, the General came towards us with a bright smile on his face.

Oh, how much we had been longing to see the General! How ardently we had been yearning for him! As soon as we saw at close quarters this General whom we had only ever dreamt about, the tears of emotion started rolling down our cheeks.

“Dear General!” we called loudly and rushed towards him. The General quickened his pace with his arms open wide.

“Dear General!” “Dear General!” we all exclaimed, throwing ourselves into his arms. And we pressed our hot cheeks to his face, shedding ceaseless tears.

As if to add to our glory and joy when we were taken into the embrace of the General by the kind favour of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, the blazing July sun rose still higher and spread its dazzling light everywhere.