

# **The Immortal Woman Revolutionary**

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## 1. Founding the Democratic Youth League

### In Pyongyang

Our country was finally liberated, and the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, who had accomplished the historic cause of national liberation by leading the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle along the road to glorious victory, now revealed, the line to follow in the construction of the Party, the country and the armed forces.

In response to his brilliant new nation-building programme, our people arose like a billowing sea.

The Korean people, who had for so long struggled in the abyss of destitution and abuse, deprived of their rights and living in a state of moral darkness, set out joyfully to build a new democratic Korea, rich and strong. They were happy to be hewing out their fortune by their own efforts.

Those commanders and soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army who had survived the bloody battles of the war against Japan now committed themselves to this tremendous task and rushed to take up the posts assigned to them.

Around ten o'clock in the evening of September 28, 1945, the great leader called me to give me a detailed account of the youth movement as it stood at that moment, and in view of the important role of youth in the construction of our nation, assigned me to take part in youth work.

His words exhilarated me, while at the same time filling me with apprehension about whether or not I would be equal to the task, which was one of enormous responsibility.

At the time of liberation, our youth movement was in chaos. Youth organizations proliferated across the different provinces: the Young Communist League, the "Liberated Youth League," the "Peasant Youth League", the "Students' Union", the "Young Proletariat

Union” and the “Red Youth League” were only a few examples, and their activities went on separately.

Although they were all loud and enthusiastic about nation-building, they operated with no unified central body to direct them and no sound programme to follow. As a result, they failed to prove their worth and were at loggerheads with each other. Worse still, many even began to grapple with one another, misled as they were by factionalists and local separatists. Three brothers in one family sitting down to a meal could end up in a brawl because the eldest was affiliated with the YCL, the younger with the LYL and the youngest with the SU.

Taking advantage of this, US imperialists and reactionaries at home sought to disrupt millions of patriotic young people and use them in their own reactionary manoeuvres: the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and the White-Clad Youth League were typical in their efforts to round up young people.

At the time, the YCL was very weak numerically because it admitted only young people from the proletariat advocating communism. Moreover, youth’s own fuzzy conception of what exactly communism meant prevented the YCL from winning support among the broad masses of patriotic young people.

Whether a new democratic Korea could be successfully brought into existence depended in the long run on the unity of our people. But the fact that their sons and daughters were wavering in confusion, torn apart across the nation, posed the gravest threat to our revolution.

The great leader encouraged me by pointing out that I was young myself and had experienced youth-league activities during the period of armed struggle. I was obviously capable of doing youth work, he told me. Then he put me to work as vice-chairman of the Pyongyang city committee of the YCL.

Standing stiffly at attention, I pledged that I would be a credit to the new post.

The great leader went on to say that while the position of vice-chairman of the YCL Pyongyang city committee was not a very high one, I did have to carry out a crucial task there, for at present nothing was more urgent than rallying the youth into one unified body.

That evening I left his office fired with the resolve to unite the

patriotic youth of the entire country behind the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Two days later, he wanted to see me again.

When I entered his office, he told me he was sorry for the hardships I had endured in the mountains dressed for years in a military uniform, and because of that he had had a suit of clothes made for me. He told me to try it on. A neatly folded suit obviously of good-quality material, with a white shirt and a necktie, were lying on the table. My head was swimming with happiness at the thought of his great, warm parental concern for me.

Narrowly controlling my emotions, I put the suit on.

But I was thwarted by the necktie. I held it up but didn't know how to tie it. At my wit's end, I put it around my neck and tied it twice, as if I were about to hang myself.

He laughed and said "I see you're a stranger to it." He helped me to tie it properly, showing me the necessary motions.

I could no longer contain myself from an emotional outburst and began shaking with violent sobs.

Placing his hand on my shoulder, he said tenderly: "You're the commander of the youth, don't be so soft! You're a proud youth worker of liberated Korea, shouldn't you be working your fingers to the bone?" Then he gave me a warm hug.

At that moment my thoughts flashed back to the forests of Zhiyangjie and the day I was enlisted in the guerrilla army.

The uniform of the KPRA: those were the first new clothes I had ever had in my life! Then, too, the father leader had helped us into the new uniforms especially made for the children of the Children's Company, buttoning a coat here, teaching how to tighten a belt there, adjusting another child's army cap....

Because I was born into a needy family as the youngest son, my grandmother used to patch the worn-out hemp clothes of my brothers and put them on me. Having lost my mother when young, I was brought up by my grandmother. Not once had I ever worn new clothes....

Under the warm care of our leader, my first proper set of clothes was the uniform of the glorious KPRA. I had come of age wearing it. Today, on the soil of liberated Korea, I had been assigned to a new post

again in new-clothes provided by the General. The warm flashback to the days when I had been under his training and care awoke me suddenly to the fatherly love of which I had little awareness before. I felt something warm rising in my throat.

“Father ... General, I guarantee the success of the youth work you’ve entrusted to me!” I addressed him in my mind.

It was in this way, then, that I made a start in youth work right after liberation.

I arrived at the Pyongyang city committee of the YCL, as suggested by the General, and found it even more difficult than I had imagined.

The Pyongyang city committee of the YCL was housed in the same building as the Pyongyang city Party committee. Its chairman, vice-chairman and various department heads were all intellectuals and quite unfamiliar with youth work, so it was difficult to deal with things properly. The membership was about 2,000 people.

Making a beginning to the work of the YCL Pyongyang city committee, setting it on the right path and uniting the widely divergent youth of the city under the standard of democracy-this was a tremendously difficult task, guaranteed to bring on headaches and tension.

Having assigned the job to me, the General did a great deal to help me, teaching me every detail and constantly making inquiries about how I was getting on.

I felt guilty about bothering him and for pestering him for his opinions. Of course, certain matters had to be submitted to his decision, but innumerable trivial problems cropped up in the course of my work, and generally I had to dispose of them according to my own judgment. Yet I felt my ability to be insufficient to deal with them, so that I was often helpless with doubt and indecision.

At this point, more than anything else in the world I wanted to see Comrade Kim Jong Suk, the heroine of the anti-Japanese war, who would be arriving in Pyongyang soon.

During the period of the anti-Japanese armed struggle in the mountains, before submitting any report to the General we consulted Comrade Kim Jong Suk, modifying the report according to her advice because we knew the General was always satisfied with

any report that contained her suggestions.

The happy day of her arrival came, and I was on tiptoe with expectation: On December 29, 1945, Comrade Kim Jong Suk finally appeared in Pyongyang.

The following morning I unexpectedly met her at the orderly room of the guards unit. The instant I saw her, I was overcome with joy, but assuming a solemn appearance, respectfully greeted her and ushered her in. Had the new recruits not been around me, I would have leaped up and down with excitement like a child.

She read my thoughts and invited me to call on her in the evening, at my leisure.

The invitation raised me to seventh heaven of delight. I couldn't wait for evening to come.

I had mountains of work to do that day, since it was the eve of New Year's Day, but excited at the thought of meeting her, I busied myself like a bee all day long, feeling no fatigue at all. Time flowed quickly, yet my watch seemed to be slow.

Suddenly the day's routine was over, and I was free.

Should I ride my horse or go on foot? I chose the latter. Poor means of transportation in those days meant that we often rode on horseback through the streets, as we had done in the mountains.

Moran Hill, the Taedong River, the trees and roofs of the houses—every-thing was white with snow, a world of silvery white. What a wonderful evening!

Gazing at the cityscape around me as I walked, my mind drifted back to early August 1945, when I last saw her before liberation.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung had ordered all the units of the KPRA to launch a final offensive to liberate the country, and our comrades had gone to take up the positions assigned to them. I was honored with the duty of guarding the General.

As I followed the General, carrying a knapsack packed with his articles on my back, she came to say farewell to me. She sympathized with me for the discomfort I would feel in the sultry weather and told me to attend to the Comrade Commander faithfully. She then wished me good health until we met again in victory.

I replied that we would eat the well-known Pyongyang noodles on our day of triumph.

Smiling, she encouraged me by saying that to speed up the arrival of that day we should fight with all our might and valor in the last showdown.

Four months had gone since then. What a tremendous change had taken place in the history of our country in that period!

The defeat of vandalistic Japanese imperialism, the great victory in the anti-Japanese revolutionary war, the start of the grand march on the road that would lead to a new democratic Korea...

My heart full of emotion at these thoughts, I arrived at her residence, and after checking my attire to make sure I was presentable, I stepped onto the porch.

As Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to meet me, she suddenly halted and stood gazing at me for a while, struck by the unusual appearance I presented in civilian clothes. It was the gaze of a mother delighted to see her son return home after a long absence, dressed in his Sunday best, or it might have been an elder sister, happy at the safe return of her younger brother for whom she had been in constant anxiety....

The moment I saw her, I, too, was overwhelmed with excitement.

“Do come in,” she said, “You are quite a different man now, Youth Commander. Dressed as you are, I barely recognize you....”

Pulling myself together, I greeted her in return and expressed my sympathy for the hardships she had been through while working in the provinces.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, however, praised my efforts on behalf of my youth work and my efforts on behalf of the guards unit. She said she was truly happy for our reunion in liberated Korea, but added that recalling our great eagerness to see this day when we were fighting in the mountains brought her pain as well because of our comrades who lay buried on the slopes of Mount Paektu.

The moment she said this, I, too, seemed to hear the voices of our fallen comrades: “Revenge my death, comrades! Follow the General to Pyongyang and to my home village on the day of liberation!”

Alas! What a great number of eager young men had died, shedding their hot blood for this day.

She stood silent for a while, as if picturing the faces of these comrades in her mind’s eye. Presently she changed her tone and inquired about present comrades, asking where they were, if they were all healthy and what they were doing now.

I told her all I knew-their locations now, what jobs they had taken up, and so on.

Then she asked about my own work.

I told her everything from beginning to end-the triumphal return of the great leader to Pyongyang following the liberation, the formation of the guards unit, my attendance on the General during the founding of the Party and my recent assignment to youth work.



After listening to all this, she said:

“We-you and me-are people who got our training at Mt. Paektu. We should therefore do all we can to help the General to build a new country as quickly as possible in order to provide the people with a happy life, a chance to gratify their long-cherished desires. Don’t you think so? This is why the General has placed this difficult and heavy burden of youth work on your shoulders.”

I told her frankly that while I completely agreed with her, I was being crushed by all the difficulties and obstacles I had come across in my efforts.

She understood me completely. She herself had already witnessed in the local areas, the problems of the youth, she said. Working with them was both extremely complicated and a matter of pressing importance in our country.

Moreover, she had thoroughly acquainted herself with the work of Pyongyang city committee of the YCL and the general situation of our youth work.

Thus, even after national liberation, our youth movement once again had the honour of advancing under her guidance.

### **“Let’s All Unite behind General Kim Il Sung”**

As the unforgettable night of December 30, 1945, wore on, I related to Comrade Kim Jong Suk of how we were attempting to dissolve the YCL so as to advance further and form a new democratic youth organization.

She mentioned having heard that at the Meeting of Active Democratic Youth one certain person had caused a ruckus, unjustifiably opposing the line set forth by the General and leaping up and down from his seat in the tribune. She asked how such a thing could have happened.

Outlining the events of that day for her, I began by describing the guidance given by the great leader to form the democratic youth organization.

Immediately after liberation, the great leader has stated that it was vitally important to both the Party and the revolution that as many

people among the masses as possible be won over to the side of revolution. He himself has spent a great deal of his energy enlisting and uniting broad segments of people into united mass organizations, especially the masses of young people, the masters of the future. To emphasize the need for unified youth organizations, he advanced the slogan: "Patriotic youth, unite under the banner of democracy!" This was to become the line for rallying all the patriotic youth of our nation into a single democratic organization.

The struggle to implement this line was not easy, for it was faced with subversive machinations by reactionary elements and factionalists, who were constantly intriguing to split the youth of the nation.

Early in October 1945 the great leader called a consultative meeting of the Communist Party and YCL activists to set up preparations for forming a single democratic youth organization.

On October 29, 1945, the Meeting of Active Democratic Youth was convened. The great leader delivered a historic speech on this occasion, answering questions raised by the youth representatives and brightly illuminating the road our youth should take in the future.

The meeting unanimously approved the decision to form a democratic youth organization, as outlined by the great leader, and drew up a draft programme and rules for the new Democratic Youth League (DYL) and adopted the declaration on the foundation of the DYL. It also formed a preparatory committee to inaugurate the DYL, which elected the great leader its honorary chairman.

At the meeting the great leader also took the opportunity to address the entire Korean youth by reading a letter he had written to them.

The letter was full of warmth, love and hope for the patriotic youth who valued their country and democracy. It urged them to support with courage the formation of the DYL.

The representatives at the meeting were overwhelmed with emotion and full of confidence when they heard the letter.

Thanks to this meeting, the formation of the DYL proceeded in full swing throughout the country.

In the meanwhile, however, the reactionaries and the factionalists had become ever more outrageous and desperate in their manoeuvres.

I gave Comrade Kim Jong Suk an account of the moves of the

reactionaries against the founding of the DYL.

When we came to Pyongyang right after liberation, there were so many so-called political parties, leagues and unions that one could barely list them all, and new organizations continued to mushroom overnight. This showed just how difficult and entangled things were in those days.

The first news to reach our ears on our return to Pyongyang was the assassination of the chairman of the Pyongyang city Communist Party committee at the hand of the reactionaries.

We found to our surprise that two CP municipal committees existed in Pyongyang. To keep them apart, people distinguished one from another by calling them as “so-and-so’s committee”, prefixing each by the name of its chairman.

At the bottom of this chaotic situation lay the vicious schemes of the reactionary elements, such as the pro-Japanese and other traitors, who in turn were abetted by the US imperialists. Then there were also the renegades to revolution and political speculators of all hues who, each professing themselves to be “patriot” and “revolutionary”, came out with their own “isms and views” to take advantage of the prevailing confusion. They had no scruples about indulging in all sorts of destructive and subversive acts, if they were to attain their selfish ends.

The assassination of the chairman of the Pyongyang city Communist Party committee was typical of the underhanded behaviour of these reactionaries.

Earlier, he had formed the branches of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland in South Phyongan Province in collaboration with political workers dispatched by the great leader. At the news that the CP committee in Pyongyang had been set up by him, the reactionary elements refused to recognize this committee, and the “Seoul centre” hurried to dispatch its own man to take the post of chairman of the Pyongyang city Communist Party committee. However, the sound communists and the majority of the people turned their backs on him, and so, in order to “legitimize” him, his supporters murdered the rightful chairman.

Moreover, the reactionaries rigged up other backward or ultra conservative youth organizations such as the “Young Men’s Christian

Association” and the “White-Clad Youth League”, trying to wheedle large numbers of young people into joining them. And when the founding of the DYL was going ahead full steam, they resorted to every despicable plot to frustrate it.

A typical example of this was the nonsensical behavior of a certain rabble-rouser by name of O at the Meeting of the Active Democratic Youth.

On that day, the great leader, who was chairing the meeting, had to leave early, as he had other affairs to attend to. Availing himself of this opportunity, the man started railing against reorganizing the YCL into the

DYL. He kept insisting that dissolving the YCL to found the DYL meant that the Party was turning to the Right and that the youth movement was in retreat. He urged them not to approve this line.

At first the representatives were nonplussed by this. As the man continued to rave hoarsely on the platform, his followers responded loudly, coming to his rescue.

The steady representatives, however, did not remain passive. One after another they leaped up and denounced the assertions of the factionalists, demanding that the foundation of the DYL be carried through without fail.

But the cheap demagogue continued his tirade, jumping up from his seat time and again and setting himself up as a matchless authority on communist theories. The meeting hall turned into pandemonium.

Informed of this, the great leader broke his other engagements and returned to the meeting, guiding it back in the right direction.

Having failed to reach their aim at the conference in Pyongyang, the factionalists went on to work like burrowing mice out in provinces. Although the decisions made at the Meeting of Active Democratic Youth were dispatched to the lower bodies, these insisted that there was no need to disorganize the YCL and that a new youth league might be formed as an auxiliary to the YCL. They went so far as to convene a meeting, at which they adopted a “decision” to this effect. One city even staged such a piece of a nonsense as to send its “representative” to the “Conference of the General Federation of Young Men in Seoul”.

The factionalists were also desperate to split the students, arguing that students should form their own organization and not join the DYL because to do so would mean “domination” by the “benighted” working-class youth. This complicated matters among the students, confusing them as to whether they should enter the DYL or not.

In order to straighten out this state of affairs, the great leader organized a grand lecture for students above secondary-school level, and thus clearly illuminating the road for them to follow. And at a meeting with the representatives of students and officials in charge of student affairs he gave instructions for a programmatic guideline to be drawn up for the work with the students.

On December 28, he also published the work *On Merging the Students' Union into the Democratic Youth League*.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who had listened to all my explanations attentively, asked me what I thought should be done to unite our youth under the chaotic situation of the time.

I found myself tongue-tied at this unexpected question. To tell the truth, faced by such 'confusion, I had been full of anxiety, but had thought little about a possible remedy.

After a pause, she said:

“At present many people are worsening the situation, each insisting on the justice of his own opinion. But there is one thing common to all. What is it?

“The majority of Koreans are following and trusting our General with absolute confidence.”

She remarked that this, indeed, was the key to saving the present situation and reversing it to a favourable one.

Her remark was an eye-opener for me, and quite suddenly what had seemed to be such a muddle only a moment before was all at once clear as a bell.

Instantly my mind flashed back to a mass rally held in Sinuiju one month before on November 27. The events of the rally suddenly held new meaning for me.

Recently there had been tumult in Sinuiju, caused by a number of rebellious elements, including students who had been taken in the vicious intrigues of the reactionaries. At that time the great leader had hurried to the scene and made a speech at a mass rally.

Among those attending was one who asked the General whether he was a communist or not.

All waited for his answer with bated breath as silence fell. Actually, few people had much knowledge about communism at the time, and some, misled by reactionary propaganda, were hostile to it. Slowly, the General gave his answer:

“Somebody asked me just now: General, are you also a communist? Yes, I am a communist. Communists are true patriots fighting unswervingly for the complete independence of the country and the happiness of the people. If a man called a communist does not love his country and nation, he is not a true communist. I am not the

kind of communist who looks up to foreign countries but one who relies on our own people and fights for the benefit of the Korean nation and people.”

This statement brought on a storm of cheering and applause from the people. DYL. He kept insisting that dissolving the YCL to found the DYL meant that the Party was turning to the Right and that the youth movement was in retreat. He urged them not to approve this line.

At first the representatives were nonplussed by this. As the man continued to rave hoarsely on the platform, his followers responded loudly, coming to his rescue.

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organized a grand lecture for students above secondary-school level, and thus clearly illuminating the road for them to follow. And at a meeting with the representatives of students and officials in charge of student affairs he gave instructions for a programmatic guideline to be drawn up for the work with the students.

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This statement brought on a storm of cheering and applause from the people. It was the DYL, saying that it deserved a fine building. We moved into it only a few days earlier.

Upon her arrival I rushed out to meet her and took her around, acting as her guide.

Before entering, she took a look at the building from the outside and remarked that, being large and tidy, it would please young people. Other preparatory committee members, who up to then had been lost in preparations for the inaugural meeting of the DYL, came out at the news of her arrival and lined up in front of the building.

They were deeply touched by the thoughtfulness of Comrade Kim Jong Suk who had come to see them casually, without advance notice.

Of the preparatory committee members only I was acquainted with her. They had formed a mental picture of her as the woman general of the anti-Japanese war, famous across the country and therefore terribly imposing and stern in appearance. But the instant they saw her, they felt as if she were their own mother or sister. When she hurried them back into the building, worried that they should have come out to meet her on such a chilly day, they actually wondered if she could really be the fiery woman general of Mt. Paektu.

Their attitude was understandable at the time.

Not long after the country had been liberated, political lectures were quite frequently held all over the city. One day we attended a lecture for young people.

The lecturer that day was a woman in full military attire. Taking the rostrum, she snatched her pistol from her waist, and brandishing it high in the air, began her lecture in harsh, threatening tones: “My Young Comrades, you see before you someone who vowed to fight to the last

against those who stand against the hegemony of the proletariat. Anyone who opposes the proletarian revolution will meet his or her death through a bullet from this pistol!”

I heard people in the audience wondering in whispers who on earth this person was. Those who seemed to know her replied that she was the wife of a man who had taken part in a movement abroad.

Back from the lecture, our youth workers differed in their opinions: some marvelled at the woman, exclaiming what an admirable revolutionary she was and imitating her posture, with a pistol in her hand; others disagreed, saying she had no similarity whatsoever to Korean women, and confessing that the mere sight of her had made them shudder.

I told them that not all women guerrillas of the KPRA behaved like her. But since they had never met our women guerrillas, my explanation had no effect on them.

It was therefore natural that they should be pleasantly surprised by Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who shook them all by hand and urged them to precede her into the building.

She examined everything attentively, from the corridor to each office room, and raised many questions: How far was it from the hostel to the office? Was the office always as warm as on that day? How many youth workers lived at the hostel? Had desks, chairs, filing cabinets and telephones been supplied satisfactorily?

I told her that our comrades were pleased with everything, since the hostel lay near at hand and the heating was so good that we could actually sleep in the office without going back to the hostel in winter. Recently some of them had begun to work, eat and sleep in the office. Thus I acquainted her with every detail of our life.

“Young people, once they’re stirred up, they do not feel exhausted, even when they work through several sleepless nights,” she said in appreciation of our efforts.

A little later we all went with her to the meeting hall downstairs. It was a rare opportunity, we thought, to have this chance to meet with a renowned woman general. An occasion not to be missed.

Glancing with kindly amusement at the youth workers, who were all burning with such enthusiasm and desire, she told them to take a seat, then sat down herself. She told me to go outside and help

Comrade Kim to carry in something he had brought for us.

Comrade Kim soon arrived, a heavy, bulging bag in each hand. The bags were full of roasted sweet potatoes and chestnuts.

As I went back into the hall with the bags, she took them from me and said, "Time for lunch. Now we're together, let's have a chat. We can help ourselves to medicinal chestnuts while we talk."

The youth workers were touched by this modest, kind gesture. The usual concept of holding a meeting at the time was to make a speech, hammering the table with one's fist, or to hold a discussion in a solemn atmosphere. Up to that point none of the youth workers had met a superior worker who wanted to simply converse with them, helping them to baked sweet potatoes and roasted chestnuts.

She told them to bring over a long table from the front row and heaped the sweet potatoes and chestnuts on it, remarking: "We can have a cheerful conversation while we eat. After all, why should we look blue, as if we had quarreled with each other?" As she spoke, she handed out handfuls of chestnuts to the comrades closest to her.

Following her lead, I told the others to come and sit at table.

Thanking her sincerely, they sat down at the table, as she had requested.

After a while, she asked each of them for their name, native place, parents and family situation. Because of her kind and friendly attitude, the youth workers were only too happy to talk of themselves or their families.

She then said she would like to speak about a few things to them. She remained seated as she spoke.

She said she had come here neither as an official in charge of the youth work nor as someone who had come to inspect their work. She simply wished to see how the DYL building, assigned to them by the General, had been furnished and help them if they needed help. At the same time she wanted to get acquainted with them and encourage them to carry on with their youth work in the future, pooling their strength. That was why she had called on them, she said.

The youth workers told her not to worry about the building. They were happy to be working in such spacious and fine building, they said, and rather felt embarrassed because they had no idea of how to repay the General for his benevolence.

Looking around at them, she resumed her speech:

“You are carrying out youth work at a very opportune time, a time when the country has been liberated and the Japanese imperialist scoundrels no longer exist. It’s wonderful that you should have this chance to engage in the work of building our Korea, speaking your mother tongue.”

She pointed out that General Kim Il Sung had poured a great deal of his energy into youth work right from the beginning, from the moment he set out on the road of revolution, in fact. His revolutionary activity had actually begun with youth work, she said:

“Both in the days of the anti-Japanese war and right now,” she went on, “the General insists that our youth constitutes the backbone of our revolutionary force. The main force in the transformation of society and the advancement of revolution, he says, is young people, and no revolution has ever emerged victorious without the participation of youth, without the enlistment of their power. His faith and hope in youth is truly great. You must never forget that.”

Although they had heard speeches about youth problems many times before and they themselves had made speeches about this matter, they had never before felt as close to this topic, never appreciated it as profoundly as at that moment. They looked up at her with eyes full of respect.

She went on to detail the reasons why our youth should be unified into a single force.

Today we were entrusted with the heavy task of wiping out the feudalistic forces that still opposed us, she said, together with the remains of the Japanese imperialists’ colonial rule, before we could build a unified democratic state. And the most crucial requirement for building the nation with our own strength, she emphasized, was unity amongst ourselves.

There was no other way out. The unity of the youth was also equally important to the revolution. She then went on to describe the situation.

“The US imperialists occupying south Korea have disrupted and split the patriotic and democratic forces of south Korea, frustrating their revolutionary onrush. They have also extended their aggression and intervention to the northern half of our country. Simultaneously

the factionalists and local separatists are running amok in an effort to weaken and confuse the patriotic force of people. They are scheming to undermine the youth movement in particular by trying to win the young people over to their side.

“Youth is the main force of our revolution, the builder of a new society. To disperse them is to lay a stumbling-block in the way of building a powerful, independent sovereign state. We must put an end to factionalism that within our own generation has continued to divide us throughout the national liberation struggle and within the communist movement. For this reason our youth must be united.

“This is why the dissolution of the YCL, the formation of the DYL and the rallying of the great masses of youth into the DYL organization are indispensable to the job of organizing our youth to be the main force in building a new democratic Korea...”

The youth workers marvelled at her fluency in putting across ideas of such deep meaning. Because she had begun with inquiries about the health of their families and talked with them in a simple, familiar way, they were fascinated by her words and thus able to follow her profound political insight. Each of them stood up and expressed his determination to implement the line set forth by the General for the foundation of the DYL.

Delighted at this, she told them that the General wished the formation of the DYL to be proclaimed as early as possible. “Your resolution is so high,” she added, “that I feel it was very much worthwhile to have paid this visit to you.”

And she promised to convey their fiery enthusiasm to the General.

We all felt awfully grateful to her for having spoken to us.

Soon Comrade Kim Jong Suk said good-bye and left, unaccompanied, going as quietly as she had come.

### **The Inaugural Conference of the DYL**

When the great leader heard the report on the progress of the work done by the preparatory committee for the inauguration of the Democratic Youth League, he stated his satisfaction and suggested holding the inaugural conference on the 16th and 17th of January,

1946.

I notified all provinces of these dates and requested that the representatives arrive in Pyongyang the day before the opening of the conference.

All the members of the preparatory committee threw themselves into preparations for the conference, reviewing their tasks to the last detail.

At the time I felt very tense.

I had never even seen a grand meeting of such countrywide importance before, let alone taken part in organizing one, so I was full of anxiety about whether or not I could carry out my job with success.

Our biggest headache at the time was constant intriguing and harassment by the factionaries.

At the beginning of the year a large lecture had been held at a theatre in Pyongyang. The reactionary elements managed to steal into the hall and caused a lot of disturbance. We agreed that for the conference we would take careful measures in advance to outwit their possible schemes. We had to expect a possible conflict at the meeting by the factionalists within our own ranks. We worried most about this matter.

The successful preparations for the DYL formation across the country had driven them to a greater frenzy.

In those days they danced to the tune of the reactionaries, shouting that they were going to “defend” the Young Communist League for the sake of the revolution.

What happened in Haeju was a case in point.

When the meeting for the formation of the Hwanghae Provincial Committee of the DYL was held, the factionalists who were present there to “guide” the meeting insisted that the YCL not be disbanded and that the DYL be seen as an “outer body of the YCL”. They asserted that this was at the “direction” of the “Seoul centre”.

The youth workers attending the meeting sensed that these allegations conflicted with the DYL organizational line as indicated by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, and so they put up a stubborn fight against it.

The meeting went into temporary adjournment and several representatives were dispatched to Pyongyang.

Scarcely had I received the information from Hwanghae Province when I reported it to the great leader. After meeting the youth representatives he left for Haeju without delay.

In a report about his attendance at the inauguration meeting of the DYL Hwanghae Provincial Committee, the daily *Jayu Hwanghae* wrote as follows:

“The meeting for the foundation of the provincial committee of the DYL was held at the auditorium of the Haengjong School on the 11th.... At about half past three in the afternoon the audience was overjoyed at meeting General Kim Il Sung, the young hero of Korea, and welcomed him with wild applause. Presently the General walked up to the rostrum and in calm and persuasive tones gave a speech entitled, To the Democratic Youth Leaguers’....”

At the meeting he earnestly instructed that the youth organizations be recruited from the lowest levels of organization and that the great masses of the young be brought into the DYL organizations as early as possible so that they might be trained to become the great motive power in building the nation.

Meanwhile, Comrade Kim Jong Suk summoned me and inquired about my preparations for such documents as the report and the speeches. She advised that documents were, of course, essential, but it was just important to ensure that the meeting proceeded as smoothly as possible.

First and foremost, she emphasized, we had to forestall the insidious manoeuvres of the reactionaries and take the greatest possible care to guard the great

leader, especially in the meeting hall itself.

She suggested that I escort the great leader personally while the meeting was on and be constantly alert to the ever-changing situation, maintaining close contact with the bodyguard platoon leader.

Anticipating that many representatives would want to have an audience with the General, she said that these interviews should be arranged beforehand through consultation with the General’s aides.

In addition, she gave concrete instructions on the proceedings of the meeting - such details as conducting an opinion poll among representatives, providing board and lodging for them, and making sure they followed the rules in such matters as conduct when coming

to and going from the meeting hall, their attire, their sanitary conditions, etc.

On January 15, the day before the opening of the meeting, the General called a consultative meeting with some of the youth representatives from the Communist Party. These had been selected from among the provincial representatives.

At this meeting he explained the prevailing situation and the tasks confronting them, and reiterated the meaning and importance of the foundation of the DYL.

The same day Comrade Kim Jong Suk met those attending the consultative meeting and stressed the importance of preparing themselves beforehand to fight against the absurd opinions and sophism of the factionalists. She urged them to bear in mind that the next day's meeting was an important one, since it would found the DYL and unite all of Korean youth into one single democratic organization for the first time in history. The youth representatives from the Communist Party, she reminded them, should play a key role in bringing about the success of the conference.

The night before the conference I carefully examined the meeting hall, inside and outside, and stationed myself in my office, not returning home.

At that moment Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to see me.

She questioned to the last detail about the preparations for the meeting and told me that I should do my best to chair the meeting successfully in line with the General's intention, bearing in mind that it was the General who was giving his personal guidance to the conference.

Then she presented me with a new necktie.

It was a brightly coloured one, with a white design against a violet background.

The one I was wearing was dark, so the new tie made me look much livelier. She said that she had given it to me as a way of making me more high-spirited and distinguished in my appearance, the way a person who leads numerous youth representatives ought to look. She was delighted when I put it on, saying that it suited me perfectly.

The important day arrived at last: On January 16, 1946, the



Conference of Representatives of the Democratic Youth League Organization in North Korea was opened. This was a day to be forever remembered throughout the history of the Korean youth movement.

The representatives elected the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung to be the honorary chairman. Their stormy applause reflected the warm respect felt for him by the entire Korean youth.

The conference began with the report on the founding of the Democratic Youth League of North Korea. This was followed by the reports on local situation, delivered by the representatives of all provinces, and reports on their programmes and rules. Finally the members of the central committee were elected.

However, the meeting had to overcome all sorts of twists and turns right from the beginning.

The factionalists, determined to do everything in their power to attain their criminal ends, brazenly harangued even during the founding meeting, about the need to keep the YCL intact. They proposed that a "North Korean Committee of the General Federation of Young Men" be formed.

The notorious ringleader here was the afore-mentioned O.

His behavior at the meeting was both insolent and ridiculous.

The representatives were all decently dressed; O alone slouched in his chair, still wearing his overcoat and hat.

When the representatives began their speeches in favour of forming the DYL, he sprang up from his seat and started a fiery tirade.

In spite of his desperation and his vehemence against the foundation of the DYL - he quoted Marx and Engels and came out with a review of the more than 100 year history of the international communist movement, starting from the Paris Commune - none of the representatives paid any attention to his tirade.

The hard-core youth representatives who had received advice from Comrade Kim Jong Suk lashed out with particular force at his speech.

Though he shouted himself hoarse and banged his fists on the table, he could not force his opinions on them. Upset by this, he grabbed his hat and threw it up in the air, where it circled around in the air before falling into a corner. A roar of laughter echoed through the meeting

hall. This enraged him all the more and he tore off his overcoat, flinging it furiously into the air as he had done with his hat. It, too, fluttered down on the floor of the meeting hall.

This really was the height of foolishness. One of the representatives remarked drily, "I think he's going to strip down the skin!" This brought on another roar of laughter from the representatives.

O's disgraceful behaviour made it pretty plain to people there just how base and shameful the factionalists were.

The factionalists themselves seemed to be disgusted by O's behaviour and left the hall, obviously aware that it would be wise to disappear before they exposed themselves to even greater public ridicule.

When the second day of the conference opened, the hall shook with a storm of applause and cheers to welcome the great leader Comrade Kim II Sung.

When he was told of what had happened on the first day, he put aside many other urgent affairs in order to attend the meeting in person.

Those attending were overjoyed to see the great leader, and the meeting hall echoed for a long time with emotional applause.

The great leader Comrade Kim II Sung then went on to deliver the report, *On the Occasion of Formation of the Democratic Youth League of North Korea*.

In this speech the great leader referred to the necessity of forming a united democratic youth organization and indicated what needed to be done to fortify the DYL, both ideologically and organizationally. He emphasized that the DYL had to be made stronger and its youth be helped to gain ideological unity. Its young cadres needed to be trained in an effective way, he said, and the organization had to make thoroughgoing analyses of its own progress by keeping careful and accurate statistics on what it had achieved. Finally, he concluded that the purity of the DYL had to be maintained by means of a purge of the pro-Japanese and other rebellious elements in its ranks and that the entire youth of Korea needed to take the lead in sweeping away the remains of Japanese imperialism and building a new Korea.

When he concluded his speech, the audience rose to its feet as one and shouted, “Long live General Kim II Sung, our wise and brilliant leader!”

The meeting wound up in victory.

On January 17, 1946, the meeting proclaimed to the world the founding of the Democratic Youth League of North Korea, which held the immortal Juche idea as its guiding ideology and followed the brilliant revolutionary tradition of the Korean communist youth movement, as laid down by the great leader Comrade Kim II Sung.

I was moved to tears and felt the urge to fly to Comrade Kim Jong Suk, to let her know of this historical event.

After the conference was over, the representatives posed for a souvenir photograph with the great leader. It was a great pity that Comrade Kim Jong Suk was not present on that important occasion, but at that moment she was once again going to a great deal of trouble on behalf of our youth in the newborn DYL. She was preparing a celebration banquet in honour of the youth representatives.

A few days before, Comrade Kim Jong Suk had spoken to me as follows:

“This inauguration meeting of the DYL is a truly important event. It marks an epoch-making turning point in our youth movement. This is why I want to arrange a great celebration banquet.”

I was overjoyed at the idea. How delighted our youth workers would be at the news! I could see them cheering already in my mind. At the thought of their pleasure, I started wriggling my shoulders, quite unaware of what I was doing. The thought suddenly hit me that the banquet would be a tremendous load to her. Perhaps it would be better to choose some place other than her home for it.

Reading my mind, she smiled and said that it was not at all a burden but a great happiness to her to serve our youth workers with one of her own, home-cooked meals.

“Don’t worry,” she reassured me. “When we fought the Japanese in the mountains we got used to preparing sudden meals for large units, even though we had almost nothing on hand. This banquet holds no difficulties for me.”

Now the conference was over and the youth representatives were heading for the residence of the great leader.

When they got there, they thought the banquet had been prepared by several cooks and a number of other kitchen staff, and so they were surprised to see Comrade Kim Jong Suk busy in the kitchen.

“Does she often work in the kitchen?” they asked me.

I said yes and told them that in the days of the anti-Japanese war she used to help the cooks prepare the meals and that no one in the unit could match her in cooking skills.

Soon Comrade Kim Jong Suk was serving the food she had prepared by herself.

The young people were overwhelmed with gratitude.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk told everyone that this was a meaningful day for them all and that the General had arranged this get-together in their honour as a way of wishing them success in their future work. She wanted them to have a good time and help themselves to as much food as they wanted.

Some of the young women representatives, seeing Comrade Kim Jong Suk busy in the kitchen, hastened over to help her. But Comrade Kim Jong Suk took them by the hand and made them sit down again. There was nothing they needed to do, she said, and she invited them to have a chat with her. She asked them how old they were and where they were born and grew up and asked a great deal about their work.

They relaxed and spoke frankly to her. It was a great pity, they said, that they had received no education. At this she reminisced about the days when she herself had first been assigned to work with youth. Even without formal schooling, she said, one could still study assiduously. It was up to them individually, she told them encouragingly.

She also talked with some of the young men representatives, filling their wine glasses and giving them a great deal of precious advice about youth work.

Time went by so quickly, the banquet had drawn to a close before one was even aware of it.

The youth workers rose from their seats, full of gratitude for the respected leader and Comrade Kim Jong Suk who had provided them with such an unforgettable evening.

Looking at them with great satisfaction, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said: “You are the fighters who are going to be arousing our young

people to join in creating our new nation. I know that you will play a big part in building a new Korea in responding to the high ideals of the General in this respect.”

Her encouraging words refuelled the determination of the youth representatives to do their utmost for both the General and their country.

She took a long, affectionate leave of them, standing at the gate of her residence.

### **“Ideological Work Is a Battle Too”**

Once the DYL had been successfully launched, it was time to begin the ideological education that would instil in the young people the nation-building policy advocated by the great leader.

It was to be an uphill battle all the way, for there wasn't a training class, lecture, explanatory talk or publication that took place without a fierce argument and class struggle.

Up to that point the reactionary exploiting classes had remained untouched and the nation was not yet being transformed in a revolutionary manner. The riffraff of society was raising its arrogant head, assuming a pompous air of importance, and reactionaries, backed by US imperialists, were scheming every way they could against our youth work and ideological education.

It was a time when not a night passed without some incident or other. At a farm village a DYL meeting was stormed by reactionaries: a youth worker at a certain factory was shot while making a speech; and a slogan put up in a street by our people was torn down. We felt uneasy planning even a small meeting, let alone a large one.

Whenever I look back on these days, my thoughts immediately turn to Comrade Kim Jong Suk who in her energetic activity on behalf of our youth cared nothing about her personal safety.

One day in mid-February 1946, the Central Committee of the DYL sponsored a lecture on the subject of the newly-established Provisional People's Committee of North Korea. It was to be directed at the youth, students and citizens of Pyongyang, and I was assigned to

conduct the lecture. The auditorium of Pyongyang Girls' Middle School No. 4 was to be the meeting place.

Though it was past the onset of spring, the weather was still chilly. Nevertheless, the hall was packed to capacity, a clear indication of how great was the people's support for the newborn PPCNK.

The time came for me to take the rostrum. I began by thanking the audience for their kind attendance, but even as I spoke, a sharp whistle suddenly interrupted me from the back row. As the audience turned to look back, a second shrill whistle rose from the front row. The audience started buzzing with indignation, knowing that this was the work of hooligans.

I knew that if I were to waver at this point, things would go beyond my control, and so I continued my lecture, paying no mind to the disturbance. But a little later, another volley of whistles pierced the air, this time accompanied with a noisy stamping of feet.

That day the reactionary elements came there with a plot to disturb the lecture and make speech against the PPCNK.

The youth workers and our hard-core supporters rushed out to quiet the disturbances and restore order in the hall. But the trouble-makers yelled out, "You're free to hold your lecture and we're free to stop you if we want! Why do you want to suppress our freedom?"

Angry young people were leaping out of their seats. Some of our members were actually being attacked physically by the ruffians.

Their next ploy was to toss hand bills into the audience, which caused even greater confusion.

I finally suspended the meeting before things got worse. I called on our young men to calm down and cool off. I knew that it wasn't unusual for the reactionaries to actually murder or injure our supporters and workers by starting this sort of ruckus on purpose.

At any rate the lecture was a failure, and we were all beside ourselves with rage, swearing we would find out who these bastards were and teach them a lesson.

That evening, Comrade Kim Jong Suk called me.

Knowing that she must have come to talk about the abortive lecture, I prepared myself for self-criticism. I was disgusted with myself at my having failed to outwit the rabble-rousers.

To my surprise, however, Comrade Kim Jong Suk spoke to me

with a calm and tender expression on her face:

“How upset and shocked you must have been today! Yet you managed to keep your temper and bring the uproar under control. It was such a hard task, yet you did it well. Calm down now and eat something.”

She put a small table in front of me laden with bowls of steaming rice and soup. I ate with gratitude, fighting back tears.

When I finished the meal, she asked quietly:

“By the way, what do you think about today’s incident?”

“What?!”

I was embarrassed. I was boiling with fury at the reactionaries for ruining the lecture, but had thought little of how a similar incident might be avoided in the future. I finally blurted out: “I think we should mount a mop-up operation against the reactionaries.”

“Of course, that’s necessary, too,” she said. “But this is not really the task of the DYL, I think.”

“What’s your opinion then?” I asked the question, still under the influence of the smoldering anger.

“The worse a situation is, the more prudent you should be,” she answered. “The lecture should be organized again. In fact, I’ll deliver the lecture myself.”

I was surprised at her words.

Thinking back on it now, I realize that she was even more bitterly upset than we at the intrigues of these scoundrels to sabotage the lecture. Nevertheless, her reactions were different from ours. While we were panting with fury at the reactionaries, she kindly taught us how we should go about retaliating against them and what our attitude as youth workers should be.

Over and over again I tried to dissuade her from exposing herself to danger by attending a meeting infested with reactionaries. But she would not listen to my advice.

“The fiercer the reactionaries’ attacks upon us, the harder should be our ideological offensive against them,” she insisted. “The slightest vacillation or retreat should be avoided when carrying out our ideological work. We should look upon ideological education quite simply as another battle.”

She added that she had promised her help to us in carrying out

our youth work. How could she help if she did not keep her word on an occasion such as this? Her mind was made up about the lecture, so I had better organize it as quickly as possible.

She was so firm about her decision, I was helpless against it, so I returned to the DYL Central Committee in haste to inform our youth workers of what she intended to do.

They all approved of the plan to repeat the lecture, but were against her idea of doing it herself.

The way they saw it, the reactionaries were running about like mad dogs, and when they learned that the lecture was going to be held again, they would become even more violent in their actions. What could the youth workers do if something happened to her during the lecture? It would leave a permanent scar on DYL. The lecture had to be done by somebody else. This was their unanimous opinion.

I completely agreed with them. I was the one who had to answer for the failure of the lecture, so I was the one who should stand before the audience again. That evening I called on Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

After listening to our suggestion, she remarked, smiling:

“You’re anxious about my safety. Don’t be so serious. Yes, it’s dangerous to get on the rostrum, since the enemy may turn even more vicious when they learn that the lecture they tried to sabotage is going to be held again. But to attract greater public attention to the lecture, it’s a good idea to announce a new person as the lecturer.”

She went on:

“The people who were at today’s meeting will no doubt hesitate when they get another invitation. Probably they won’t want to come again for fear of further disturbances.

“But if a new person stands up as the lecturer, they may possibly change their minds. Anyway, we want to attract as many people as we can to acquaint them with the General’s intention. So it is not a bad idea for me to appear before the audience.”

Again, I could not argue with her.

The young people were exultant at the news that the lecture would be given by Comrade Kim Jong Suk. The event lent dignity to our youth workers, and they were happy with unusual pride and honour because of this.

We announced the news of Comrade Kim Jong Suk’s lecture and



date to all the DYL organizations as well as to the public figures and citizens of Pyongyang. At the same time, we took full measures to strengthen the guard at the meeting hall.

The auditorium of the girls' middle school, the site of the previous unsuccessful lecture, was filled to overflowing.

As Comrade Kim Jong Suk stood on the rostrum, dressed neatly, a storm of applause broke out, shaking the hall. I was at full alert, watching the audience in the hall, but saw nothing abnormal.

She began her speech without waiting for the long applause to subside.

"Friends!" A hush fell over the hall.

"Recently we celebrated the historic foundation of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea in a grand way."

She went on to note that our people had seized power in their own hands and thus greeted the meaningful event with warm emotion and ecstasy. This was quite natural, she said, as our people had suffered cruel oppression and had been deprived of their country and their power. Now we had taken back our country and were masters in our own house. Could there possibly be a happier situation than this?

"Our people now have their own government, the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea, because General Kim II Sung, the wise and brilliant leader of our nation, has gratified our long-cherished desire for our own government."

Resounding applause greeted these words.

She went on to point out the differences between the PPCNK, erected by General Kim II Sung, and the Japanese imperialist ruling machine that had bled the people white in the past and the reactionary military administration enforced by the army of the US aggressors in south Korea.

The audience was spellbound by her brand-new story about the people's government. She emphasized the fact that our government was the genuine government of the people, one that respected their will and firmly protected their interests.

"A handful of reactionary elements are opposed to the founding of our people's government. They want to restore the old society, which ensures a comfortable life only for the exploiting classes, such as landlords and capitalists. This is the daydream of the reactionaries,

whose patrons are US imperialists.”

At this point her speech was interrupted by approving cheers.

She continued:

“At the lecture held here several days ago a handful of these reactionary elements created a disturbance and tossed around some of their handbills. They were working against the PPCNK. Are we really to be deceived by their tricks?”

Voices burst out, declaring a resounding “No”.

“No amount of desperate frenzy on the part of the people’s enemies can curb the popular desire for justice or stop the rolling wheels of history.”

Another flurry of clapping interrupted her speech.

“Today the people’s government is in existence, all set to build a new world according to the wish of the people. Our forefathers dreamed of a life in a small thatched cottage at most. But General Kim Il Sung foresees a new world where the land is distributed among the peasants and plants and mines are in the hands of workers, where children can study for free and the sick are given free medical care. I urge you to rise as one in our new nation-building task, to unite, strong as steel, behind the General.”

The audience rose to its feet, cheering and shouting, “Long live General Kim Il Sung!” and “Long live the Provisional People’s Committee of North Korea!”

The lecture was over, yet no one left one’s seat, for everyone was gazing up at Comrade Kim Jong Suk with emotion and exultation.

I was in heaven. Our DYL had never heard such a thrilling lecture.

Of the numerous lectures held in Pyongyang, none had been as successful as this one, where the speaker and the audience breathed as one and everyone present was in raptures.

The reactionaries must have known about the assemblage that day, and some of them might have crept, undiscovered, into the hall, but they dared not open their mouths this time.

As I was told later, one student who attended had been “directed” to interrupt with whistling, but listening to her speech, he was so overcome by her tender and noble personality, so lost in her fascinating and interesting tale, that the directive completely slipped his mind.

After the lecture was over, she said to me:

“When we were fighting in the mountains, we ignored flying bullets in order to win over comrades and unite the people. We thought nothing of doing political work in zones strictly controlled by the enemy. We should continue to work the same way now. We can’t hesitate before the task of uniting the people and youth around the General, no matter how difficult and dangerous the job might be. Ideological work is a battle too.”

I looked on her words as a criticism aimed at my own unsuccessful performance, and made the following pledge to myself;

“From now I will never flinch from the task of educating our youth and people in the idea and line of the great General. I’ll do this ideological work as if I were fighting a battle.”

Several decades have gone by since Comrade Kim Jong Suk gave this historic lecture, defying danger as she spoke. But her speech and her impressive image that day have been engraved on my mind for ever.

## **The Shock-Brigade for Agrarian Reform**

On March 5, 1946 the Law on Agrarian Reform in North Korea was proclaimed in our country. I heard the radio report on it, and unable to repress my excitement, hurried to see Comrade Kim Jong Suk. Her face was bright with happiness as she wished me good morning. “This day marking the start of the agrarian reform will be remembered all through history,” she said.

I told her that I too was extremely happy over the agrarian reform law. It was a dream we had all talked about as we sat around the campfire at Mt. Paektu, and now it had come true.

She nodded in agreement and picked up the paper *Jongro* that sat on the table. It contained the text of the law.

“I can’t read these provisions absent-mindedly,” she said. “The General wrote this law literally day and night with the sole purpose of gratifying the hopes of our peasants.”

Listening to her words, I remembered how the respected General, meeting his grandparents in Mangyongdae, had questioned them

about the demands of the peasants regarding the land, listening to their opinions with great interest. He sent a great many anti-Japanese fighters to the provinces so as to get a clear picture of the actual conditions of our rural districts. And while chatting with people who paid a visit to him, he would raise countless questions regarding the land problem, hoping to familiarize himself with the voice of the people in this matter.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk went on quietly:

“I’ll never forget what happened in the guerrilla base more than ten years ago. As you know, the people’s revolutionary government had been set up in guerrilla bases in East Manchuria and the land had been distributed. People came from all around, both north and south Manchuria, to see for themselves whether it was true or not that land had been distributed to the peasants. And it was the loss of this land that pained the people most when the guerrilla bases had to be relinquished and the anti-Japanese war spread over vast areas.

“They hated to leave the fields they had for the first time in their lives seen as their own, and some farmers kept a handful of soil in their pockets as they left, wailing. At that time the General promised them that he would restore those lands to them after defeating the enemy. That cherished day has come at last.” Her eyes were brimming as she spoke.

Just at that moment we heard the announcer’s voice over the radio, giving an account of the agrarian reform law.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk listened for a while, then said that the whole country would be rejoicing over it. She said she felt as if she could actually see the happy smile on the peasants’ faces. Her own face beamed as she spoke these words.

I told her the streets were alive with people and that everyone was full of emotion and joy. I predicted that no one would sleep that night.

She agreed, and then asked me what the DYL was planning to celebrate this historic event.

I was immediately tongue-tied.

I had been so full of excitement and jubilation that no definite plan or even vague outline had formed in my mind as to what the DYL should do.

The most I could think of was to say I would convene a grand celebration meeting.

She told me persuasively:

“The agrarian reform is a land revolution. The mere passing of the law alone does not mean that the land goes automatically into the hands of the farmers. As we know from our experiences in the guerrilla bases, the landlords are unwilling to let go the land, so the DYL organizations should be in the vanguard of the struggle to implement the agrarian reform law. The General intends to take concrete steps to enforce the law, and it is at this point that our youth must serve as the shock-brigade. The DYL is the single organization of young men of our country. After all, why did we rally the youth of our country into one, single organization such as the DYL?

“Because we wanted to pool their strength and direct this unified power at building our nation. The moment the General advances any policy or line, the DYL should find the best way to support it without needing to be asked to do so.”

She was right. I had to act, it wasn't enough for me to just stand on the sidelines and shout bravo.

I hurried back to the DYL Central Committee. We discussed ways to enlist the energies of the youth, but nobody came up with any really bright ideas.

One day the great leader summoned our youth workers and clearly outlined the activities the DYL organizations should undertake and the tasks the DYL members and other young people should fulfil in putting the agrarian reform law into effect.

That same day Comrade Kim Jong Suk met us again and gave us concrete suggestions about what we could do to carry out the instructions of the great leader.

First she explained the significance of the agrarian reform about to come into force in our country, and noted that the DYL should above all conduct energetic political and ideological work among the great mass of peasant.

It was of primary importance, she stressed, to make the peasants aware of the benevolence of the General who had promulgated the agrarian reform law, and to help them to be masters in their own homes. She continued:

“Not long ago the General put forward the slogan, ‘Land to the tillers!’ This means that the land is not just to be distributed to the farmers but also has a deeper meaning: the farmers are to be the masters of land for ever. Therefore he has advanced the revolutionary principles of land confiscation without compensation and free distribution of land in the coming agrarian reform. These principles have been conceived by none but the General, who is deeply sympathetic to the long-cherished aspiration of the peasants because he knows and understands their socio-economic situation.”

She then went on to tell us about various ways and means of performing mass political work.

Citing the example of the propaganda and singing squads in the period of the anti-Japanese war, she stressed that the propaganda squads should not confine themselves to merely speechifying before people but go among them and enlighten them in the plainest words possible while working together with them. The singing squads should make sure their propaganda was effective singing the songs most agreeable to the tastes of the masses. She went on:

“Placards and posters should also be used as publicity, the way they were by the anti-Japanese guerrillas. Slogans and posters should never be pasted up thoughtlessly but be situated in places of heavy traffic, where they are the focus of attention. The slogans should be written on wooden signs, not just on paper, so that they can be used in demonstrations. And on mountain paths frequented by the peasants trees and rocks should also be inscribed with slogans, so that people can read them wherever they go.”

She also advocated expanding the DYL organization while ensuring the success of the agrarian reform. The coming agrarian reform would offer a rare chance for young people to temper themselves politically and ideologically through revolutionary practice, she said, hence, we should use this opportunity to enlist large numbers of good young people into the DYL from the rural districts.

She stressed particularly, that the agrarian reform was to be accompanied by a serious class struggle so that our youth should faithfully execute the Party class line with heightened class awakening.

“At present”, she explained, “the landlords account for only four

percent of the farm population in north Korea. But they will be bound to make a last-ditch attempt, being unwilling to part with the land. Therefore you young people should also take the lead in disclosing and sweeping away the reactionary elements who are doing all they can to frustrate the agrarian reform. You should make it your business to guard the important establishments the enemy seeks to destroy. And because spring plowing and sowing are to be pushed ahead along with agrarian reform, the rural youth should be encouraged to proceed with the pressing farm work without fail.”

In conclusion, she said:

“Agrarian reform is an important form of revolution. The DYL members and other young people must become the vanguard in this crucially important reform.”

We all rose to our feet, hardened in our resolution to become the faithful fighters in the forefront of the struggle to put the great agrarian reform law into practice.

We held constant consultative meeting of the DYL workers where we discussed the means by which to implement the tasks the great leader entrusted to the DYL.

We organized a variety of activities in line with the concrete suggestions made by Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

First we took colorful measures to activate the political work among the masses, setting up training courses for the DYL members, who were then dispatched to rural districts in batches.

So the streets of Pyongyang, the capital of revolution, and the towns and villages across the country, echoed from morning to night with the sounds of singing and the blowing of bugles, cheerful performances put by the singing squads of our DYL. Slogans, posters, wall newspapers and news flashes reporting the agrarian reform appeared everywhere, stimulating the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people further.

A few days passed.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk rang me up and hinted that the DYL should form the self-defence corps to neutralize the enemy’s machinations, which had become frenetic with the start of the reform. The terrorists and subversive elements dispatched by the US imperialists and their lackeys, together with the landlords who were

about to lose their land, were going mad in their efforts to stop the agrarian reform, spreading reactionary rumour of all sorts. In some areas they were even plotting to revolt against the reform.

In view of these developments, she proposed to form the self-defence corps with the youth leaguers to deal a blow to the enemy's intrigues.

The great leader thoroughly approved of the formation of such a corps, and added that the DYL should concentrate on defending the rural committees and villages, and keep a watch on communication facilities, including telephone lines and production centres so as to discover and shatter enemy's plans before they were carried out.

Thus it was that the DYL self-defence corps came into being with the participation of youth leaguers everywhere, playing a strong part in the enforcement of the agrarian reform. Our DYL members stood sentry day and night at every rural committee which numbered more than 11,500 throughout north Korea, and they crushed enemy sabotage of all kinds, reducing it to mere rubble. Consequently, the agrarian reform was brought to a successful conclusion in a period of only 20 days.

In this period the ranks of the DYL swelled from 250,000 to 530,000. The rural youth especially was awakened to class consciousness, and the working youth from factories and towns grew to be the most reliable mainstay of our organization.

This surge of patriotic devotion, these shining feats of our youth leaguers throughout the days of democratic reform-the land revolution in particular- would not have been possible without the guidance of Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

## **2. Be Vanguard of Youth**

### **The Way in Which Functionaries Should Be Trained**

One day Comrade Kim Jong Suk unexpectedly asked me: "What do you think is the most important part of the work you're doing now?" "What's the most important?" I echoed her, bewildered. I thought it over, but could give no definite answer.



“It seems you do not always study your work.”

She always liked obviousness and now she saw my weak point: my noncommittal attitude.

I remained silent, though I felt ashamed.

Looking at me, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, “I did not ask you this question to test your theories, but to make you aware of the key point in your work. There is a serious shortage of capable functionaries in Korea right now. The same is true of the Democratic Youth League. The low level of working officials everywhere gives rise to a lot of trouble and prevents them from carrying out a proper job in the work with youth.

“It’s only when our functionaries start performing well that the General will feel at ease....”

These remarks were an indication of the anxiety that constantly preyed on her mind.

I hung my head.

When the great leader entrusted me with the heavy responsibility for youth work, he no doubt expected me to do a fine job of it. But I often failed to deal promptly with all the problems that cropped up in youth work, and managed to make a few forward strides only when the great leader or Comrade Kim Jong Suk led me by the hand. I must have disappointed them many times. This thought made me feel ashamed and guilty.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk went on, “The most important thing in youth work at present I think is to train functionaries. You should always inform them of the General’s ideas and line, teach them how to work, and discuss with them how to settle problems that have cropped up so that they learn how to work on their own initiative. At present you do not do any of these things. After holding a meeting or giving instructions you only examine whether the task was carried out properly or not. You seem to pay no attention to training functionaries.”

She was quite right. This was exactly how I behaved. When a task was set I spent days directing, urging and pressing people, outlining what should be done by what date, then inquiring whether they had carried out the assignments or why they had not fulfilled their tasks in time. What I did not do was to give some thought to training

the functionaries of the lower echelons.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, pointing out the need for a responsible worker to know his functionaries well in order to train them well, asked me what I knew about the ideas of the staff of the Central Committee of the DYL, about their political and ideological preparedness, their living situation and difficulties.

I gave her a vague answer, telling her what I'd heard about the staff from others. Then realizing how half-heartedly I had worked, I added, "In a few days I will find out more."

She smiled, seeing me so embarrassed. I smiled too.

"You see what I mean?" she said. "How can you work without knowing people? You say you work with youth, yet you know little about your own colleagues on the Central Committee of the DYL. This is why you often make one of your female comrades weep."

Comrade Kim Jong Suk had learned, I don't know how, that a few days ago I had caused a female instructor in the propaganda department of our committee of the DYL to burst into tears.

The comrade wore glasses. I never called her by her name but always spoke of her as "the one with the glasses". This was because her name kept slipping my mind, and what I remembered about her the most was that she wore glasses.

She was very offended that I should call her "the one with the glasses".

There was a reason for this. There had been talk several times of her getting married, but each time nothing came of it because of the fact that she wore glasses, and this naturally distressed her. And here was I, always labelling her as the one with the glasses. It must have wounded her greatly.

One day at a morning meeting I indicated the need to get information about the operation of night schools, and said that the one with the glasses should perform the task, when she suddenly broke out sobbing and put her head down on the table.

I nevertheless reprimanded her: "I gave you assignment. What are you crying for? If you don't want to do the job, don't do it."

At this she abruptly rose to her feet and rushed out of the office, covering her face with her hands.

When she passed by me in the corridor later, she cut me.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, “A leading official must not work that way. While always working with the functionaries of the Central Committee of the Democratic Youth League you should train them so that they, in their turn, are able to train workers in lower echelons and that all of them know exactly what they’re doing and are able to take the initiative. To do this you should include in daily, weekly and monthly work plans what you would do to train the officials in this period. And you yourself should make preparations beforehand, knowing exactly what to talk about with them, what to ask them, what to teach them and what problems to solve. To meet with them just at any odd time and talk vaguely about this or that before parting with them is not the way to do it. The purpose of a meeting with them is to arouse them, teach them and encourage them to work better.”

Her remarks opened my eyes to what I should have been doing all along.

I said, “From now on I will direct all my energies to training functionaries.”

Comrade Kim Jong Suk nodded, saying that it just would not do to bustle about slapdash as I did. She then told me I needed to study diligently and educate myself.

She went on to say, “Whenever you find yourself in difficulty, think about the General. Although he is always busy with affairs of state, he makes it a rule to take time to read books and study. If we follow but a fraction of his example, we will be able to do good work and become competent.”

I promised I would do so.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk then went on to talk about the Central Committee of the DYL saying it should work harder, laying stress on training functionaries and stressed the need to consolidate Party organizations.

“A number of Party members are on the Central Committee of the DYL, but they are too few. From now on more stress should be placed on training staff to be Party members.”

We should bear in mind, she said, how the great leader had trained recruits to be revolutionaries when they fought in mountains. The newcomers at first did not know how to read and had no idea what

a revolution was. They had joined the guerrillas solely to get revenge on the Japanese. We, too, should do good job of training members of the Central Committee of the DYL to be Party members, the way he had.

She advised me to build up a Party organization within the Central Committee of the DYL, then staff it with the best people and build them up into the core element, placing them in charge of youth affairs.

After this talk, I made it a top priority for the Central Committee of the DYL to start training functionaries.

I personally made a study in depth of our functionaries, finding out their birthplace, age, character, tastes and experience. I persuaded them to study different topics according to their own inclination, thus steadily raising their political level and business sense. In the course of this I, too, learned a great deal.

I met “the one with the glasses” separately and apologized for my thoughtlessness. I then helped and gave her guidance with all sincerity.

Some time after we held a general meeting of the Party cell to admit the prepared young functionaries into the Party. That day the female to whom I had apologized was among those to be admitted into the Party. At the news that she had become a Party member the boy friend who had cast her aside on the plea that she wore glasses came to visit her at the office of the Central Committee of the DYL.

Watching the girl and boy strolling together toward the Taedong River that day, I realized the meaning of Comrade Kim Jong Suk’s instruction as to training functionaries.

## **Straightening Out Our Style of Work**

The agrarian reform was at its height.

One day in the office of the propaganda department of the Central Committee of the DYL a school teacher was writing notes for a speech to be used by the propaganda squad. The speech was to urge people to carry out the agrarian reform successfully. He was to submit it to propaganda department chief Comrade Ri, but gave it to the chief of the students’ and children’s department, Comrade Yun, to look

over instead.

Comrade Yun read the speech and gave his opinions on how to improve it with no thought of the consequences.

When this came to the attention of Comrade Ri, he sent for an instructor and asked him why the teacher had given the speech to Comrade Yun rather than to him.

The instructor replied that he supposed the teacher had submitted it to the students' and children's department, thinking that it would be used in his school.

"The speech is to be used not only in the school but also by the singing squad and the propaganda squad. He can't just do as he please!"

Comrade Ri, angry, sent for the teacher.

"Have you written the draft of speech?" he asked.

"Yes, but it isn't satisfactory, so I'm revising it after getting some comments on it," he replied politely, noticing Comrade Ri's displeasure.

"To whom did you show it?"

"Well... to the chief of the students' and children's department. .

"I told you I wanted to see the draft, didn't I?"

The teacher began to explain his reasons, excusing himself.

"There is no need to excuse yourself. Please show me what you have written."

"All right. I will bring it immediately."

After a while the teacher brought it and put it on the table.

Comrade Ri glanced through the manuscript perfunctorily, then tapped it on the table to indicate his annoyance.

"Thank you for your trouble. You must be busy with school affairs. You may go," he said coldly.

The teacher, who had behaved prudently so far, was offended and said, "When may I come back for the manuscript? Our school has to start propaganda work soon."

At this Comrade Ri slapped his hand on the manuscript and said sharply, "You are not on our staff. Go and ask at the students' and children's department."

The teacher strode out of the room without comment. He came straight to me and complained, saying, "Department chief Ri is an

overtly critical man, so fearing that he would nitpick at the draft, I asked department chief Yun to look over it beforehand. I know Comrade Yun from pre-liberation days and we're on familiar terms. Is it right to treat people like this? I'm not coming back to the Central Committee of the DYL."

At this juncture Comrade Kim Jong Suk unexpectedly opened the door. She had been informed that the work of the propaganda squad and the singing squad, arranged by the Central Committee of the DYL, was proceeding successfully and had come to the office to tell the DYL to include several songs in their repertoire. She had dropped in on me on the way.

A concerned look came over her face when she heard the angry voice of the teacher.

I quickly straightened my jacket and stood up with embarrassment.

Seeing the sudden change of my attitude, the teacher quickly left the room.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk commented that she seemed to have come when I was busy and told me to go on with my work. Then she asked me why the teacher had left so suddenly.

Under the circumstances I could not give a detailed account of the situation, so I said that there was no big problem.

"Is that so?" she said and went on to make inquiries about my work.

"You seem to have many things to do. If you find time tomorrow, please come to see me," she said and left. After I saw her off I could not hold back my rising anger.

I first sent for Comrade Ri and reproved him for being so captious. Then I had the teacher come to me and admonished him, for not observing the proper work order. I rebuked Comrade Yun for meddling in affairs that had nothing to do with him.

Finally I called the instructor who had informed on Comrade Ri and took him to task, saying, "Word should be passed correctly, no matter what it is, otherwise good things may be interpreted as bad and bad things as good. You are to blame for today's misunderstanding as well." After that my anger died down somewhat.

The next day I met Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

She first asked me how I had settled the matter of the teacher

yesterday.

I told her what I had done.

Her face clouded. “You seem to have got into the bad habit of looking down on people recently,” she said. “When something like this happens, you should first find out what the exact circumstances are, then take measure against such a thing happening again. You can’t just call this or that person and put the blame on them. You’ve never done that before. Why have you begun to behave like this recently?”

I remained silent.

“Have you any idea of how the other youth workers see you?” she inquired sternly.

I hung my head and continued to remain silent.

“If you don’t know that, you cannot work.”

Silence reigned for a good while.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk then went on: “The youth workers respect and support you because you fought under the command of the General. In consideration of our General, they believe and follow you, his soldier. And yet look at how you behave.”

It was bitter criticism, and it made me reflect on my behaviour as never before. Although Kim Jong Suk often gave me and anti-Japanese fighters such a kind of advice, I failed to bear it in my mind. I strengthened my resolve to come to my senses and work better from then on.

“If you have realized your mistake, then it’s enough. What I want to talk about today is the working style of the functionaries. Think it over when you go home,” Comrade Kim Jong Suk said.

She first referred to the functionaries’ attitudes toward work.

“If their working style is to improve, then they have to adopt the proper attitude toward work. Our youth workers seem to be unaware of the fact that they are not government officials, but servants of the youth organization.

“The reason for this is that up to now our people have only seen the way in which the Japanese imperialists and feudal rulers threatened people and ordered them around, browbeating them into thinking that the word of those who oppressed them was law. Therefore, now when our people are promoted to be cadres, they seem to see

themselves as government officials. This is wrong. For functionaries to develop the proper attitude, they have to discard their carping ways and then haughty self-image. Yesterday's conflict with the school teacher, for example, was the direct result of department chief Comrade Ri's self-importance and overcritical manner.

“Think it over: If Comrade Ri had been modest and magnanimous, the teacher would have submitted the written manuscript to him in the first place. But since the teacher thought him haughty, he went to Comrade Yun instead. Department chief Ri then summoned the teacher and insulted him, which in turn caused the teacher to go so far as to say that he would not come again to the Central Committee of the DYL. This is all a good lesson for us, proving that the incorrect attitude on the part of a functionary discredits the organization of the DYL in the eyes of the youth.

“The Youth League works with young people. If a staff member professionally engaged in work with young people is captious and impertinent, no one will be open with him. Youth workers should be modest, open and approachable. In other words, they should be good friends to young people.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk then went on to say that youth workers should be blinded neither by love of gain nor by ambition for a high position.

She was referring in particular to one official in the accounts section of our Central Committee of the DYL, who at the time was being talked about because of his greed.

The great leader had kindly made arrangements to allocate to us the houses of the Japanese, the landlords and the capitalists who had fled to south Korea. These quarters had been confiscated as enemy property.

A house was allotted to this particular official of the accounts section, and he moved in. Later, when a better house became vacant, he moved in and made the first house available to another official. He drew criticism from people with this act. But then he went even further and hauled all sorts of good furniture designated for use in the offices of the Central Committee of the DYL to his house. Some of the furniture he also dispatched to other officials out of fear that he might



be brought to account later. They accepted some of it, unaware of his ulterior motives. Later they returned the furniture after getting wind of his intention. Moreover, whenever supplies arrived, he set aside special quantities for those who were partial to him, and took far more than his own designated lot under their shadow. His behaviour was altogether mean and shameful.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk went on to say, "If functionaries are blinded by greed, they eventually fall into a dangerous quagmire. A craving for high position is a logical consequence of greed. Those who lust after power and position also lust after material gain. This is shameful for youth workers. So you see that in general people need to lead a life that is honest and blameless. Youth workers in particular must refrain from coveting material gain and high rank, but regard dignity and honour as one's most valuable asset.

' "A person is not looked up to because he or she fares well and dresses well. It's only when one works devotedly and leads an upright life that one is respected and loved by people. Do people look up to us anti-Japanese fighters because we are rich? No. We started out barehanded, but we came carrying our homeland in both hands. We spent the springtime of our lives fighting in the mountains. Some comrades did not return and now lie in mountains, fields and riversides far away, but they, too, are immortal being at one with the motherland. What higher honour could there be for them? I hope our youth workers live the way our young guerrillas did during the anti-Japanese war."

Next, Comrade Kim Jong Suk stressed the need for functionaries to take the lead and set an example in all that they did.

Again referring to what had happened with the teacher, she said, "If it's necessary to do so, youth workers should be a part of the propaganda and singing squads and write articles, make speech and sing together with them, but should not put on airs while they do this, nor make others write articles in their place. Nor should they just hand out instructions without doing anything themselves. Among the guerrilla troops, youth workers were always in the vanguard of battle. They wrote drafts of speeches, made wall newspapers with their own hands and organized the entertainment whenever there was a party. But these days they've fallen into the

habit of using others and sitting back with the excuse that they are leading them. It's really a disgrace.”

Listening to her, I bowed my head and recollected an incident a short while ago.

One day when cleaning was being done in our office building, Comrade Kim Jong Suk came to look for me. My colleagues told her that I was at work in my room. Coming in, she asked, “What are you doing here instead of being out there, cleaning with the others?”

I gave her the excuse that I had an urgent document to draw up.

“Do the cleaning now, together with everyone else, and finish the document at night, even if it means you sleep a little less,” she advised me.

Now as I turned the incident over in my mind, I was seized with remorse at the thought that her remarks about taking the lead in all affairs were ferring to me.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk then went on to discuss the need for youth workers to observe good manners.

“A youth worker has to know how to behave. When you bow politely to your elders, show courtesy to your juniors and conduct yourself well in your village and your family - that's when you can consider yourself to be qualified as a youth worker,” she said.

My response to her teaching was to tell her that I would immediately start an active campaign to improve the working style of our staff at the Central Committee of the DYL.

As the first step, I met the school teacher, Comrade Ri and other officials of the DYL Central Committee whom I had called to account and apologized to them for my mistake. At the same time I admitted that I, too, had been in the wrong. I pressed up on them the need for steady self-cultivation from then on so that we might all become genuine youth workers.

It was thanks to Comrade Kim Jong Suk that the working methods of our staff were able to improve steadily right from the beginning. She helped us, like a loving mother, to start off on the right foot as we conducted the affairs of DYL.

### **Comrade Kim Jong Suk Listens in Secret to My Speech**

In the spring of 1946 the organization assigned me the task of making a speech entitled “Let Korean Youth from All Walks of Life Unify to Build a New Democratic Korea!” at a mass meeting.

I resolved to write lots of notes and make a good speech.

Days passed, but I found it difficult to find time to prepare for the speech. Urgent matters kept cropping up in connection with the agrarian reform, and I was busy making preparations for the Second Congress of the DYL. Although the day set for holding the mass meeting was getting closer, I still had made no notes.

One day Comrade Kim Jong Suk met me and gave me important instruction on youth work. And she said, “Well, I hear you are to make a speech at the mass meeting. Be sure to make good preparations for it.”

I wondered how she had got to know of the assignment given to me. I renewed my resolve to make good preparations for my speech, but as time went on, I continued to be pressed with work. I made notes for the speech only at odd times. On the eve of the mass meeting one of the youth workers said, “Tomorrow’s the big day of the meeting. Are you ready for it?”

At this I felt my inward anxiety rising.

I turned in my mind on the gist of speech I had framed so far, fully resolved to make notes. I was terrified of making a slip.

But to make matters worse, an acute crisis arose in the city, and I had to sit up all night in my office helping to deal with it.

The sun was up before I knew it.

I felt extremely uneasy. Deciding at last to make a speech without notes, I went straight to the mass meeting.

To tell the truth, I wanted to show Comrade Kim Jong Suk notes for the speech, they were so random and disorganized, I felt ashamed to see her and gave up.

The mass meeting was held in what is today the puppet theatre. The theatre and its vicinity were packed with people. When I saw them I shuddered. This enormous audience was going to listen to my speech, I thought. How would I ever get through it?

A microphone was installed in the theatre with big loudspeakers outside, so that the speech was audible to the crowds both inside and outside the theatre.

My colleagues, who were aware of my situation, comforted me, saying, "Brace yourself. Don't fear. You have the gist of it in your head, right?"

In my mind I saw only the image of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who would be so apprehensive for if she knew I was about to make an ad-lib speech. This thought embarrassed me even more.

I took a deep breath and stood up before the microphone, determined to go through with it. Recollecting the gist of speech I had framed, I began to speak. Silence reigned in the hall, occasionally broken by stormy applause. It was going without a hitch. I was so delighted, I could have cried.

Then I thought, "I am the soldier of General Kim Il Sung. I grew up on Mt. Paektu. I am one of the anti-Japanese guerrillas who fought the Japanese army of one million troops. I can deliver a speech without a single note."

With this determination came strength and eloquence and my speech reeled off as smoothly as silk.

As I left the platform, I found myself covered with sweat from head to toe.

"You did well. Excellent!" With these words my friends encouraged me, and judging by the reaction of the audience, it seemed that I had not done too badly.

After a while I returned to my office, where I was told that Comrade Kim Jong Suk wanted to see me immediately at her home.

I thought she wanted to look at the notes for my speech, probably unaware that the mass meeting had been held that day.

I felt ill at ease because, of course, I had no notes.

Entering by the front gate, I found Comrade Kim Jong Suk waiting for me, seated in a corner of the garden.

She looked very glad to see me and told me to come on in.

"I am very pleased today, so I sent for you. Your speech was excellent."

I was nonplussed. She already knew that I had made my speech? Why was she praising me so much?

"Thank you for your speech," she said. "I, too, have just got back from seeing you deliver your speech."

Only then did I understand how matters stood. Later I was informed

that she had been very apprehensive on learning that I went to the mass meeting without written notes for my speech. Informing the great leader of the fact, she was worried about how to help me out.

But the great leader said, “Never mind, he’s up to it. Leave him alone. To speak without notes is good, an opportunity for him to train himself and accumulate experience.”

Nevertheless, she could not relax, so she went to the mass meeting in person. She did not let anyone know she was going, saying that if I knew she was there I might not speak well out of nervousness. She quietly took her seat backstage. From there she could hear the way I spoke and see how the audience reacted.

My speech obviously appealed to the audience, particularly when I called upon the audience to work toward the unity of the whole nation and set to build a new Korea. And when I said that the physically strong should give their strength, the rich donate their money, the educated give their knowledge, and the technicians contribute their techniques in response to the call of the sagacious leader General Kim II Sung, a shout of approval went up in the audience. Some of them said, “His words echo what General Kim II Sung said in his first formal greeting to the nation after his return home in triumph. There’s no doubt he is the General’s soldier.”

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was very pleased to see the way the audience reacted and applauded together with them.

She went on to say, “When you told me you had received the assignment to make a speech, I wanted to help you, but gave up the idea, thinking it would be better for you to prepare for a speech on your own. Still, I felt uneasy and went to the meeting to hear you. You did very well. Moreover, it was good that you spoke without notes. Youth workers should all make speeches that way.”

Then she suggested me what I should set right in my next speech.

### **Kim Jong Suk’s Talk with the Representatives of the “General Federation of Young Men in Korea”**

After liberation our country was artificially divided because of the occupation of south Korea by the US imperialists. Hence our youth

movement, too, had to be launched separately in the two regions.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's pain in such a situation was even greater than anyone else's. He clearly indicated the direction in which the south Korean youth movement should move in its development, and he regarded it as part of the Korean youth movement as a whole.

In a talk he had with youth workers from south Korea on November 19, 1945, the great leader told them:

“To achieve the unity of the masses of young people of south Korea, a single democratic youth organization must be formed on a mass scale.”

The leader's line reflected the then prevailing situation and legitimated demands for the development of a general Korean youth movement. However, there were many difficulties in the way of implementing the line, for in those days there were many youth organizations in south Korea.

In south Korea also the Communist Youth League had been formed in September 1945, but its membership was small when one considered the number of young people living in south Korea. Only those devoted to communism joined the Communist Youth League.

When the Communist Youth League was formed, the US imperialists and their lackeys set up many reactionary youth organizations to counter it. Syngman Rhee's clique and other traitors to the nation rigged up such groups as “The Young Men's Association for Promotion of Independence”, “The Young Men's Association from the Northwest”, “Taedong Young Men's Association”, “Paekho Group”, and many other organizations in a variety of hues. Their sheer numbers succeeded in breaking up the ranks of young people in south Korea, admitting them at random.

At that time factionalists put up “Left” and Right slogans advocating “socialist revolution” and “bourgeois republic”, blocking the way to the unity and cohesion of young people and helping the enemy's attempts to split the revolutionary forces.

The spy group headed by Pak Hon Yong, the betrayer of the revolution, formed another youth organization called “General Federation of Young Men in Korea” (GFYMK) separately from the Communist Youth League instead of implementing the great leader's

line of forming the DYL.

When the GFYMK came into being in December 1945, the great leader again gave instructions to form the DYL in south Korea as soon as possible to bring in patriotic young people from all walks of life. As a result, the youth and the students of south Korea launched a vigorous struggle to carry out the line and to foil the divisive tactics of the reactionaries and factionalists.

Around that time the representatives of the GFYMK called on the great leader in Pyongyang. They had joined the GFYMK on the “instructions” of the Pak Hon Yong clique but realized that this organization would go nowhere. They therefore called on the great leader to get advice as to what to do with the GFYMK in the future and how to solve the various problems of the youth movement in south Korea as a whole.

The great leader was very busy at the time with establishing the future Provisional People’s Committee of North Korea, but he warmly welcomed the representatives of the GFYMK who had made such a long, hazardous journey to seek a path for the young people of south Korea to follow. He talked with them all day long and clearly showed the way the revolution and youth movement in south Korea should be heading.

Later the great leader saw to it that they were informed of the experiences and success of the youth work in the northern half of Korea. Comrade Kim Jong Suk took charge of this task toward the end of January 1946.

At that time I went to her on her call, and she told me:

“The General has an urgent matter to attend to this morning, so he did not meet you and gave the task to me instead. He wants you to take charge of the work with the representatives of the GFYMK from south Korea. You must do the job well.”

Then she gave me instructions on how to inform them of our experiences in youth work so as to satisfy all their requests.

On her suggestion I showed them around the building of the Central Committee of the DYL, arranged talks with youth workers and set up a symposium on our experiences. In addition, I saw that full answers were given to their questions.

Every day Comrade Kim Jong Suk questioned me on how I had

proceeded with the GFYMK, then gave me further instructions. .

One day she asked me what the representatives of the GFYMK had said about their interview with the great leader.

This reminded me of how excited they had been, and I went on to tell her what they had said.

On their way to Pyongyang to see the great leader, they had feared that he might not receive them. They thought the famous patriot and hero of the nation, the General who was renowned for putting Japanese imperialism to rout, would not find time to meet nobodies such as them.

When I told them they would soon be received by the great leader, they asked me if they really would meet the General in person, or would it be his adjutant or his secretary who talked with them.

In the presence of the great leader at last, their excitement and joy was beyond description.

From the remarks of journalists of a Seoul newspaper who had been in Pyongyang earlier, they were aware that General Kim II Sung was very young. But they never thought that he would be modestly dressed, like a common person, or that he would chat with them so unceremoniously and for such a long time, answering all their questions with good grace.

“No one in the world is as lucky as we! We were received all day long by the legendary General Kim II Sung. Having met him and heard him speak, we see the road ahead clearly and feel invigorated because now we know everything and have nothing to fear. We heard so many rumours in south Korea, which is why we did not support the line of forming the DYL. Now we’ll go south immediately and carry out the General’s teachings, even at the risk of our own lives.”

Hearing me out, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, “I am glad to hear they are full of confidence and courage now. Well, what questions did they ask?”

“They asked me to tell them about the anti-Japanese armed struggle and then they wanted permission to meet the female General Comrade Kim Jong Suk. I declined their second request,” I replied.

“Why?” she asked.

“Not knowing them well, I thought I could not allow them to meet



you without a specific reason,” I said.

She laughed with surprise and said, “You often act on your own volition. They are resolved to form the Democratic Youth League in south Korea. Because of that, they should be treated with sincerity. Is that the proper way to treat them? I am not important. The General met them, so why shouldn’t I? It’s still not too late. Bring them to me. I would meet anyone ten or twenty times over if it helped implement the General’s line, right?”

I told her I would bring them to her.

I chose the head of the GFYMK representatives and another man to meet Comrade Kim Jong Suk. I thought that if the other GFYMK representatives were made aware of the visit, they would all want to go. I suggested to the head that he and one other person go out for a talk with me. It was only when we left the hotel that I told them the real purpose of our outing. They were thrilled.

They started to worry on the way: “We should be dressed more formally and take a bouquet, shouldn’t we? Shouldn’t we at least ride in a rickshaw if we are to enter the gates of her home?”

“It would have been better if you had been more formally dressed, but we are already on our way. She doesn’t care about bouquets or rickshaws,” I answered.

They did not seem reassured.

When she was informed that the GFYMK representatives were there, Comrade Kim Jong Suk came out to the entrance hall and greeted them warmly, saying, “Come in. You must have been through a great deal, travelling all the way here from Seoul, braving death along the way.”

She was dressed very simply in plain clothes, with the result that they took her for a house servant. We went into the drawing room unceremoniously. I said nothing.

Inviting them to sit, she sat down too and asked, “How do you find it here in Pyongyang? Does the food agree with you?”

They relaxed, as if talking to their own kind sister, and said that they were very comfortable here. Glancing at the door that led to another room, one of them whispered to her, “Today we came quite unexpectedly, without a present. Please excuse us to her when she comes in.”

She smiled and said, “What’s the point of bringing a present when you visit our home? Let me introduce myself to you. I am Kim Jong Suk.”

At this they both leaped to their feet and stood at a loss, not knowing what to say. They felt ashamed that they whispered to her, not knowing who she was.

“Please be seated. I’m only a soldier serving the General after all,” she said, setting their minds at ease.

After a while one of them said politely:

“We have met General Kim II Sung. We will boast of this when we return to south Korea. He gave us guidelines for our struggle. We are very grateful to you for receiving us like this. Please excuse us for not recognizing you.” They cast disapproving glances at me because I had not tipped them off.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, “I am happy you met the General and got instructions from him. The General is greatly concerned over the youth movement in south Korea. I hope you do a good job, otherwise our Korean youth and people might well be reduced to colonial slavery again.”

Then she asked them to talk about the situation in south Korea.

They gave her a detailed account of what they had gone through. It was far more complicated and a much graver situation than I and our youth workers had ever imagined. The US imperialists and their toadies were perpetrating all sorts of criminal acts to check the patriotic advance of the south Korean people and to split apart the youth and students of south Korea by poisoning their minds.

When she heard their story, Comrade Kim Jong Suk remarked that the youth movement in south Korea was suffering a great deal, but only partly because destructive moves of the US imperialists and their lackeys. The main problem, she said, was that the masses of young people had not yet awakened politically.

She went on to explain further:

“First of all, I should like to say that one can work properly with youth only if one has clear knowledge of what path our liberated Korea should follow. I’d like to talk a little about that. As General Kim II Sung said on several occasions, our Korea has to get rid of the residues of Japanese imperialism and feudal society and build a new

democratic society.

“There are two kinds of democracy. The ‘democracy’ advocated by the US imperialists, by the pro-Japanese and by other traitors in south Korea is bourgeois democracy. In other words, American-style ‘democracy’. Those who advocate this kind of ‘democracy’ are all set to rig up a reactionary government in our country. We must not be taken in by it. The democracy we call for is that of the masses of people. This kind of democracy can be realized only when the people’s government is set up to serve the interests of the people. Therefore we must wage a vigorous campaign to establish a genuine government, the government of the people. This is what the people themselves want as well.

“Next, I want to say that no factionalism must be allowed to enter the youth movement in south Korea. As you know from the history of our country and of the communist movement, all factionalist trends are political maladies that lead to the ruin of the country and the failure of the revolution. In the past our country had no national unity and was swallowed by the Japanese imperialists because of factional strife. It did much harm to the national-liberation and communist movements.

“What then should we take as yardstick to eliminate factionalism and achieve unity and cohesion in the ranks of our youth?

“When we fought the anti-Japanese war, our opposition to Japan unified us as a nation. The General announced his intention to unite with anyone who was opposed to Japanese imperialism and formed the anti-Japanese national united front. At that time our guerrillas were joined by the people from different backgrounds, with differences in property status, religious beliefs and levels of knowledge, but they all had one mind and one purpose. There were even some Japanese guerrillas among us, and we fought shoulder to shoulder with them because they were opposed to Japanese imperialism.

“But what should we take as a criterion for our unity today?

“I believe the only way is to take genuine democracy as our standard. We can join hands with those who support the idea of establishing a people’s government capable of practising democracy in the interests of the people; and must not go along with those who are opposed to it and advocate the American-style ‘democracy’, the bourgeois democracy. As you know, immediately after national

liberation General Kim Il Sung set up the slogan ‘Patriotic youth, unite under the banner of democracy!’ to pool the strength and wisdom of the youth and ignite in them the desire to build our new state. It seems to me you should put up the same slogan in south Korea.

“That way you will be able to avoid the disunity of your youth, rally them under the same banner, and launch a vigorous campaign to build a rich, powerful, independent country.”

As the representatives rose from their seats they expressed their determination to remember her words and launch a resolute struggle for the youth movement to follow the right course.

She excused herself for her lengthy talk and left the room for a while, then returned and conducted them into another room.

“You are guests in our home, but I have nothing special to treat you with. Please try the food I have prepared.”

They declined the offer, saying “We are honoured to have met you and to have heard your valuable advice. This is far more than we deserve.”

She took them by the hand and led them to the table, saying, “I should be sorry indeed if you, my guests, leave my home without sharing a meal with me.”

They took their seats, even though they felt ill at ease. The sight of the table surprised them: it was set with boiled rice mixed with millet, cabbage soup and a number of side dishes.

One of the representatives was a physician who had graduated from Severance Medical School. He expressed his admiration, saying, “I have made calls on many patients in Seoul, but this is the first time I ever saw such a modest meal.”

She said smiling, “The country is in a difficult situation, the General says, so we do not lead a life that differs even slightly from that of the people. I have served you as I do the General. Don’t think anything of it. Just help yourselves.”

They were more embarrassed.

Meeting with Comrade Kim Jong Suk left an indelible impression on the GFYMK representatives from south Korea. They treasured the memory of that day after they returned to Seoul.

Later they stirred youth workers and many patriotic young people in south Korea into beginning a stubborn and determined campaign

to foil enemy attempts to splinter youth movements both at home and abroad. As a result, the Democratic Youth League was formed in south Korea in April 1946. This was a great event in the development of the youth movement in south Korea and in the politico-ideological life of south Korean young people.

Years later, as I was passing through Seoul during the southward advance in the Fatherland Liberation War I happened to meet one of the “GFYMK” representatives on the street, who had been to Pyongyang in those days and joined the volunteers. Seeing me, he shouted with joy.

He told me he had heard the sad news of the death of anti-Japanese heroine Kim Jong Suk. All his comrades knew about his interview with her, when they held a memorial service for her in a secret underground room. As he grasped my hand now, he assured me, “Kim Jong Suk will live on forever in the memory of our south Korean people and youth. Her teachings and her warm image will live on forever as well....”

### **3. Training Us to Be the Loyal Vanguard**

#### **Her First Visit to the Guard Unit**

Even after the country was liberated, Comrade Kim Jong Suk continued to work in different local areas, including North Hamgyong Province, to give guidance to those who were striving to implement the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung’s line for the foundation of the party, the state and the armed forces. It was only on December 29, 1945, that she arrived in Pyongyang.

At the news of her arrival every guard-unit soldier was dying to see her as quickly as possible.

Those recruits who had enrolled after liberation pleaded with us, the veterans, to introduce them to Comrade Kim Jong Suk. They insisted that we the veterans were her old comrades-in-arms, so it mattered little if we meet her a little later, but they as recruits had yet to meet the famed “woman general of Mt. Paektu,” and therefore priority should be naturally given to them.

But we the soldiers who had fought in the anti-Japanese war were even more impatient to see her again.

What a profound feeling of comradeship had formed between her and us along the path of bloody war and during the interminable trip through the sea of flames and snowstorms! We had made a solemn promise with her that on the day of national liberation we would go to beautiful Mangyong-dae, the old home of the General!

However, we suppressed our eagerness, giving her a chance to rest up for a few days from the fatigue of the past struggle. But she appeared at the guard unit the very next morning.

It was Sunday and I was jotting down plans for the coming week in my handbook, revolving in my mind the question of why we had not yet published the wall newspaper for New Year's Day. This was an assignment from the great leader, but it remained unfulfilled until then.

At that time I was carrying on youth work and simultaneously directing work at the guard unit, so I felt little concern for its publication in the whirl of business.

I called the platoon leader and told him what he should do in connection with the issue of the wall newspaper. Then, as I casually glanced out of the window, I caught the unexpected sight of her familiar figure in the courtyard.

The neat military uniform, the sunny smile on her face... It had to be Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

Flinging the door open, I dashed out.

"Comrade Kim Jong Suk!" I wanted to shout. But no cry burst from my lips, for I was choked with something warm that filled my throat. I clasped her hands vehemently. Words failed me at that moment.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, too, looked very moved and gazed into my face silently for a while. "Thank you for all your recent efforts," she said.

Her compliment, though only a few words, brimmed with warmth that could not have been as strongly expressed with a thousand words of eloquence.

Saying I had heard of her arrival yesterday, I asked her what urgent matter had brought her to us.

She smiled and said, “Why, is this place forbidden to me unless I come on an urgent matter?”

Then she told me to show her my quarters.

Hastily I pulled myself together, ushered her into my room and offered her a chair.

As I sat down, she said she had come to find out how things were going at the guard unit.

Instinctively I straightened up, trying to look official.

Glancing around at us, she said she was impatient to know how we were getting on, and made a round of the bedrooms, the dining hall, the washroom, the playground and the sentry-box.

After the inspection, she once again praised our achievements.

Already she had a thoroughgoing knowledge about the enemy’s intrigues and the struggle of our guard unit against them.

Not a second passed without her being concerned about the safety of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung.

She told our guard unit: “Comrades, there is no difference between now and when we fought in the mountains as far as the General is concerned: he continues to work, unconscious of changes in the day and night. He rarely thinks of himself. Who should care for his safety but we, the guard unit? We must do our best to ensure the General’s security.”

She also pointed in detail to the basic duties of the guard unit and the substance of its activity, the defects we had shown in our work and the best ways to improve our performance.

Some time later, the director of the General Affairs Department (GAD) of the Party Central Organizing Committee came to the unit, having heard of her visit to us. After greeting him cordially, she touched on some problems needing immediate solutions at the guard unit.

First she suggested supplying the unit with new uniforms.

The General was being visited by a large number of people from all parts of the country these days, and more and more foreign guests were also arriving to see him. But the guardsmen’s uniforms were not in good shape, and so it was important, she said, that they be supplied with new, good-quality uniforms as soon as possible.



The director of the GAD thanked for her opportune suggestion, and said he would order new uniforms to be made as soon as the New Year's celebrations were over.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk smiled and told him she was glad to hear his decision to have the uniforms made quickly, but could he complete the task before New Year's Day? When fighting in the mountains, she said, guerrillas were accustomed to finishing this task almost immediately, as soon as they had been assigned to do it.

"Let's try and have them all clothed in new uniforms as they greet the General on the morning of New Year's day."

Her words were appealing indeed, and the GAD head promised to do it without fail.

She also touched upon our meals.

She had been told, she said, that the meals were not as good as before we had moved our quarters here. She had inspected the dining hall and the kitchen, and found both to be less than satisfactory when it came to sanitation, food materials and the cooking itself. She proposed to effect quick improvement there.

She pencilled changes into the menu personally, outlining what sort of boiled rice and soup were to be served, how special meals for Sundays should be planned, and what was required to maintain good quality and nutrition in the food...

While Comrade Kim Jong Suk was doing all this, the guardsmen gathered in front of the orderly room, having learned that she was there. When she heard that they had assembled outside, hoping to meet her, she invited them to come in, saying that she also had thought about getting acquainted with the guardsmen.

Delighted by her presence, they stood round her in a circle. She looked at each of them with affection and said that thanks to their devoted service, the General was able to concentrate on his work without worry. We should all pool our strength and continue to strive with one mind to perform our duties as bodyguards creditably in the future.

"From this day on I, too, will be the General's bodyguard, like you."

The guardsmen cheered loudly, honoured and happy that the well-known "woman general of Mt. Paektu" should say she was

going to become a bodyguard like them.

Moreover, since she had been hailed as a heroine of the anti-Japanese war, they had expected her to be a dignified woman difficult of approach. But in reality her voice was soft and tender and her character was a free and easy one. This made a great impression on them.

From that day signal changes were beginning to occur in the lives of the guard unit.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk was concerned about every matter that touched on the work and lives of the guardsmen, and her efforts were already bearing fruit on the first morning of the year 1946.

On New Year's morning, the first after the liberation of the country, the guardsmen, handsomely clad in new uniforms and high boots, called on the great leader to offer him New Year's greetings.

The respected leader Comrade Kim II Sung was immensely happy to see the appearance of the guardsmen, who had changed beyond recognition.

The table of their New Year's party, too, was laid with unusually sumptuous foods.

That day the great leader Comrade Kim II Sung inspected the special New Year's issue of our wall newspaper.

The wall newspaper was entitled *Beacon*. The lead article expressed the New Year's resolutions of the guardsmen for 1946. A cartoon depicted a young man, an old man and children rolling the Earth over pro-Japanese and pro-US elements, reactionaries and traitors to the nation. An editorial headlined "The Wheels of History" called on readers to crush all class enemies, and a "Questions and Answers" column helped guardsmen broaden their knowledge, particularly of current political affairs.

The great leader read it all with great interest and highly commended us and our guard unit on our meritorious work in general, and on our well-edited wall newspaper in particular.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, a serene smile on her face, was also looking at the guardsmen with approval, glad of the General's praise of them. I was filled with a feeling of reverence for her.

After her arrival in Pyongyang Comrade Kim Jong Suk deemed the guidance of the guard unit to be her personal duty-her greatest

revolutionary duty, she said, since the years of long-drawn anti-Japanese war.

### **Full Preparations for a Meeting**

I witnessed many cases when Comrade Kim Jong Suk directed the organizational lives of the guardsmen.

She used to say that the dearer the child, the harsher the rod. Although she cared for and loved the guardsmen profoundly, she saw to it that they lived under the strictest guidance and control from the organization.

The following incident is a good example.

Comrade Han left barracks without leave to meet his girlfriend in Pyongyang, thinking that he would be back by the time he was to go on sentry duty. He therefore slipped off without a word when he was free.

Han's friend, An, they had come from the same village-asked Han whether he had got a permission slip from his superior. Han told him he had not reported to the superior, but because he thought he could return in no time, everything would go alright if he, An kept it under his hat.

Comrade An let him leave, promising "secrecy".

Unfortunately, however, Han failed to return in time for his duty, having been delayed waiting for his girl friend.

It was time for the changing of the guard, and the chief of the guards went round asking where Han had gone. Many others soon joined him in looking for Han.

An now had to report to the commanding officer that Han had gone out without permission. The news quickly spread among the rank and file that Han was out without a leave permit. A while later Han arrived, panting, covered in perspiration, but he was too late to go on sentry duty. He reproached himself bitterly, thinking: I was on duty, yet I came too late for my shift. Was I crazy?

Then he thought it was his girlfriend's fault-she had exposed him to "shame." His logic was that if she had turned up at the appointed time, he would have been able to return before his sentry duty and then he would not have got into trouble.

Meanwhile, Comrade An was having difficulty in explaining to Han the circumstances under which he had been compelled to tell on him. Han, however, grumbled, "Everybody's the same. No one stands up for me."

He was in need of sharp criticism, I thought.

I decided to call a general meeting of the DYL primary organization to correct his error.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk heard of this and called me to inquire about our preparations for a DYL meeting.

I replied that I had told him to prepare a self-criticism and had also told many others to help him by criticizing what he had done. I thought this would be a good dressing down for him.

She remarked that the most important thing in preparing for this meeting was to decide the best way to help Han correct his mistake.

She emphasized the necessity of convincing the guardsmen that they now held a very important and honorable post. She pointed out that the act of Comrade Han, who had left his post at will without a word, and his resulting failure to perform his duty originated, basically, in a lack of the self-awareness so necessary for every guardsman. We needed to be mindful of this, when criticizing him.

If the guardsmen were to be faithful to their duty, she said, it was best for them to follow the example set by the anti-Japanese guerrillas. At this point, she recalled an episode that was already familiar to me.

It happened in our unit when we were in the midst of one of our long marches.

One of the guerrillas turned restless when the unit was to pass his home village.

His fiancée was living in the village, and as he marched past, he felt the urge to dash off at a run to see her. But on second thought he decided to follow the discipline of the unit and passed his village, clamping down on his desire to meet her.

This reached the ear of the great leader. The unit was already far past the village. Out of pity for the soldier, who had gone on without

meeting his beloved parents and his fiancée, the General ordered the unit to have a rest on the hillside and told the soldier to go back to his village to see them.

Drying his tears, the soldier rushed back to his village....

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that this example should be introduced to the guard-unit recruits to teach them that they should abide by the rules of the unit voluntarily, as the anti-Japanese guerrillas did.

She also spoke of the need to instil in them the correct conceptions about revolutionary comradeship at the meeting.

At the same time, she said, Comrade Han's going out without leave was caused at least partly because he had no trust in the organization and his comrades, and was therefore reluctant to open up his thoughts to them. Therefore, the guard unit should review its work in this respect, too.

Comrade An's attempt to shield Han's undisciplined and carefree tendency was an error derived from the fact that he lacked a correct view on revolutionary comradeship. Accordingly Comrade An ought to censure his own erroneous viewpoint on comradeship, and it would not be bad for others to review their own conduct from this angle as well. Thus we should strive towards creating a guard unit overflowing with fervent and genuine revolutionary comradeship.

Listening to her instructions, I felt how superficially I had prepared for the meeting. I had planned the meeting to be an occasion for browbeating a man for his faults, rather than a meeting of instruction.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, smiling:

“Criticism should be harsh. Sharp criticism means to clearly point out the root and the consequences of a mistake and to indicate the means to correct it. The one being criticized feels ill at ease while the criticism is going on, but once the meeting is over he feels refreshed, rather like a patient leaving the hospital after recuperation.”

When the meeting was finally held, it opened with Han's speech criticizing his own error. Many comrades took part in criticizing him, and I also spoke on the occasion.

Every speaker expressed his views in a sincere and fiery tone.

One guardsman said:

“An old man in our village who heard that I serve as a guardsman in Pyongyang came to me, supporting himself with a stick, and kowtowed to me. ‘Can anyone become a soldier of General Kim Il Sung, the peerless patriot and the father of all nation?’ he said. ‘Probably you are one of the soldiers familiar to our General. That’s why I bow to you, no matter how young you might be: through you, I pay homage to the General’.

“Then clasping my hand, the old man went on, ‘Let me touch your hand. If I were your uniform or cap, I could be there every morning and evening when you meet and attend to the great General Kim Il Sung!’”

His anecdote stressed the importance of our guard unit and the weighty duty we had assumed.

I spoke about the high sense of discipline and revolutionary comradeship prevalent among the anti-Japanese guerrillas. I also told of the voluntary observation of rules in the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, which I myself had witnessed. And I described the warm comradeship of the guerrilla who might not in the least compromise with the errors of a comrade, but if the comrade fell in battle he would rescue him by shielding him with his own body from enemy bullets.

Because I had spoken as taught by Comrade Kim Jong Suk, my speech got a good reception from those who attended.

Comrade An and many others, including Han, stood up time and again to criticize their own shortcomings and spoke of their firm resolve to acquire a better sense of discipline and the kind of revolutionary comradeship shown by the anti-Japanese guerrillas.

The meeting I had at first envisaged as only intended for criticism for criticism’s sake in order to “shake up” a faulty comrade, when held in line with the instructions given by Comrade Kim Jong Suk, turned into a vehicle for ideological education that exerted a good influence on the guardsmen as a whole.

From then on no one in the guard unit was blamed for such undisciplined practices as going out without leave, and the cohesion among the ranks became stronger because it was based on revolutionary comradeship.

## **Tenderhearted Care**

One early January day in 1946 Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked whether there was anything our guardsmen considered to be an inconvenience in their lives.

As I couldn't think of anything, I told her everything was fine.

After looking at me silently for some time, she said I deserved to be blamed for their inconvenience. Then she went on to point out that the guardsmen had no washroom, so that in the mornings they had to wash their faces in the boiler room. Moreover, since there were only two washbasins they had to wait their turn. They took special leave to go outside and have a bath or get their hair cut. And they had to ask the comrades whose families lived in the city to wash their clothings. "Don't you feel these things are a bit inconvenient?" she asked.

I burst out unreservedly, giving her my own opinion:

Did we wash our face in a washroom when we fought in the mountains? Think of the days when we rubbed our faces with ice and snow so as to wash them in the dead of winter! What a nice place the warm boiler room is!

"Right now we are working overtime to build a country. Is it right to complain of washrooms and washbasins? I think a bathroom or a barber-shop are insignificant at a time such as this."

She was dumbfounded by my reply. Then she said that it was good that I did not forget the hardship of the past, but I was a member of the commanding personnel, so I should not remain indifferent to the lives and needs of the soldiers.

She went on:

"When we fought in the mountains, we made great efforts to keep ourselves neat and tidy despite conditions that were far worse than now. But our life in the land of liberated Korea need not be so harsh. Now you live in a haphazard manner. Although you can improve your life for the better if you try a little, you dismiss comfort as a trifle. The guard unit should be a model for other units. If it's bogged down with inconveniences and lacks discipline, it will eventually be a stain on the General's authority and on the dignity of the nation...."

She then told me to have a washroom, barbershop and bathroom



built as fast as possible.

In fact, our only two washbasins often derailed our set morning schedule, and every Saturday morning the majority of the soldiers had to leave barracks to go to the bathhouse and barbershop in the city. One soldier was brought to task for returning late from a fellow guardsman's house in the city, where he had been to have his trousers pressed.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that the guard unit should carry out the construction of sanitation and cultural facilities through its own effort. If a certain task was difficult beyond their power, they could appeal to others for assistance.

As soon as I had been given this advice by Comrade Kim Jong Suk, I met with relevant officials and obtained the same number of washbasins as there were members in our unit.

"Hey, we got these things so easily. Why did we queue up every morning before?" remarked one soldier, walking lightly with a pile of washbasins on his shoulder.

As we entered our room, others wearing fatigues were leaving to get bricks.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk had had some rooms in the building of the Party Central Organizing Committee rearranged into a washroom, barbershop and bathroom to serve as a sanitation facility for the guard unit. I hurried over to the place to find it bustling with activity. She was already there herself, helping guardsmen to build up walls for the washroom. From the very start she worked together with us, until the facilities were completed.

In a few days a splendid washroom and bathroom were set up, as well as a room for the guardsmen to iron their clothing.

However, she did not confine her care only to this.

A few days had gone by. One morning as the great leader came out of his residence, he noticed the loose waistband and coat of the sentry and helped him tidy himself up, telling him to be more careful of his appearance.

Presently Comrade Kim Jong Suk appeared at the guard unit and saw to it that a large mirror was hung on the wall in front of the door to the orderly room.

I blushed for shame at this, for seeing the guardsmen in new

uniforms on New Year's Day, 1946, she had told me to hang a large mirror on the wall of the entrance. At the time I agreed readily, but left it undone over the passage of many days. Hanging a mirror wasn't a matter serious enough to worry about, I thought.

When the mirror was up, she cleaned it and said:

"The guardsmen who attend our General have to look their very smartest."

She also had a shoeshine stand with brushes and polish installed beside the mirror.

From that day on the guardsmen improved in appearance, being able to see themselves in the mirror.

Here is another story.

It was a freezing cold day with a violent snowstorm. One sentry was standing on guard without fur boots.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who was passing the sentry box, halted and looked down at his feet.

He told how things stood.

The guard unit had supplied every sentry post with a pair of fur caps, fur coats and fur boots but the soldiers who were going out into the city or taking part in various events sometimes borrowed and put on the fur coat or boots meant for the sentry box, saying that they were warm and comfortable.

That day, too, the sentry had readily granted his comrade's request to borrow the fur boots. The comrade was going out into the city and thought he would probably be outdoors longer than the sentry.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk went straight off to Comrade Kang, who was in charge of supplies. She said there was nothing she could do about the lack of supplies, but why should he begrudge the guardsmen these things? She then suggested that all the guardsmen be supplied with the same kind of fur caps, fur coats and fur boots as the sentries.

Comrade Kang was glad to act on her suggestion immediately.

Another time, on a drizzly spring day, Comrade Kim Jong Suk saw the platoon leader of the guard unit walking past in the rain and asked him why he did not wear a mackintosh. The platoon leader replied that mackintoshes were allotted only to the sentry posts because of short supplies. She asked him to wait a moment, then gave him the raincoat

of the great leader, which she brought out from her residence.

Seeing the platoon leader hesitate, she said that we were all one family and it was natural that a son wears his father's raincoat. She added that she would try to see to it that mackintoshes were provided to them as soon as possible.

A few days later high quality mackintoshes were distributed to all officers and men of the guard unit.

One day in mid-February, 1946, when the great leader sat down at the table to have supper, he noticed a plate of steamed meat dumplings. Without picking up his spoon, he called the aides and the platoon leader of the guard unit.

I thought he had called a meeting for some urgent matter, or was about to give important directions. But some time later, the platoon leader who had gone to the General's residence returned, carrying a large parcel wrapped in paper, and summoned all the guardsmen. He opened the package to reveal steamed meat dumplings.

The great leader-, the aides and the platoon leader, all ate the meat dumplings with gusto. But this reminded Comrade Kim Jong Suk of the guardsmen who were not present. Thinking how delighted they would be if they too were served meat dumplings, she prepared more of them in the kitchen.

The steaming dumplings the platoon leader had brought were prepared in the following way.

One day while chatting with her, a guardsman told her by chance that he loved the rice cake *songphyon*, which was stuffed with redbean paste.

Some time had gone by since that conversation. When she was told that the soldier had no appetite after a bout of flu, she remembered this, personally prepared some *songphyon* and invited him to eat it.

He ate some with a good appetite, then rose to take his leave.

She sensed he still felt somewhat uneasy because of her great kindness, and parcelled up the remainder, plus some extra rice cake, and handing him the parcel, told him to help himself and his comrades to a midnight snack.

## **Concern for a Soldier's Health**

One night in March 1946, the reactionaries raided the house of a Christian minister.

After liberation Rev. Kang, who had been a pious Christian from his youth on, and his fellow Christians turned to the road of patriotic devotion to their country and nation. They did this in active response to the great leader's line for nation-building. Angry about this, the reactionaries hurled hand grenades into his house after midnight, killing three people, including Rev. Kang's son and daughter, and wounding many others.

To keep cope with the emergency, the great leader dispatched guardsmen to the scene immediately.

A search for the enemy was launched around Rev. Kang's house. Our guardsmen surrounded the reactionaries at once and laid siege on them. The desperate enemy fired back at our men, wounding the platoon leader Kim in the leg.

Informed of this, the great leader did all he could to make sure the guardsman got good treatment for his wound. But the surgeon who had given first aid to Kim's wound stated that it was unavoidable; his leg had to be amputated.

This unnerved Kim. He stopped eating, aggrieved at the thought that his service in the guard unit came to an end. At the age of fifteen he had been awakened to revolution and had joined the struggle against Japanese imperialism under the influence of the small units and political workers of the KPRA, sent out by General Kim II Sung. Later he was arrested by the enemy, imprisoned as a boy convict and sentenced to seven years of penal servitude. He greeted national liberation in prison, then was recommended for our guard unit.

The day he was enrolled as a guardsman, his joy and excitement were beyond measure. He cried with happiness, holding the new uniform in his hands and renewing his resolve to live to the last moment of his life defending the great leader as his armed bodyguard. Being the person as he was, he was appalled when told one of his legs was to be amputated. It was an enormous grief to him!

The great leader, who was deeply sympathetic with the mental and physical pains of any soldier, visited Kim's hospital, taking out time from the pressing whirl of his work.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk accompanied the General. The patient was

unconscious from the great pain.

As the great leader stood beside his bed, looking at him, he, still unconscious, murmured in delirium; "Dear General, I'm a guardsman!"

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, eager to bring him back to his senses, shook his arm and said that the General had come to see him. This made him open his eyes, and the moment he recognized the great leader, he burst into loud weeping, like a child. The great leader, holding his hand affectionately, encouraged him, saying, "Don't lose heart, man. However much pain you feel, you must not lose the spirit of a revolutionary."

At his advice, Kim tried to steady his mind.

The great leader watched him with commiseration for some time and added that it had been decided to keep him on in the guard unit. So he should screw up his courage to recover from his illness. Comrade Kim answered that he would do his best to get better, thanks to the treatment.

Turning to the surgeon, who was close by, the great leader expressed the opinion that it was wrong for the surgeon to try to treat the patient with medicine alone. Nutritious food, he said, was no less important. He urged the doctor to give Kim good treatment so that he might soon return to his post.

After the great leader's departure, Comrade Kim Jong Suk admonished the patient in a calm, firm tone:

"It's a disgrace for a man to lose heart so easily, don't you think so? Our guerrillas used to treat their sicknesses unyieldingly, even when there was neither physician nor medicine, even when they were totally alone, with no one to help them. Some recovered from their illness like a phoenix, even if it meant sawing off his own foot at the ankle. General Kim Il Sung's soldiers never say die."

And in the place of the medical staff she applied the plaster to his wound and bandaged him herself.

Before long she learned that a renowned doctor was residing in Pyongyang, but there were certain rumours about him and this made hiring him complicated. She told the great leader what was being said about him among the people.

The great leader said: It's true he once had a hand in treating

Japanese aggressors, his wife is a Japanese, and as a general practitioner he owns his own private hospital and lives in wealth. None of this matters. The life of a soldier is important to us, so we had better consign him to this doctor's treatment, trusting him to do a good job.

Although I had been familiar with such examples of the great leader's magnanimity while struggling through the flames of the anti-Japanese war under his command, I was once again touched-by his great liberality and noble faith.

When we told the doctor of the decision made by the great leader, he burst into tears of emotion and excitement. His image is still vivid in my mind.

Afterwards, Comrade Kim Jong Suk called on the doctor as well and urged him to do his best for Comrade Kim. She told him to ask anything he needed emphasizing that she was ready to bring any medicine and devote herself for the treatment of the patient in any way she could.

Mastering his emotion, the doctor exclaimed:

"I marvel at the concern of the great General and the respected woman general for the health of a young bodyguard!"

It was a real wonder to him. He had never before experienced such noble and human love.

He tackled the treatment of Comrade Kim, devoting all his energy to curing his patient. He counted less on his medicine than his own burning desire to lesson the anxiety of the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

Meanwhile, on the instructions of the great leader, Comrade Kim Jong Suk exerted all her efforts to lifting the cloud that hung so darkly over the doctor's home. His wife was to be deported to Japan, separated from her husband and children because she was a national of the now ruined Japan. The doctor himself was on the verge of being condemned as an accomplice to the criminal Japanese imperialists. Nevertheless, Comrade Kim Jong Suk believed that the doctor and his wife were innocent, and reported this to the great leader.

The great leader finally appointed him to be the doctor in charge of an important medical establishment and saw to it that his wife was able to remain in our country with her husband and children, as she wished, to continue her happy home life.

Thus Comrade Kim's treatment simultaneously brought about a new life for a medical doctor who was blessed with the joy of starting over after being saved from a miserable fate.

Now Comrade Kim was almost restored to health. One day, giving us a parcel of drugs and foodstuffs to take to the patient, Comrade Kim Jong Suk remarked:

"Hot spices are no good for quick recovery from a wound, so I haven't brought spices. Tell Kim he'll have to go without them, even though it means less appetizing food. Warn him not to eat eggs. Eggs are no good for bullet wounds. Our experience in the mountains showed that eggs and edible oils are apt to cause festering, and retard healing. He must be plagued by thirst. Give him fruit juice instead of plain water. I'd like you to find out what he wants to eat most, and I'll try to get it for him."

Thanks to such kind concern on the part of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, the guardsman was restored to health and returned to his post. The great leader had promoted him to an officer in the guard unit, proof of his great political trust in and benevolence towards the young man.

Congratulating Comrade Kim on his assuming a new office after months of hospital life, Comrade Kim Jong Suk presented him with a new cap, uniform and shoes. When he left the hospital Comrade Kim went straight to meet her, clad in his new uniform.

"Bravo! Congratulations on your successful recovery, Comrade Deputy Battalion Commander!" She shook his hand enthusiastically.

But Comrade Kim, sobbing with happiness, could say nothing.

She encouraged him kindly and said, "Don't waste your time here with me. Go and meet the General at once. He'll be happy to see you."

Comrade Kim Jong Suk then hurried the young officer off to meet the General. She left him, striding off with a bright smile.

### **The Old Man Who Came to the Sentry Post**

It was at lunchtime one February day in 1946 that the great leader saw an old man walking back and forth near the sentry box. He told

an officer to ask the old fellow why he had come and also not to let him stay outdoors in such cold weather. The officer identified him as the uncle of one of our guardsmen.

The old man had to see his nephew on an urgent matter. Yesterday the father of the guardsman had died, and the guardsman was the eldest son of the deceased. Thinking that the eldest son should certainly be present at the funeral, the old man had set out to find his nephew.

All he knew was that his nephew was one of the guardsmen for the great leader. He began to comb through Pyongyang, knowing he would meet his nephew where the great General Kim II Sung was. Going from this sentry post to that, the old man had finally arrived at the right place.

But the sentry was not about to let him in, despite the fact that listening to the old man's story about his nephew aroused his sympathy. What held the sentry back was the realization that anyone could come here and tell such a story with some sinister aim in mind.

This was why the old man was hanging around the sentry post.

When he was told of this story, the great leader told us to treat the old man to a hot lunch and give him a chance to warm himself up.

He ordered that his nephew be summoned at once and sent home with the old man.

That day I hurried to meet Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who had called me.

She let me know that the great leader had decided we should take charge of the funeral of the guardsman's father. The old man and his nephew were to be sent home without delay and the platoon leader of the guardsmen and Comrade Kang were to accompany them. Our guard unit would be the principal mourners at the funeral.

Necessities for the funeral could be sent right now, she said, but in her opinion it would be better to consult the family first, then provide them with what was needed.

Prior to the departure of the platoon leader and Comrade Kang, she cautioned them:

As the commanding personnel of the guard unit of the great General they were to be polite in their speech and behaviour at the house of mourning and extend sincere condolences to the family.



They were to speak and act modestly so that the family could be frank with them in requesting everything they needed. And they were to tell the family that the funeral costs would be borne by the unit to which the eldest son belonged, so the family needed not worry about it. After that they were to come back at once.

After the guardsmen had left, she told me to inquire of the General Affairs Department director about the coffin which she had requested for the funeral and get myself ready to go with the platoon leader as soon as he and his company came back. Not long after my return from the GAD director, the platoon leader and others arrived.

The family in mourning was destitute. Immediately after liberation our workers and peasants found it very difficult to earn their livelihood. This family, too, was living in a shabby one-room hut, not having proper bedding or clothing to speak of.

For family of our guardsman, a grand funeral ceremony for the father was beyond hope, and their only wish was that the eldest son see his deceased father's face before he was buried.

When our comrades, together with the eldest son and his uncle, arrived in a car and entered the house, the family was struck dumb with astonishment.

Starting with the tale of his quest for his nephew, the old man boastfully related to what had occurred at the sentry box, the nice lunch he had been given and the details of his return in the car. All the mourners present were moved to tears of gratitude.

When the living conditions of this poor working family were described to Comrade Kim Jong Suk, she remarked:

“The wealth of this country is created by the hands of our workers and peasants. But their life is miserable everywhere. This is entirely due to the influences of Japanese imperialism, the landlords and capitalists. Today we must follow the word of the General and build without fail a better world where working people live in comfort.”

She said we should do our best for the funeral service. In this way we would help the family to be the envy of others because its eldest son was a guardsman ensuring the great leader's safety.

We discussed several matters concerning the preparations for the funeral in the presence of Comrade Kim Jong Suk. One of the comrades proposed having a modern funeral with plentiful

bouquets of flower and wreaths. He suggested skipping the troublesome effort of preparing foods to lay on the table and the trite practice of kowtowing.

Laughing, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said: "Of course it is outdated to prepare great quantities of food for the funeral service, but we must not be so hasty as to abolish it altogether right now. If you young people appear suddenly and start saluting, placing a bunch of flowers, this would be completely alien to the old folks, who would be quite distressed by your action. And our enemies may take advantage of this distress for the purposes of anti-communist propaganda."

Helping us pack up, she reminded us of what we had forgotten that we were to remember our manners.

She pointed out that we had not prepared incense and candles, and told us to take lots of bowls and plates with us, since these were also in short supply.

We loaded a large truck with the coffin, together with wine, dried pollack, rice, and bundles containing various foods and fruits to be laid on the funeral table. A good wreath was also included, plus several yards of parachute cloth, on Comrade Kim Jong Suk's instructions. This was because the family was poorly dressed, and we had nothing but this sort of cloth to take to them. She thought it all right as clothing material for them.

Loaded with these goods, we drove into the village, which was a collection of bungalows in Sadong District. The villagers swarmed around our truck, amazed, because they had never before seen such a lorry come roaring through the narrow street of their village.

Watching us unload, the people clicked their tongues in marvel, and the old man who had come to our guard unit was dazed with emotion. He said he could not tell if he was dreaming or awake.

Someone said to him, "That's because your family has produced a fine son."

But the uncle of our guardsman disagreed. "You're wrong. The son was alive before liberation too, but when did we ever get a chance to enjoy such a marvel? This is all entirely because of the benevolence of our General Kim Il Sung."

"Quite right. You've hit the nail on the head!"

Hearing that we had even prepared incense, a village woman

exclaimed in admiration that we had brought everything needed for a funeral. She added: "I thought guerrillas were the only fighters good enough to beat the Japanese, but I see now that no one could match them in etiquette and manners either."

We kowtowed in front of the funeral table together with the deceased man's son.

When young, I had bowed at the memorial service dedicated to my mother departed. I had had no chance to kowtow since then.

As I touched the ground with my forehead, I remembered Comrade Kim Jong Suk stopping us as we were about to leave and asking us if we knew how to kowtow.

At her question we all laughed: What was so difficult about it? "Then let's see just how elegantly you do it," she demanded.

Every man did it after his own fashion: one bowed only his head, the second threw himself down to lie prone on the ground, the third kowtowed once, the fourth did it three times running, the fifth kowtowed by placing his open palms flat on the ground, and the last one bowed with his palms flat together.

Smiling, she told the comrade who was best at it among us to repeat his kowtow, then suggested we follow his suit.

"When kowtowing, you must pay reverence to the departed with genuine sincerity," she added.

The funeral made a deep impression on many people. When it was time for our return to the unit after it was all over, the people of the village surrounded our truck, and every one had a heartfelt message for the great leader: "Please extend the best wishes of our workers to the great General!" and "Please convey to the dear General Kim Il Sung that we will all work hard because we hold him in high esteem!" Even after we had started on our way, they followed our truck a long distance, waving good-bye.

As we took our leave, we felt intense honour and happiness at being worthy enough to work under the care of the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

## 4. Kim Jong Suk's Lofty Image

### The First Garden Plot in the Residence

One spring day of 1946, after the agrarian reform had begun, I visited the great leader's residence. Entering the courtyard, I came to a halt, surprised at an unexpected scene.

The courtyard of the residence had been dug up to make a kitchen garden, and Comrade Kim Jong Suk was sowing seeds along the furrows.

I stood riveted for a while, gazing around at the newly upturned plot because I had already given her my opinion on the arrangement of the yard.

It was cold winter when she arrived at the residence, and the snow lay deep in the yard. One day, looking around the snowbound court, I told her that when it got warm, trees might be planted and various flowers grown in the yard so that it might become a beautiful garden resounding with the song of birds and overflowing with the fragrance of flowers. I pointed out that a wooden bench should be here and, if possible, a tiny resting place could be arranged there.

Smiling, she replied that it was winter now and she would consult me when spring came. But the courtyard had now turned into a kitchen garden.

Greeting her, I asked her why she had upturned the yard like this. She smiled and urged me to join her in sowing lettuce and spinach.

I took one of the paper bags containing the seeds on the ground and followed her silently, sowing.

Abruptly, she turned back at me and asked if I remembered the slogan raised by the great leader when outlining future tasks as he summed up the results of the agrarian reform.

Without thinking of what she meant, I replied:

"Let's greet the first spring of liberated Korea with increased production. Don't let even an inch of land lie idle! This was the message from the General to the peasants. But I don't think there would be a short supply of vegetables even if you didn't turn this into a kitchen plot."

I still felt regret because my pleasant dream had melted away.

She stopped working for a moment and said:

“As you said, this is the first spring of liberated Korea. The General appealed to us to greet this important spring with increased production, not leaving even an inch of land idle. A lot of thoughts crowded upon me as I mulled over the meaning of this slogan.... It is agriculture that the General is most concerned about at present. The northern half of Korea is short of cultivated land and the soil is very poor because of neglect by the Japanese imperialists. Under these circumstances, efforts should be made to grow crops well everywhere in order that everyone in the country eat and live better. This is why the General takes much pains to improve farming. By sowing the seeds of a variety of plants, I intend to help the General mature his plan on the agriculture of the country by experimenting with this plot.”

Her words stirred my conscience.

She continued:

“One inch of land. What a precious thing it is! As I sowed, I looked back on days gone by and tears came to my eyes. How this land has claimed our blood and sweat! As I prepare the ground and sow seeds in this first spring of liberated Korea, my thoughts turn to Hoeryong, Fuyandong, Chechangzi and the secret camps on Mt. Paektu. I see the faces of the comrades who have gone into the afterlife without seeing this day...”

Her eyes were wet.

I continued my work silently.

Some time later, Comrade Kim came into the garden and told me that she had dug and made the plot almost unaided. He said she seemed to be overworking these days. I blamed him for having kept all this to himself, and spoke to Comrade Kim Jong Suk, saying that she had better leave the work to us and reassured her that we would do it creditably.

She replied she was happy to work on the plot. It was not all exhausting since she was tending the soil of her liberated country; if possible, she said, she would have liked to hug this land that symbolized the ardent dreams of her comrades.

When the sowing was over, she washed the shovel and hoe and laid them in good order. Then she had a short rest with us, saying:

“These days as I live in my own house, tending my kitchen garden in a land clear of the Japanese enemy, I’m haunted by the images of my unforgettable comrades.”

Then she recalled the names of the women guerrillas who fell fighting early in January 1938: Pak Su Hwan, Ho Sun Hui, Kim Yong Gum, Kim Sang Guk...

As the great leader was advancing toward Mengjiang, leading the main units of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army, he gave Comrade Kim Jong Suk and some other women guerrillas the task of making the uniforms in preparation for the next spring operations in the Changbai area. They were to continue their military training and political study while doing it.

Because of the “Hyesan Incident”, the Japanese imperialists had keyed up their offensive to the harshest limits, so our revolutionary organizations were having to run the gauntlet. Under these circumstances, the great leader was drawing up a new strategy to bring about an upswing in the Korean revolution. In addition to the production of the uniforms therefore, he appointed Comrade Kim Jong Suk to take charge of the underground revolutionary organizations that were spread all over this part of the country.

So she stayed in the Changbai area. She started out her task at the Gan-bahezi secret camp to begin with, speeding up the production of uniforms.

In that secret camp there were two log cabins situated about two kilometres apart. The first one housed the sewing team members, including Comrade Pak Su Hwan; Comrade Kim Jong Suk and some other women guerrillas settled down in the second one.

“It snowed heavily that winter,” she recollected. “The trees were all thick with it, we could see only their top branches. Our cabins were buried so deeply, we had to dig a tunnel to get in and out. Our comrades were actually delighted with all the snow, saying it was a good omen for a bumper harvest.

“Thus farming became our topic of conversation. It was a miserable story: poor sharecroppers everywhere had to subsist on tilling someone else’s land without an acre of their own.

“Although they toiled the entire summer, they had nothing left but an empty winnow in autumn. Unable to afford a chicken for their

hungry children, they had to present a fine hen, which they had bought with meagre savings at the market, to their landlord on New Year's Eve to beg his favour for continued sharecropping in the coming year.

"I told them we should never forget this hateful, cursed past, and finish the production of uniforms as soon as possible so as to hasten the arrival of our country's liberation. When the country was liberated, we would grow crops to our heart's content in fields we would get through a fair distribution of land. Inspired by my words, all worked with good spirit. Comrade Pak Su Hwan sang a revolutionary song in celebration of the happy future.

All these comrades were killed a few days later..."

I had heard of their heroic death before. One day the Japanese "punitive" troops fell upon them. The six women guerrillas fought heroically down to the last bullet. Their last words were, "Long live the Korean revolution!" written in blood on a tree trunk. They died arm in arm with each other....

"Now and in the distant future we must never forget that our land is stained with blood and was won at the cost of our comrades' lives," Comrade Kim Jong Suk concluded.

"This is why I want to see this land laden in future with golden crops and fruits in abundance."

I hung my head. Although I was among those who had weathered bloody battles in the anti-Japanese war and heard many tragic life stories about the land, I had given little thought to every inch of our liberated land as she did.

It seems that experience does not always help one to open one's eyes, and one's consciousness rests on how well one has prepared for life.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk tended her kitchen garden for an admirable purpose indeed.

## **A Volley of Rifles at a Funeral Service**

The sickle is the symbol of the peasantry.

Today a sickle, a hammer and a brush brightly adorn the flag of

our Party.

Whenever I see our dignified cooperative fanners enjoying a worthy life as the main force of the revolution, the full-fledged masters of the country, the image of Comrade Kim Jong Suk comes into my mind: she always held them in high esteem, especially in the days that followed the country's liberation.

One late March day of 1946 she visited Kangso County in the company of the great leader Comrade Kim II Sung.

He was visiting the county to find out how the peasants lived and how things were going on in the countryside after the agrarian reform was put into force. But his visit was also directly connected with an unusual petition tendered by a peasant.

The peasant wrote that he was infinitely grateful to General Kim II Sung, the sun of the nation, for having liberated the country and distributed land to them. At the conclusion of his letter, the peasant pleaded for a certain landlord.

He wrote that the landlord so-and-so in his village was neither greedy nor cruel to anyone, so could the General please allow the landlord to continue living as before in his old home?

After reading the petition, the great leader was immediately suspicious and concluded that this was more than a matter of a simple peasant's "sympathy" for the landlord. There was obviously a landlord's dirty trick hidden behind the peasant's petition.

He decided it was imperative to wake the peasants up to the wily artifice of their enemies and help them exercise their rights as masters of the land. In this way the results of the agrarian reform would be consolidated even more firmly. This was the real motive for his trip to the countryside.

When the great leader arrived at Panryuk-ri, Pansok Sub-County, Tae-dong County, Comrade Kim Jong Suk introduced him to an old man, an erstwhile participant in the March First Popular Uprising. He was an elder who knew the opinions of the countryfolk.

On meeting the General, the old man prostrated himself before him and said, "General, how great your policy is! When the people were given land, they danced with joy. Now they are happy sowing seeds in their own fields. Our forefathers never saw such wonderful day. Allow me to kowtow deeply to you, illustrious General. You have



gratified the cherished desires of our peasants.”

Helping the old man up, the great leader said that kowtowing made him feel awkward, and it was not he but the state that had given the peasants their land. Offering the old man a cigarette, he said he'd like to have a chat with him and ask him about any complaints the peasants might have concerning the agrarian reform.

The old man, perplexed, asked what complaints could the peasants possibly have about the reform?

The great leader said that he was pleased to hear of it, then switched to the topic of landlords. He asked whether they kept quiet after they had forfeited their land.

The old man said there was nothing worth mentioning, but then hesitated for a moment.

Here Comrade Kim Jong Suk joined in the conversation, since she had already acquainted herself with what was going on there. She told him the landlords in the area threatened and bullied the peasants, telling them not to feel too happy, because the agrarian reform was going to be nullified anyway by the “central government” that would soon be set up in Seoul. The peasants were terribly afraid about this.

Nodding, the great leader reassured the old man. Saying that this was the deceptive demagoguery of the enemy and that no one could deprive them of the land granted by the state, so they had better go on growing their crops and stop worrying.

The old man slapped his knee and responded: “I'm very glad to hear that. Your words, General, make me feel much more secure. A few minutes ago I hesitated to speak about this matter for fear I might worry you. But now I feel relieved. I'll tell all our villagers what you said and I'll also appeal to them to defend our land with all their strength.”

Much satisfied, the great leader left there and headed for Songiri, Songthae Sub-County, Kangso County.

Before the arrival of the General, Comrade Kim Jong Suk entered the village to choose the house where the General was to stay. She also made inquiries of the situation in the county.

The great leader settled in at the house of the chairman of the peasants' committee.

Apologizing deeply for the fact that the petition had been tendered

by a peasant of his village, the<sup>1</sup> chairman asked pardon on his behalf, attributing the problem to his, the chairman's own poor work.

At the news that the General had arrived at Sangdong village, even the people from Hadong village rushed to the house of the chairman. It became a scene resembling a mass rally.

The General exchanged greetings with the huge crowd of people one by one. He then explained in plain words the significance and aim of the agrarian reform and the inviolable right of the peasants who had become masters of the land. He especially emphasized that they should never be taken in by the false claims and wily tricks of the reactionaries.

In the meantime, Comrade Kim Jong Suk chatted with some of the women.

She told them: "It's said that some people scared by the false propaganda of the landlords, are afraid of putting the three-to-seven system of tenancy into effect, despite the fact that they have struggled for it since last autumn. This is a mistake. Enemies like the landlords are only a handful, and if the peasants unite as one the landlords will be paralyzed. Don't be afraid of them. Just go ahead and put the three-to-seven tenancy system to work for you. And whatever you do, do not on any account yield to or be tricked by landlords."

She then went on: "When we fought in the mountains, the land was distributed among the peasants in the guerrilla bases. The peasants at that time defended the distributed land at the cost of their own lives against the continuous punitive operations of the Japanese imperialists. You should also fight to the end in order not to lose the land given to you by the General as your right. Now wild rumours are being spread by the reactionaries that the ownership of land by the peasants will not last and the land will be returned to the landlords with the appearance of the 'central government'. They even resort to such evil acts as murdering steady rural workers and Party members.

"But the reactionaries will never overcome the strength of our people. You should continue to act according to the General's instructions, defend your land steadfastly, farm as industriously as you can, and thus make a positive contribution to building the nation."

Her words cheered and encouraged the country women and

they resolved to defend the land given over to them by the General without fail.

In conclusion the great leader told the chairman that all the officials working in the rural districts should hold fast to the class principle and isolate the landlords completely so as to crush the enemy's schemes.

After this visit the peasants in the region carried the three-to-seven tenancy system out to the end and successfully finished their first sowing after the agrarian reform, doing all this in defiance of the desperate and frenzied manoeuvring of the reactionaries.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk continued to make inquiries about how the agrarian reform was going in the rural villages visited by the respected leader, and reported back to him.

One day she got the shocking news that the chairman of the Songiri peasants' committee had been murdered by the reactionaries.

Breaking this news to the General, she said that she would like to hold a grand funeral in defiance of the enemy.

Praising her for this good idea, the great leader suggested a state funeral for him. He admired the peasants there for their hard work, he said, and that was why the enemy had committed such a crime out of sheer malice. So the funeral should be held in a grand manner.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk made the arrangements for the funeral in person.

She summoned me and the officers of the guard unit to give us our assignments in preparing for the funeral. She said that as the General had suggested a state funeral, the ceremony should be an august one, with a volley of rifles and a brass band. At her instructions, I hurried with the preparations, and now and then she kindly looked in on our progress.

It was her advice that the funeral, though done by the state, should be adapted to traditional peasant customs. In other words, there should be a table for the mourning service, and the bereaved children should wear mourning clothes in order not to disappoint the peasants.

The day of the funeral arrived at last.

The house of the deceased swarmed with local peasants and people from neighbouring villages, together, with central officials who had come to bid their last farewell to a comrade who had given his all

to the rural revolution.

Trucks from the guard unit brought a band and a great many soldiers. They stood at attention along the path from the chairman's house to the tomb, forming a guard of honour.

The procession of peasants carrying the coffin slowly moved on, accompanied by a solemn dirge. Behind them came the procession of colorful wreaths and bouquets, followed by a large crowd of peasants and officials.

Songi-ri village had never seen such a grand procession before. In fact, it was a funeral service the likes of which the peasants of this country had never before witnessed. Before long a volley of rifles echoed through the air at the tomb. This was highly reminiscent of the solemn rifle volley given for departing revolutionary martyrs in the days of the anti-Japanese war. It was a resounding reminder that the tillers of the land, once the objects of illtreatment and humiliation, now enjoy a dignified and worthwhile life in this current period of history.

None of us would ever forget this funeral, held under the kind solicitude of the great leader and the warm care of Comrade Kim Jong Suk, both of whom had struggled hard to ensure that the peasants as well as the workers would become the main force of the revolution, the full-fledged masters of the country.

When I returned from the funeral ceremony, Comrade Kim Jong Suk emphasized once again:

“In connection with the peasant's death, we must not merely rest content with the successful conduct of the funeral ceremony. We should also look after his children and family in a responsible way.”

Soon thereafter she sent the children of the deceased to the Mangyong-dae Revolutionary School, and from then on favored his family with unlimited affection.

### **Why She Made Mugwort Rice Cake**

Right after liberation some of our youth workers came in for some criticism because after getting married they failed to make a home worthy of a revolutionary.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk could not overlook such trifles in the lives of our workers, but tried to rectify them.

At the time some of the young wives preened themselves on having such important husbands, and at the same time nagged them. This affected the men when executing their revolutionary tasks.

The wives of our workers were not all the same in their level of education. Some had graduated from a girls middle school under the Japanese imperialist rule, while others were illiterates from the countryside. Under the Japanese, they had been downtrodden and oppressed. Once the country was liberated they married men of importance in Pyongyang. This gave rise to unhealthy tendencies among them.

Through personal advice and by criticism at meetings, Comrade Kim Jong Suk helped them wake up to these shortcomings.

Here is an example.

A few days before the lunar May Festival, Comrade Kim Jong Suk went picking moxa in Mangyongdae, and also collected mugwort to make rice cake.

During the anti-Japanese war, she would always go moxa picking when spring came. She braided moxa ropes to be used in making a fire with smoke, and dried them.

In the summer nights she would create moxa smoke to drive away the mosquitoes, so that the great leader could stay up to work late into the night, free of mosquitoes even in the deep forest.

In the first spring after liberation, she again prepared moxa ropes to make smoke, as she had done in the mountains.

One day, when she said she would go moxa picking in Mangyongdae, I suggested to her that now the country was liberated, there might be a new and better method for exterminating mosquitoes than moxa smoke. She smiled and said that moxa was not only good for driving away mosquitoes, but also for disinfecting the house at the end of winter and fighting bacteria in the summer. This was why she continued to go moxa picking.

After gathering the mugwort, she wove it into smudgefire ropes of moderate length and kept them in the cool shadows, where they dried green. None could match her way of doing these things. Despite our efforts to model ourselves on her, we could not catch up to her.

That day, she brought home a small amount of edible mugwort to mix with rice cakes in addition to moxa.

Up to now those of us who were married often got together to chat and eat whenever we had leisure time. We did this by force of habit after our life in the mountains.

We usually met at the residence of the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Suk, not at the house of any of the comrades.

If special food was being prepared, the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Suk invited us to share the meal. Not infrequently she invited us to dinner, saying that we were looking too thin.

When we fought in the mountains, the great leader had been just like father to us. It was the same when we returned to Pyongyang after liberation.

At the news that she would serve mugwort rice cake, we looked forward with delight to a happy dinner at her residence.

But to our regret she revealed that the mugwort ricecake would

be served to the wives of our workers alone. But I realized her purpose for doing this: Since the young wives were not good cooks, she wanted to pass on her secret of how to make mugwort rice cake so that they might display their skill at making this cake at the coming May Festival. I was inwardly grateful to her for her kindness.

She wanted so much for us to have a happy home life; now she was even taking pains to impart her knowledge of cooking to our wives.

She invited the wives of newlywed workers as well as those of important officials. All were happy to accept her invitation.

She had piled up plates with mugwort rice cake, accompanied by *kimchi* pickle and some other side-dishes, and placed them all on a large round dining table. She then urged them to help themselves. The oiled mugwort rice cake looked very appetizing, and the guests ate with gusto.

She herself waited on guests with motherly affection, now placing a soup bowl nearer to a diner and now topping up the *kimchi* pickle juice. When the guests had finished the meal, they thanked her for her kind hospitality.

She told the guests that they must have tasted plenty of mugwort rice cake in the past, and that her cake wasn't so very appetizing because she had made it in the same way as in her guerrilla days. One woman told it was most delicious she had ever eaten. Another responded that it was really tasty and savory.

Turning to one woman sitting silently in the corner, Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked her for her opinion.

The woman was a newlywed from the countryside, who was reticent and honest. Looking down at her lap, she whispered:

“To tell the truth, it doesn't taste as good as it did when I ate it in my days of poverty.”

Comrade Kim Jong Suk's eyes stayed on her a moment. The other women stared at her, upset by her disagreeable remark. But Comrade Kim Jong Suk appreciated her frankness. She herself remarked that frankly speaking, it was not as tasty as mugwort cake mixed with raw cornflour, which had been so delicious to all during the anti-Japanese war. At this, the others chimed in:

“That's so because you were hungry.”

“She’s right. Nothing is appetizing to a full stomach.”

“Hunger is the best sauce.”

Acknowledging their comments, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said:

“I find these days that my taste has changed. It gives me food for thought that now I should complain of rice-mixed mugwort cake. All of



you also suffered hardships in the past. So you must have quite a few stories to tell when you compare your present life with the past.

“Let me take this opportunity to tell you a few of mine.”

Saying this by way of an opening, she reminisced about the harsh days of the anti-Japanese war.

“Today we talk about the taste of mugwort rice cake, but in the past your husbands struggled to overcome indescribable hardships. Have you ever eaten raw potato or raw corn as a meal? Have you ever marched for three or four days running, eating nothing but a handful of snow? It rained for days, and we would be thoroughly soaked, but we had no shelter in which to dry our clothes or sleep. Have you ever slept in the rain, leaning against a tree?”

She then told a story about a guerrilla who had given his only padded jacket to a recruit and marched in an unlined jacket in the biting cold of Manchuria during the Arduous March (December 1938-March 1939-Etf.). The soldier had no underwear, only wornout, unlined clothing, yet he marched for a hundred days. Imagine. Nearly frozen, he could hardly open his mouth. But he was willing to give his warm jacket to his revolutionary comrade. Do you think he did this because he didn't feel chilly or exhausted?

“Learning of this kind deed, the General lauded him greatly when summing up the ‘Arduous March’. Despite the hardship of that march, the good-hearted soldier fought well and now he works with us for the foundation of the Party, the state and the army. He has never assumed any airs of importance.”

Concluding her narration, she remarked:

“You should bear in mind to whom you are indebted for your comfortable life here in Pyongyang. You live in a country that was liberated by the anti-Japanese revolutionary forerunners, commanded by the great General, at the cost of their lives. Yet none of our anti-Japanese fighters boasts about himself. They devote themselves to the cause of building a new Korea just as quietly as they fought in the mountains. I hope all of you are deeply aware of this, and try to become revolutionaries like the anti-Japanese women guerrillas. You must prepare yourselves to be virtuous wives and mothers and faithful workers for the country through further self-education.”

Her words touched their hearts, and they were all resolved to live

up to her expectations.

Smiling brightly, Comrade Kim Jong Suk declared that her drudgery to create the mugwort rice cake had been well rewarded. She added that the fields were now lush with spring mugwort, so they had better treat their husbands to mugwort rice cake on the May Festival.

The women promised they would do so and returned home, elated.

Influenced by her words, the women began to cultivate their minds and actively helped their husbands in revolutionary work.

### **A Meaningful Folktale**

There was a worker among us who was criticised at the meetings on account of family troubles between his wife and his mother. The organization advised him many times to admonish his wife, but without results.

Informed of the fact, Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked me one day why the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law were not on good terms.

I told her that as far as I knew, they were often at odds over negligible matters, and the worst of it was that they spoke ill of one another before the villagers.

One day Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked the daughter-in-law over to her house to crack pine nuts. The young woman was glad to help her, guessing she was very busy.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk always kept pine nuts in stock at home and served pine-nut dishes to the General now and then. This was her favorite menu during the anti-Japanese war.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk watched her work for a while, then began to chat saying that pine nuts were nutritious, since olden times regarded as a tonic rich in oil and nourishment. It was particularly good for expectant mothers - an effective guard against miscarriage. She said there was a folktale about it healing the breach between two people.

The young woman, curious, asked her to tell her the story. Comrade Kim Jong Suk said, smiling, that though she was not a good story teller, she would try her best. She told the following tale:

Once upon a time there lived a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law

in a village. They hated each other, in the end going so far as to actually pray for other's death.

The son of the family was in mortal fear that he might lose both his mother and wife at the same time. At his wit's end, he went to meet his childhood friend, who lived in a village over three passes away. The son chose to travel the long way to meet his friend because he feared the trouble of his mother and wife might be known to the villagers.

The son quietly consulted his friend about the best way to patch up the quarrel.

The friend blinked with thought for a while, then suddenly brightened up and slapped his knee. He asked the son if he had pine nuts in his house.

Delighted at the affirmative, the friend said, "Wonderful. You tell your wife, 'Every mealtime, you sit beside the table and crack ten pine nuts for your mother-in-law. Continue this for one hundred days, and mother will go peacefully. Then family troubles will be over and mother, having one foot in the grave, will leave this world without pain'."

The friend added that this was meant to improve his wife and assured him that nothing bad would happen to his mother, so he could convince his wife without worry.

The son returned home and told his wife to do this.

His wife was glad to hear of this way to get rid of her mother-in-law and went to pick pine nuts.

From then on as the mother-in-law sat at the table, the daughter-in-law helped her to pine nuts, which she broke for her with a nutcracker. The mother-in-law, though distrustful, helped herself to the tasty nuts offered by her daughter-in-law, half skeptical over her kindness.

This happened every mealtime. The delicious pine nuts whetted the old woman's appetite and she grew healthier. She was very grateful to her daughter-in-law for serving her the pine nuts so promptly every day, and praised her daughter-in-law to the other villagers, saying that she was so kind.

The villagers, too, were impressed by the woman's filial piety.

Before long this caught the ear of the daughter-in-law, and the compliments delighted her. She became more zealous in cracking the

pine nuts.

The mother-in-law thought to herself that she ought to do something in return for her daughter-in-law, so she helped the younger woman in her work and lavished praises of her whenever she met the villagers. There was no more backbiting now, and, the both were busy speaking well of each other.

As the mother-in-law now held her dear and helped in her work, the mind of the daughter-in-law had slowly changed, about invoking the mother's death. She decided to stop offering pine nuts, for she was sad at the thought that if the mother died, who would help and look after her with affection.

One morning the daughter-in-law prostrated herself before the mother-in-law, begging her pardon. At this the old lady also burst into tears, saying that for an old woman she herself ought to have had better sense. Very happy at this scene, the son told her wife to keep serving pine nuts to mother, since they were good for longevity.

The daughter-in-law resumed her routine, sincerely wishing the mother a long life and good health. The mother-in-law, drying her eyes with the hem of her skirt, handed over her silver hairpin to her daughter-in-law.

Thereafter no more quarrels were heard between them.

Concluding her story, Comrade Kim Jong Suk quoted the maxim that mutual assistance yields love, backbiting brings nothing but loss. A young daughter-in-law should be dutiful to an aged mother-in-law who has suffered in life. A mother-in-law should not hate nor speak ill of her daughter-in-law before the villagers. No clapping can come from a single palm and no quarrel can be made by a single voice. Both were to blame.

Listening to her story, the woman blushed, ashamed of herself and admitted feebly:

"I was wrong."

Comrade Kim Jong Suk encouraged her, saying "Take these pine nuts with you and help your mother-in-law to them every mealtime. She will be very pleased." She gave the woman a paper-bagful of pine nuts.

From that time on his home was no longer subject to gossip about family discord.

No one knows if the woman helped her mother-in-law to pine nuts, but it was true that she brought about a change in her life as instructed by Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

### **At the Bazaar**

One early summer day of 1946, I heard my name called in the street. I turned round and saw mother Kim Myong Hwa (an anti-Japanese revolutionary fighter-Ed.) accompanied by Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

These days Comrade Kim Jong Suk quite often went out among the people to listen to their voices. That day, too, she was heading for the crowded bazaar to hear what people from various walks of life said about the policies pursued by the General. I felt sorry for her because she was walking in the stream of people proceeding to the market through a sultry, dusty back lane. I asked her why she hadn't come by car.

Her answer was that everybody else was on foot, so why should she take a car?

She told me to come with her to the bazaar if I had time, so I accompanied her.

We wedged our way through the sea of people crowding into the market. She was beaming. The peasants had come with spring vegetables from the plots they had received through the agrarian reform. They were much cheaper than the year before. Sellers and buyers were all smiling broadly.

This seemed to be the harbinger of the first summer in our liberated country. The women were delighted at the early appearance of cucumbers, the old folks were willing to sell their lettuce and crown daisy, even forgetting to take money from buyers, overheated in talking about the good crops in their fields....

Comrade Kim Jong Suk, too, was immensely happy at this glimpse of our people's happy life that had come about, thanks to the General.

She stood in front of an ironmonger's. Usually counters of different goods were lined up under the same roof, but the

ironmonger's stood separate. Various kinds of ironware were on display as well as precious machine parts and accessories, including motors. Several men were chatting at the stall. One predicted that as the price of ironware rose, it would bring in a rain of money; another asked whether by the nationalization of industries; factories and enterprises were to be distributed like the land to all or even private-run enterprises were to pass into the hands of the state.

The discussion went back and forth.

One asserted it wasn't impossible to distribute the land, but the factories couldn't take that route, there was no other way but for the state run them. Another objected that if things went as the other said, things like rice mills would also fall under state ownership, and then the master of the rice mill in his village would be sorely distressed....

Listening to their conversation, Comrade Kim Jong Suk was lost in deep thought.

At that moment a jeep stopped not far from the ironmonger's, tooting its horn. I wondered how it had got into the alley of the bazaar overflowing with people. Like me, Comrade Kim Jong Suk was watching the jeep dubiously.

Flinging open its door, a fashionably dressed, thickly powdered young woman got out.

Instinctively my hand touched Comrade Kim's who was standing beside me. He responded in the affirmative.

The young woman was the wife of an "official". Comrade Kim Jong Suk was acquainted with her.

The woman began to saunter around the bazaar, a basket in her hand. Apparently she had come shopping.

Strangely, the ironmonger reacted to her appearance: At the sight of her, the owner of the stall got busy thrusting his goods under the counter. When I asked why, he replied that a few days ago when she entered his stall and saw the ironware on sale, she accused him of selling goods stolen from the factories and threatened him with harsh punishment. He added that undoubtedly she had come to take away his goods.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk softly asked him to tell her frankly where he had got these goods.

Believing that she was a housewife who dropped in at his stall to

buy something like a hammer, the shopkeeper unhesitatingly said, "The sources are varied. Some of them are stolen machine parts from factories, some others furnished by handicraftsmen. To tell the truth, the motors come from factories. We know this but shut our eyes in order to earn money. These days there are workers who pay money for machine accessories out of their own pockets, saying they need them for nation-building. I lower my prices for them. I am not a bad man, you know. Once the nationalization of industries is put into effect, I will bring all these things to a machine factory and get a job there. If the factories come under the ownership of the workers, we are the only ones who should run them."

Hearing him, her face shone brightly.

The shopkeeper was a conscientious man.

In this way Comrade Kim Jong Suk gained a deep insight into what was going on in the people's minds.

A while later, the woman returned to the jeep, her basket full of food.

Every one at the ironmonger's had a few comments to make:

"Where does that jeep belong to?"

"Who knows? No doubt a high-hat's."

"She seems a great lady."

"Nonsense. What's great about her? She lives in luxury because of her husband."

Giving no heed to what the others were saying, she directed the men who were loading her purchases into the jeep. I was really disgusted at her haughty manner and her defiant attitude even as she sensed that all eyes were upon her.

Suddenly what I had seen a few months ago flashed across my mind.

One day Comrade Kim Jong Suk and I were returning from the house of a revolutionary. On the way we came across an old man who was pulling with all his strength a handcart loaded with luxurious furniture. The load was swaying left and right.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk saw this too, and supporting the furniture, told me to pull the cart so as to help the old man.

I took the handle despite the old man's protestations and pulled it for a good distance. I asked him whose furniture it was. To my

surprise the old man said he was going to the “lady’s”. The furniture was enemy property.

The wives of some workers who had not been tempered in the flames of the revolutionary struggle seemed to vie with each other in taking away enemy property to their homes, relying on the influence of their husbands.

This was very harmful and might affect even their husbands, Comrade Kim Jong Suk said. It should be investigated and necessary measures should be taken against it, she emphasized. And here, today, was the same woman again, shopping by car.

She was gone, but I could not repress my anger at her behavior.

At that time an unexpected thing happened. Two young men came to the ironmonger’s to buy a motor. Suddenly they were delighted to meet Kim Jong Suk, calling her by name. All those present became saucer-eyed. Feeling shy, she was about to leave, avoiding them. But the young men were stubborn, saying, “Don’t you recognize us, Madam? You have been to our village....”

She stopped at the words “our village” and looked at their faces closely. She realized she had indeed been to their village, accompanied by the great leader. She then exchanged greetings with them cordially.

The young men said that they had come to buy a motor for a pump, and asked her why she had ventured to such a place as the bazaar.

“Well, you’re here, so what’s wrong with me being here?” she replied. Then she inquired how the crops were growing and how the peasants were getting along.

Impressed by this scene, the people remarked:

“Who is she?”

“She is Madame Kim Jong Suk, the woman general of the anti-Japanese war.”

“She is out here on foot, dressed like everybody else. A good contrast to the woman who was here some time ago.”

“Our General is a part of our people, so Comrade Kim Jong Suk is a part of us as well, as you can see.”

They were quite right.

To hear the voice of people and to make sure that all their wishes and aspiration were reflected in the policies of the General, she spent many hours at such places as the market place, unobserved and



unrecognized by the people around her.

### **Ryo Un Hyong's Impressions of the Great Leader and Kim Jong Suk**

Addressing a meeting, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung said: "As you learned in the film, *Following the Sunshine*, Ryo Un Hyong, alias Mongyang, came to see me from south Korea immediately after liberation. He was 60 at that time. Following the exchange of greetings, we talked for a while. Having thus renewed my acquaintance with him, I thought whether I should return him or offer him to a bowl of noodles at a noodle house. But thinking that he would be disappointed if I entertained him at a restaurant, I decide to invite him to my house instead.

"When I asked him to have the meal at my home he was very pleased. Actually boiled millet was all we had for him at my house. At that time our people were subsisting on boiled millet, and I was no exception. Boiled millet was what he got at my house, served with bean paste soup and a bean paste dish, prepared by Comrade Kim Jong Suk. Deeply impressed on our simple life, he returned home."

The General's words brought back in my mind Ryo Un Hyong's visit to Pyongyang in mid-February 1946.

He had been to Pyongyang several times, but this must have been his first visit, I think.

That day I had gone to meet the great leader to consult with him about a series of questions relating to further extending the ranks of the DYL. There I met Ryo Un Hyong, who had just arrived from south Korea. He had kept waiting for a while at the entrance of the great leader's office building, since the sentry did not know who he was. He was attired as a gentleman, with a cane in his hand. This was strange to the eyes of the guardsmen, so they wished to prove his identity and the purpose of his call. At that moment the platoon leader appeared and told them he was Ryo Un Hyong, popular in south Korea.

At that point I remembered that his name was often mentioned by those who had come from south Korea to talk with the great leader, so I examined him closely. Sturdy and handsome, though aged, dignified in bearing, uncommonly staring piercing eyes... I could see at the first glance that he was not an ordinary man.

The great leader received Ryo Un Hyong cordially and talked with him for many hours.

I waited to meet the great leader after his interview with Mr. Ryo was over. But the interview dragged on, and rising from the sofa in the waiting room, I told the aide that I would come later. The aide, who knew that I came with pressing questions told me to wait a little longer.

I said, "Probably the General will entertain the south Korean politician at dinner and spend hours with him. I think I might as well leave now."

The aide agreed with me, "You're probably right. Come again later."

Those days the great leader often met guests from south Korea and abroad. Each time he received them warmly because they had come across the "death line" (38th parallel). I guessed this interview was no exception.

On my way home I wondered when I would get the chance to meet the great leader. A bright idea hit me: I'd call on Comrade Kim Jong Suk and put my questions to her. Then she could get his opinions when he came home.

I turned around and headed for his residence. On my way I met a DYL worker coming from North Phyongan Province. He was an old acquaintance from the days when I had been working in the province, assigned to strengthen the local DYL organizations. He said he had been waiting for me at the Central Committee of the DYL, but I hadn't shown up, so he was coming to look for me. He told me what had been happening in the DYL organizations in his province.

According to his report, the anti-Party factionists were still insisting upon the line of the Young Communist League even after the foundation of the DYL. They insisted that even though the name of the Young Communist League had been replaced by that of the DYL, the work should continue to be done the way the YCL had done it.

And their spies in the DYL distorted the organizational principles of the DYL. They not only kept young people away from the DYL, but also crossed out the names of many DYL members on various excuses, thus breaking the unity and cohesion of the DYL youth.

His report increased my impatience to meet the great leader as quickly as possible. When I arrived at his residence, Comrade Kim Jong Suk told me that the General was holding discussions with a guest from south Korea over a meal.

I was at a loss: Had he invited him to his residence then?

Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked me why I had come, then told me to eat first. As I was accustomed to her kindness, I sat down to eat unreservedly.

Then I told her the questions I had to discuss with the General. Her face clouded and she said this was a matter that brooked no delay. She told me to wait for the General.

This was how I happened to see Ryo Un Hyong entertained at the dinner in the great leader's residence.

I glimpsed him in the adjoining room through the partly open door. He was dining with the General. He looked quite different compared to the moment he entered the General's office earlier. He was much older than the General, but very polite in his talk with him and heedful of what the General said, rather like a pupil attentive to his teacher.

When the dinner was over, Comrade Kim Jong Suk went in and said she was sorry for serving such a poor meal.

Ryo Un Hyong replied, "Not at all. Madame. Today I have eaten sumptuously indeed, a delightful dinner that I will never forget." He gazed earnestly up at her.

She whispered to the great leader that I had come to see him.

"Let him have a meal first. Where is he?"

Comrade Kim Jong Suk said that I had just eaten.

"Did he eat well? They say he's been sleeping in his office these days, snowed under by DYL work."

He then said that as he was busy, he would meet me the following day.

Next morning as I entered office building of the great leader, I met Ryo Un Hyong in one of the offices. When I came in he recognized me

and nodded at me like an old acquaintance.

I greeted him, “You’ve come early this morning.” As we chatted, he asked me how long I had been working with the General. He said he thought I must be a relative of the General’s, since I seemed to make myself at home in his residence.

I explained that I participated in the anti-Japanese war under his command and that I was his soldier even now. Then I asked Ryo Un Hyong for his impressions of Pyongyang.

After thinking for a while, he said what impressed him the most was the youth of the General and the fact that he was a genuine leader of the people. He went on to describe what he had felt during his stay at the General’s house.

When the General invited him home, he had guessed that the great leader’s residence must be a grand edifice, at least, different from ordinary homes even if it wasn’t a palace. But he was surprised by the residence. Little had he imagined that General Kim II Sung, who was well known not only in Korea but throughout the world, should live a humble life in a very ordinary house. In Seoul he had heard that the wife of the General was also a famous woman general, and again he had been surprised to see that she was a simple-looking woman wearing remarkably simple clothes.

Ryo continued;

“I was treated to a traditional Korean meal in the General’s residence -not boiled rice or meat soup, but a meal one can eat anywhere, consisting of food that is usually found on the tables of ordinary people. We ate boiled millet, bean paste soup and *kimchi*. What simplicity! Usually people try to treat a guest to a sumptuous meal just for show, even borrowing things from neighbours if need be. But the General served just boiled millet and bean paste soup. He told me the country had only recently been liberated and a great many state affairs were awaiting solution, so the livelihood of the people was still rather meagre. But the day would come, he said, when everyone was well off. He said he was putting all his energies into bringing this about.

“He’s a very sincere man, I can see that. As I sat at his modest table and listened to his frank statements, I felt deeply moved. He is indeed our great General.”

Even as he spoke now, I could see that he was choked with emotion. This was obviously a man of great feeling.

He continued: "I also greatly admire Kim Jong Suk. I have talked with quite a few renowned women, so-called Amazons, at home and abroad. But she was like none of them. Her political insight and judgement surprised me, particularly her simplicity and modesty. It touched me deeply that she did the household chores herself, not employing a cook or housemaid. As the Korean proverb states, whenever there is a general, there is also a good steed. This could well be an allusion to our General and Kim Jong Suk. The meal she prepared for me in person will stay in my memory for ever. Indeed, Korea has a great person in its leader."

Ryo was convinced he could see the oak tree in the acorn: From the General's residence alone, he said, one could imagine the future policy pursued by the north and see the course Korea would follow in coming years. He expressed unconditional support to and admiration for the General.

After this initial visit he was to come to Pyongyang two more times.

He trusted the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Suk so much that he sent daughters to Pyongyang across the demarcation line. As he saw his children off, Ryo said to them: "You must do as Mrs. Kim Jong Suk tells you. Follow her example and you will become persons of worth. This is my earnest wish for you."

### **The Story of a Letter**

On October 30, 1971, the great leader Comrade Kim II Sung welcomed the renowned political figure, Minobe Ryokichi, the then Governor of Tokyo Metropolis, together with his party, to our country. He acknowledged the great efforts the governor had made for the democratic development of Japan and for the friendship between Korea and Japan, and arranged a luncheon for him.

Minobe Ryokichi and his party were overwhelmed with emotion at the reception. One of the guests rose from his seat and handed over to the great leader a letter he had brought with him.

All those present wondered what the letter was, and watched with curiosity. It turned out later that the letter, which had come from a Japanese woman, was associated with the following story.

One day early in 1946 two girls in rags appeared in front of the great leader's residence and tried to gain access to the house. The sentry asked them what they wanted. They answered in poor Korean that they wanted to beg for food, being starving. Dumbfounded, the sentry told them they had come to the wrong place and suggested they go begging somewhere else.

At that moment Comrade Kim Jong Suk came out and saw the girls standing at the gate. Seeing her, they more earnestly begged for bread from her.

The sentry, embarrassed, felt the sting of remorse, for he had failed to send the beggar girls away. He raised his voice, ordering them to leave immediately. Restraining him, Comrade Kim Jong Suk approached and asked them why they had come here.

It turned out that the girls had been drafted into the Japanese army and worked as nurses in an army hospital. With Japan's collapse they were now returning home. They had travelled on foot from northeast China and now, having neither money nor food, they had been reduced to begging.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk took them into the house.

The sentry at once reported to the commanding officer that the Japanese girls had entered the residence because he had carried out his duty poorly.

I told him to be more careful on sentry duty and went to see Comrade Kim Jong Suk. When I opened the door, the girls were in the washroom and Comrade Kim Jong Suk was laying the table for them. I told her I was sorry for this occurrence. Blaming the sentry who hadn't sent them away, I told her that I would interrogate them. It was my intention to send them off as quickly as possible.

Holding me back, she invited the girls to the table. They thanked her and devoured the food without as much as a blush.

I was incensed.

"All the people in your family were murdered by the Japanese, including your brother. And what a great number of our comrades were slaughtered by them. Yet you're being so genial to them..."

I spat out my words in anger.

Laughing at me, she said jokingly, “Even liberation hasn’t mended your quick temper.” Then she added: “I’ve learned that they are the daughters of poor family. When still youngsters, they were taken to a Japanese army hospital in a far corner of China. How hard it must have been for them! They are now trying to get back home and their parents. But they have to wait because of formalities. Someone has to care for them, otherwise how can they return home?...”

She was right, I thought; they were in a pitiable situation.

Having finished their meal, the girls bowed to her over and over again, thanking her for her kindness. Comrade Kim Jong Suk saw them off at the door, telling them to come again when they were hungry. And she told me not to send them away if they came again.

A few days later, they visited the residence once more.

At that moment Comrade Kim Jong Suk was in the courtyard. She recognized them at once and called them in before the sentry stopped them.

They became friends with her and called on her often, feeling a deep attachment to her.

One day Comrade Kim Jong Suk asked them how they were getting along, then told them to come and stay at her residence until they were repatriated to Japan. They were beside themselves with joy.

Thus, they settled down at the great leader’s residence with no notion of who Comrade Kim Jong Suk was or where they were staying. They imagined that she was the kindhearted wife of some Korean cadre.

One day they learned the truth. One of them asked me, “Is this really General Kim Il Sung’s residence?”

I said yes.

Gasping, she said that they had had no idea of this, but that they were too deeply attached to the family to part with it.

Comrade Kim Jong Suk at once knew what they were thinking and said: “Never mind. I want you to stay in my home until you conclude your formalities for the repatriation to Japan.”

But they were shy of the great leader and felt awkward in his presence. Comrade Kim Jong Suk told the General of this, so the great leader talked with them one day. He said; “You are children of

the toiling people who groan under the oppression and exploitation of Japanese imperialism. Though you're Japanese, you aren't our enemy. We fought against Japanese imperialism but had no hatred toward the Japanese people. At one time we even had Japanese in our Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army. So make yourselves at home till you're repatriated."

One girl was aged sixteen, the elder nineteen.

They were eager to reciprocate the affection shown by the great leader and Comrade Kim Jong Suk, but no chance was on hand. All they could do was to help Comrade Kim Jong Suk in her work.

One day the great leader felt unwell, having overworked himself.

On learning this, the girls were restless with anxiety. Instantly their thoughts turned to the medicines they had taken with them when leaving the Japanese army hospital. They discovered the necessary medicine in their kit.

On second thoughts, however, they were not sure if he would want to take it. There must be drugs in his house, they thought, so it was unlikely that he would take medicine offered by Japanese girls. After much hesitation they broached this to Comrade Kim Jong Suk, who thanked them for their kindness and welcomed their suggestion.

The two girls then offered the medicine to the great leader, still doubting that the General would take it. He would probably be glad to receive their sincere offer, but taking it was another matter, they thought. However, he said that he certainly would accept the medicine they gave with such sincerity, and took it at once.

The two girls burst into tears despite themselves, so moved were they by the trust he had shown toward them.

Finally the day of their return to Japan arrived. The great leader personally looked into the necessary formalities for their repatriation to Japan.

On the day of departure, Comrade Kim Jong Suk presented them with new clothing, a nice sum in travelling expenses, and some bread. She was also so kind as to give them a map of their travel course, as well as identification papers signed by the great leader. The girls returned to their native home.

I had heard nothing of them since. Their memory lapsed into oblivion in my mind amidst democratic reforms, the Fatherland



Liberation War, the postwar reconstruction and socialist construction.

But that day in 1971, after the passage of several decades, the great leader received a letter sent by one of the Japanese girls via a member of the Japanese delegation.

The writer of the letter recalled with emotion that Comrade Kim Jong Suk had so kindly looked after them in her home, not minding that they were Japanese, and recalled how they were moved to tears on seeing the General gladly took the medicine they offered. Thanks to the care of the great leader and Kim Jong Suk, they arrived in Japan safely and were happily reunited with their dear parents, brothers and sisters. Now an old woman, she still remembered their kindness and always did her utmost for the promotion of Japanese-Korean friendship.

Greatly satisfied with the letter, the great leader said he was very pleased at the news that they had returned home safely and were exerting themselves on behalf of the people. He also wished them good health and success in their future endeavours to strengthen friendship between Korea and Japan.

The thought of the letter kept me awake all night.

What a touching story! Such legend-like tales have emerged because of the broad-minded, boundless humanity of the great leader and of Comrade Kim Jong Suk.

Such reminiscences make me long for the warmth and benevolence of Comrade Kim Jong Suk