

## REMINISCENCES

# Looking Forward to a Bright Future

—From "With the Century", Vol. 8—

KIM IL SUNG

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

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

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

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

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

To make matters worse, there were traitors like Rim Su San, who surrendered to the enemy and led them to track down the Headquarters of the KPRA.

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

But the shortage of food was the hardest nutto crack.

The enemy did everything conceivable to pre-vent even a handful of grain leaking into ourhands. Whenever we stored food reservesunderground in the mountains, they quicklysniffed them out and destroyed them.

The enemy also strictly controlled the foodsupplies to the inhabitants in internment vil-rages. When the peasants went out to theirfields, the sentries at the gates of these vill-ages ransacked even their lunch pails. In many internment villages, the food rations, clothingand ammunition for the army and policemenstationed there were kept in secret stores out-side the walled villages, and the locations ofthese stores were known only to the men whodealt with them. The store-keepers were theonly ones who had keys to the stores and, onlywhen necessary, opened the stores in secretand transported the supplies little by little tothe villages. The enemy took such countermea-sures because we had frequently attacked for-tified towns and villages, and carried away allthe supplies that we could get hold of.

The same situation prevailed in mining andlumbering areas. They kept food rations onlyfor a couple of days, or for three or four daysat the most, in those places.

When we were in the vicinity of Chechangzi,we ran out of food and salt. The 7th and 8thRegiments roamed around in the Antu arealooking for food, but in vain. So the whole unithad to go hungry.

We were so hard up that we had to eat frogmeat on May Day that year. In some countries,fashionable restaurants serve frog meat as achoice dish, but in our country no restaurantcooks frog meat. Occasionally, children can beseen catching frogs on the edges of rice fieldsor in brooks and broiling them skewered onsticks. But they do this not for the taste of themeat but mostly as a pastime.

Although guerrilla life was arduous, we hadnever fasted on May Day before. On May Dayin 1939, which we celebrated on the Xiaodeshuiplateau, we were even able to provide the menwith bottles of liquor.

On May Day in 1940, however, liquor was outof the question. We had nothing at all to eat. Sowe caught frogs in brooks to allay our hunger.That was how we spent the festival, so there isno need to talk about how we got along on or-dinary days.

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

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

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

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

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

The next day, the platoon leader took Jon Mun Sop and Ri UI S01, two of my orderlies, and Han Chang Bong to gather wild vegetables. The four men came back in the evening with a basket which was far from full of edible herbs. I asked why they had picked so few, and they said they had spent a long time, wrestling! I asked why they had wasted time wrestling instead of picking vegetables. They answered that the rustle of the spring breeze, the fragrance of the flowers and the sight of a soft lawn had awakened in them the memory of their home villages and their childhood, when they had frolicked on spring hillsides, so they spent the whole morning wrestling, in spite of themselves.

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

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

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

I could have meted out a heavier punishment in view of the graveness of their

mistake. None of my men had ever slighted his commander's orders as they had done. The irony of the incident was that it involved four men of whom each had had a strong sense of responsibility and had been more faithful to his duties than anybody else. They were in the habit of carrying out any assignment, light or heavy, with credit. To be honest, they were worthy of being held up as model guerrillas in our unit.

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

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

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

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

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

Most of the anti-Japanese guerrillas were optimistic. In effect, all the men and

women who took up arms to fight battles to the death against the Japanese imperialists lived with revolutionary optimism, knowing no pessimism.

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

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

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

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

In those days, too, we went through severe hardships because of a shortage of food. To procure food supplies, it was necessary to throw off the pursuing enemy. But the enemy's "punitive" force was close on our tail, so it was impossible to obtain food. Not even a rabbit was to be found on our way, for some reason, and as we were marching through a vast expanse of wilderness, there were no local people we could turn to for rations.

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

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

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

The men vied with one another to jump into the water. They caught crayfish in high spirits, as if forgetting their days of starvation. When their feet became too cold, they came out and stood for a while, and then jumped back into the water. All the men spent a pleasant time catching crayfish. Even the men who had been plodding on the march with great difficulty did the same.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The players made many slips, but the spectators did not blame them at all. Such

mistakes provoked louder laughter among the people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is meant by becoming a revolutionary? It means taking the road of struggle,

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

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

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

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

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

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

I made use of every odd moment to inspire my men with optimism. I used to say, "When the country is independent, let us go to Pyongyang and eat mullet soup and

cold noodles and then climb Moran Hill to view the Taedong River!" Then, the men would exclaim, "Oh, let us hasten the coming of that day!" giving clenched-fist salutes. They then used to fight with redoubled courage.

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

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

"Comrades," I said to the men, "although we celebrated May Day by eating frog meat today, we will defeat Japanese imperialism and celebrate the liberation of our homeland in Pyongyang by feasting on the soup of mullet caught in the Taedong River. The enemy is now making frantic efforts to destroy us, but we will never be brought to our knees. Let us all fight more determinedly to destroy the Japanese imperialist aggressors and liberate our motherland, with a firm confidence in the future and with the lofty pride of the Korean nation and Korean communists."

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

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

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

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

As you see, a commander's mental state is important. If the commander is

courageous, his men will be courageous; if the commander's belief is unshakable, so will be his men's. Just as soldiers' optimism is affected by their Commander's faith, so the people's optimism depends on their leader's faith and determination. This is the reason why the masses look up at the faces of their leaders in times of difficulty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Songs have had a great effect on my own life. It may be said that my life began with the Lullaby and that my revolutionary struggle started with the Song of the Amnok River. When I was crossing the Amnok River at the Phophyong ferry, I made up my mind while singing the song to win back my motherland. Whenever I sang this song in subsequent years I speeded up the struggle, recollecting the pledge I had made on the river.

In my middle-school days I myself wrote the texts of songs and composed the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

revolutionary fighters.

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

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

How witty and humorous the "guffaw meet-ing" was! People smiled even at the sight of the notice.

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

After O Jung Hup and Kang Hung Sok fell in battle, we gave two big concerts. The officers and men of my unit had never been so mournful and indignant as they were when those comrades were killed in action. On the day of O's funeral, an evening meal of rice and salted, roasted mackerel was served in the camp, but nobody touched it. Whenever she saw mackerel after liberation, Kim Jong Suk used to tearfully recollect O Jung Hup. You can imagine how sorrowful my men were when they had lost him.

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

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

The performance was an unusual one.

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

After the evening meal, the veterans and recruits, and the workers who had

helped us carry away the spoils gathered to see the performance.

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

Comical interludes were also interesting.

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

Conjuring Up the Spirit of Paebaengi was quite spectacular, but I don't remember who performed it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What did Pak Kil Song say at the last moment of his life? He said, "Motherland! I am proud of you ... Communism means the youth of the world... is the cradle that raises a bright future for the country... We know this so clearly that we face death with smiles."

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

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

All the fighters who laid down their lives onthe road of the revolution against the Japanese were optimists, with rich emotions and unshak-able confidence in the triumph of the revolt-ion.

Revolutionaries have an optimistic view ofthe future. They set greater store by tomorrow than today, and give their lives when in fullbloom for the good of tomorrow without hesi-tation. They are indomitable fighters.

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

Because of the imperialists' clamour forsanctions since the collapse of socialism in sev-eral countries, our people are undergoing seri-ous difficulties in many ways. We are facedwith grave challenges in all fields of political, military, economic and cultural life. It may be said that we are in a hair-trigger confrontationwith the enemy, in a situation more strainedthan in a war.

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

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

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

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