

Living Apart from the People Is Impossible

From "With the Century", Vol.5 —

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We felt one truth intensely during the whole anti-Japanese revolution: if an army does not enjoy the support of the people, it can never be strong and win a battle. During the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we invariably maintained that "As fish cannot live without water, so guerrillas cannot live without the people." One slogan encapsulated in a nutshell, "supporting the army and loving the people". This means that the people should defend the army and the army should love the people.

I have already described the active and self-sacrificing nature of the support we received from the people, when we were fighting in Mt. Paektu.

What was the source of the zeal and spirit with which our people defended and supported the army, a zeal and spirit unprecedented in the history of guerrilla warfare? What enabled them to support and encourage the People's Revolutionary Army at all times and at the risk of their lives?

We must seek the secret above all in the popular character of our army. Our army was organized by the sons and daughters of the people, fought for the freedom and liberation of the people and safeguarded their lives and property. So it is only natural that the people were attached to such an army and helped them.

However, the people do not defend and support, at the risk of death, all armies, whose composition and mission are popular. The people do not like an army, which purports to be "popular", but misbehaves and lacks discipline. An army can only enjoy unsparing support from the people, when it truly loves the people and is deferential to their wishes, defends their interests and protects their lives and property.

The Korean People's Revolutionary Army possessed all these qualities.

The public morals of the KPRA were based on the thoroughgoing spirit of love for the people. Every commander and man of the People's Revolutionary Army found a reason for their existence in the people. They felt that they existed for the people and that they could only be happy when the people were happy. Consequently the joy of the people was their joy and the sorrow of the people was their sorrow. The existence of the KPRA itself was meaningless and worthless, if isolated from the people. If we had kept our distances from the people, our guerrilla army could not have maintained its existence.

On the very first day when we started the guerrilla warfare, we regarded the embrace of the people as the cradle for our happy lives and the support of the people as the source, guaranteeing our lives.

As a matter of fact, the parent body of our guerrilla army was the people. Our parents also came from the people and the protectors of our revolution were none other than the people.

Consequently, we considered unity between the army and people as a sine qua non.

The army's love of the people and enjoying their support determined its existence more than the outcome of the battle. If we had not attached great importance to this, we would have been transformed into a "drop in the ocean" as the enemy used to describe us, and would have broken up, after falling back hither and thither.

When waging guerrilla warfare, we felt a need to codify an idea, which could serve as the regulations and codes of behaviour for the revolutionary army in relations between the army and people and between the officers and men, as well as in the everyday life of the army. So we formulated and made public the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

We drafted the regulations to strengthen the popular character of our revolutionary army, legalize its spirit of loving the people and maintain it firmly.

Admittedly, the People's Revolutionary Army was not a regular army. However, it boasted a military force as good and well-organized as a regular army. A large number of men could not be moved only by the orders and instructions of the commanders or on the strength of conventions.

The mid-30s marked a period, when the enemy stepped up the construction of concentration villages in west Jiandao and sought to "isolate the bandits from the people" to prevent the influence of the People's Revolutionary Army. The Japanese imperialists resorted to every conceivable means to drive a wedge between the guerrilla army and people and cut off the route, the lifeline of the guerrilla army, by which assistance passed on to the army. They left no stone unturned to disgrace the People's Revolutionary Army and blockade it militarily and politically, as well as economically.

They themselves knew full well that our army was genuinely popular and morally sound, and that our soldiers would not behave like the bandits and their army therefore paled in comparison. However, the enemy defamed our revolutionary army calling our soldiers "bandits". This reflected their craftiness and real intentions to impair the political and moral prestige of our army.

Whereas we regarded unity between the army and people as vital, the enemy persistently attempted to "isolate the bandits from the people".

The Japanese imperialists tried to denigrate the popular nature of our People's Revolutionary Army, imputing to us even those crimes, which had been committed by gangs of mounted bandits. In order to restore the image of the revolutionary army, which had been reversed, owing to pernicious enemy propaganda, and elevate its status, it was necessary to give fuller play to the popular character inherent in our army. To this end, we had to codify our demands and seal them in a document.

The organizations of the Independence Army, which held their own ground in various parts of Manchuria in the past, had left positive and negative impressions in their relations with the people. Sometimes the people looked unfavourably on the Righteous Volunteers Army and the Independence Army, mainly because they did not properly fulfil their obligations to the people and imposed too many economic burdens upon them. Some commanders of the Independence Army, like a certain company commander of Jongui-bu, collected an enormous amount of money and goods, under the name of war funds or contributions to the independence movement, only to unscrupulously misappropriate them for personal pleasure.

The Japanese imperialists even exploited such misdeeds, in order to slander and blaspheme our People's Revolutionary Army. They painted the Independence Army and People's Revolutionary Army with the same brush, claiming that all people waving the banner of independence were robbers, who plundered and misappropriated the property of the people. To clear ourselves of such a false charge, intentionally imposed by the enemy, we had to clarify the popular character of our army.

We also drafted the provisional regulations, because the number of army recruits had rapidly increased.

The KPRA never waged a battle, which might harm the people. Aware of this fact, on the defensive in battles, the enemy soldiers entered a village and offered resistance, by leaning on the walls of residential houses or on fences. However, we never thought of fighting, by relying on the villages or residential houses, regardless of the adversity.

This was also true, when our army entered Sandaohezi village in early summer 1934 prior to the battle in Luozigou. The enemy started to attack our unit by mobilizing a large force with a view to checking its advance into Luozigou. At that time, too, I intentionally ordered my men to beat the enemy by luring them out to a field, located on the outskirts of Sandaohezi. Otherwise, the villagers might have suffered. As we did so, we missed a chance to remove about half the enemy's manpower. We experienced similar cases more than once.

Even when they stayed at a village for a short time, the People's Revolutionary Army never behaved arrogantly under the pretext that they were fighting for the liberation of the people. No sooner had they taken off their knapsacks than they fetched water, made a fire, swept the yard and chopped firewood. I was no exception. We always saw to it that the commanders themselves served as a model for the men and educated them by setting an example.

In this way, ever since the first founding days of the guerrilla army, we regarded loving and helping the people as the most important duty and precept of the men of the KPRA.

However, at first, after our advance to the area around Mt. Paektu, some recruits frequently acted scandalously, jeopardizing the relations between the army and people. The recruits in our unit included former rural youth, men from the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist armed units and also those, who had defected to our side, after rising up in revolt in the puppet Manchukuo army. These recruits from different origins, who had still not gone through the elementary stage of drills, occasionally behaved, contrary to the traditional discipline of the revolutionary army and besmirched the honour of the unit.

The following events occurred, when our unit stayed for some time at old man Ri's at Liutiepaodong in Shijiudaogou. At that time the old man introduced us to a young man, his nephew, who had allegedly come to help him gather in the crops. Judging by his new shoes and gaiters, the young man had apparently made full preparations for the harvesting. Our subsequent talk was very interesting. He was extraordinarily eloquent. He depicted the special features of any object briefly and vividly.

The young man had been out for some time and came back in a gloomy mood with shabby gaiters and shoes. I asked him what had happened, but he hesitated and refused to answer.

I instructed platoon leader Kim Jong Phil to make detailed inquiries into how the gaiters and shoes had been changed. Kim Jong Phil subsequently came back and reported full of indignation that one soldier, who had defected from the puppet Manchukuo army, forced the young man to change his leggings and shoes, and that the soldier lightly shrugged off criticism, although he had committed such a preposterous misdeed.

"He had justified himself: 'The soldiers are having a hard time in the mountains for the sake of the people. Surely the people should take care of them, then? The puppet Manchukuo army do this about all the time'."

I was shocked by the platoon leader's report. In the bygone days there had been numerous instances, where the brass hats of the aggressor armies had legalized such crimes, as murder, robbery, rape and pillage in areas under their occupation, allowing their men to perpetrate such acts. During the Sino-Japanese War and Pacific War, the Japanese soldiers had even taken comfort women for the army to battle fields. The puppet Manchukuo army followed the Japanese army's lead, in maintaining ignoble relations with the people.

As the soldier had been unduly addicted to such wrongdoings as murder, incendiarism and plunder in an army, which specialized in these misdeeds, he considered it natural to exchange such things as gaiters and shoes with another man. However, in our People's Revolutionary Army such an act was a serious mistake, which could not be overlooked. As we regarded the love of the people as a strict rule, we considered such actions as heinous crimes.

I apologized to old man Ri on behalf of the revolutionary army.

"Old man, this happened owing to our failure to educate him properly. Please forgive us, although I know you are displeased, believing the blunder to be the fault of your own stupid son."

The old man started up and cut me short.

"When you say this, I feel even more ashamed. It is quite right to swap shoes for soldiers, who are fighting in the mountains all the time. Why on earth are you asking for forgiveness?"

After this incident, the relations between the old man and us became more friendly. Whenever we went to Shijiudaogou, we never failed to visit Liutiepaodong to see and inquire after him.

Our men went to that village and conducted a lot of work to obtain supplies. Once they came back with two chickens they had got there. I made sure that the chickens were stewed for infirm Wei Zheng-min. At that time he was staying in our unit, because his health had deteriorated. The man who had got the chickens said that he had not been able to pay for them because the owner had refused money. I asked for the name of the owner: once again it was old man Ri. The guerrilla was experienced in the procurement of supplies, but had not dealt with the matter very well.

I visited old man Ri, taking with me the man's platoon leader from the supply unit.

After giving a helping hand to the old man in threshing for some time, I made the platoon leader produce 10 yuan and say, "I'm sorry for my late payment for the chickens." In those days the market price of a chicken was about one yuan and fifty fen. Although the price for the two chickens was three yuan, we paid generously, because we wanted to help the old man. However, this only served to incur his anger. "I'm not a Korean if I take this money. The saying goes, 'He that does fear no shame, comes to no honour.' And this old man also has face."

"Accept it, please. If we had known that they were brood hens, we'd have returned them to you. Unaware of this fact we've consumed your brood hens, which would have hatched out chicks in spring, so we've spent all your capital, haven't we?"

Eventually we managed to slip the money into his hands.

Wiping away tears with his sleeves, the old man told us about a robbery two years earlier when he had been the victim.

One day he had hunted a deer. He had sold the deer to a rich man. On hearing this news, a crowd of soldiers rushed to him and rashly demanded money, producing their guns. He was robbed of all the money he had received for the deer, for they threatened to shoot him to death then and there. Since then he had said "No" at the mere mention of soldiers. However, when he saw how our men respected the people, he thought he should not spare anything for such soldiers. And one day he had heard that our men were searching for black hens. He said that he had given our men his two hens in a desire to show his sincerity at such a time, although it was a small amount. Now that he had received money, which amounted to more than three times the price of the hens, he had a guilty conscience that he had not fulfilled his duty as one of the people, he said.

On hearing the old man I felt that we were abusing his sincerity too much. Nevertheless, we could not disregard the revolutionary army's traditional regulation of unfailingly repaying the people's sincerity. Some recruits regarded the people's disinterested support for the revolutionary army as a matter of course; they disposed of the aid materials imprudently, without taking the people's status and living conditions into serious consideration.

A typical example was provided by the ox incident, which happened in Yaoshuidong in autumn 1936.

At that time our unit had stopped at the entrance to Diyangxi, Shijiudaogou of Changbai County. Then we were all having a very hard time, owing to a shortage of food. One day two recruits, who had gone towards Yaoshuidong to gather some dried vegetable leaves, came back with an ox beaming with joy. We then discovered that the ox had been sent by peasants from Yaoshuidong, upon hearing that the guerrillas were taking only soup made of dried vegetable leaves for their meals.

At first the two men had refused to take the ox. However, they said that they had been compelled to bring it, because the peasants had entreated them to accept their sincerity and forced the reins into their hands.

Water was already boiling in one corner. As they had not tasted cereals for many days, even the veterans and commanders, to say nothing of the recruits, were delighted at the thought of eating plenty of beef soup after such a long break. I also felt like telling them to slay the ox promptly, at the thought that my men would otherwise have to eat a bowl of dried vegetable leaves soup for their supper. However, after examining the decorations of the full-grown ox, sadly looking up to the sky, I changed my mind. The neatly made nose ring, the bridle nicely wound with red cloth, yellow brass bell and coins - all these bespoke the wholehearted devotion of its owner. I told the men, who were excitedly moving about, as if preparing to slay the ox, tear its limbs off and put them into the cauldron immediately, to gather in one place and then said gently: "Let's return the ox to its owner."

The men who had brought the ox looked up at me dumbfounded. The other recruits were also extremely disappointed; the smile disappeared from their faces. It must have seemed quite an unexpected order for such men, who had been appeasing their hunger for several days. I reasoned with the recruits, who were heaving a sigh:

Why are we going to return this ox to its owner? Precisely, because it is the precious property of the peasant, its owner. Look how dearly he has held his ox and loved it! This brass bell has probably been kept with much care for several generations in his family. Most likely the grandma of the family brought the coins in the strings of her purse attached to her skirt, when she was married and treasured them all her life. Our mothers express their affection for oxen in such a way. We should also return the ox, because the farming of the peasants in Yaoshuidong is largely dependent on it. What will happen there, if we slay the ox because it is the sincerity of the people, without taking this into consideration? The owner of the ox and his neighbours, who have become indebted to the ox, will have to do the work of the ox from tomorrow onwards. They will have a hard time of it in carrying the load, which used to be carried by the ox, on their backs and turning over, with picks and hoes, the fields, which have been ploughed by the ox until now. When you think of this, you can't feel at ease, if we were to eat this ox, can you? Almost all of you are the sons of poor peasants, so think of your parents, who are toiling away.

The soldiers, who had brought the ox, seemed to feel the pricks of their consciences. They said with tears in their eyes that they were to blame and asked me to punish them. Instead of punishing them, I sent them again to Yaoshuidong to return the ox.

In those days, when I received recruits I shared bed and board with them for some time. By mixing with them, I trained them for some time, before sending them on to a company or a regiment. It was difficult to do so when I received scores of them; however, when I received three or four of them, I kept them company for at least several days. In this way I could acquaint myself with their family circumstances, preparedness, characters and aptitudes and also adopt appropriate measures for their education.

Around October 1936 over 10 lumberjacks joined our unit at the same time. From the very first day I kept company with three young men from the new recruits.

One day, on their way back from sentry duty, they each brought back a knapsack of unhusked maize from a peasant's field without asking his permission. They said that, as even I drank only plain water at mealtime because of the unit's dearth of food, they wanted to pick at least some maize and treat me to plenty of it. I was surprised above all by the fact that, although they had committed an illegal act, laying hands on the people's property, they believed that they had fulfilled their duty as men for the sake of their Commander.

I could understand their concern for their Commander, but could not accept their sincerity.

"Thank you for your sincerity. Nevertheless, today you seriously harmed the interests of the people. You have picked three knapsacks of maize, without even obtaining the owner's permission. How is such lawlessness acceptable!"

"We're soldiers who are having a hard time for Korea's independence. So three knapsacks of maize are nothing. In former days the people in my village even contributed gold for the fighters of

the Independence Army. If any peasant has grievances against the removal of a few ears of his corn, he is as good as a pro-Japanese element." This speech was made by a stocky, short young man on behalf of the three.

They put in a word in turns. They showed no signs of repenting for their mistake. It was impossible to predict the serious mishaps and vices in future, if I failed to correct their mistaken view, that it was all right to encroach upon the interests of the people and boast about fighting for the liberation of the country.

It took me more than an hour to convince them of their error. Then I ordered the three recruits to take all the maize back to the edge of the peasant's field. A company commander accompanied them.

The party did not come back, even though several hours had passed. I was afraid that some accident might have happened. I went to the maize field with my orderly. The three men were sitting at the edge of the field with the ears of corn.

I asked the company commander why they were doing this. He replied that they were waiting for the owner.

I looked at the men. All their eyes were red and moist with tears. I was reminded of the first phrase "Ren-zhi-chu Xing-ben-shan" (A man's real nature is originally generous) of "San-zi-jing" (a Chinese book, in which each phrase consists of three words—Tr.), which I had read at primary school in Badaogou. As the phrase shows, man's intrinsic nature is truly beautiful.

Returning to our bivouac, I emphasized to the three men again: You should learn a lesson from what you have done today and love the people more ardently from now on. If we are rude to the people, they will turn their backs on us. Nothing is more horrible than abandonment by the people. The greatest tragedy for a revolutionary is to forfeit the love of the people. If we forfeit the love and support of the people, what shall we rely on in our struggle?

That night they did not utter a single word until they went to bed. I held the hand of the youngest man and asked him why he had remained so silent, maybe he disagreed with what I had said that day.

"No, not at all. I just think that ours is a really good army. I'll never do such a thing again." He pledged between tears to become without fail a good guerrilla and merit the love of the people.

Deviations, which were detrimental to the honour of the revolutionary army, were not only revealed in relations between the army and people.

As the numerical strength of the army increased, the regimental commanders and higher officers did not mix well with the soldier masses: they did not provide guidance for the lower echelons and merely gave general orders. Worse still, some commanders even claimed that, as the number of soldiers increased to several hundreds, the superiors and inferiors should wear different uniforms by rank and eat and sleep separately; otherwise, they said, extreme democracy might be fostered in the army, which would make it impossible to command the troops.

Some newly selected junior commanders frequently assumed airs, regarding themselves as very important dignitaries.

This happened when our unit, which had been active in the Changbai area, was marching at

night towards our secret camp, leaving the neighbourhood of Shisidaogou in autumn 1936. Prior to our departure, I appointed a scout party and told my men what they should beware of during the march. I laid particular stress on refraining from smoking. Smoking during a night march was tantamount to exposing oneself to the enemy of one's own accord.

When we were about to turn a mountain bend, a strong smell of cigarette smoke suddenly spread from the direction of the company, walking at the head of the ranks. Clearly someone from the 2nd Company had quickly lit a cigarette, the moment Headquarters in the rear of the ranks was not visible, as his company turned the bend.

Next morning I summoned the company commanders to inquire into the matter. To my surprise, it was not the rank and file, but rather company leaders Ri Tu Su and Kim Thaek Hwan, who frankly confessed that they had disobeyed my order not to smoke the previous night. When they buckled to any task, they habitually rolled a cigarette.

I sternly reasoned with them.

"Today I will not dwell on the need to refrain from smoking. What would have happened to our unit, if the enemy had surprised us last night on seeing your lit cigarettes or smelling the smell of your cigarette smoke?

"The anti-Japanese war we are now waging is a war of will power and discipline. This war represents a serious confrontation between our revolutionary will to liberate our country and the aggressive ambitions of the enemy to legalize and perpetuate its occupation of another country. We are now winning victory after victory in this confrontation, for the very reason that our will and discipline are stronger than those of the enemy and that we are incomparably superior to the enemy both politically and morally.

"What will happen, if such feeble-minded people as you frequently appear in our ranks? A military group with lax discipline and a weak will is doomed to defeat in a battle with the enemy.

"You pose as rare habitual smokers, but there are many heavy smokers among ordinary soldiers, too. When you smoke, they also want to smoke. However, not a single rank-and-file soldier smoked on the march last night.

"What does this mean? It means that you consider yourselves special. There can be no privileged individuals in the case of military discipline. But you behaved yourselves as if you were special. If we permit such a behaviour, this would mean that we condoned privileges for commanders. We do not admit privileges. If we were to admit them, the rank and file would not trust their superiors. In that case only unity between the officers and men and the spirit of defending the cadres and taking loving care of the men will suffer a loss. Is your mistake serious or not?"

Ri Tu Su and Kim Thaek Hwan said that they were ready to face any punishment, because their error was serious.

"I could punish you. However, that would be facile. I sincerely advise you not to repeat the same mistake. Regard this advice as punishment itself."

That day I assigned Ri Tu Su as "head of the no-smoking corps".

At around that time the orderly of regimental political commissar Kim Phyoung advocated

equality between the rank and file and their superiors, an extreme and undisciplined claim, vitiating the atmosphere in the ranks. Ho Pom Jun, the orderly, was a veteran, who was somewhat aged and had joined the armed struggle comparatively early. He had previously been my orderly, but Kim Phyong had taken him to his regiment, saying that he was not suitable for an orderly at Headquarters, because he was too slow. Kim Phyong sent his orderly Ri Kwon Haeng to Headquarters as successor to Ho Pom Jun.

Once he had been put under the command of Kim Phyong, Ho Pom Jun caused troubles from time to time, answering back to his commanders. When he was sent on a liaison mission by regimental commanders, he was sometimes disobedient. At their wits' ends, the commanders submitted Ho Pom Jun's matter to the superiors. If such a matter had been overlooked, comradeship between the rank and file and their superiors might have been damaged and the spirit of defending cadres might have flagged.

Taking due account of the aforementioned reasons and the new situation in our People's Revolutionary Army, we drafted and proclaimed the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. I think it was around the end of 1936, for this was the time when Kim Ju Hyon was busying himself, saying that we should not make light of the first New Year's Day we would celebrate in Mt. Paektu. Kim Phyong had compiled the draft, but it lacked the attributes of provisional regulations. Therefore, we made another draft consisting of 15 articles. We termed the document "Provisional Regulations", as we planned to supplement and perfect them in future.

The provisional regulations of the KPRA clarified in detail the character and mission of our revolutionary army, as well as the regulations and codes of action, which should be observed by the commanders and men in their everyday lives.

In the provisional regulations we paid particular attention to the problem of relations between the army and people and between the officers and men. This can be seen from the fact that all the articles of these regulations emphasize the popular character of our revolutionary army.

"This army shall be the KPRA, which fights against Japanese imperialism and its lackeys and for the restoration of the country and the freedom and liberation of the people."

This was the first article of the regulations.

The second article of the regulations laid down the organizational principle of our People's Revolutionary Army, stating that it was a genuinely revolutionary army of the Korean people organized by their fine sons and daughters.

The regulations described in the following manner relations between the army and people.

"Given that 'fish cannot live without water', this army shall fight for the restoration of the country and emancipation of the people, defending and protecting the lives and property of the people and sharing life and death, good times and bad with them and in concert with them."

The article on unity between the officers and men read as follows:

"The commanders and men of this army shall voluntarily observe military discipline and public morality in the spirit of protecting of the cadres and taking loving care of the men, as well as unity between the officers and men."

The provisional regulations also included an article, which stipulated that the property of the

Japanese imperialists and their stooges should be confiscated and appropriated for the anti-Japanese war and that some of it should be used to help the poor. Furthermore, the provisional regulations included an article, stipulating that a common front would be formed with those units, which desired to conduct joint operations with the Korean People's Revolutionary Army as well as with those countries and peoples, which sympathized with this army.

The provisional regulations also defined the military structure of the People's Revolutionary Army and the authority of Headquarters, with regards to the appointment and dismissal of the commanders at all levels; in addition they laid down the qualifications for joining the army, the procedure for entering and leaving the army, as well as all acts subject to punishment.

The provisional regulations prescribed the flag, badge and star of the military cap, of the KPRA.

The aim of the provisional regulations was clear: To attain without fail the historic cause of national restoration, which the people yearned for, by our own efforts, without encroaching upon the interests of the people, where the army and people, as well as the officers and men, would become one and display the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and strenuous efforts.

One basic emotion ran through the provisional regulations: love. In other words, love for the people, men and commanders should be regarded as an iron rule.

According to my experience, unity between the army and people or the officers and men comprises identity of thoughts and feelings, which cannot be achieved merely with regulations and principles. To achieve this goal, human feelings of caring and doing something for the good of others should be simultaneously shared between the army and people, between the officers and men, and between the rank and file and their superiors. The human feelings of love for each other and consideration of one another as dear and valuable are strong ties, which solidly unite the people's ideas.

We can quite justly say that the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army were not a rule or legal document used to control or supervise someone: they constituted an affectionate code of laws or charter, which linked the army and people as well as the commanders and men with warm feelings.

After the promulgation of the provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, we made sure that all the commanders and men observed them strictly. Following the promulgation of these regulations, relations between the army and people and between the officers and men improved, becoming more cordial and unbreakable.

Even in difficult circumstances, when we the commanders and the men were threatened with death from hunger and cold, we did not recklessly lay hands on any property of the people. And when we dug even a few potatoes, without obtaining the owner's consent in unavoidable circumstances, we left a written apology and money, which was several times more than the cost, either at the edge of the field or in the potato cellar.

When we entered a village, our first thought was to help the people. We never hoped to be entertained.

Even now I cannot forget what happened when our unit stopped at a village in Ershidaogou,

Changbai County.

At that time, too, I put up at a small straw-thatched house, which looked the poorest in the village. In that house an old couple aged over sixty were living, bringing up their little grandson as the apple of their eyes. Their son was said to have died before his time while working as a raftsmen, while their daughter-in-law had died of typhoid fever. Rain was leaking from the ceiling of their house, which lacked able-bodied people. The thatched roof had decayed and the earthen porch had crumbled. Consequently the house looked jumbled, as if uninhabited. On the first day I cut, together with my orderlies, some ten bundles of grass on the hill at the back of the village, replaced the roof and also repaired the earthen porch.

At the dead of night a chicken could suddenly be heard flapping its wings. I looked out, wondering if a weasel was taking away the chicken. The old man of the house was taking the chicken out of the hencoop with the help of his wife, who was holding a lit pine-knot. When I asked him why he was doing this at midnight, he said that he needed it urgently. There were only three chickens in the hencoop, and the old man took out two of them. One was a cock, while the other was a fat hen. In daytime we heard how the hen cackled for a good while after laying an egg. The old man tied up the two feet of the hen and the cock with a string. He put the hen into the kitchen and went out through the twig gate holding the cock under his arm. His wife followed him; I don't know why. They did not come back in even two or three hours.

I waited for them, sitting on the earthen porch. The old couple only made their appearance towards daybreak. They were extremely crestfallen. The cock was still under the old man's arm.

"Old man, where have you been, and why have you only come back now?"

"We've been to all fifty-odd houses of the village," said the old man, putting the cock down on the earthen porch.

I asked him why they had taken such trouble in the middle of the night.

"We learned that the name of your Commander is Kim II Sung. So we've been looking for the house, where he is boarding and lodging, but failed to find it."

"Why are you looking for that house?"

"We want to tell your Commander about your commendable deed and bow low to him. Indebted as we are to you, we can't sit back with folded arms, can we? We wish to treat your Commander at least to a rooster, although it's nothing special, but...."

The old couple had first gone to the landlord in the village. He said that he expected the Commander to be staying in the largest house in the village.

They also visited the house of the landlord's agent, the second largest one in the village. Then they visited, one after another, all fifty-odd houses of the village. The old man said that all the villagers had treated him and his wife badly, because they lived in poverty with no one to rely on.

"It is true that we can't appear before your Commander in these clothes. However, they're going too far. Some even went so far as to tease us, saying, 'Well, he's in your house, and yet you're looking for him here!' Tell me, please, which house is your Commander staying at?"

It was clear that, even after visiting the whole village, the old man could not imagine that the man he was anxiously looking for was putting up at his own house. As the old man was very much

anxious to learn my whereabouts, I disclosed my identity. But the old man did not believe me. He said that it could not be true.

He said: "In the past when the soldiers of the Independence Army frequented my village, even a company commander used to stay in the largest house, making people slay an ox and hold a drinking party. How can the Commander stop at such a humble house as mine? Moreover, how can the Commander replace our roof, repair our earthen porch and enjoy sorghum gruel? Clearly you also despise us and conceal his whereabouts," he went on, greatly displeased.

The old man acknowledged my identity only after hearing the truth from my orderly the following day. We barely managed to dissuade the old couple from killing their rooster for us and left the village. Similar incidents happened on many occasions.

The provisional regulations of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army demonstrated our great viability in consolidating unity between the army and people.

If we had failed to establish in our ranks the spirit of loving the people and serving them devotedly, we would not have endured the manifold hardships and might have abandoned the revolution halfway in those stern and trying days, when the destiny of the People's Revolutionary Army and our own existence was constantly at risk.

After the promulgation of the provisional regulations of the KPRA, a new advance was also made in the unity between the officers and men in our revolutionary army.

As the commanders we got into the habit of sharing good times and bad with the men. When the men ate gruel, so did the commanders; when the men slept on tree leaves in the snow, so did the commanders.

All the commanding personnel of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, from the Commander down to platoon leaders, strictly guarded against and opposed the "small pot".

The terms "large pot" and "small pot" emerged in the Kuomintang Army of Jiang Jie-shi. In this army an officer regarded it as natural to have food specially prepared in a small pot separately from the large one, where ordinary men prepared their meals. The Japanese army went to extremes, strictly discriminating between the rank and file and their superiors and unconditionally treating the superiors with preference and categorically treating the rank and file coldly. In this army, when one rose to at least the rank of corporal, one did as one pleased, enforcing such barbarous discipline and punishment to the rank and file as making them lick the soles of his feet or shoes.

The KPRA never permitted such a "small pot". If there is a "small pot", it will inevitably engender a special section, which will enjoy the privilege of eating special food. Then a difference will inevitably be created between this special section and the rank and file, who have to eat from a large pot. If someone exercises discrimination and fosters inequality in food, but talks glibly about equality for all, no one will support and follow such a hypocrite.

We made it an iron rule for all the commanders, irrespective of rank, to share with the rank and file food from the same pot at all times, in all places and in all circumstances. Everyone shared food from the same pot: this constituted the inviolable discipline and ethics of the People's Revolutionary Army.

As everyone shared the same food, clothing and bedding, the commanders authorized to take

care of the men, were frequently given less to eat, dressed more poorly and had worse bedding than the men.

Today we also oppose the "small pot". Although this happened long ago, at one time many restaurants in the capital and provinces kept a separate room to serve cadres with special food. Although the central authorities warned them many times to refrain from maintaining a separate room, the people working in public service persisted in keeping a "small pot". In the end such individuals, who were being disloyal to the people, assumed the air of being special.

Some officials, guided by their subordinates to a separate room or reception room for distinguished guests, considered it natural and wanted to receive special treatment.

We do not support the "small pot", as this will engender all kinds of "evil spirits". The "small pot" will only produce capitalist ideas. If we were to retain such a "small pot", relations between the Party and the masses would be impaired and the people might forsake their belief in socialism. The strength of our socialism has to do mainly with the fact that our Party has not become bureaucratic and we do not allow the "small pot".

Loyalty to the people always underlies all policies formulated and carried out by the Workers' Party of Korea. Loyalty to the people is the main factor underlying the character of our Party, army and state. Through our own experience we have confirmed the truth that a party and army, which considers loyalty to the people as the main mode of existence, is ever-victorious. The existence of a handful of privileged circles is not humanism; it is open expression of the anti-popular spirit.

In a capitalist army genuine relations between the army and people, between comrades and between the rank and file and their superiors do not exist, nor can they exist. Only coercion, deception, conflict, confrontation, blind obedience and belief can exist. Sadly in the army of an imperialist state it is difficult to find, even among rank and file, the beautiful trait inherent in human beings, the trait of serving others' interests and caring for others.

"Eat first. If you don't eat him, he'll eat you!" This is the philosophy of life which officers in the armies of capitalist countries use to indoctrinate their men. According to this philosophy, all other beings except "myself" are enemies and should be eaten up. Allegedly, towards the end of the Second World War, the Japanese soldiers on the New Guinean front caught human beings and ate their flesh, when they ran out of food.

Even today the armies of capitalist countries foster a brutal mode of life, the "law of the jungle", among the soldiers.

The unity between the army and people and between the officers and men was further consolidated during the implementation of the provisional regulations of the KPRA. The traditions of this unity are now being implemented in full under the correct leadership of our Party.

The soldiers of our People's Army regard it as their greatest pleasure to love and help the people. Now it is commonplace everywhere in our country that the army helps the people and the people assist the army.

As we frequently hear and see in newspapers and on TV, our girls volunteer to become the eyes and limbs of disabled soldiers, who were wounded while defending their country. I feel the greatest happiness at seeing the unity between the army and people, which is displayed more fully with the

passage of time.

The People's Army continues to consolidate the traditions of unity between the officers and men.

Today the commanding officers of our People's Army treasure and love their men like their children or younger brothers. Many of them have rescued their men heroically at the risk of their own lives. The men regard their company commander as their eldest brother and company political instructor as their eldest sister. Relations between the rank and file and their superiors in the company, the main combat unit of our People's Army, are so close.

Our country has a powerful weapon which we can justifiably be proud of in the eyes of the world. I am referring here to the unity between the army and people and the unity between the officers and rank and file.

Such a powerful weapon cannot be made by any military science or technology. It can only be made by genuine love.