



SAGA OF RESISTANCE TO JAPANESE INVASION



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Preface

The Chinese people suffered long under the yoke of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. They lived in the depth of untold misery, suffering and privation. In striving for their liberation, the Chinese people carried on a bitter but brilliant struggle for many years under the most adverse conditions. They wrote innumerable stories of their spectacular and heroic deeds in sweat and blood. Many of our friends in foreign countries are interested in these stories. From these accounts, narratives and episodes they want to understand the great sorrows the Chinese people experienced, the perilous and rugged paths they travelled and how, step by step, they succeeded in securing the ultimate great victory. We are now publishing a series of books, in several foreign languages, with these stories. The stories relate actual events in which the authors participated. This book is one of several volumes in this series.

In this book, we have selected stories of the period of the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression (1937-45). To help our readers understand these stories better, we present a brief resume of the history of the anti-Japanese war.

During the hundred years prior to liberation, China was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial country partitioned by many imperialist powers. From 1931, the Japanese imperialists tried to turn China into a colony

under their absolute hegemony. On September 18, 1931, Japanese troops stationed in Northeast China launched an attack on Shenyang (Mukden). Because Chiang Kai-shek pursued a policy of "non-resistance," the three provinces in the Northeast fell into the hands of the Japanese in the short time of three months. On January 28, 1932, Japanese troops struck once again at Shanghai. Japan then extended her conquests. In 1933, she attacked Jehol and the northern part of Chahar. In 1935, she followed up her early successes with an invasion of the eastern part of Hopei Province. The position of China was daily deteriorating and the entire Chinese people were on the brink of national subjugation.

The masses of people rose in unbridled fury. They demanded firm resistance to Japanese aggression. Workers in Shanghai, Canton and other cities staged strikes in protest against the Japanese invasion. People all over the country spontaneously boycotted Japanese goods. Huge anti-Japanese meetings and demonstrations were staged in many towns and cities throughout the country. In December 1931, some thirty thousand students of Shanghai, Peking and Tientsin went to Nanking, strongly protesting to the Kuomintang regime against its policy of compromise with, and capitulation to, the Japanese imperialists.

The Chinese Communist Party was the first to appeal for armed resistance. On September 22, 1931, the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army issued a proclamation calling for "mobilization of the masses to resist the aggression of the Japanese imperialists . . . and the setting up of a guerrilla corps in the Northeast to fight the Japanese imperialists directly." After the fall of the Northeast, the Chinese Com-

munist Party helped the people of Northeast China set up an Anti-Japanese Volunteers' Corps (this was later reorganized into the Allied Northeast Anti-Japanese Army), and gave leadership to the forces. They heroically and perseveringly waged long-drawn-out guerrilla warfare against the Japanese in the snow-bound Northeast. On April 15, 1932, war was formally declared on Japan by the Central Workers' and Peasants' Democratic Government at Juichin, Kiangsi Province. It called upon and led the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army as well as the vast masses of oppressed people to undertake a national revolutionary war against the Japanese invaders. In January 1933, the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army issued another important proclamation, asserting its readiness to stop fighting and negotiate with the Kuomintang and other warlords, with a view to rallying all forces against the Japanese, on the conditions that all attacks against the Red Army be ceased, that the rights of the people be guaranteed and that the masses be armed. In answer to these just demands, however, Chiang Kai-shek launched full-scale encirclement campaigns against the Red Army. On August 1, 1935, in the course of the incredibly difficult Long March, the Chinese Communist Party issued an "appeal to all countrymen to fight against the Japanese invaders and save the motherland." It called for establishment of a national anti-Japanese united front and put forward a "Ten-Point Programme" to save the nation.

Since the Japanese invaders had penetrated deeper into North China, saving the nation from utter ruin had become the pressing demand of the Chinese people of all walks of life. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, students in Peking held a big anti-Japanese

demonstration on December 9, 1935. This patriotic movement quickly swept the whole country. It created an unparalleled high tide in the struggle against Japan and for democracy. Exerting all its efforts for the realization of the programme the Communist Party had advocated, the Red Army marched eastward from northern Shensi Province in February 1936, in an effort to get to Hopei Province to fight the Japanese. But this attempt was thwarted by Chiang Kai-shek's intervention. When he sent out large forces to check its advance, the Red Army had no alternative but to return to northern Shensi.

With the ultimate aim of subjugating all of China, the Japanese imperialists launched a new attack at Lukou-chiao (Marco Polo Bridge) near Peking on July 7, 1937. On August 13, they raided Shanghai. The very life of the nation was at stake. The day following the "July 7 Incident" the Chinese Communist Party addressed an appeal to the nation, calling upon the people as a whole to carry out armed resistance. Chiang Kai-shek wavered and hesitated, but was finally forced to go to war because of the pressure exerted by the people throughout the country and because the economic interests and even the life of his regime were endangered by the full-scale invasion of the Japanese. Thus the Chinese people embarked on the heroic War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression.

By August 1937, according to an agreement reached between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang government, the main force of the Chinese Red Army was reorganized into the Eighth Route Army and immediately dispatched to the front lines in North China. In October, the Red Army Guerrilla Corps which had remained in the southern provinces, was reorganized into

the New Fourth Army, which then marched to the Central China front.

From the outset, two battle fronts were created in the War of Resistance: the Kuomintang front and the front of the liberated areas. Although the Kuomintang troops resisted the Japanese during the earlier stage of the war, they soon sustained a crushing defeat, because the Kuomintang regime persistently pursued a policy of oppressing the people, and militarily adopted the strategy of relying solely on defence. In North China, the Kuomintang troops abandoned Peking and Tientsin not quite a month after the "July 7 Incident." Soon afterwards the provinces of Chahar and Suiyuan were relinquished. In a little over half a year, North China fell almost completely into the hands of the Japanese. In Central and South China things were just as gloomy. The Kuomintang troops abandoned Shanghai in November 1937. In December, Nanking was given up. In October 1938, they withdrew from Canton and Wuhan. Thus, most of Central and South China was lost. Thenceforth, Chiang Kai-shek concentrated the main force of his troops in Southwest and Northwest China, to avoid a clash with the Japanese army.

In striking contrast to the Kuomintang, the people's army led by the Chinese Communist Party fought valiantly and won many battles as soon as they got to the front. The first great victory was scored by the Eighth Route Army at Pinghsingkuan Pass in September 1937. More than three thousand enemy troops were wiped out in this campaign. This helped brace the drooping spirits of the people and inspired them with confidence in the struggle of resistance. The Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies also penetrated into the enemy's

rear in North, East, Central and South China. They regained vast areas lost by the Kuomintang troops, armed the people and developed anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare. Local anti-Japanese democratic governments were set up and vast liberated areas opened up. By 1940, when the anti-Japanese war was three years old, the people's anti-Japanese armed forces led by the Chinese Communist Party had already grown from the original forty thousand men to nearly half a million, and they engaged half of the Japanese troops in China. The population in the liberated areas and areas where the guerrillas were active had increased to nearly a hundred million. There were Communist-led people's armed forces all over China, from the Northeast to Hainan Island in the extreme south. The creation and development of the vast liberated areas turned the enemy's rear into battlegrounds, and constituted a serious menace to the safety of the important cities and communication lines under Japanese control.

Following the fall of Canton and Wuhan, the policies of the Japanese aggressors and the Kuomintang underwent important changes. Since Japan's rear was exposed to the attack of powerful guerrilla forces, she had to turn her main forces around to strike at the liberated areas. Japan discontinued all strategic assaults on the Kuomintang battle front, and adopted the policy of using mainly political means to induce the Kuomintang to capitulate. By this time, the Kuomintang had shifted from relatively active to totally passive resistance to Japan, while actively struggling against the Communist Party and the people. From 1939 onwards, the Kuomintang openly made many criminal attacks against the liberated areas and secretly ordered large numbers of Kuomintang troops to surrender to the Japanese invaders. These traitorous Kuomintang

troops flagrantly raised the anti-Communist banner and collaborated with the enemy in attacking the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies.

In 1941 the liberated areas entered a difficult period. Momentous changes in the international situation took place that year. On June 22, Nazi Germany, betraying its treaty obligations, treacherously attacked the Soviet Union. On December 8, Japan started the Pacific War. In the face of these new developments, the Japanese invaders concentrated about seventy-five per cent of their forces in China on full-scale action against the liberated areas, with a view to ensuring the safety of their rear bases in the Pacific War.

The Japanese classified the territories in North and Central China into three categories: "pacified areas" (enemy-held territories), "pseudo-pacified areas" (guerrilla-warfare territories for possession of which we and the enemy were contending), and "non-pacified areas" (liberated areas). In enemy-held territories, the enemy resorted mainly to the strategy of "clearing-up." They would try to hunt down all people suspected of being anti-Japanese in the countryside. They intensified the fascist *paochia* or tithing system, whereby one individual suspected of anti-Japanese action could make all the members of ten families liable to punishment, bolstered up the puppet regime, merged small villages with larger ones to facilitate the purging of patriotic elements, and intensified looting and the suppression of the people.

In the guerrilla-warfare territories, their main policy was that of "nibbling."¹ Terrorism and underhand op-

¹ A policy of terror, adopted by the Japanese in the guerrilla districts, of creating a no-man's land by ousting the inhabitants

pression were used simultaneously. They set up puppet governments and forced the villagers to accept their rule. They made the people construct barrier ditches, walls and fortifications. Villages were mercilessly razed and devastated and became smouldering ruins, with a view to restricting the activities of the anti-Japanese forces.

In liberated areas, they used "mopping-up" tactics. They put into effect the most barbarous "three-all" policy—burn all, kill all and loot all. They even spread germs to poison the people when they failed in their "mopping-up" operations and were forced to retreat. The purpose of all such methods used by the Japanese aggressors was to destroy all anti-Japanese bases in their rear and to make it impossible for the people's armed forces to exist. By that time, the greater part of the Kuomintang troops behind the enemy lines had surrendered, and become accomplices of the Japanese. More than ninety per cent of such puppet troops under Japanese command invaded the liberated areas. Under such difficult conditions, the territory, population and the number of troops of the liberated areas dwindled. The financial situation of the liberated areas was very difficult.

The Chinese Communist Party pursued various effective measures to cope with the situation.

(1) It used the strategy of "advancing at the same time as the enemy advances," by "penetrating deep into the enemy's rear to open up new liberated areas." It organ-

from their homes, forcing them to move to the enemy-occupied territories and levelling their villages to the ground. They followed this up by erecting forts and outpost towers and digging fortification ditches throughout the area to prevent the infiltration of the Eighth Route Army.

ized armed work-teams, which were joint bodies of the Communist Party, the government and the army, which penetrated into the enemy's rear to arouse and organize the people and to destroy the puppet regimes. It strengthened the local armed forces and the militia, waged "mine warfare" and "tunnel warfare" and extended guerrilla warfare on a broad, popular basis. Thus, the enemy's policy of "gradual encroachment" was effectively coped with. Many enemy strongpoints were eliminated. Furthermore, a variety of anti-Japanese struggle tactics were introduced in the enemy-held territories.

(2) A production campaign was conducted among the troops, in government offices and schools, and among the vast masses of people, as a result of which many difficulties were overcome and the livelihood was improved.

(3) It led the peasants to carry out a large-scale campaign of rent and interest reduction, thus enhancing the people's enthusiasm in opposing the Japanese.

(4) The number of troops was reduced and their quality was improved. The government administration was simplified and the number of personnel in various leading organizations was reduced. These measures economized manpower and available materials and lightened the people's burden.

(5) A "support the government and protect the people" campaign was initiated in the army, while among the people, a movement of "support for the army and preferential treatment for families of the anti-Japanese fighters" was carried out. The harmonious relations between the army and the people were thus further promoted.

Because of these efforts, all difficulties were overcome. The liberated areas were greatly consolidated and, from

1943, gradually expanded. Popular anti-Japanese struggles spread far and wide.

By the first half of 1945, there were already nineteen liberated areas in China, with a total population of 99,500,000. The number of troops in the Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army and the South China Anti-Japanese Column increased to 910,000. The militia in the liberated areas expanded to 2,200,000 men. At that time, sixty-nine per cent of the Japanese troops and ninety-five per cent of the puppet army were held down or locked in combat in the battle fronts of the liberated areas.

With the declaration of war on Japan by the Soviet Union on August 8, 1945, China's War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression was quickly brought to its final stage. The Soviet troops swiftly crushed the Kwantung Army, cream of the Japanese forces, and liberated North-east China. The Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army and the South China Anti-Japanese Column, operating in close co-ordination with the Soviet Red Army, unleashed a full-fledged offensive, quickly routed the Japanese and the puppet armies in their regions, and liberated a large number of small and medium-sized towns and cities which had been occupied by the Japanese and puppet troops. On August 14, 1945, Japan announced her unconditional surrender.

In the eight years of the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression, the Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army, and the South China Anti-Japanese Column had, under the correct leadership of the Communist Party, and with the support of the great masses of the people, developed into a powerful force of 1,300,000 men. They fought 125,100 engagements, in the course of which they

killed or captured 1,700,000 Japanese and puppet troops, and liberated territories with a total population of 160,000,000 people. They became an unprecedentedly powerful revolutionary force in Chinese history. This was an important guarantee for the ultimate nation-wide victory which the Chinese people achieved in 1949.

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	i
First Encounter at Pinghsingkuan Pass <i>General Li Tien-yu</i>	1
Night Raid on Yangmingpao Airfield <i>Colonel Li Chung-tai</i>	24
Cavalry on the Plains <i>Major-General Liao Kuan-hsien</i>	36
March Through the Forests <i>Lin Chan-tsai</i>	46
Recollections of General Yang Ching-yu <i>Huang Sheng-fa</i>	60
The Destruction of the "Great Wall" <i>Kao Yung</i>	75
Five Heroes on the Langya Mountains <i>Ko Chen-lin</i>	82
On the Tsulai Mountains <i>Hsu Kang</i>	98
The Establishment of Guerrilla Bases in Southern Suiyuan <i>Senior Colonel An Cheng-fu</i>	109
Squad Leader Chia Shih-kuei <i>Major Ching Ying</i>	146

Nanniwan Reclamation <i>Hsieh Kuang-chih</i>	157
Going In and Out of the Enemy's Rear <i>From Yen-an "Jiefang Ribao"</i>	168
Heavenly Troops Descending from the Sky <i>Chen Liang</i>	177
The Battle on the Taiku Peaks <i>Major Chang Shan-tsai</i>	185
Fighting with Mines <i>Tsang Yi</i>	197
Li Lan-hsi's Armed Work-Team <i>From Yen-an "Jiefang Ribao"</i>	204

FIRST ENCOUNTER AT PINGHSINGKUAN PASS

GENERAL LI TIEN-YU

After the Lukouchiao (Marco Polo Bridge) Incident, which the Japanese precipitated on July 7, 1937, Japan arrogantly expected to conquer China in three months. Hordes of Japanese troops captured Peking, Tientsin, Nankow, Changchiakou (Kalgan), and later, Tehchow and Paoting, like a flood let loose by broken dykes. The Kuomintang troops in North China, numbering about eight hundred thousand, speedily collapsed and ran pell-mell when attacked by the Japanese.

The Eighth Route Army, then numbering only forty to fifty thousand men, rushed to the front lines along two routes to intercept the enemy; one to northwestern Shansi, the other, northeastern Shansi. The force which went to northeastern Shansi was the 115th Division to which we belonged. Our regiment, the 686th, was an advance detachment of the division.

As we were hard pressed for time, we travelled by train and lorries, whenever possible. Everywhere we were met by large numbers of people who came out to give us a hearty greeting. We were often surrounded by old men and women peasants and young mothers carrying babies in their arms, all asking, with tears in their eyes, if we were going to the front to fight the

Japanese bandits. Refugee students, who had been forced by the Japanese to leave their families in the Northeast, would hover round the station, singing songs of sorrow and protest.

Who could witness his motherland trodden underfoot, his fellow countrymen subjected to the most trying ordeals, wandering homeless, without having his heart fill with bitter hatred and fury?

With clenched fists and fighting spirits our soldiers would shout: "We'd rather have our heads cut off and our blood flow than become slaves in a conquered country!" The crucial moment of life or death had come. The grief and hatred of the Eighth Route Army and the people were interwoven.

The sights that greeted us when we got off the train at Kaoping were shocking. There was an atmosphere of disaster and confusion. The Kuomintang troops and people carrying their belongings jammed the roads in a frenzied stampede. Whole villages were deserted except for Kuomintang soldiers laden with bedding, hens, or anything they could carry as they beat a disorderly retreat. Their horses were burdened with boxes and crates of all sizes. Some of them were cursing the Japanese, others blamed their commanders. Most of them were crying with sheer fright: "Terrible, terrible! The Japanese are invincible!" The Kuomintang high command was rife with men who were terrified of the Japanese and believed that they would conquer China. Many of the rank and file shared these feelings. We often heard them say: "Let's quit. It's hopeless to fight them." When they met us they expressed their surprise and consternation by sarcastic comments such as, "Are you going to fight the