

Historical Data Described on National Classic “Record of Foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe”

Kim Song I

The great leader Comrade **Kim Il Sung** said as follows.

“From olden times the Korean people rose as one man in a holy war to defend their country and they repulsed the aggressors each time an invasion occurred. They defended their country heroically as recorded in 5,000 years of honoured history.” (“KIM IL SUNG WORKS” Vol. 1 P.206)

When we trace back to the annals of fifty thousand years of our nation’s long history, we could find lots of stories of struggle of our people to defeat foreign invasion.

A national classic called “Record of Foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe” kept in science library of **Kim Il Sung** University is the book that recorded the struggle of Sowipho(Ryongchon area, North Phyongan Province at present) against the first invasion of Houjin.

The book consists prefaces, “plan of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe”, “annual report of Chamui” and “Record of foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe”.

In preface there are four prefaces including preface written by Ri Ik Jong in July 1759, one by Ri Kwan Ryong in March 1797 and one by Cha Sin Yong in the last third of March 1816. This shows that the book was published several times, not a once as it has several prefaces.

The book was edited and published by Kim Ryang Gi in 1759 and amended and published again in 1797 and 1816, and it is recognized to be finalized and published by Kim Ri Gung in 1825.

In “plan of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe” it is described the position and territory and natural and geographical features of Sowipho.

In “annual report of Chamui” chronicle data about life of Kim U, the commander of volunteer troupe is recorded.

“Record of Foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe” which is regarded as main part of the book describes specifically about scores of battles by people of Sowipho area from the first invasion in January 1627 to August in which the enemies retreated finally and the facts after the dissolution of the volunteer troupe.

Above all, data about organization of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe are recorded in “Record of Foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe”.

The Houjin invaders, aiming to resolve their economical crisis, crossed suddenly the Amnok River and occupied Uiju and progressed to Phyongsan in a short period.

But our people organized themselves the volunteer troupe and commenced vigorous struggle.

Against the invasion of Houjin people of Sowipho organized a volunteer troupe like all the people of our country and fought against the invaders.

Kim U who participated in Imjin patriotic war against Japanese invasion in 1592 and distinguished himself in military services gathered refugees in Sowipho and prepared defensive measures by building fortress when Ryongchon was occupied by Houjin invaders.

Three surfaces of Sowipho are surrounded by sea, Ka Island not far from its south, Sin Island is

near from its west and Sokryang is near from its north, and it's a natural fortress in which magazine and provision depot can be deployed and it could accommodate as many as ten thousand people.

Its northwest is rugged hill which is suitable for defense and its east is low mountainous area and its flatland has ponds, reed fields and swamp lands on several parts so it was advantageous for the volunteer troupe.

And its southeastern part has a port to which ships could access to supply provisions and effects necessary for the volunteers.

And in the villages around Sowipho, hundreds of relatives of Kim U, the commander of the volunteer troupe so they could support Kim U and it was advantageous to rally people nearby and to found volunteer units.

Considering these circumstances, Kim U, with his friend An Kuk Ham, and under the purpose to protect their native land and the country and save people, found the volunteer troupe of which most of the soldiers were from his relatives.

As the struggle of volunteer troupe sparked lots of people from the south of Ryonggolsan Castle rallied in Sowipho in a short time.

Among them "Eight Heros" such as Jang U, Ri Kyol, Kim Ui Ro, Sim Tal Hae, Kim Jung Guk and Choe Hui Nam who had base in Ungsan rock cave joined as the hard core.

The volunteers concentrated to prepare weapons and provisions and in the meanwhile they gathered all the fishing boats from near and far anchored under the hill.

At the time Choe Hyo Il's volunteer troupe from Uiju area joined them and the unit got more strengthened.

On February 10, Choe Hyo Il and An Kuk Ham elected Kim U as the commander.

The unit had 3 700 soldiers and more than ten members who helped the commander to make battle plan and officers were as many as 75.

In early March when the unit was getting strengthened more and more Ri Rip from Ryonggolsan Castle came to Kim U's Unit. Kim U conceded the position of commander as Li Rip, older than him, had already organized and commanded volunteer troupe and took the role of vice commander.

Commander Ri Rip had been a drill judge as he distinguished himself in Sosa battle during Imjin patriotic war against Japanese invasion, Kim U, too, had been an adjutant general as he fought vigorously in Kim Hae battle during the war, and An Kuk Ham passed military examination and had been a military officer.

Like this commanders of the volunteer troupe were trained in the battle against foreign invaders and experienced with military knowledge. Besides, there were many brave soldiers from army.

The basic weapons they used were cannon, matchlock, gun, spear, sword, catapult and iron hammer.

Next, the activities and military achievements of the volunteer troupe are recorded in "Record of foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe".

First, activities of the volunteer troupe from February 1627 to March of the year, the time before "negotiation" are described.

The first battle was on February 15 after the foundation of the volunteer troupe.

The enemies occupied at the east of Mt. Tokchon and plundering many houses and people. Sim Tal Hae, Kim Tuk Jup, Jang U, Choe Hui Nam and others lead 500 soldiers annihilated from left and right the enemy based in Mt. Tokchon and killed lots of enemies and captured 14 horses.

Defeated at Tokchonsan battle, the enemy gathered about 5 000 cavalry soldiers from Kwaksan and Sonchon and formed assault posture at the east of Mt. Ungsan. In this situation Kim U tightened disciplines and in the meanwhile made precise plan to defeat the enemy and organized ambushes and assaults. So in this battle they annihilated many enemy soldiers and captured about fifty horses.

After this battle the volunteer troupe got famous and many people from near and far joined so the army got stronger and bigger.

Defeated continuously at battles, the enemy attacked Sowipho again with about 2 000 soldiers but Kim U saw the army led by Sim Tal Hae, Kim Ui Ro attack the enemy and he himself led several officers and performed fierce battle against the enemy. Defeated by fierce attack of the volunteer troupe, the enemy fled leaving six of their generals and other many corpses. The volunteer troupe captured fourteen horses.

Second, active military activities of the volunteer troupe are described on the book.

After the “negotiation” the enemy was defeated continuously but they didn’t stop invasion but massacred and plundered people and set on fire the houses and watching for a chance to attack the volunteer troupe.

Foreseeing their intention, the volunteer troupe attacked the enemy successively to drive them out.

So according to precise plan they performed all-out attack on March 15 and killed fifteen enemy soldiers and captured sixteen horses and many other military equipments and returned to their base.

The enemy gathered their units around Uiju, Changsong and Kwaksan and attacked the volunteer troupe but they were defeated on March 17 and on March 18, the next day they attacked the voluntary army with 5 000 soldiers.

The volunteer troupe defeated the enemy in many small and large battles after its foundation but it was the first time to fight against such a big army.

But in co-operation with Jan Rin’s volunteer troupe based in Mt. Jangsan and taking advantage of geographical position, they drove the enemy to swampy land and inflicted wholesale death upon the enemy. In this battle the volunteer troupe nearly exterminated the enemy manpower and captured weapons and equipments.

Beaten utterly at Ryonggolsan Castle and Sowipho resulting immense loss, the enemy, to compensate the defeat of the previous day, attacked Sowipho again with 5 000 but the volunteer troupe defeated the enemy on its every step with offensive, assault and pincer operations.

The enemy, driven to desperation, gathered 10 000 cavalry soldiers from Sonchon and Kwaksan and attacked Sowipho again. In this battle the volunteer troupe made the best use of the experience of the previous day and taking advantage of the enemy’s weak point of trembling for fear, made plan and allured ambushed the enemy and captured 34 horses and many other equipments. After this battle the volunteer troupe got stronger mentally and physically and the trends of the volunteer troupe and people to the enemy became more strengthened.

Third, the struggles of the volunteer troupe to drive out the enemy are described.

Houjin invaders did not retreat as they confirmed on “negotiation” but occupied and kept in Changsong, Ryongchon and Uji area with the aggressive ambition.

To frustrate completely the aggressive plan of Houjin invaders and drive them out from our country was urgent and noble duty of northwestern volunteer troupe including Sowipho unit.

Furthermore, as the intention to occupy the northern part of the Chongchon River was blocked by Sowipho Volunteer Troupe and other units which were based in several areas and plundering were not free, Sowipho Volunteer Troupe was disgusting one for the enemy.

From the end of March to early April the volunteer troupe conducted 30 small and large battles.

Get known that 5 000 enemies were based and preparing attack under Mt. Tokchon by comprehending the enemy, the volunteer troupe advanced and retreated about ten times during the time of tide and when the enemy vanguard arrived at the bridge they blockaded the attack of the enemy and roared. In the meantime a unit which was ambushing commenced cannon fire at once and shoot from left and right to destroy the enemy’s battle formation and penetrated the commanding system completely driving them to disorder.

After this battle Sowipho Volunteer Troupe conducted many small and large battles and they won the victory every time.

The enemy had no choice but retreat to their den over the Amnok River.

At the time of their retreatment, the volunteer troupe got the information that the enemies were going back with many of our people and their properties. So when the large unit of enemy was about in the middle of the Amnok River, the volunteer troupe attacked them with one accord and separated them and defeated one by one.

While Sowipho Volunteer Troupe was annihilating the enemy, the other volunteer troupe units including Jong Pong Su’s unit were continuously attacking the enemy.

So Houjin invaders could not occupy the northwestern part of our country and they retreated on August 9 at last.

Next, the patriotic spirit of our people is shown in national classic “Record of Foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe”.

One of the examples is the record about the fierce battle between the volunteer troupe and the enemy on April 26.

To the continuous assault, the enemy said “the negotiation is going on but you’re attacking us. Aren’t you afraid of the Heaven?”

Then the volunteers said “We are grinding our teeth with anger to avenge you.”

From this record we could see hostility and patriotism of our people at the time.

In national classic “Record of Foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe” after the adoption of peace treaty the relation between our country and the Jurchen race and records of Mao Men Long, survivor of Ming Dynasty.

First, it described the relation between our country and the Jurchen race after the peace treaty.

After the adoption of peace treaty, the Jurchen race stayed in our country for a certain period of time and let a Mongolian general took thousands of our people saying that they were “prisoners”

The volunteer troupe selected some of the soldiers who were good at Jurchen language and help

our people escape.

Second, it describes about Mao Men Long, a survivor of the Ming Dynasty.

Mao, Men Long, a so-called governor general of Left army, was a general of Ming Dynasty but he came into our country and established his base in Ka Island and Sinmi Island after he was defeated by Houjin in 1621.

They said they were in our country to fight Houjin but demanded huge amount of materials or plundered at the Maritime Province and in the end they made some property by sea-smuggling and led dissipated life.

In the book, the areas Mao occupied and his harmful operation are described. According to the book, Mao based in Ka Island and Wang Si Xian, the guerilla commander, a Xue, the commander based in Me cape and Jangja Island and they sometimes showed and plundered, and the damage was more severe than Houjin.

Besides, it describes non-resistance stance of the king and feudal rulers at the time of the first invasion of Houjin.

Like this, national classic “Record of foundation of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe” describes the records of Sowipho Volunteer Troupe’s struggle and patriotism of our people as well as several historical datum which are helpful in researching the history of our country.