

Birthplace of the History of the Korean Nation  
Sacred Mountain of the Revolution  
Mountain Famous for Natural Scenery



# SACRED MOUNTAIN OF KOREA

**Foreign Languages Publishing House  
DPR Korea  
Juche 110 (2021)**

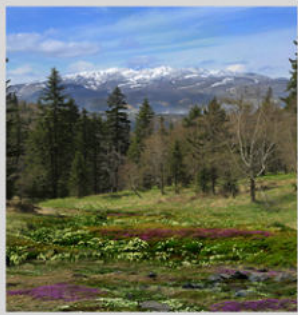


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## Contents

Preface	2
<b>Ancestral Mountain</b>	5
Great Paektu Mountains	6
Object of Worship of the Nation	12
<b>Sacred Mountain of the Revolution</b>	23
Central Leadership Base for the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle	25
Sacred Place of the Revolution	30
<b>Natural Environment</b>	41
Natural Beauty	42
Natural Scenes and Anecdotes Related with Them	57



## PREFACE

Mt Paektu, 2 750m high, is the origin of the Great Paektu Mountains which is the spine of the Korean peninsula, and Lake Chon on the summit is the source of the Amnok, Tuman and Songhua rivers.

The mountain is the birthplace of the Korean nation and a witness of its long history.

All the states that rose and fell in the Korean history worshipped it, regarding it as the fertile ground of their founding.

The ancestral mountain of Korea is the sacred mountain of

the revolution.

The light which would put an end to the dark era of Japanese colonial rule and add lustre to the 5 000-year-long history of the nation dawned on the mountain.

It can be said that a mountain takes a very common position in the history of a country and nation, but that of Mt Paektu is great and solemn in the history of Korea.

The book *Sacred Mountain of Korea* shows the status of Mt Paektu from historical, geographical and chronological points of view.





# Ancestral Mountain

Mt Paektu is the ancestral mountain of Korea from which its land starts and which embodies its people's traditions that can be called their soul and foundation formed and consolidated through a long period of history.

## GREAT PAKTU MOUNTAINS

Korea is a country with many mountains.

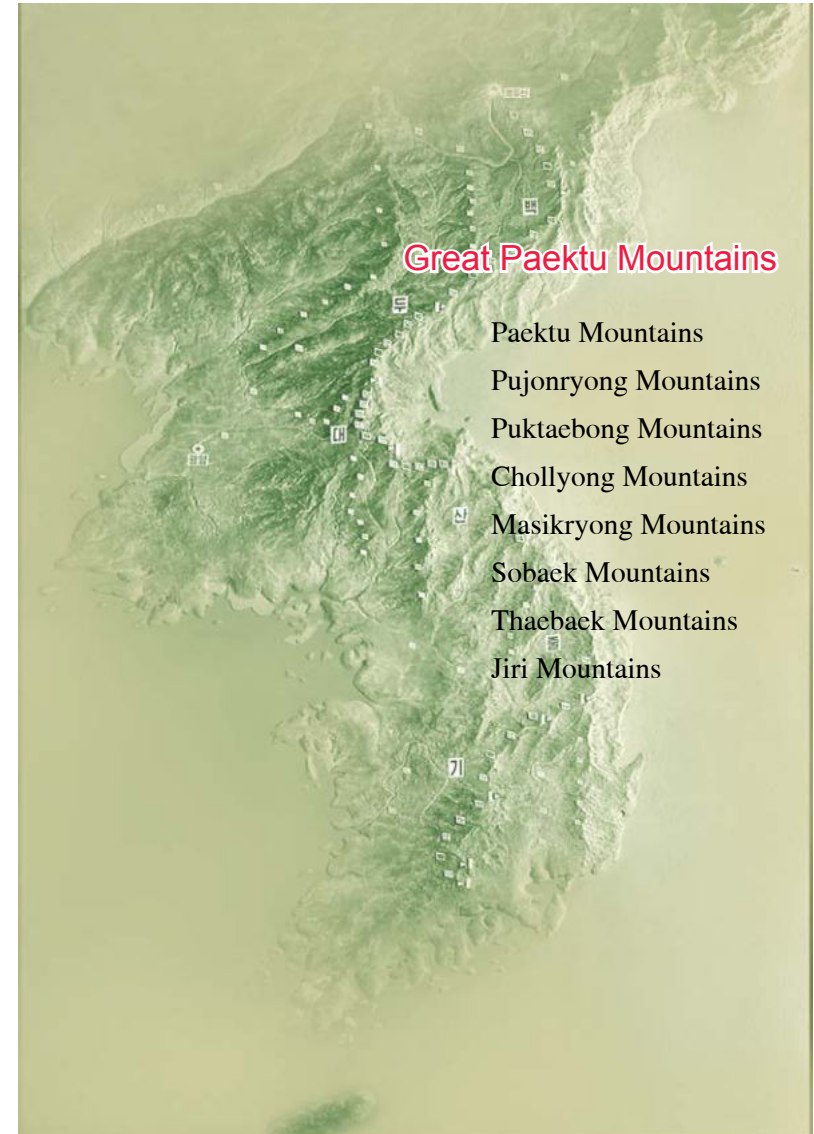
All the mountain ranges of Korea are characterized by the fact that they originated from Mt Paektu and are connected with each other to form one grand mountain range.

Mountain ranges of Korea are linked with each other to form the Great Paektu Mountains which starts from Mt Paektu and ends with Kujae Peak of Jiri Mountains. The total length and average height of the Great Paektu Mountains are 1 470km and 1 170m, respectively.

In 1769 the Korean nation established the system of mountain range called Great Paektu Mountains based on the scientific principle of *Sanjabunsuryong*, which means the mountains control the flow of rivers and the rivers rise from mountain valleys.

*Sangyongphyo*, an old geography book based on this principle between the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, diagrams mountain ranges and mountains of Korea with Mt Paektu as the centre and expresses big mountain range as *taegan*, main mountain range as *jongmaek* and branch range as *jimaek*.

In the part of *Paektutaegan*, the book describes in detail big mountains and ridges of Mt Paektu stretching to Machonryong Mountains, Pujonryong Mountains, Rangnim Mountains and Thaeback Mountains. (Above mentioned data have been scientifically proved by satellite information.)



Mt Paektu is located on the boundary between the city of Samjiyon, Ryanggang Province in northern Korea and China.

The Mt Paektu area whose peculiar natural environment was created through 13 eruptions of volcano and in the course of its evolution, contains well-developed layers of different eras from Proterozoic to Cenozoic.

Lake Chon on the top of the mountain is surrounded by high peaks of more than 2 000m above sea level with cliffs of more than



Major Peaks of Mt Paektu

600m. As the peaks of different forms and heights are connected to each other, the mountaintop looks flat and easily climbable if seen from afar, but they actually consist of high and sharp-cut cliffs. Of many peaks forming the outer rim of the volcanic crater, 20 peaks are more than 2 500m high and about 200 peaks have the relative height of more than 20m above the lowest point of the saddle.

Affected by the typical highland climate, the Mt Paektu area is the coldest area in Korea and its climate is most capricious.

The duration of sunshine is only 2 317.6 hours a year and the effect of ultraviolet rays is very strong, so the absolute temperature is not high. In summer the sunshine feels particularly hot and the colour of the leaves and flowers of plants are relatively thick and clear. The lowest temperature of Mt Paektu is 47.5°C below zero and 58 days of a year have the temperature lower than 30°C below zero. There are Lake Chon and many hot springs, falls and wells in the Mt Paektu area.

There are many volcanoes and lakes on the globe, but few crater lakes are as big, deep and highly-located as Lake Chon on Mt Paektu.

Its water level is 2 190m above sea level. If seen from above, the crater resembles magnolia flower, the national flower of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the lake looks like the heart of man. A big water spout was observed in the centre of the lake in mid-June 1981, in which a water column scores of metres high moved about 200 metres.

Such a phenomenon was observed several times later. In the olden times people called the lake Ryongdam (Dragon Lake–Tr.) in their belief that such phenomenon occurred as a dragon rose up from it. The lake is 384m at the deepest point, 213.3m on average and 14 400m in circumference.

It was since the late 7<sup>th</sup> century that the mountain was widely called as it is now–Paektu.

Later, the name Jangbaek was sometimes used, but it indicated only the mountain range stretching to the northeastern region of China and the mountain as a whole was known under the name of Paektu.

Mt Paektu stretches its ranges to more than 1 440km away, forming the single geotectonic structure of the Korean peninsula.

The height of the peaks of the Great Paektu Mountains is, in general, more than 1 000m above sea level and most of them are over 1 500m. But the height of the peaks becomes gradually lower from the north to the south. Therefore, topographically Korea is high in the north and east and low in the south and southwest with the Great Paektu Mountains as the axis.

Ri Su Gwang, a well-known scholar in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, wrote in his book *Jibongryusol* that all the mountains in Korea begin from Mt Paektu and Mt Halla on Jeju Island also belongs to Paektu Mountains.

Mt Paektu, regarded as the sacred mountain of the Korean nation from the remote past, is the one in which all the mountain ranges of Korea struck their roots.





## OBJECT OF WORSHIP OF THE NATION

### Birthplace of the History of the Nation

Throughout the long historical period most of the Korean states took Mt Paektu as the foundation of their nation building. That is why the Korean nation has venerated the mountain as the sacred mountain which embodies their soul and spirit and defends their country.

Throughout the long history full of vicissitudes, all the orthodox states, ranging from Tangun Joson which was the first to call itself Joson, to Koguryo, Palhae, Koryo and to the feudal Joson dynasty, founded themselves in the region that included Mt Paektu, and the Korean people have lived and created history and culture as a homogeneous nation.

Mt Paektu belonged to Ancient Joson since Tangun Joson, the first dynasty of Korea, founded in the early 30<sup>th</sup> century BC, and was associated with the life of its people. Tangun Joson expanded its territory by embracing such tribes and small states around Mt Paektu as Ye, Maek, Puyo, Kuryo and Okjo during the early years of its founding.

An old history book of China says that Ye, Okjo and Kuryo belonged to Korea.

An old history book of Korea writes that Sira, Korye, north and south Okjo, north and east Puyo, Ye and Maek were all brought

under the control of Tangun as he founded a country within the territory of Korea.

The historical relics like the sites of houses, dolmens, stone tombs and graves which have been discovered in the Mt Paektu area show that the mountain was in the domain of life of the Korean nation since the beginning of the human civilization.

The Korean people have revered Mt Paektu as a symbol of Korea since their ancestors explored the area around Mt Paektu. What is the most important here is that worship of Mt Paektu began with the reverence of Tangun, founding father of the Korean nation.

The legend of Tangun is proof of that.

According to the legend, Hwanung received three royal seals from his father Hwanin, the King of the Heaven, descended to the top of Mt Paektu with his subordinates and civilized the human world, doing 360 kinds of work. Hwanung was Tangun's father.

Although the legend is fictitious, it implies the way of life and thinking and aspirations of the people of that time.

It also shows the concept of the Korean nation that big events like founding of a state began in such a high and mystic mountain connected to the sky as Mt Paektu.

During the period of Later Joson which inherited Tangun Joson, Mt Paektu was still included in the domain of life of the Korean nation and their reverence of Mt Paektu continued.

During the reign of the 47<sup>th</sup> king, Tangun Joson which had

existed for more than a thousand years was replaced by Later Joseon (slave owner state established by a force of the Tangun dynasty) in the mid-2 000s BC because of the people's struggle against the slave owner system and the tendency to separation of the vassal states. But Puyo, Kuryo and Okjo, the ancient states of the Korean nation, still existed in the area of Mt Paektu. These states were all vassals of Tangun Joseon, their residents were from the same ancestors and their reverence for Mt Paektu was strong.

The reverence for the mountain grew stronger in the period of Koguryo, which was the strongest state in the history of the Korean nation.

Koguryo (277 BC–AD 668) was the first feudal state of the Korean nation founded by Ko Jumong (called King Tongmyong). Koguryo was the successor to Kuryo, the ancient state of Korea, and its administration area included the Mt Paektu area. The area along the Ubal River to the south of Mt Thaebaek, which was mentioned in the part dedicated to the birth of Ko Jumong in the legend of King Tongmyong, is today's Mt Paektu area.

During the days of the Koguryo dynasty the Korean nation combined the reverence for Mt Paektu with that of its founding father and made it clear that Koguryo inherited Tangun Joseon by claiming that Ko Jumong was a descendant of King Tangun.

Koguryo set it as a state policy to become a powerful state in the East by merging the consanguineous countries within

the territory of former Tangun Joseon and realized it through continuous struggle.

The worship of Mt Paektu became a nationwide feeling and state policy and religious ceremonies for sanctifying the mountain were held every year. It can be proved by more than hundred pieces of tiles of the Koguryo style unearthed in 1956 near Tal Gate north of Lake Chon. Those tiles were from the roof of a temple in the mountain, which was used for the memorial services for Mt Paektu.

Palhae (698-928) set up with the Mt Paektu area as the centre was also a country founded according to the traditional rituals of the Korean people who regarded Mt Paektu as the birthplace and sacred mountain of the nation.

During the period of Koryo (918-1392) and feudal Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), reverence for and national feeling about the mountain did not change.

In the period of Koryo, the mountain was revered not only as the origin of the dynasty but also as the sacred mountain which defended the country and nation. The people of Koryo used to regard the God of Mt Paektu as the defender of the Koryo dynasty and state and hold grandiose state memorial services for Him.

The feudal Joseon dynasty also hosted nationwide memorial services for Mt Paektu as an expression of the reverence for it.

Also important with respect to Mt Paektu is the Korean people's struggle to defend it.

The northeast expedition by the Koryo Army under the command of Yun Kwan, a famous general of Koryo in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, was a very important historical event that took place at the foot of Mt Paektu and a patriotic undertaking to defend the sacred mountain of the nation and consolidate the state control over it.

And the military activities by Kim Jong So and Nam I, patriotic generals of the feudal Joseon dynasty, were an expression of the will of the Korean nation to defend Mt Paektu and its surrounding area.

Mt Paektu is indeed a famous mountain of Korea and the birthplace of the history of the Korean nation as well.

### **Mountain Embodying the Soul of the Nation**

The soul of a nation is its spirit and stamina. Mt Paektu is the mountain that embodies the soul of the Korean nation.

By origin, the Korean nation has a strong sense of dignity. It can be proved by the fact that the nation has maintained its sovereignty for thousands of years. Such a resourceful and dignified nation grew weaker and was reduced to a plaything of foreign forces and finally to an enslaved nation, having lost their country to the Japanese imperialists.

The ruling circles of Japan which took the road of civilization with the Meiji Restoration in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a momentum, openly revealed their ambition to invade the Asian continent with

the support of the Western powers.

Japan waged three large-scale wars to invade Korea.

It ignited a war (called the Imjin Patriotic War in history) five hundred years ago by hurling hundreds of thousands of troops, and waged two wars, i.e., against China and Russia between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

While other people were travelling the world by warship and by train, Korea's feudal rulers rode on donkeys, wearing horse-hair hats and singing of scenic beauties, thus wasting hundreds of years. Then, when aggressive forces from the west and east threatened them with their navies, they opened the doors of the country that had been so tightly closed. The feudal monarchy then hosted a contest for concessions in which the foreign forces had their own way. Finally, the twenty million Korean people became slaves of the Japanese imperialists. Having lost the sovereignty of their country, the Korean people trembled with sorrow.

Korea at that time was a living hell under the oppressive rule of Japanese imperialists who forbade Korean people from using their own language and names and took away even their rice bowls.

Lenin was right in saying: Japan is plundering Korea with unheard-of brutality combined with all the new discoveries and pure Asian-style torture and will be fighting to continue to plunder it.

At that time the Korean nation prayed for a great man to come from Mt Paektu, which was associated with the soul of the nation, and save the country and nation.

The Japanese imperialists made every possible effort to obliterate this desire of the Korean nation during their occupation of Korea. They even tried to implant a steel spike on the summit of Mt Paektu, saying that it would prevent a great man from being born there.

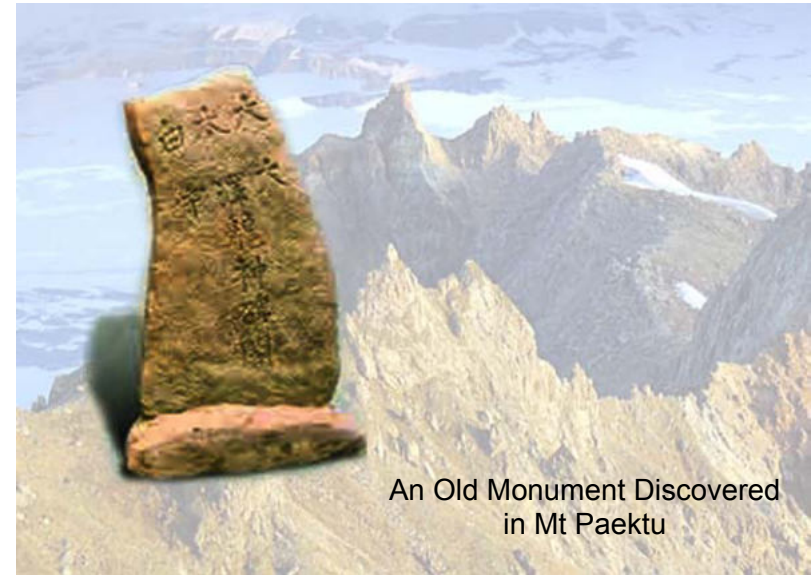
However, the reverence of the Korean people for the mountain got stronger with the aggression of the foreign forces.

The data and relics proving it have been discovered, attracting the interest of the people.

There is a stone monument Ryongsinbigak at the shore of Lake Chon.

The monument made with pumice stone was set up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Japanese imperialist aggression of Korea grew more undisguised. It is inscribed with 29 Chinese characters. It is 1m high, 44cm and 58cm wide in the upper and lower parts, respectively, and 10-11cm thick.

Although the monument has been weathered for so long years, the characters are well preserved. The inscription writes to the effect that a man related to Chonbulgyo (Korea's national religion revering Mt Paektu) prayed to the Dragon God of Lake Chon to help the Korean nation live a stable life for ever. The monument was registered as national treasure No 195 of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and moved to the saddle between the Janggung and Hyangdo peaks which commands a fine view of the lake.



An Old Monument Discovered  
in Mt Paektu

The reverence for Mt Paektu of the Korean nation continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the late 1920s a Korean who had worshipped the mountain noted in his book after he toured it:

“Mt Paektu is  $\alpha$  and  $\Omega$  of Korea.”

By  $\alpha$  and  $\Omega$ , academic symbols for expressing start and end of something, he meant that Korea begins and ends in Mt Paektu.

And he continued: Where did Korea come from? It came from Mt Paektu. The mountain is the roots of a tree called Korea and the mirror image of Korea; if you want to do something good for Korea you'd better know Mt Paektu and if you want to know Korea you'd better refer to Mt Paektu; it is the most celebrated mountain in the

world, marvellous one in the east and ancestor of all mountains in Korea; oh, Mt Paektu, it is an intensive expression of Korea as a whole, comprehensive value of the best of Korea and absolute spirit of Korea.

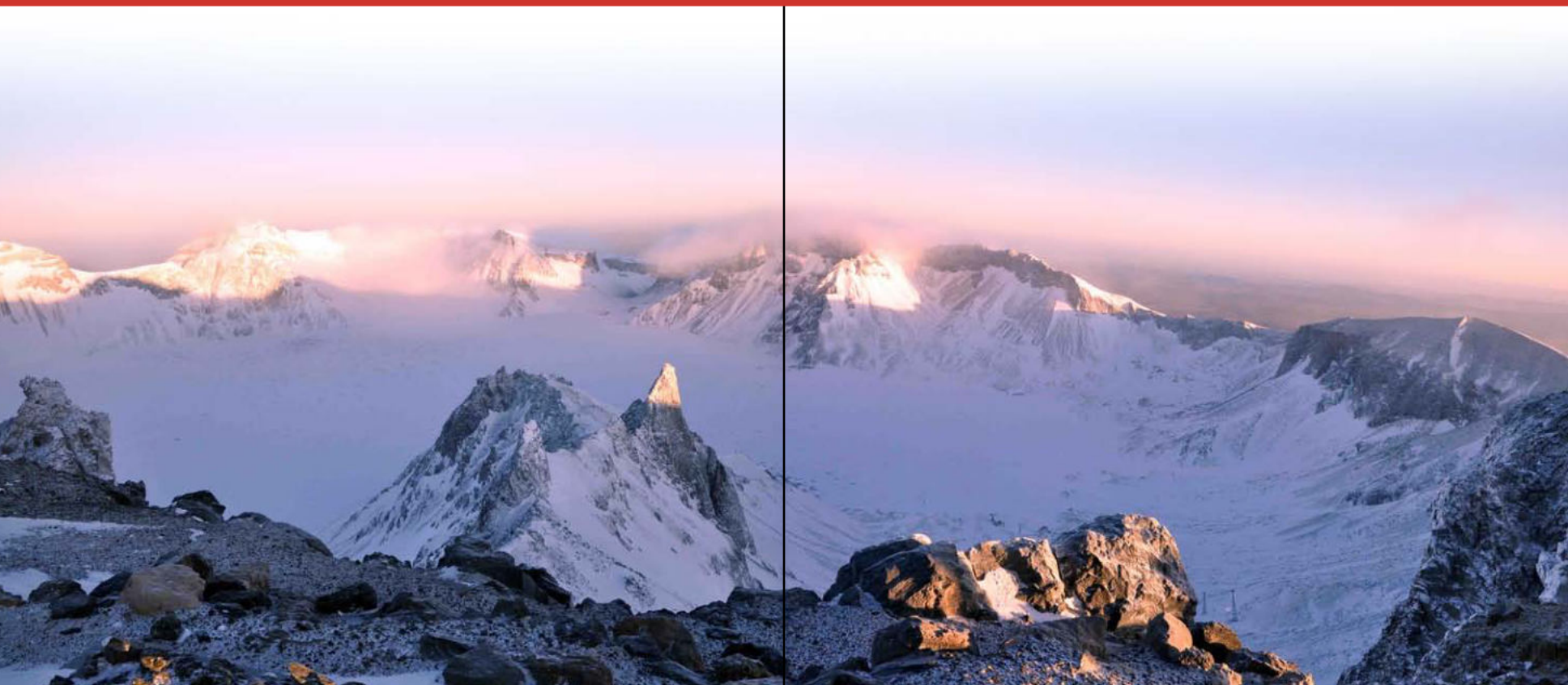
In the 1920s a Korean historian wrote after he looked at Lake Chon on Mt Paektu:

“Both Tangun and King Tongmyong came from Mt Paektu; it

was a great event that such great men came from Mt Paektu; who knows if another outstanding man will come from the ancestral mountain in the future? the fact that Tangun and King Tongmyong came from Mt Paektu is just like a drop in the bucket.”

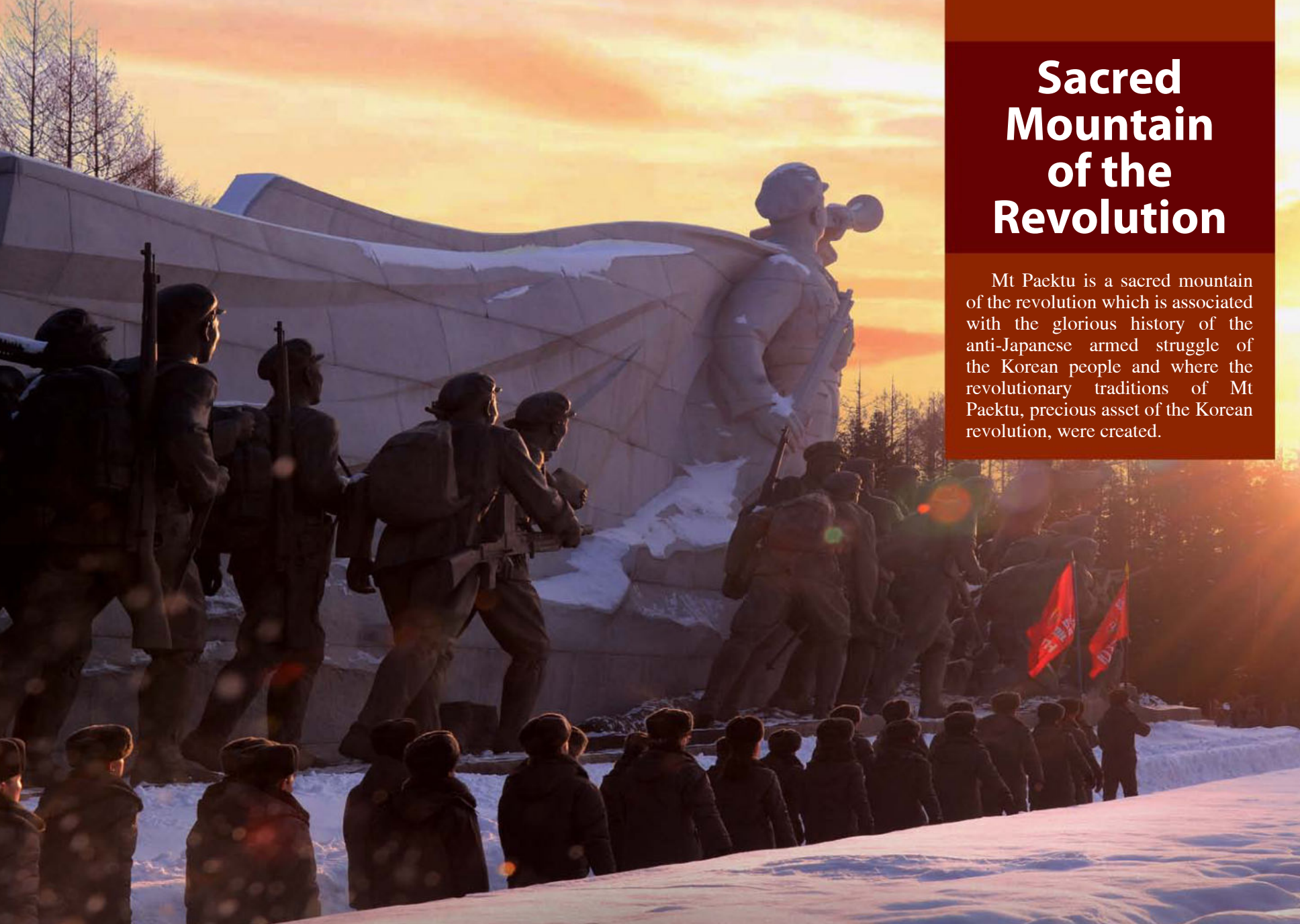
With hindsight, it seems that he predicted the birth of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, great leaders of the Korean people.

A dawn of a new Korea was breaking from Mt Paektu.



# Sacred Mountain of the Revolution

Mt Paektu is a sacred mountain of the revolution which is associated with the glorious history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle of the Korean people and where the revolutionary traditions of Mt Paektu, precious asset of the Korean revolution, were created.



The anti-Japanese armed struggle of Korea had become the main stream in its people's struggle for national liberation and social progress since the Korean revolution selected the Mt Paektu area as the central theatre of its activities. It was entirely thanks to the staunch confidence, pluck and devotion of Kim Il Sung that it was the sacred duty and independent right of the Korean revolutionaries to fight for the independence of their country.

Kim Il Sung was a great man the Korean people greeted for the first time in their history of thousands of years. He was born in a straw-thatched house at Mangyongdae and embarked on the road of the revolution in his teens with a determination to defeat the Japanese imperialists and achieve the independence of his country.

He advocated that the masses of the people are almighty and independence of Korea should be achieved by the Korean people themselves. The entire nation sympathized with his idea and love of the nation and turned out in the struggle.

He founded the Anti-Japanese Guerilla Army with sons and daughters of the people and led the anti-Japanese warfare with Mt Paektu as the central base.

The enemy trembled with fear in front of Kim Il Sung who tamed with unheard-of military strategy and tactics the formidable million-strong Kwantung Army which the Japanese imperialists boasted as the "sons of a tiger."

At last the flames of national liberation and national resurrection flared up on Mt Paektu.

## **CENTRAL LEADERSHIP BASE FOR THE ANTI-JAPANESE ARMED STRUGGLE**

From the second half of the 1930s to the first half of the 1940s, Mt Paektu played the role of the central leadership base for the overall Korean revolution with the anti-Japanese armed struggle at the centre.

Then, what was the reason?

The first reason was the demand of the subjective and objective situation created in the second half of the 1930s.

At that time the anti-Japanese armed struggle of the Korean people had become the main stream of the overall Korean revolution and was greeting a heyday of its development under the leadership of Kim Il Sung.

The Japanese imperialists started the Sino-Japanese War on July 7, 1937 and intensified oppression and plundering of the Korean people under the pretext of "security of the rear" and "supply of logistics." As a result, the minds of the Korean people were directed to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. With an intention to join the KPRA, many young Koreans came to the Mt Paektu area which resounded with the gun report of the anti-Japanese struggle. This demanded that the Korean revolutionaries advance to the area around Mt Paektu as early as possible and expand the armed struggle to their homeland from there.

The second reason was that Mt Paektu was a natural fortress which was favourable for defending and unfavourable for attacking in terms of military topography.

There was no other base more suitable than Mt Paektu for the KPRA to expand the guerilla warfare. Moreover, the Korean revolutionaries were faced with the task of expanding and developing the anti-Japanese armed struggle to the homeland as quickly as possible in order to put an end to the colonial rule of the Japanese imperialists and achieve the liberation of their country and nation.

To this end, they had to wage battles along the border area between Korea and China based on Mt Paektu. Only then would they be able to weaken the formidable military might of the Japanese imperialists by means of guerilla warfare and arouse the entire Korean nation to the anti-Japanese struggle.

The third reason was that Mt Paektu took a very important position in view of its spiritual significance.

As mentioned above, Mt Paektu is the ancestral mountain and symbol of Korea and birthplace of the history of the Korean nation with 5 000-year-long history. For this very reason the Korean nation venerated the mountain and prayed that a great man would be born in it.

All in all, for the Koreans the reverence for Mt Paektu meant the reverence for Korea and love of Korea as a whole and, it was a natural sentiment of the Korean nation.

Mt Paektu was cherished as the symbol of Korea and its liberation in the hearts of the Korean people.

It was a review and natural result of the anti-Japanese armed struggle of Korea in the first half of the 1930s that only when the Korean revolutionaries controlled Mt Paektu, could they mobilize all the forces of the Korean nation to the resistance and achieve its final victory.

It was a very important task for the Korean revolutionaries to advance to Mt Paektu and turn it into a strong fortress of the revolution and its central leadership base. With a keen insight into the subjective and objective conditions of the developing revolution, national sentiments and the mountain's military significance, Kim Il Sung decided to turn the Mt Paektu area into a strong fortress and leadership base of the revolution. Then he put forward clear strategy and lines to this end and led the struggle for their realization.

At the Nanhutou Meeting (February 27–March 3, 1936) Kim Il Sung put forward the policy of advancing the main force of the KPRA, the central force of the Korean revolution, to Mt Paektu and homeland. True to this policy, the KPRA advanced to the Mt Paektu area and waged vigorous military and political activities with the area as the centre.

The Paektusan Base, central leadership base of the Korean revolution, consisted of secret camps in the forests in and around Mt Paektu with the Paektusan secret base as the centre and the





Headquarters of the Korean revolution in the Paektusan Secret Camp



Sajabong Secret Camp



Komsan Secret Camp



Mudubong Secret Camp



Sonosan Secret Camp

networks of organizations in the Mt Paektu area.

There were Paektusan, Sajabong, Komsan, Sonosan, Kanbaeksan, Mudubong and Soyonjibong secret camps in Korea and Heixiazigou, Diyangxi, Erdaogang, Hengshan, Limingshui, Fuhoushui and Qingfeng secret camps in Northeast China.

The organizations of the Party and the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland and many other networks of revolutionary organizations were set up in the areas around Mt Paektu, and they formed a network of semi-guerrilla zones.

By expanding the revolutionary organizations into various places of Korea, Kim Il Sung turned Mt Paektu into an operational base of the revolution for expanding and developing the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle on a nationwide scale and a strategic and logistics base of the KPRA.

The revolutionary spirit of Paektu, which is the root of the strong revolutionary spirit of the Korean people, was created in this period in Mt Paektu. The Korean revolution has advanced overcoming all kinds of difficulties and challenges.

It is thanks to the revolutionary spirit of Paektu that the Korean people were able to achieve victories surmounting the hardships.

The nucleus of the revolutionary spirit of Paektu is the history of leader-centred revolutionary unity which the Korean revolutionaries created under the leadership of Kim Il Sung in the forests of Mt Paektu.

And it was Mt Paektu that proved the philosophical principle

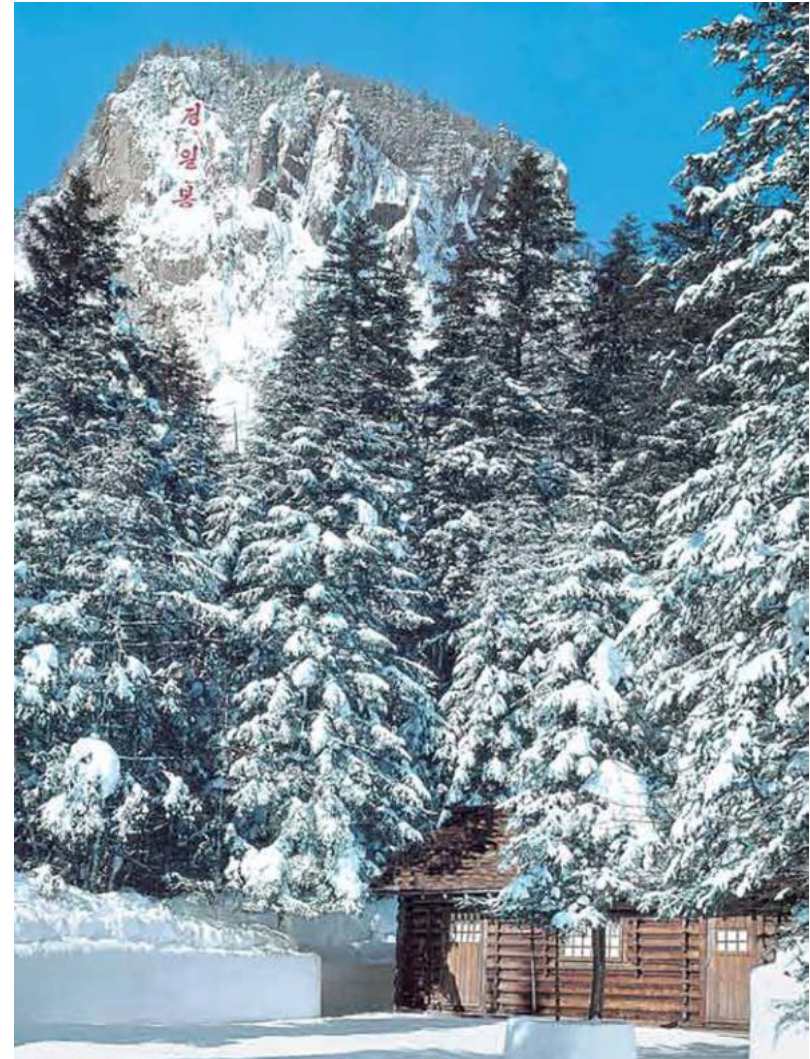
that the independence of Korea should be achieved by the Korean nation itself. When the Korean revolutionaries declared frontal confrontation against the Japanese imperialists, the “leader of Asia,” they did not expect a strong state backing. By dint of this revolutionary spirit, the Korean revolutionaries created the miracle of winning independence of their country and nation without the support and assistance from a state and brilliantly decorated the history of national liberation struggle with the heroic epics of their bloody struggle.

Inspired by Kim Il Sung’s ennobling love of the nation and comradeship, they unhesitatingly sacrificed their lives to the war for liberating their country and nation and had the firm conviction that as long as they were led by him, they could achieve the liberation of the country and nation and build a new world of the people.

## SACRED PLACE OF THE REVOLUTION

Mt Paektu is the place which is dear to the hearts of the Korean people and evokes many memories. It is because the mountain is the place which teaches them the history of Korea’s ruin and its lessons, the history of a new Korea and the truth of the Korean revolution.

The history of the Korean revolution which started and



Kim Jong Il's birthplace in the Paektusan Secret Camp and Jongil Peak

advanced victoriously by dint of unity traces its roots in Mt Paektu. Mt Paektu is a sacred place of the revolution where Kim Jong Il, who the Korean nation extolled as the Shining Star of Paektu and the future of Korea, was born and grew up. Since he was born in Mt Paektu, his personality was exactly like the spirit of Mt Paektu.

The Korean people were happy with the birth of Kim Jong Il, saying that it would guarantee the future of Korea and herald the bright future of the nation under the colonial rule of the Japanese imperialists. The birth of Kim Jong Il was the greatest luck of the Korean people who had prayed for the birth of a great man for so long.

Kim Jong Il who was born into the most revolutionary and patriotic family represented the bright future of the Korean people and the sunshine which heralded the future of a new Korea.

At that time many slogans reflecting the joy of the Korean people over the birth of Kim Jong Il appeared attracting the public attention.

*Monthly Report about Ideological Crimes*, a document of Japanese police dated January 4, 1944, wrote: The publicity that a baby boy selected by the heaven was born in Samjiyon, a sacred place in Mt Paektu, greatly agitated the sentiment of the people in wartime; the baby boy selected by the heaven was said to become a general who would bring about the independence of Korea; Koreans say their country would become definitely independent

in the near future, they should kill all the officials of the government institutions and everyone should turn out in the sacred struggle to achieve the independence of the Korean nation.

So far, a number of trees with slogans of that time have been discovered in Mt Paektu and many other places of Korea.

Although the letters have been faded out by rains and snow storms, the slogans still tell the people the pride and glory of the Korean people who greeted another great man in Mt Paektu.

With the birth of Kim Jong Il Mt Paektu greeted another master. Indeed, it was a great event which was brought about by the history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle of the Korean people and an event that heralded the new history of Korea. As he grew up experiencing ennobling comradesly obligations among the most righteous and stout guerillas, Kim Jong Il was a son of Mt Paektu, a son of the guerillas. By reflecting the unanimous aspiration of the Korean people and the requirement of the era, the Mt Paektu area has been laid out as befitting a sacred place of the Korean revolution.

The revolutionary traditions of Paektu are the tradition of boundless loyalty to the leader the Korean revolutionaries displayed during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the tradition of self-reliance and fortitude with which one carries out the difficult task of the revolution without fail by one's own efforts and the tradition of indomitable struggle to rise up perseveringly from all falls however many times they are repeated.

In the period between the late 1950s and the early 1960s the

prevailing situation and the developing reality required the DPRK to defend the revolutionary traditions of Paektu. At that time anti-WPK revisionists were spreading feudal-Confucian ideas which did not suit the ideological feelings of the Korean people in an attempt to obliterate the revolutionary traditions of the Korean people.

Kim Jong Il saw through the harmful nature of their attempt.

In June 1956 Kim Jong Il in his teens set out with his schoolmates on a march to the revolutionary battle sites in the Mt Paektu area, the first of its kind. Every place in the Mt Paektu area is associated with his effort to safeguard the revolutionary traditions of Paektu, the root of the Korean revolution.

Thanks to his energetic leadership, the Mt Paektu area started to



Monument to the Victorious Battle in the Musan Area



Samjiyon Grand Monument

be laid out as a base of education in the revolutionary traditions in the late 1960s.

The revolutionary battle sites in the Mt Paektu area consist of Samjiyon Grand Monument, Monument to the Victorious Battle in the Musan Area, monument on Janggun Peak and the historic sites and battle sites in Chongbong, Pegae Hill, Mupho, etc.

The Samjiyon Grand Monument consists of the bronze statue of Kim Il Sung in the centre of the axis of the concourse (400m×250m) against the background of Mt Paektu and Lake Samji, and the group sculptures. The stand of the statue in the pattern of Janggun Rock well matches the peaks of Mt Paektu, artistically highlighting the lofty profile of General Kim Il Sung in his youth when he dealt crushing blows to the Japanese imperialists crisscrossing the rugged peaks of Mt Paektu.

The Monument to the Victorious Battle in the Musan Area was erected on the Taehongdan Tableland in May 1971 in commemoration of the victorious advance into the homeland by a large unit of the KPRA in May 1939. The monument was renovated in May 2002 to meet the requirements of the times. The monument consists of the statue of Kim Il Sung at the centre, a tower representing a rifle with a bayonet, a large-scale sub-thematic sculptural group and a monument to Kim Il Sung's revolutionary exploits behind the statue.

Worthy of particular note is the renovated city of Samjiyon at the foot of Mt Paektu.

The city with multi-storeyed and low apartment houses and

hotels is a new prototype of a mountain town in the DPRK. Modern streets were built with the main road in front of the statue of Kim Jong Il as the axis. The city is divided into educational block, residential block and commercial service block. Samjiyon City Sci-tech Library, Paektusan General Museum, Samjiyon Blueberry Drink Factory, Millim Health Complex, Chonji Health Complex, Schoolchildren's Palace, tourists' lodgings around Lake Samji and many other modern structures have been built in the land which had been covered with thick larch forest. There are houses and public buildings with various types of roofs as suited to the characteristics of the alpine region, various signboards, street lamps. Its nocturnal view is also spectacular as the streets and buildings are brightly decorated with illuminations. The ski track in the forest brings vigour of youth to the people who visit it.

The local residents and visitors can receive medical treatment at the Samjiyon City People's Hospital which was built as a model of local hospitals. The hospital is equipped with modern medical facilities, inpatient rooms, and fitness and treatment rooms.

All these are the result of loyalty of Kim Jong Un to the great leaders who devoted everything for the good of the country and people and his commitment to pluck a star from the heavens if it is a wish of the people.

The sea change in the Mt Paektu area shows what the ideal land the Korean people aspire after under the leadership of Kim Jong Un looks like. He frequently climbs Mt Paektu to formulate plans for

the future and prosperity of the country and devotes all his wisdom and energy for the good of the people. Thus, the single-hearted unity of the leader and the people has been achieved at a higher level and the foundations of a thriving country have been built in the DPRK.

Good traditions gives birth to good inheritance.

This does not necessarily mean that the traditions are inherited on its own accord.

It is the truth taught by the Korean revolution and the human

history of politics that the destiny of one's country and nation can be defended only when their own traditions are safeguarded, inherited and developed. The revolutionary spirit of Paektu, the main fighting mode of the Korean people, and the development of the Korean revolution are unthinkable apart from Mt Paektu.

In the future, too, Mt Paektu will stand firm as the majestic symbol of the DPRK and shine as the sacred mountain of the revolution instilling the revolutionary spirit into the Korean people.



City of Samjiyon



# Natural Environment

Mt Paektu is widely known as a celebrated mountain in the East for its charm of the nature, beauty of mountain and natural scenery.

## NATURAL BEAUTY

### Charm of the Nature

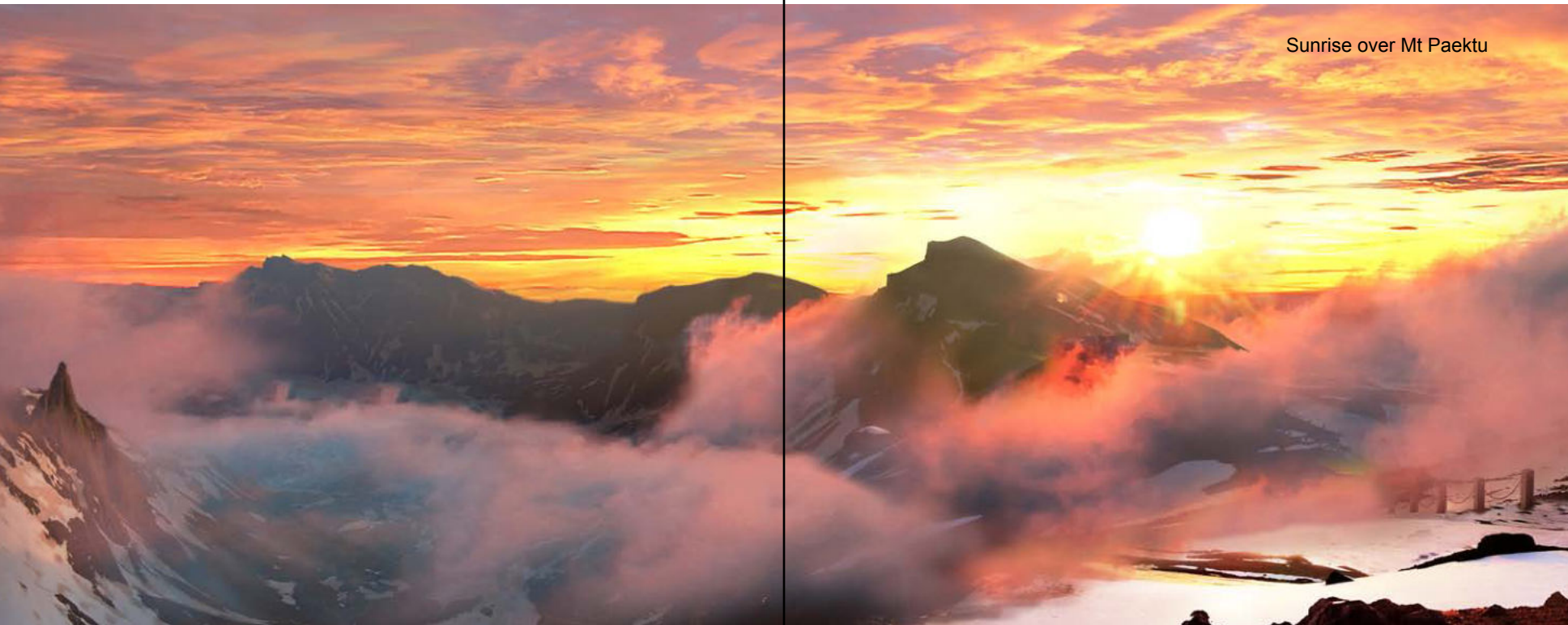
From olden times Korea has been called a golden tapestry of land with beautiful mountains and clear rivers.

There are many scenic spots in the country. The followings are eight most scenic spots: Mt Paektu, Pyongyang, Mt Kumgang, Mt

Myohyang, Pujon Plateau, Mt Jiri, Haeundae and Pulguk Temple. Among them Mt Paektu is regarded as the first.

The most spectacular scene in Mt Paektu is the sunrise over the mountain as it evokes special feeling along with the charm of the nature. When the sun rises through the red glow over the snow-capped mountain, it makes the viewers seethe with passion. Thin light beams filtering through dark clouds of the early morning get thicker, mysteriously stirring the clouds in an instant and dyeing the

Sunrise over Mt Paektu





high cliffs and blue water surface of Lake Chon scarlet. The sunrise over Mt Paektu looks different according to season, weather, place and sentiment.

So the Korean people would say: No trip to Mt Paektu can be said to be complete without seeing the sunrise over it.

An Jae Hong wrote in his book in 1931 that the grandiose looks of the mountain's peaks and Lake Chon, the panoramic view from Mudu Peak, and the clean and beautiful Lake Samji constitute the three scenic spots of Mt Paektu.

Other books published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also mentioned the three scenic spots of Mt Paektu.

The profile of the peaks soaring high into the sky and the majestic view of Lake Chon blend into a spectacle. The wide stretch of primitive forest far below Mudu Peak, the view of big and small peaks surrounding it and the serene and beautiful Lake Samji are a nice combination of the broad-minded and commanding masculine quality and clean and delicate feminine beauty.

The forest in the Mt Paektu area, called Chonphyong, is also a scenic beauty.

Surrounded by Taegak Peak, Yonji Peak, Mt Sono, Mt Kanbaek, Mt Sobaek, Mt Phothae and Kwanmo Peak, the thick forest

stretches so far and wide that it looks as if it was connected to the sky, and hence its name *Chonphyong* which denotes a heavenly horizon. In the morning the sun rises over the east horizon of the forest painting everything in it in the same colour.

And in the evening fog rises from Mt Sobaek and envelops the area.

Chonphyong is famous not only for its beautiful scenery but also for its valuable medicinal materials like young antler, musk, marten leather and wild insam. The rhododendrons on the snow-covered mountain top look like an exquisite embroidery on a piece of white silk. And the Rimyongsu Falls and the Sobaek Stream



Rhododendrons on snow-covered Mt Paektu



Forest in the Mt Paektu area



Lake Samji





Rimyongsu Falls

which do not get frozen throughout the year add much more to the natural beauty of Mt Paektu.

Also spectacular is the ice sculpture festival which takes place

in the city of Samjiyon on the occasion of the Day of the Shining Star (Kim Jong Il's birthday).

Mt Paektu is indeed a famous mountain of Korea in terms of natural beauty.

### Beauty of Mountain

Mt Paektu is the best of all the mountains in Korea.

As it is capped with snow all the year round, the Korean people have called it from olden times a mountain hewn out of a white gem. If seen from afar, its peaks look flat and soft-sloping like earthen jars standing upside down, but if seen on its summit, the peaks surrounding Lake Chon are steep and even precipitous.

Each of the peaks encircling the lake has its unique features. Some are high and big like Janggun Peak and others are low. And some are steep and others are flat on the top. All the peaks surrounding Lake Chon originated in Janggun Peak, the highest peak in Mt Paektu.

Among numerous mountain peaks forming the outer rim of the crater, 20 are over 2 500 metres high above sea level. In the mid-area of the east ridge of the somma rises Janggun Peak (2 750m), the highest one in Korea, and Hyangdo Peak (2 712m)



Rocks of fantastic shape in Mt Paektu



Cliffs in Mt Paektu

is located about 1.1km away to the north of the peak. 900m away from Hyangdo Peak stands Ssangmujigae Peak (2 626m). There are Jebi and several other peaks southwest of Janggun Peak. In the mid-area of the western ridge of the somma are Chongsok Peak (2 662m) and Paegun Peak (2 691m) that is always shrouded in clouds and Chail Peak (2 596m) towards the Tal Gate. And in the mid-area of its northern ridge are rocks of various shapes and on its southern ridge are high and low rocks and peaks in a row. The difference in the height of its major peaks is within 150 metres. So, the peaks stand similarly high and the ridge of the outer rim looks like a folding screen.

The area of Piru Peak east of the crater is composed of the rugged cliffs. Piru Peak, which looks as if guarding Janggun Peak, forms a relatively distinctive range as a unique mountain body representing the mountain beauty of the crater. Rock ridge dominated by Piru Peak is about 1km long and about 600m from Janggun Peak to Piru Peak is straight and steep-topped. Therefore, it is very difficult to climb the ridge.

Rocks of various shapes—for example, bear, candle, lion and rainbow—stand in this area. So, the area is called Manmulsang (myriad shapes) in Mt Paektu.

The scenery of the peaks of Mt Paektu is so fascinating that it is regarded as the acme of beauty of mountains. The following are typical peaks of Mt Paektu.

### **Janggun Peak**

Janggun Peak (2 750m) represents Mt Paektu and it is the highest peak which dominates the vast area on the coast of Pacific in Northeast Asia. The peak is covered with white pumice stone layer 1-20m thick.



Janggun Peak

The peak stands to the southeast direction from the centre of the crater and protruds about 45m towards Lake Chon along the ridge of Piru Peak. The mountain ridge is so steep that it is difficult to gain access to it. On the ridge stand several sharp-pointed rock pillars, the highest of which is Piru Peak (2 580m).

After Piru Peak, the mountain ridge diverges into eight branches to form rocky walls which reach the alpine lake. The rocks in these ridges are so solid and dense that they did not crumble even at the times of volcano eruption but have preserved their shapes as they are.

Stones and rocks called volcanic bombs are scattered over Janggun Peak, and they are diverse in size, ranging from scores of centimetres to 1-2 metres in diameter.

### **Hyangdo Peak**

Hyangdo Peak (2 712m) is the second highest of the outer rim peaks encircling Lake Chon. It is 2.1km east of the centre of the crater. It soars high on the rocky cliffs on the shore of the blue Lake Chon.

In the past it was called Chonwang Peak in the sense that the King of Heaven descended there. But later it was renamed

Hyangdo Peak in reflection of the Korean people's aspiration and wish to convey the immortal exploits of Kim Jong Il and hold him in high esteem.

Inscribed on the outer slope surface of the peak is Kim Jong Il's autograph, reading, "Mt Paektu, sacred mountain of the revolution, Kim Jong Il."



Hyangdo Peak

Janggun Peak is located about 1km southwest of Hyangdo Peak. Just like Janggun Peak, it is formed with layers of various kinds of lava from volcanic eruption. The steep southern slope of Hyangdo Peak has glacial moraine downland formed by the movement of mountain glacier.

### **Ssangmujigae Peak**

Ssangmujigae Peak (2 626m) is on the eastern shore of Lake Chon. The peak is about 960m north of Hyangdo Peak and the two peaks are linked by a saddle.

The ridge lies from north to south and its western foot is connected with the cliff over the lake. The peak is called so because its two paralleled cliff ribbons, if seen from afar, look like twin rainbows with the mountain as the background.

## **NATURAL SCENES AND ANECDOTES RELATED WITH THEM**

Mt Paektu has many natural scenes and peculiar natural phenomena occur frequently in the area.

### **Old Names of the Mountain**

In the olden times Mt Paektu was called under various names. The present name Paektu has been used since the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The following are its old names and their meanings.

Mt Thaeback: a big and white mountain

Mt Pulham: a bright mountain

Mt Kaemadae: a mountain that looks like the back of a lying horse

Mt Tothae: a mountain with several peaks

Mt Jangbaek: a long and white mountain

Mt Paek: a white mountain

### **Object of World-class Exploration**

On the earth many mountains rise more than 3 000m high above sea level, and volcanoes are numbered in hundreds. But any high mountain or volcano cannot be an object of exploration.

The reason why Mt Paektu has become the object of exploration since long time ago was the peculiarity of its volcanic activities and mystery of its natural scenes.

In the light of volcanological point of view, the volcano of Mt Paektu is unique in that the number of its eruption is quite large and the stage of its eruption is distinctive. It remained active even in the period of human history. Unlike other volcanoes, explosive eruption was combined with outflowing eruption, the former being dominant.

What drew the attention of many geologists and volcanists across the world was the great eruption of white pumice that took place around the year 1000. At that time the fallout from the eruption flew as far as the Japanese islands across the East Sea of Korea.

It is accompanied by harsh physical and scientific exertion as it targets the untrodden realms of nature. There is no clear historic record of when exploration started but it is believed that exploration started in the early stage of human history. Mt Paektu is a peculiar mountain formed by the eruptions of a volcano, in the course of which a great depression crater was created on its summit and turned into a big lake.

Mt Paektu experienced complex formation and evolution processes of biological circles due to constant change of glacial

periods and interglacial periods. It has a peculiar climate and beauty for its height. Such distinctiveness of volcanic activities, beautiful scenery and mysterious natural phenomena were known even to the European and American continents, drawing their geographers, mountaineers and explorers. Therefore, it became a major target of exploration by scientists and mountaineers from many countries including Korea, China, Mongolia, India and Japan in Asia, Russia, United Kingdom, France and Germany in Europe and US and Canada in North America. The history of world exploration records 60-odd major explorations of Mt Paektu.

### **History of Exploration**

Exploration of Mt Paektu was conducted and developed through certain historical stages in terms of target, scale, content and method. It started as mountain-climbing for mere entertainment, not for scientific purposes.

It was around the 1400s when mankind left their first footprints on the foot of the mountain. Since then the exploration of the mountain was conducted at a low standard and in very sluggish and one-sided manner until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the main purpose of the exploration was to survey and ascertain the location of



the mountain and borderlines between countries. Later on, the curiosity for its beautiful landscape and mysterious nature prompted many people to climb it. Hundreds of years have passed since people discovered and climbed it, but it was around 1670 that a human being conquered its summit for the first time. At that time, a Korean mountaineer reached the top of mountain, surmounting every manner of hardship, and found an amazing lake which he had never imagined. He was struck with wonder by the marvellous landscape of the alpine lake, majestic waterfalls and peculiar weather conditions. Subsequently, he recorded them in a book. Since then the existence of the alpine lake was known to the world and legends about the mysterious mountain were produced. The mountaineers from various countries started to climb it with great curiosity and enthusiasm.

Between 1682 and 1684 a sketch of the panoramic view of the mountain with the lake at the centre was made public, giving a visual explanation of its geographical location and form and natural scenery of the mountain.

In 1764 a map of a panoramic view of the mountain was drawn up and articles on the mysterious lake were published.

The exploration and survey of the mountain by a Korean geographer named Kim Jong Ho (early 19<sup>th</sup> century–1864) brought about a fresh turn in this regard. Between 1835 and 1861

he conducted detailed exploration and survey of the area of the mountain on three occasions and drew up a topographical map on the basis of scientific mathematical geography and by an original way of portrayal and described the rich natural scenery of the mountain, thus highlighting the geographical features of the mountain and making a tangible contribution to enriching the geographical wealth of the country.

In 1898 a man confirmed the geographical location and main features of Lake Chon. And in the course of surveying the lake shore he discovered the Paegam Hot Spring. And according to his note he witnessed a small sudden eruption from the lake in which black smoke, gas and volcanic ash were gushing out with an explosive sound.

Entering the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the exploration of the mountain was developed from the form of individual mountaineering for sightseeing to collective exploration, whose scope and content was mainly academic, military and economic survey. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the day of Korea's liberation major explorations were made on ten occasions, chiefly by the Japanese imperialists. In August 1907 a group of Chinese mountaineers who started from Antu, Northeast China, climbed Mt Paektu from the north and took a photo for the first time of the mountain with Lake Chon at the centre. In July 1910 a group of Russian explorers made a general survey of the mountain

and took photos. In 1911 a group of European mountaineers took 42 photos of Lake Chon and other scenes in the area of Mt Paektu and made them public, thus ensuring scientific accuracy and objectivity in introducing the mountain. In 1913, the initial period of Japan's military occupation of Korea, a group of experts in the field of topography, geology, agriculture and forestry surveyed the Mt Paektu area to collect data on its topography and natural resources for Japan's invasion of the Asian continent. Since then the expedition to the mountain assumed an aggressive and predatory nature in its scale and purposes.

Entering the 1920s the aim of the exploration went beyond the boundary of general survey and gradually assumed more scientific character. In particular, the interest in the floor terrain and depth of Lake Chon heightened and attempts were made to survey and confirm the mountain's nature in a scientific way.

In 1926 the Japanese imperialists dispatched a group of 50 experts in the sectors of topography, geology, plants and animals, agriculture and forestry on a mission to make an exploration of it, but their exploration was also for general survey.

In August 1927 the Korea Association of Education sent an exploration group to measure the depth of the lake. The group built a small boat with tin plates. But it failed to attain its goal because the ship was broken during transportation. So it merely looked round

the lake and left a simple note on the exploration.

In 1929 the Japanese imperialists dispatched another exploration group. It tried to measure the depth of the lake by help of a raft. However, they only succeeded in measuring the depth of a few points in shallow water owing to insufficient measurement apparatuses and mysterious natural and climatic phenomena. They admitted that their finding lacked scientific accuracy and gave up making it public.

In August that year, a heavily-armed company of Musan garrison of the Japanese army climbed the top of the mountain and made a detailed survey of the state of border guard and topographical features in this area. And they fired a machine-gun in volleys towards the wall of the crater under Paegam Peak in an attempt to confirm the width of Lake Chon by calculating the speed of the bullets and the time they hit the cliff.

According to a Korean who guided them, it was impossible to trace the bullets because of the deafening sound of gunshots and so their attempt ended in failure.

In the 1930s a relatively large exploration group from the United States and Germany measured the depth of some parts of the lake. But they failed to reach the centre of the lake and gauged only a few points. And then they made public that the Lake Chon is 312.7m deep.

In July 1931 a Korean mountaineer climbed Mt Paektu and made a general survey of its natural scenery. Later he wrote a book titled, *A Travelogue of Mt Paektu* by combining the existing materials with his findings.

It was the winter between 1934 and 1935 that the first wintertime expedition was carried out. An expedition group formed in December 1934 at a university in Japan managed to arrive at Lake Chon in early January the following year, braving biting cold and snowstorms, but had to give up their survey after obtaining only a few samples of ice from the lake. Later they published a pamphlet titled, *Mt Paektu*, in which they gave misleading information that the ice of the lake was 3-4m thick and the snow piled up was 1.5m deep.

In the period between 1939 and 1941 the exploration of Mt Paektu was conducted in every summer.

In the summer of 1942 a group made up of 40 employees of Manchuria-Jilin Railway Bureau and 200 heavily-armed soldiers of Japanese Kwantung Army and puppet Manchukuo Army conducted a comprehensive survey of the mountain. They measured the depth of lake in several points but their measurement value was shallower than existing one. So they made public that the lake was 312.7m deep as it was known. Subsequently, the exploration of the mountain was conducted by a small group of explorers or

individual mountaineers on several occasions, during which interesting stories were created. While measuring the depth of the lake on a raft, an explorer was caught in a whirlwind. His hat flew high in the sky in the wind and came back again on his head. Believing that it was by the hand of the God of Lake Chon, he hurriedly left the mountain. Another explorer who went into the lake by a small vessel made of cowhide narrowly escaped death.

Numerous explorers and mountain-climbers at home and abroad visited the mountain until Korea's liberation since Mt Paektu was widely known to the world, but they all failed to uncover the fundamental secrets of the mountain and lake. One of them put up on the shore of the lake a signpost reading, *Lake Chon on Mt Paektu will remain as an eternal secret of mankind.*

Afterwards, the expedition to the mountain suspended.

### **New History of Exploration**

Entering the 1980s, positive efforts were made to disclose the secrets of Mt Paektu, the celebrated mountain of Korea which boasts of time-honoured history spanning 5 000 years.

An engine boat weighing more than one ton was used for the first time in the survey of Lake Chon. The survey confirmed its maximum depth and status of its floor, thereby proving that it was the deepest of the crater lakes on the earth.

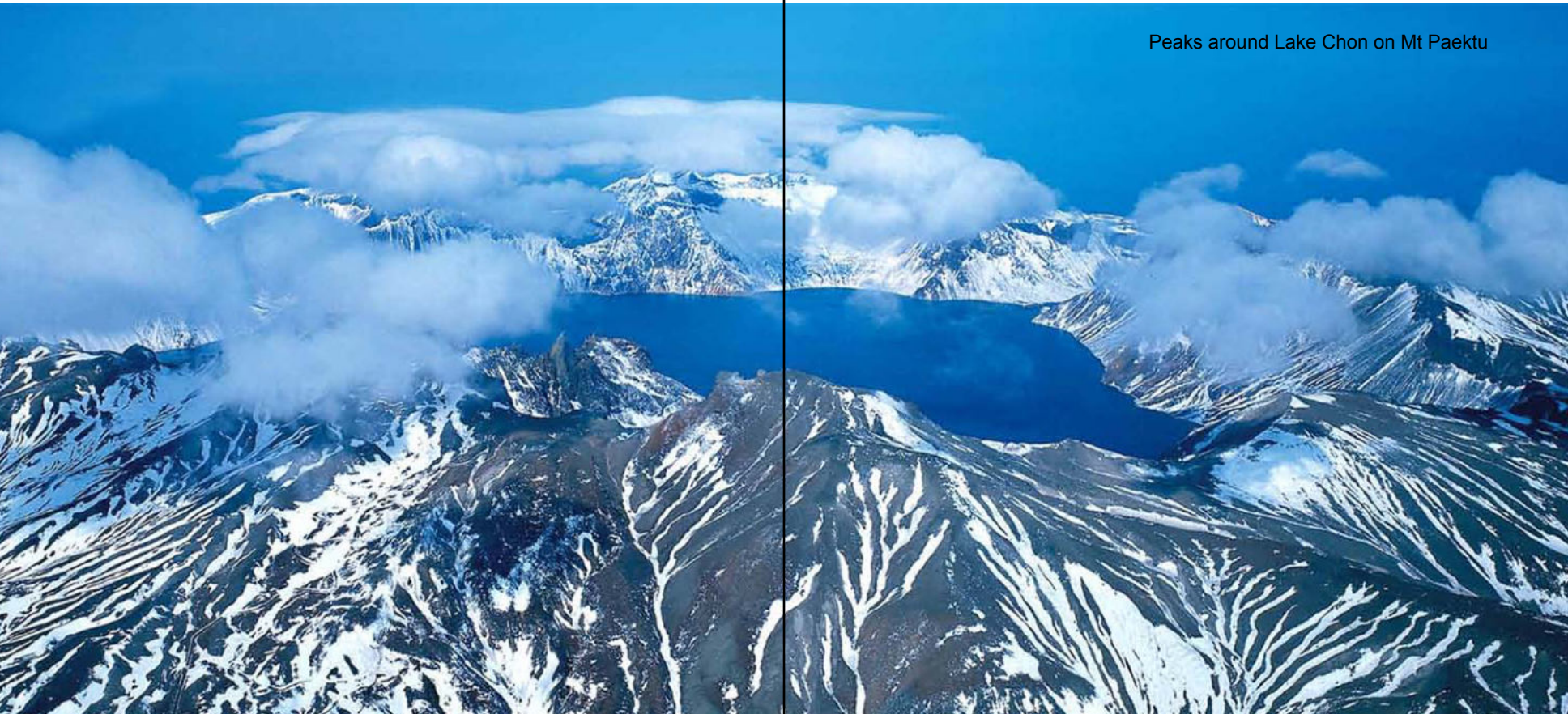
Winter in Mt Paektu is really rigorous. In retrospect, many mountain-climbers and explorers had visited the mountain in summertime but nobody had dared to stay there all winter out.

The members of the expedition group executed their duties at the highest possible level despite the bitter cold of 40 degrees below zero and the maximum instantaneous wind speed of about

80m/s. They clarified the climatic, topographical, geological and biological features of the mountain and the law-governed nature of their changes and systematized them in a scientific and theoretical way, thus supplementing and perfecting the geographical materials related with the mountain.

In particular, they ascertained the possibility and features of

Peaks around Lake Chon on Mt Paektu



inhabitation of cold-current fishes in the lake and thereby broke new ground in the study of the change of biological circles of crater lakes.

### **216 Peaks**

The outstanding quality of Kim Jong Il is wonderfully reflected in the nature of Mt Paektu. Many mysteriously-shaped peaks, high and low, form the outer rim of the crater of the mountain.

In the course of surveying the peaks in the crater the surprising fact was discovered that there are 216 peaks with a relative height of more than 20m and this number coincides with the birthday of Kim Jong Il (February 16).

### **A Bear Which Descended to Lake Chon**

From olden times a legendary tale has been told in the area of Mt Paektu that a horrible monster lived in the alpine lake. According to witnesses a horrible brown monster as big as a bull swam across the lake crying loudly. It was believed to defend the lake.

Then, is there a real monster living in the lake? This question was a matter of great concern for a long time. The identity of the monster was finally revealed in the course of exploration of the mountain.

The so-called monster proved to be none other than a big bear that lived in the Mt Paektu area. You would hardly believe if someone tells you that a bear was found in the lake. But it was true. There is no knowing how and why the bear came to the lake. The most cogent hypothesis is that it came to the lake in search of water or prey. In fact, animals including big bears sometimes appear on the shore of the lake in spring and autumn.

At dawn on July 12, 1981 a big bear appeared on the top of Piru



A bear swimming across Lake Chon

Peak. It came down to the lake, swam to Chongsok Peak on the opposite shore and crossed over the outer rim of the crater.

On the afternoon of September 24, 1983 a bear apparently weighing 200kg came down to the lake along the valley between Hyangdo Peak and Ssangmujigae Peak. It strolled along the shore for a while before slowly going towards Paegam Peak.

Later on, similar cases were observed on several occasions.

In April 2007 a big bear that emerged from hibernation was observed creeping on the frozen lake.

The footprint made on the surface of the snow was as big as two feet of a human adult. At that time the bear sat on snow licking its soles of feet for about 30 minutes and went back to Chongsok Peak when it felt human presence around.

Natural caves that were thought to be hibernation places for bears were discovered at the foot of Mt Paektu and its surrounding areas.

It is quite interesting that big bears living in this area frequent the alpine lake and swim across it.

### **A Vulture on the Shore of Lake Chon**

The general exploration group of Lake Chon on Mt Paektu caught a vulture on the shore of the lake for the first time on June 20, 2007. Belonging to the eagle family, vulture is one of the

biggest bird species. It weighs 10kg, and the length of its wings, tail and beak is 75-87cm, 35-41cm and 6cm, respectively.

It lives mainly in mountains and plains in northwest China, central Asia, southeast Europe and Russia's Far East Region. During breeding season, it builds its nest on highlands that are 2 000-4 000m above sea level. After breeding, it comes down to flatlands and moves about from autumn. It sometimes flies to Korea.

Its characteristic features are that it has a strong beak, long and wide wings and has soft down on the upper part of the forehead and head but has no fur in the nape and sides of the neck. It mainly eats the flesh of dead or small animals.

The vulture caught at that time weighed 12kg, and the length of the wings (130cm when spread out), tail and beak was 80, 40 and 7cm, respectively.

The appearance of vulture, after scores of species of animals were discovered on the shore of the lake, shows that the relation of food chain is growing richer as the species of plants and animals are becoming diverse.

### **Freshwater Tortoise on the Shore of Lake Chon**

It will not be easy to believe that tortoises are living at the shore of Lake Chon on Mt Paektu. But in fact tortoises have been

discovered and caught several times there.

In August 2004 a yellow-eared tortoise, a species of freshwater tortoise, was caught in the lake at a depth of two metres near Okjang Spring west of the lake. Up until then it had been known that this species of tortoise was distributed only in wetlands or lakes in Mexico, but none in Korea. It is quite surprising that such a rare freshwater tortoise was discovered in the lake that is known to be the coldest place in Korea. It is called so as it has yellow patterns around the ears. It has a high ornamental value since it looks pretty.

In 2008, four years later, another yellow-eared tortoise was discovered, thus confirming that more than one freshwater tortoise lived there.

No explanation has been provided on how yellow-eared tortoise distributed in the middle part of the American continent came to live in the lake. The fact that freshwater tortoises are living in Lake Chon is of great academic significance.

### **Twin Rainbow**

It is a law of nature that a rainbow appears due to the refracted sunlight when it passes through drops of water in the atmosphere, and such a natural phenomenon can be seen everywhere.

When they see a rainbow the people are charmed by its

mysterious patterns and beautiful colours and cry cheers despite themselves. This is all the more so when they see a twin rainbow. Maybe not so many people must have seen a twin rainbow hanging above the summit of Mt Paektu. But, in fact, a twin rainbow is not a rare phenomenon in the mountain. It is because its atmosphere contains many a water drop owing to the frequent gathering of clouds and fog and torrential rains.

On Mt Paektu pouring rain stops abruptly and clouds turn into white cumuli, finally dispersing. Then a beautiful twin rainbow appears over Lake Chon. Sometimes a double rainbow which appears over the lake moves up to the peaks above or hangs over two peaks. At other times the twin rainbow hangs between Janggun peak and Lake Chon.

There is a peak named Ssangmujigae (twin rainbow-Tr.) as a twin rainbow frequently appears over it.

That the twin rainbow on Mt Paektu looks so gorgeous and elegant is probably because water of the lake is so clear and its atmosphere is so fresh and clean that this area has stronger solar radiation and receives more ultraviolet rays than other areas.

### **Colourful Clouds over Hyangdo Peak**

Colourful clouds are frequently seen over Hyangdo Peak.

Colourful clouds are often described in legendary tales. But you

can see them in reality—over Hyangdo Peak around February 16 every year.

If you stand on the shore of the lake and see thin layer of clouds passing over the mountain ridge at a fast speed with the sun rising over Hyangdo Peak as the background, you can notice the clouds are dyed in beautiful colours. This phenomenon can be explained with the principle of formation of rainbows.

The colour tones of the clouds are changing and beautiful as the shapes of clouds often change owing to a strong wind.

In olden times Hyangdo Peak used to be called Chonwang Peak in the sense that the King of Heaven descended to the earth riding the colourful clouds. (Chonwang means the King of Heaven—Tr.)

### **A Beautiful Grassland Enveloped in Fragrance of Flowers**

In general, plant constitutes one of the three components of natural scenery.

The wide Paektu Alpine Grassland covered with primeval forests is a major element of the landscape of world-renowned Mt Paektu.

If you enter the grassland after passing the forests of Paektu, the majestic Mt Paektu heaves into sight across a wide sea of different

kinds of beautiful flowers. Tens of thousands of species of plants are growing on the earth and countless flowers boast of their colours and fragrance, but the flowers on the grassland at the foot of Mt Paektu are famous for their distinctive and rich colours and fragrance. The grassland is covered with a carpet of moss, lichens and flowers of different colours—blue, red, yellow, light pink, purple and white. There are scores of rare flowering plants. Some live at the cracks of rocks and bloom throughout spring and autumn, and others like rhododendron bloom even in winter when armful larches shiver in cold. These flowers provide sheer contrast against the green primeval forests of Paektu. Flowers on the grassland look more beautiful when the sunshine pours down in the morning and after rain. Grass leaves glisten with dew in the sun and flowers raise their heads, emitting fragrance to fill the grassland.

This is not all. Beautiful bees and butterflies are busy among flowers. Pheasants, roe deers and hedge sparrows, and alpine strawberry and backwoods blueberry add much more to the idyllic surroundings of the grassland.

Indeed, the Paektu Alpine Grassland is a garden full of beautiful flowers and rare fruits.

### **Nocturnal View**

Nocturnal view of the mountain is also wonderful.



In the world, many places are renowned for their fascinating nocturnal view. However, they would not give sublime and unique feelings to the people like the night of Mt Paektu which is associated with meaningful stories of history. As the sun sets over the western ridge of Mt Paektu, the mountain is dyed in red glow. Some time later the evening glow slowly clears, revealing sparkling stars over the lake. Finally, darkness reigns over the mountain and mysterious silhouettes of peaks loom into sight against the sky.



Whereas there are wild nights when darkness rules and the lake roars in windstorm, there are serene nights when the clear water of the lake sparkles with the starlight and the ripples of the lake wash the pumice stones on sand beach.

When the moon rises over Hyangdo Peak, the nocturnal view of the lake becomes more spectacular. The moon and stars on the rippling deep blue water of the lake are really fabulous.

The scenery of Mt Paektu is impressive whether it is seen in the daytime or nighttime.

## Snowscape

Snowscape of Mt Paektu is also fantastic.

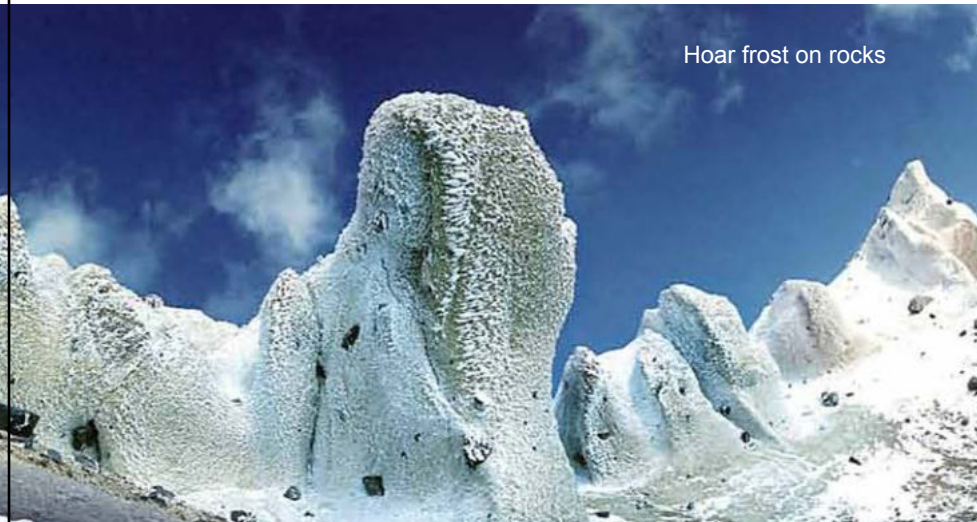
Snowscape of the mountain is characterized by the howling snowstorms, snowslides, endless sea of snow and ice.

While it is shiny over the grassland and its surrounding forests, clouds hurriedly scurry over the lake, covering or revealing the peaks.

Then, in an instant, the clouds disperse like fog and snowflakes drift in gale.

Even though it was calm a moment ago, a sudden sweeping wind throws snow adrift from the surface of the mountain, forests and frozen lake and moves snow piles from here to there.

It gives rise to avalanches on all sides and covers the forest



Hoar frost on rocks

with snowstorm.

What is particularly spectacular is the ice built on the wall of the crater, shore of the lake and waterfalls.

If the raging snowstorm stops and the sun shines, icicles hang on the cliffs encircling the lake, producing melodic sounds.

Snow flows down the slope of the crater and collides with snow blown up from the lake, forming ice roofs on the cliffs.

And large snow caves are built around hot springs.

Waterfalls are frozen to giant ice sculptures of various shapes. Play of dazzling colours on the sculptures in the morning sun or evening glow is something that cannot be found in other places.

### **Snow-and-Ice Cave**

Particularly worthy of note in the scenery of Mt Paektu is the snow-and-ice cave which is located at the southeastern foot of Janggun Peak.

It is 4.5m wide and 2.9m high at the entrance and about 50m deep.

The inside of the cave looks as if decorated with ice pillars and well-trimmed crystals. There is a spring on the floor of the cave.

### **Waterfalls**

A waterfall is an important element of natural scenery which infuses people with strength and passion.

Mt Paektu has many majestic waterfalls and they enhance its scenery all the more. The waterfalls are mainly located on the cliff faces and foots of the mountain. Representatives are Sagimun, Hyongje, Paektu and Chonji falls which are located along the Amnok River.

### **Paektu Falls**

Paektu Falls is located a little away down from the Sagimun Falls on the Amnok River and on the west of the tourist road to the mountain along the valley of the river.



Paektu Falls

Its source is the underground water that comes from Lake Chon.

It is a vertical waterfall 12m high. It looks as if a roll of silk cloth hangs down and falls to a narrow valley.

Under the waterfall is a pond. Silvery spouts rise up around the stream of water. Its scene is more beautiful when flowers bloom around it.

### **Reversal Falls, a Peculiar Scene of Mt Paektu**

There is an interesting waterfall inside the outer rim of Mt Paektu.

In rainy season many waterfalls form on cliff faces encircling the crater. It becomes literally crater waterfalls. When strong northwest winds blow upwards along the cliff faces of the crater, the flow of waterfalls is reversed, sending water up into the air like fountains.

Such reversed waterfalls can often be seen in the snow-thawing season between May and June and in the rainy season between July and August.

### **Sagimun Falls**

It flows down along delicately-carved grooves on a huge rock, telling its long history. Its height is 18m.

It falls in three tiers as if it feels difficult to fall at once or reluctant to leave the mountain.

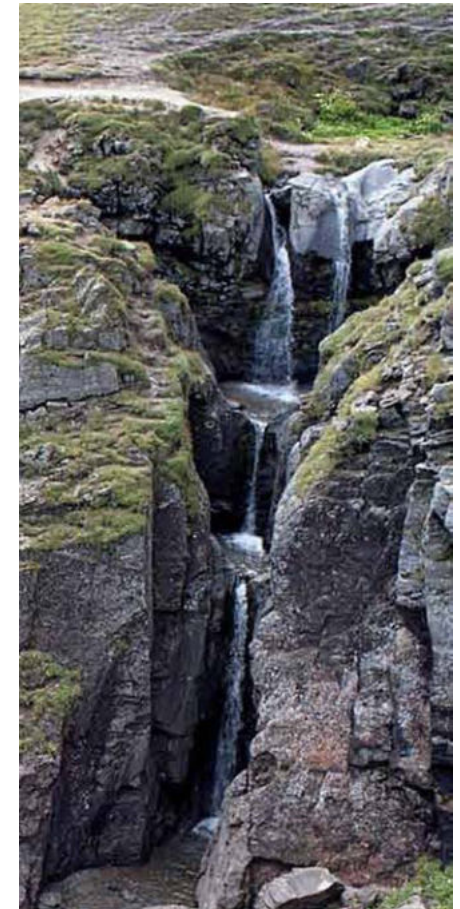
In the beginning it falls along one groove and stays at a shallow pond for a short while.

Then it falls again in two similar streams into a small pond before joining and thudding down onto the Amnok River.

Even in summer snowdrifts at the foot of the valley and waterspouts combine to unfold an uncommon scene.

As there are only ice pillars remaining in winter, visitors may feel regrettable not to see the living waterfall.

But frozen grooves, ponds and water streams give them lingering impression in their own way.



Sagimun Falls

### Hyongje (Brothers) Falls

It is located about 7.2km down from Paektu Falls along the Amnok River.

It is called so because it falls through two courses.

The 11.6m-high waterfall is not so big but it is well known for its majesty and singularity.

The left one of two courses is the “elder brother” waterfall. Water falls onto rocks, splashing out in pearl-like droplets which produce rainbows in the sunlight.



Hyongje Falls

### Chongun Rock

This rock is located about 6km upwards along the Amnok River from where the Sobaek Stream joins the river.

In fact, it is 2-km-wide rocky cliffs of exotic shape forming the western wall of the ravine of the Amnok River and located approximately 2km southwest of Mt Kom.

It was formed by volcanic activities. It looks as if over thousand soldiers stand in rows.

The average height and width of the cliffs are scores of metres and 20-30m, respectively.

They are an epitome of the special geological and topographical features of the area. Sharp-cut rocky peaks and steepy cliffs add beauty to the scenery of the Amnok River.



Chongun Rock

### Four Seasons in One Place

There are many countries in the world among which some have only one season and others enjoy four distinctive seasons.

Thanks to four seasons, natural and geographical environment becomes diverse and various scenes are created.

It is a law of nature that everything comes back to life in spring, mountains turn green with fresh vegetation in summer, fruits ripe in autumn and rivers and mountains freeze in winter.

But some natural phenomena in Mt Paektu can hardly be explained with this law.

Certainly, every year one season is replaced by another in the mountain, too.

However, phenomena peculiar to four seasons can be observed at once in one place in Mt Paektu.

Such original phenomena can be seen in the whole of the mountain or within the crater or one valley or in every season—spring, summer, autumn and winter.

In summer when green forests sway in gentle breezes and flowers emit fragrance on the plateau, blueberry trees are heavily laden with ripened fruits, unfolding an autumnal scene and snowdrifts in deep valleys are a reminder of winter.

In the meantime young plants emerge on shadowy slopes as if it is springtime.

And on cracks of rocks beautiful flowers are about to fall, heralding the arrival of autumn, but in the sky autumn has already set in as the raindrops that were falling a moment ago are turned into hailstones.

While raindrops glisten on flowers on one side of a valley, high snow piles still exist on the other side.

When on low hills inside the outer rim flowers wither and leaves are tinted with autumnal colours, there are slurry snowdrifts in deep valleys.

What is surprising here, however, is that sprouts of herbaceous plants grow near the snowdrifts as if it was early in spring.

And not far from there, a riot of plants are busy opening their buds.

Whereas the main features of four seasons can be seen altogether in summer, it is possible to observe natural phenomena peculiar to summer in winter.

To the close of a year when winter has come heralded by strong winds, Lake Chon is covered with ice and topped with a thick layer of snow.

However, in a corner a hot spring spouts out from deep underground, melting snow and enveloping the surroundings with steam.

It is freezingly cold around the lake but people can take a bath



in the hot spring and plants on the sunny shore of the lake still remain fresh.

As seen above, it is one of the peculiar features of Mt Paektu that four seasons can be observed at once.





**Sacred Mountain of Korea**

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