

FAMOUS MOUNTAINS OF KOREA



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PREFACE

Korea, a 3 000-*ri* land of golden tapestry, has several celebrated mountains like Paektu, Kumgang, Myohyang, Chilbo and Kuwol.

For their majestic and exquisitely-shaped peaks and waterfalls, they are wonderful tourist attractions and cultural resorts.

The mountains have legendary tales that reflect the emotions and dreams of the Korean people. And many historical and cultural remains and relics are preserved there.

This book introduces the beautiful scenes and historical relics found in Paektu, Kumgang, Myohyang, Chilbo and Kuwol, typical famous mountains of Korea, and legendary tales associated with them.

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Mt Paektu



Outline

Paektu is Korea's highest mountain which soars in the northern part of the city of Samjiyon, Ryanggang Province. From olden times, it has been well-known for its extraordinarily majestic scenery.

Not only it looks majestic with many peaks more than 2 500m high, but also it gives a mysterious feeling as there is a lake on its summit.

It is the ancestral mountain of Korea which embodies the soul of its people and a sacred mountain of revolution in which the Korean revolution was pioneered.

It is called the ancestral mountain because it is the basis and source of all other mountains of the country and the Korean nation regards it as the birthplace of the states in its history and sacred place which embodies the soul of the nation.

Throughout the long historical period most of the Korean states took the mountain 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



Mt Paektu

defends their country.

There was a stone monument *Ryongsinbigak* on the shore of Lake Chon.

The monument made of pumice stone was set up in the early 20th 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



Monument to the Dragon God of Heavenly Lake, Guarding Mt Paektu, unearthed on Mt Paektu

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 of 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 Janggun and Hyangdo peaks which command a fine view of the lake.

The Korean people call Paektu as the sacred mountain because it is a time-honoured mountain from which the Korean revolution



Jong Il Peak

started and the bright future of the country dawned and which embodies the revolutionary mettle and spirit of the Korean people.

It is associated with the history of revolutionary activities of President Kim Il Sung who, by leading the 20-year-long anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle to victory, accomplished the cause of national liberation, and it is where the brilliant revolutionary traditions of the Workers' Party of Korea struck their strong roots.

There is the Paektusan Secret Camp in the mountain, where Chairman Kim Jong Il, whom the Korean nation extolled as the Shining Star of Paektu and the future of Korea, was born and grew up. The Mt Paektu area has been laid out as befitting a sacred place of the Korean revolution.



Jong Il Peak and Chairman Kim Jong Il's native home
in the Paektusan Secret Camp

The revolutionary battle sites in the Mt Paektu area consist of the 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 and other places.

The city of Samjiyon in the Mt Paektu area has been renovated into a model of a cultured mountain city consisting of multi-storied and low-rise apartment houses and Samjiyon Hotel with the main road in front of the bronze statue of Chairman Kim Jong Il as the axis.

City of Samjiyon



Samjiyon Grand Monument



Monument to the Victorious Battle
in the Musan Area



Statue of Chairman Kim Jong Il standing in the city of Samjiyon

**Natural and
Geographical
Environment**

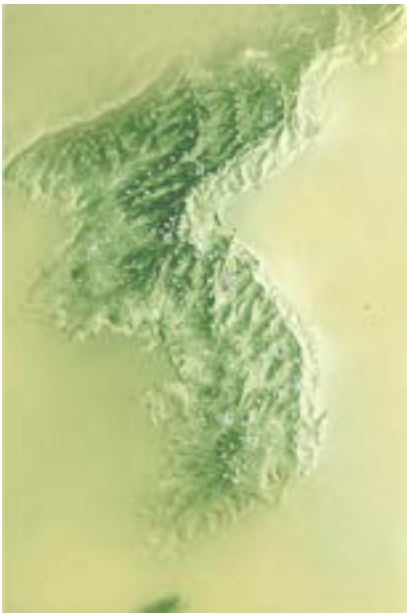
Mt Paektu, 2 750m high, is the origin of the Great Paektu Mountains which is the spine of the Korean peninsula, and Lake Chon on its summit is the source of the Amnok and Tuman rivers.

All the mountain ranges of Korea are characterized by the fact that they originate from Mt Paektu and are connected with one another, forming one great mountain range.

The Great Paektu Mountains starts in Mt Paektu and ends in Kujae Peak of Jiri Mountains in the southern part of the Korean peninsula.

The total length and average height of the Great Paektu Mountains are 1 470km and 1 170m, respectively.

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



Great Paektu Mountains

from the north to the south.

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 60°.



Cliffs in Mt Paektu

As peaks of different forms and heights are connected to one another, the mountaintop looks flat and easily climbable if seen from afar, but it actually consists of high and sharp-cut cliffs.

Affected by the typical highland climate, it 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. The lowest temperature



Lake Chon in spring

on 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, waterfalls and springs in the area.

The water level of Lake Chon is 2 190m above sea level.

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 200m.

The lake is 384m at the deepest point, 213.3m on average and



Lake Chon in summer



Lake Chon in winter

14 400m in circumference.

As an alpine area which is connected with the Asian Continent by land, the Mt Paektu area has a severe climate and unique ranges of animals adapted to its peculiar geographical and geological environment.

As the number of rare animals in this area is small, they are specially protected. Typical ones are sable, otter, tiger, leopard, musk deer, deer, antelope and brown bear.



Bear

Korean tiger

Some of the animals living in the area of Mt Paektu



Birds and fishes



As the area has very low temperatures and does not offer a favourable feeding condition in winter, there are very small numbers of perennial and winter birds. But in summer large numbers of summer birds come there for breeding as the environment of habitat becomes diversified and favourable.

Covered with thick forests, the area



offers a good home to about 235 species of useful birds including insect- and rat-eating ones and beautiful ones.

Heat cocks indigenous to Samjiyon and Tachongdan in the area were registered as natural living monuments, and heat cock, quail, hawk owl, Manchurian crane, white-naped crane, mandarin, striated swallow and *Bradypterus thoracicus* were designated as species to be specially protected.

The most common reptiles are common adder and northern crass lizard, while *Rana temporaria*, bell toad and salamander are amphibians which are distributed most widely in this area.

Khingan fir, silver fir, Korean spruce, larch and Siberian larch hold a large proportion of the flora of the area.

Some of the plants living in the area of Mt Paektu



The flora of the area is peculiar in that the species with high dispersal speed hold a greater proportion than in other areas and the species that have existed since before the damage by the eruption of pumice stones are partially distributed in some areas.

Found in these parts are *weigela florida form*, mountain loving draba, thyme, forest asiabell, angelica and other species which are rare in other parts in the Mt Paektu area and are common in southern areas.

Mushrooms hold the highest proportion of lower plants.

Common higher plants are asiatic eightpetal dryas, bush cinquefoil, Korean rhubarb, *pulsatilla nivalis*, *Papaver coreanum*, beadruby, *Erigeron alpicola*, rhododendron and other polar plants which have been adapted to the alpine conditions since the ice age.

The microclimate caused by the climatic phenomena and topographical features of the area has an enormous impact on the distribution of plants. The plant distributions in the ridges, sides, bottoms of mountains and valleys are noticeably different from one another.

Common plants growing on mountain ridges are blueberry, tick trefoil, asiatic eightpetal dryas and other plants that can grow in windy and dry places, and found on slopes are such plants as rhododendron and iris.

Mixes of grass plants like ongpetal globeflower, ledebour globeflower and pine purple grass and shrubs like mountain heath, Redowsk therorhodon and *rhododendron confertissimum* occur on the zones above forest line.

Such alpine plants as rhododendron, arctic iris, blueberry, azalea, *Campanula cephalotes*, and *Ligularia fischeri* grow on the ridge of Mt Paektu and in wide grassland at the foot of it. All plants are in flower in July and August, so that the plains at the foot of the mountain become a riot of colour.

Various species of aromatic plants and medicinal herbs like perennial rhododendron and common juniper are found on the shore of Lake Chon.

The plants on the shore are the same as their counterparts in other mountains except that they grow very slowly and their flowers are more beautiful, bigger and varied and bright in colour.

Origin of the Name

The name *Paektu* originated in the fact that it is topped with white snow for all seasons.

In the Middle Ages it came to have different names, such as Thaebaek, Tothae, Kaemadae, Paek, Jangbaek, and Sangbaek, in addition to Paektu. These names generally denote that the mountain is as high as heaven and it is mysteriously white.

Lake Chon on Mt Paektu was originally called Taethaek (big pond) long ago as it is located at the summit of the high mountain, and renamed Chon hundreds of years ago. It was named so in the sense that it is a lake lying in a place that is as sacred and high as heaven.

The lake, the source of three rivers—Amnok, Tuman and Songhua—is surrounded by a wall of precipitous cliffs, reflecting the fantastic images of peaks of Paektu on its indigo-blue water and giving rise to kaleidoscopic natural phenomena; all make up very impressive scenery.

From olden times, Lake Chon has become famous for its grandeur, mystery and picturesque scenery, along with Mt Paektu.

Peaks and Scenic Spots

If seen from afar, the peaks of Mt Paektu 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 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 of Mt Paektu.

Janggun Peak (2 750m) represents Mt Paektu and it is the highest



Janggun Peak

peak which dominates a vast area on the coast of the Pacific in Northeast Asia. The peak is covered with pumice stone layer 1-20m thick.

The peak stands to the southeast direction from the centre of the crater of the volcano of Mt Paektu and protrudes about 45m towards Lake Chon along the ridge of Piru Peak. 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.

Among the numerous mountain peaks forming the outer rim of the crater, 20 are over 2 500m above sea level. In the mid-area of the eastern ridge of the outer rim rises Janggun Peak, and Hyangdo



Hyangdo Peak

Peak (2 712m) 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.

Inscribed on the outer slope surface of Hyangdo Peak are letters of Kim Jong Il's autographic writing, which read, **“Mt Paektu, sacred mountain of the revolution. Kim Jong Il”**

Ssangmujigae Peak is on the east shore of Lake Chon. The peak is about 960m to the north of Hyangdo Peak and the two peaks are linked by a saddle. The ridge of the mountain lies from the north to the south and its western foot is connected with the cliff on the shore of Lake Chon.

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.

In the mid-area of the western ridge of the outer rim are Chongsok Peak (2 662m), Paegun Peak (2 691m) that is always shrouded in clouds and Chail Peak (2 596m) towards Tal Gate. And in the mid-area of its northern ridge are rocks of various shapes and on its south ridge are high and low rocks and peaks in a row. The difference in the height of the major peaks is within 150m. So,

the peaks stand similarly high and the ridge of the outer rim looks like a folding screen.

The area of Piru Peak in the east of the crater is composed of the most rugged cliffs. The 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. The rocky ridge 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.

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

The most spectacular scene in Mt Paektu is the sunrise over the mountain.

Thin light beams filtering through dark clouds of the early morning get thicker, dyeing the high cliffs and blue water surface of Lake Chon scarlet. The sunrise over Mt Paektu looks different



Sunrise over Mt Paektu

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.

It is the 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.

However, twin rainbows over Mt Paektu are particularly charming for its splendour and elegance.

On Mt Paektu pouring rain stops abruptly and clouds turn into white cumuli, finally dispersing. Then beautiful twin rainbows

appear over Lake Chon.

Nocturnal view of the mountain is also wonderful.

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.

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.

The moon and stars on the rippling deep blue water of the lake



Nocturnal view of Mt Paektu

are really fabulous.

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

Snowscape of Mt Paektu is also fantastic.

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

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



Snowscape
of Mt Paektu



scenic beauty. Surrounded by Taegak Peak, Yonji Peak, Mt Sono, Mt Kanbaek, Mt Sobaek, Mt Phothae and Kwanmo Peak, a 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 eastern 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 Sobaek Stream which do not get frozen throughout the year add much more to the natural beauty of Mt Paektu.

Also 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 long. 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.

The Chongun Rock in the Mt Paektu area is an epitome of

the special geological and topographical features of the area. Its sharp-cut rocky peaks and steep cliffs add beauty to the scenery of the Amnok River Valley.

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 which are located along the Amnok River.

The Paektu Falls is a vertical waterfall with a height of 12m. It looks as if a roll of silk cloth hangs down, and falls through a rock to a narrow valley. Under the waterfall is a pond. There is an interesting waterfall inside the outer rim of the crater.

In rainy season so many waterfalls form on cliff faces encircling the crater that they become literally crater waterfalls. When strong northwest wind blows 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 be seen in the snow-thawing season between May and June and in the rainy season between July and August.

The Hyongje Falls is located about 7.2km down from Paektu



Sagimun Falls



Paektu Falls



Hyongje Falls

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.

Rimyongsu Falls is located on the right cliff over the Rimyongsu Valley which was formed by the erosive action of basalt that gushed out from the volcano of Mt Paektu a million years ago. They have nine main courses looking like hanging rolls of silk, among which there are numerous smaller courses. The falls cascades down onto rocks, forming mist around them, splitting

into fine beads of droplets and merging into streams. The falls of various shapes, black rocks peeping through them, crystal-clear pond below them and groves in the surrounding area offer a peculiar scene which is different from season to season—azaleas in spring, green woods in summer, red maples reflecting on the pond in autumn and frozen or running streams in winter.

On clear days water spouts form beautiful sunbows.

What is particularly spectacular in winter is trees covered with hoar frost formed by the water from underground and cold atmosphere. Such scene is rare in other waterfalls.

The waterfall was registered as natural monument No. 345. A pavilion stands on the cliff over the waterfall.



Mt Kumgang



Outline

Kumgang is a mountain in the northern part of Thaeback Mountains which stretch in the middle of the east coast of Korea.

Stretching 60km south and north and 40km east and west, it covers an area of 530 sq km in Kosong and Kumgang counties, Kangwon Province.

For its diversified, majestic and wonderful scenery, it has been called one of the eight scenic spots of Korea and one of the three deity mountains. Countless soaring peaks that are called Twelve-thousand Peaks, rocks of myriad and queer forms and gigantic cliffs blend well with ponds dotted in valleys, crystal-clear streams flowing down deep ravines and spectacular waterfalls and diversified flora and fauna; the mountain is as beautiful as a scroll of picture.

It offers so breathtaking views of peaks, ravines, tablelands, lakes, coast and sea that it can be called a wonder of nature and combination of all scenic beauties.



Peaks in Mt Kumgang

Its scenery looks different according to season, time and weather.

As the mountain adjoins a river, sea and field, the area of the mountain has been inhabited by people since the primitive ages. Crossing the high peaks of Thaeback Mountains, they waged a creative struggle for conquering nature. In this course Mt Kumgang was developed and came to be widely known from the late seventh century.

After Buddhism spread in Korea, the mountain became a holy place of Buddhism in the East, to which numerous Buddhist



monks and followers from across the country made pilgrimages.

In the mountain there are many temples like Yujom, Phyohun, Jangan, Singye and Jongyang, Buddhist images, pagodas, monuments, stupas, legendary tales, poems, and paintings, all of which embody the wisdom and artistic talent of the Korean people.

During their occupation of

Korea, the Japanese imperialists plundered numerous cultural relics and underground resources like tungsten from the mountain.

They also felled primeval forests randomly, damaging its scenery.

During the Korean war, many historical remains like Jangan, Yujom and Singye temples, relics which were preserved in the Singyesa Special Museum and scenic spots were burned or destroyed by the US indiscriminate bombings and bombardments. Thanks to the policy of the Workers' Party of Korea on protecting national cultural heritage, the Singye Temple was restored in October Juche 96 (2007). The mountain has been laid out as an excellent tourist destination and cultural resort of the people.



Natural and Geographical Environment

Mt Kumgang owes its majestic and exquisite shape to the history of the unique geological and topographical development of the area.

The stone of the mountain is composed of gneiss and migmatite from the Archaeozoic era and biotite granite from the Mesozoic era.

The mountain was shaped in the main by the asymmetric tilted block movement in the late third Miocene period. Long-lasting action of the weather and erosion and structural movement created cliffs, deep ravines, peaks and rocks of various shapes.

It has many strata and deep ravines to the east and west with Thaebaek Mountains as the watershed, as well as cliffy areas of different gradients.

Adjoining coast-alluvial plains, Outer Kumgang is relatively high and has many cliffs hundreds of metres high.

Situated next to the inland mountainous terrain, Inner Kumgang has the topography of step cliffs of gentler gradient.

Located in the plain coastal area, Sea Kumgang is a hilly land and its coastal part is covered with cliffs of various shapes.

The peaks and ravines of Mt Kumgang look different according to the climatic change.

The mountain area is relatively warm and has much rain and snow. Whereas Outer Kumgang to the east of the mountain is

characterized by mild oceanic climate, influenced by the warm current of the East Sea of Korea, Inner Kumgang to its west is dominated mainly by continental climate.

The temperature gradually decreases going from Sea Kumgang to Outer Kumgang and Inner Kumgang.

Precipitation gradually increases from Sea Kumgang to Outer Kumgang and decreases in Inner Kumgang.

The difference of temperature in the area is remarkable depending on the altitude; it decreases by one degree centigrade as the height increases 100 m in summer and 80-90 m in winter, respectively. The average annual precipitation is 1 580.8 mm in Kosong County and 1 201 mm in Kumgang County, respectively, and the number of precipitation days is the largest in July and August. The average annual wind speed is 3.25m/s in Outer Kumgang and 0.6m/s in Inner Kumgang. Hot and dry wind with an average speed of 20m/s blows from the mountain to the sea sometimes in spring and autumn.

As it has much precipitation and thick forests which provide favourable conditions for water source protection, the area is rich in water volume. In particular, water volume is large also in spring owing to snowmelt as there is much snow in winter. As the water of streams, waterfalls and ponds flows through the granite area, it is very clear.

Whereas the Nam River and Onjong, Chonbul and Sonchang streams flow into the East Sea of Korea, the Kumgang and

Tonggumgang streams, tributaries of the Pukhan River, empty into the West Sea of Korea. The Nam (85.5 km), the longest river in Mt Kumgang, passes through the Unsondae area, and the Paekchon Stream, a tributary of the river, through the Songnim area. Meanwhile, the Onjong Stream and its tributary, the Singye, also flow through the Manmulsang, Sujongbong, Onjong and Kuryongyon areas, and the Sonchang Stream through the Sonchang area. And the Kumgang Stream runs through the Kusong area and the Tonggumgang Stream, its tributary, through the Pirobong, Paegundae and Thaasang areas and various other scenic spots like the Manphok, Manchon and Myonggyongdae areas which represent the beauty of ravines of the mountain.

Mt Kumgang is dotted with large and small waterfalls including the four famous waterfalls—Kuryong and Pibong in the Kuryongyon Valley, Ogyong in the Kusong Valley and Sibi in the Songmun Valley. There are also Mubong, Kyohyang, Pidan, Unsil and other waterfalls of various shapes

There are several natural lakes including Samil, counted as one of the eight scenic spots in the Kwandong area, Yongnang and Kam and many ponds of different sizes like Kumgang, which is also called Lake Chon on Mt Kumgang, Sangphal, Munju, Jinju, Pipha, Punsol, Ryonju, Pari, Okryu and Songnim. There are the Oegumgang Hot Spring and mineral waters like Kumnosu, Kamnosu, Janggunsu and Samnoksu.

Plants growing in Mt Kumgang are not only of great

significance in the study of the plant distribution in Korea, but also add beauty to its scenery which is different according to seasons, areas and heights. As the mountain, representing the middle zone of the distribution of plants, is situated in the zone where the distribution of the species of northern and southern plants of Korea changes and its natural and geographical conditions like topography and climate are characteristic, it is home to plants indigenous to it and various species ranging from those belonging to the southern part of the temperate zone to those found in the subarctic zone. For this reason, it is called a natural botanical garden.

About 2 260 species of plants are found in the mountain, of which 1 000 are flowering plants and 100 are indigenous to it. Its flora is considerably different in its distribution because of the impact of the sea on it and the regional features of its natural and geographical conditions. While plants of the oak family like oriental white oak and oriental oak and some southern plants grow in the area of Outer Kumgang, eastern slope of the mountain, northern plants like pine tree, fir and spruce are found in Inner Kumgang on the western slope. Pine, Japanese snowbell, arrow bamboo, harlequin glorybower and other plants occur in Sea Kumgang situated close to the sea. Bamboo, walnut and some other southern plants are cultivated here.

In addition, the mountain is a habitat also for shrubs like magnolia, azalea, royal azalea and styrax, and herbaceous plants like goldenrod, *Cacalia krameri* and Chinese astilbe and other species of

plants like forest asiabell, *Codonopsis lanceolata*, broad bellflower, wild grape and gooseberry. The mountain has distinctive vertical zonality in plant distribution; whereas pine trees are distributed mainly in the areas in Outer Kumgang and Inner Kumgang which are below 300-400m above sea level, white oak, hornbeam and other broad-leaved trees flourish in the areas in Outer Kumgang 300-800m above sea level. In particular, pine trees over 80 years old grow in the area of Onjong-ri.

What is peculiar in the plant distribution in Outer Kumgang is that magnolia, the national flower of the DPRK, grows in large numbers. Fir flourishes in the areas in Inner Kumgang which are 400-700m above sea level. In particular, firs, 100-200 years old, form thick groves in the area around the site of the Jangan Temple. Oak, linden, maple, pine-nut tree and fir are distributed in the areas 800-1 000m above sea level.

Alpine plants growing in the mountain include subarctic zone plants like thuja, dwarf Siberian pine, Sargent juniper and blueberry. Many plants including Kumgang-kuksunamu and *Keumkangsania latiseppala* are indigenous plants.

As it is situated in a large mountain range lying from north to south, Mt Kumgang provides favourable conditions for animals of northern and southern species to move. And for its many peaks and ravines, thick woods, diverse plant resources, lakes, and rivers and sea nearby, it offers an excellent home to various species of animals including mammals, birds and fishes.

About 390 species of vertebrate animals live in the mountain, of which 38 are mammals, 130 birds, 10 amphibians and nine reptiles. About 400 species of butterflies live there. Whereas carp, goldfish, catfish and whitefish live in the Kumgang and other streams in Inner Kumgang, which flow along the western slope of the mountain, trout, salmon, dace and other anadromous fishes grow in the Onjong and other streams in Outer Kumgang, which flow along the eastern slope. Species indigenous to Korea like *Gonoprokopterus mylodon* and *Coreoleuciscus splendidus* and other rare species are found in the streams in Inner Kumgang. The diverse animal resources add more to the beauty of the mountain.

Origin of the Name

The name of Mt Kumgang was taken after diamond that is most valuable among jewels.

As its landscape varies by season, the mountain has been called Pongnae in summer, Phungak in autumn and Kaegol in winter. The name Pongnae came from the fact that the summer scenery of the mountain features lush woods and inviting shade, the name Phungak from the fact that in autumn every peak is ablaze with beautiful autumnal tints and the rippling moonlight on the crystal-clear streams is quite spectacular, and the name Kaegol from the fact that in winter white snow-covered mountain body remains conspicuous.



Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter

<div>48</div> <div>Famous Mountains of Korea</div>	<div>Mt Kumgang</div> <div>49</div>
<div> <div>Scenic Spots and Highlights</div> <div> <div> <div>Divided into Outer Kumgang, Inner Kumgang and Sea Kumgang, the mountain can be called a collection of scenic spots, historical relics and legendary tales.</div> <div>Outer Kumgang</div> <div> <div>Outer Kumgang comprises a chain of peaks stretching from north to south centred on Piro Peak, the major peak of Mt Kumgang, and the eastern coastal area leading to Sea Kumgang.</div> <div> <div>Onjong Section</div> <div> <div>The tour of Mt Kumgang starts at this section, which encompasses the rocks and peaks of exotic forms on the western, northern and southern sides, the Onjong Stream meandering through them, pools scattered here and there, and groves of pine and pine-nut trees.</div> <div>The Onjong Stream is known for its limpid water and the surrounding scenery of myriad-shaped hills, maple and other species of trees.</div> <div>On the shores of the stream is Oegumgang Hot Spring noted for its clear and transparent water.</div> </div> </div> </div> </div> </div></div>	<div> <div> <div>It contains radon with a low level of radioactivity and its water temperature is 37-44°C.</div> <div>Manmulsang Section</div> <div> <div>This section features precipitous cliffs, fantastically-shaped rocks and other highlights including the Hanha and Mansang valleys.</div> <div>The Hanha Valley is the widest of all the valleys in the mountain. The valley shrouded in thick fog presents a spectacular sight.</div> <div>Pass this valley through a chain of peaks called Kwanum, and you will see a bear-shaped rock.</div> <div>Below the rock is the Munju Pool, at the bottom of which is a layer of bead-like stones. It is said that fairies used to bathe in this pool.</div> <div>Other highlights include the 37m-high Kwanum Falls, 100m-long Nunkkot (snow-white) Rock, Pom (tiger) Rock, Tongja (sentry) Rock, Chottae (candle) Rock, Mal (horse) Rock and Mangaji (pony) Rock. Some distance away from the Munju Pool is the Mansang Pavilion.</div> <div>The three rocks—Samson, Kwimyong and Chonson—constitute the centerpieces of the scenery.</div> <div>Seen behind the Samson Rock is Seji Peak. Halfway up the</div> </div> </div> </div>

peak is the Jolbu Rock, which is said to have been chopped off by a young man who fell for a fairy from heaven while gathering firewood in Mt Kumgang.

Go further, and you will see the Kumgang Gate, also called the Chonil Gate in the sense that it is the first entrance to heaven.

If you pass this gate, an iron ladder will come in sight. It leads on to a broad rock enclosed by four pillars, on which at least ten people can stand. This rock is called Chonsondae, where, according to a legendary tale, fairies descended and enjoyed themselves.

The rock affords a fine view of the masterpieces of Mother Nature. The fascinating scenery is beyond the reach of even a world-renowned writer or painter.



Samson Rock



Sightseeing path to the Chonson Rock



Kwimyon Rock

Kuryongyon Section

Famous waterfalls and pools are largely concentrated in this section, including the Kuryong Falls, Kuryong Pool, Sangphal Pools and Pibong Falls.

At Singyedong, you can see the Pae (boat) Pool and Hyongje (brothers) Falls. And not far from the Hoesang Rock is a spring, named Samnok, which is said to be a solution of wild insam and antler.

At Okryudong, you can see the Ryonju Pools, which, according to a legendary tale, originated from the two

pearls left behind by fairies. The upper pool is smaller than the one below: the former is 6m wide, 10m long and 6m deep; the latter is 9m wide, 20m long and 7m deep.

The centerpiece of this area is the Pibong Falls, which ranks among the four major waterfalls in Mt Kumgang. This waterfall



Pibong Falls

cascades down from a point halfway up a cliff, sending sprays of silvery water up into the air.

The area provides good habitat for broad bellflower, a delicious herb good for human health.

The last part is Kuryongdong, in which you can see the Kuryong Falls.



Kuryong Falls and Kuryong Pond

With a vertical height of 74m and width of 4m, this waterfall is counted among the three major waterfalls in Korea and also widely known in the East.

It resembles a long strip of silk cloth and the sound of falling water resounds through the valley. Just below it is the 13m-deep Kuryong Pool.

Beside the pool is the site of the Yujom Temple, in which there was an elm tree with 53 gold images of Buddha on its branches.

These relics were destroyed in a bombing raid during the Korean war (1950-1953).



Sangphal Pools

Above the falls are Sangphal

(upper eight) Pools, which look like a chain of eight green gems. According to a legendary tale, eight fairies used to descend from heaven and have a bath in these pools.

The valley shrouded in fog presents a mysterious sight.

Sujongbong Section

This section comprises a valley full of granite rocks and ridges on both sides abounding in pine and oak trees. It features the chirping of birds and the sound of running streams.

Among the highlights in this section are the Samdangyejol (three-tier seasonal) Falls, Jara Rock, Pidulgi Rock, Sujong Gate, Kangson Rock, Pari Peak, Kumgang Cave and Chima Rock.



Mysteriously-shaped rocks on Sujong Peak and sightseeing path

Chonbuldong Section

This section has been called Pyol Kumgang from olden times. In Mt Chonbul you can see a two-tiered waterfall against a backdrop of a thick forest, the heights of the upper and lower parts being 15m and 6m, respectively.

There are also the 15m-high Sanju Falls and 20m-high Ryonju Falls.

Walk some distance, and you can see a three-tiered waterfall. The heights of the three parts are 17.3m, 5m, and 7m, respectively. The waterfall makes a beautiful sound, hence the name Kyohyang (meaning symphony).

Next comes the Pidan Falls.

Both sides of the waterfall are covered with pine, pine-nut, maple trees, azalea, royal azalea and other species of plants, which present varying sights according to seasons.



Mysteriously-shaped rocks in Chonbuldong



Pyol Kumgang

In autumn the scenery is fantastic, beautifully coloured by maple and pine trees. Among the highlights in this section are the Kunson Rock, Sonin Cave, 50m-high Paeksa Falls, Odan (five-tiered) Falls, Chonbul Falls, etc.

Sonchang Section

Here you can see the Kumgang Pond, which is 52m long from east to west, 26m long from north to south and 1m deep, the Paeksang Rock in Pansokdong, Paekchong Pond, Unsil Falls and Kumju Falls.

The Unsil Falls resembles a scroll of silk cloth.

Paekjongbong Section

Situated in Outer Kumgang, this section has been called Smaller Kumgang from ancient times. Near Habaek Peak can be seen the Kain Rock, which looks like a beautiful woman with a headpiece on her head.

In the vicinity of Sangbaek Peak, there are many strangely-shaped rocks such as Koraedung and Pyongphung.

For its wonderful scenery, this section is a favourite haunt for visitors to Mt Kumgang.

Sonha Section

Found in this section are Jipson Peak of the shape of spearheads



Pae Rock in Tongsokdong

put together, Chaeha Peak looking as if shrouded in dense fog, beautiful waterfalls and pools, and rocks of fantastic forms.

In particular, the scenery of Tongsokdong in autumn is beyond expression.

The Tongsok Rock, which is scores of tons heavy and looks as if it would sway at a light touch, sits on a big, broad rock. It is well-known for its shape and the surrounding scenery.

Between the rocks of various colours, there grow many trees—maple, dogwood, ash, birch and oak.

In the flowering season the area becomes a harmonious blend

<div data-bbox="0 0 77 75" data-label="Page-Header"> <div>58</div> </div> <div data-bbox="77 0 966 75" data-label="Page-Header"> <div>Famous Mountains of Korea</div> </div> <div data-bbox="77 137 894 178" data-label="Text"> <p>of bright colours—red, yellow and golden brown.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="77 185 894 363" data-label="Text"> <p>Near the Ryonju Falls and Paengnyon Falls is a rock which looks like a tortoise drinking water. This is the Kobuk (tortoise) Rock. Here you can also see the Chollima Rock looking just like the Chollima Statue in Pyongyang.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="115 370 741 411" data-label="Text"> <p>West of this rock is the Kobukson (turtle ship) Rock.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="115 466 338 500" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Paryonso Section</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="77 514 894 692" data-label="Text"> <p>Famous in this section are the Odan (five-tiered) Falls and Ryongyon Falls in Ryongsindong. The former with the height of about 30m sends up thick clouds of spray, forming a beautiful sunbow on a bright day.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="77 699 894 830" data-label="Text"> <p>Go past the Tungnyong Falls and Ryongsin Falls, and you can see a granite bridge, called Mujigae (rainbow). A brook murmurs under the bridge, surrounded by pine, oak and maple trees.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="77 836 894 967" data-label="Text"> <p>On the opposite side of this bridge is a low-gradient waterfall, with the length of about 60m. For its unique shape, it attracts a large number of tourists.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="77 974 894 1063" data-label="Text"> <p>An old tale goes that many visitors used to enjoy water slides here, with no one being hurt or drowned.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="115 1118 332 1159" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Songnim Section</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="77 1166 894 1255" data-label="Text"> <p>This section is characterized by steep, precipitous cliffs and big, white rocks.</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="966 0 1932 75" data-label="Page-Header"> <div>Mt Kumgang</div> <div>59</div> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 137 1850 226" data-label="Text"> <p>Pools and waterfalls of varying sizes and forms dot the landscape.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 233 1850 322" data-label="Text"> <p>The waterfalls are of diverse shapes—conflux, straight and ring.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 329 1850 459" data-label="Text"> <p>The section includes the Sibi (twelve-tiered) Falls, 289m high, which ranks top in height among the four major waterfalls in Mt Kumgang.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 466 1850 555" data-label="Text"> <p>It looks as if gems are dropping down from the sky or torrential rain is pouring down.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 603 1304 644" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Unsondae Section</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 651 1850 782" data-label="Text"> <p>This section has a lot of scenic spots including Unsondae and Mangyongdong, as well as the waterfalls like Kuryon and Huinbidan.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 788 1850 926" data-label="Text"> <p>A 20m-high rock, Unsondae commands a good view of Ilchul and Janggun peaks to the northwest, Chaeha and Jipson peaks to the north, and Sibi Falls in front.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 932 1850 1022" data-label="Text"> <p>In particular, the Huinbidan Falls, Tujul Falls and Chilbo Peak are quite spectacular.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 1029 1850 1111" data-label="Text"> <p>The two waterfalls—Huinbidan and Tujul—appear to be linked with each other.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1039 1118 1850 1207" data-label="Text"> <p>The former resembles white silk fabrics and the latter looks like two rows of pearls flowing down.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 1214 1850 1255" data-label="Text"> <p>Chilbo Peak, as its name implies, looks as if it were adorned</p> </div>
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with seven jewels. Formerly, there was a small hermitage named Chilbo at the foot of the peak.

Inner Kumgang

This section is situated west of Mt Kumgang. With its many waterfalls, pools, steep cliffs, peaks and ravines, it boasts its feminine beauty.

It is a haven of tranquility, unlike Outer Kumgang, which is noted for its masculine beauty.

Manchon Section

This section includes Naegangdong, in which you can see the Naegumgang Holiday Camp.

Some distance away from this camp is the 70m-high Pidan Falls in Kumjangdong.

Go further, and you will see a field overgrown with azaleas and royal azaleas.

Maybe you will have a strong urge to leave photographic images of all the things here.

Many flowering plants rooted on steep cliffs are remindful of a big screen embroidered with flowers.

Besides, this section includes many scenic spots—Ul (crying)

Pool, Samhyongje Rock, Sambulam Bridge which is also called Yongson Bridge, Phyohun Temple with a history of 1 300-odd years, Jongyang Temple, Panggwang, Kaesim and Chonil rocks, etc.

Mt Kumgang is home to many world-famous temples. Among them, Jangan, Yujom, Singye and Phyohun were the four major temples in the mountain.

Built around the year of 670, the Phyohun Temple underwent reconstruction and repair on several occasions.

The temple was so famous that the royal families of other countries used to send their envoys and offerings here.

In this temple were many relics such as a 300kg brass steamer and an iron pagoda on which 53 Buddhist images were inscribed. But most of them were robbed or destroyed by foreign invaders.

Near the Sambul Rock you can see sculptures of three Buddhist images.

In front of this rock stand the statues of Maitreya, Shakyamuni and Amitabha. On the left are small sculptures of two Buddhas, and the images of 60 disciples of Buddha are inscribed on the back.



Sambul Rock

Manphok Section

This section has long been famous for the beauty of ravines.

Pass the Kumgang Gate and Kumgang Rock, and you will see a chain of waterfalls and pools in Manphokdong, the centrepiece of Inner Kumgang.

As seen from the Sugon (towel) Rock, Hyangno Peak looks magnificent.

What is spectacular in this section is the Podok Hermitage, which was built in the Koguryo period.

The hermitage sits on a 7m-high copper column on top of a steep cliff. It looks as if the hermitage were hanging on the cliff. Here you can hear many famous poems associated with it.



Kumgang Gate

Inside the hermitage is a long cave called

Podok. According

to a legend, a foreign envoy threw himself into a pool below it, saying that it was his earnest wish to live forever in this world of Buddhism like Koreans.

Nearby is Chungsongdae, which commands a panoramic view of Manphokdong. On the opposite side is the Jinju Pool 7.5m in depth and 412m² in area.

Over this pool is the Jinju Falls cascading down in four or five tiers.



Podok Hermitage

The crystal-clear water in the pool mirrors the blue sky and green forests, throwing its silvery spray into the air.

Pae Pond, Kobuk Pond, Saja Rock, Hwaryong Pool and many other scenic spots add beauty to the scenery.

Paegundae Section

This section is divided into Sorokdong, Paegundong and Hwagaedong.

Sorokdong features the Kasop Cave located halfway up a precipitous cliff, Ryongchu Rock in the shape of an eagle, and Inner Manmulsang, or Manmulsang in Inner Kumgang, noted for myriad-shaped rocks.

At the centre of Paegundong is Paegundae, which affords the finest view of Inner Kumgang. It sits on top of a long ridge, whose side is cut by a steep cliff. Here you can see a pine tree growing in a crevice of the rock.

From here come in sight two connected peaks—Hyoilmang and Popki—and Manphokdong.

Follow the sightseeing route, and you will see an imposing statue of Amitabha, which looks as if it were welcoming you with a big smile.

This can be called the centerpiece of Hwagaedong. The statue

was carved out of a big rock in the period of Koryo. The statue is 15m high and 9.4m wide.

The face is 3.1m high and 2.6m wide. The eyes, hands and feet are 1m, 3m and 3.2m each in length, respectively.

Amitabha is wearing a smile with its right hand pointing upwards.

This seems to be a sign of blessing for tourists.

This stone statue can be called the best of its kind in Korea.



Statue of Amitabha

Myonggyongdae Section

This section is noted for the fantastic scenery of the ravines in Paekchondong, Ryongwondong and Paekthapdong, as well as for the majestic looks of Paengma and Chail peaks. Most spectacular are Myonggyongdae, 90m high and 30m wide, which looks like a huge mirror, and the Okkyong Pool below it.

According to an old tale, Myonggyongdae served as a mirror for distinguishing right from wrong.

In autumn the scenery of this section is beyond expression.

Found in the vicinity of Ryongwondong are Okchodae, Chacksang Rock, Yongwoldae, Oson Rock and Paengma Peak.

Also, there is a rock named Michul, which is associated with the following legendary tale.



Myonggyongdae

-Legendary Tale-

It was a priest, named Ryong Won, who built a hermitage in Ryongwondong. He studied Buddhism there, living on pine needles for several months.

One day, he dozed off and saw a grey-haired, old man in his dream.

The latter praised the novice for studying hard, saying that he could obtain rice under a rock beside the hermitage.

The priest woke up and hurried to the rock. Surprisingly, there was a handful of rice under the rock. He looked carefully under the rock, only to find that white grains were coming out of a small hole one after another.

Very pleased to see this gift from Buddha, he boiled it in water. The gruel tasted very good.

The grains came out continuously, but only a handful every day. The priest lived on gruel for some more months and in the end became a famous monk.

The news soon got about, and another priest came there for studying.

Being greedy by nature, he made the hole bigger to obtain more rice. From that moment on, the hole ceased to give the grains.

Another scenic spot in this section is Suryomdong, in which

you can see a limpid stream meandering through white rocks and cascading down. Called Suryom, this waterfall throws up a spray of droplets.

In olden days a writer wrote about this waterfall: It looks like a string of beads or a scroll of silk cloth. The scenery is so captivating. Seeing the rocks around it, you will feel as if you were sailing a boat.

Manggundae Section

This section comprises Songnadong and Manggundae.

Manggundae commands a panoramic view of Hyolmang Peak (1 372m). It is exhilarating to see the summit of the peak touching the blue sky. It looks as if the summit had a big hole.

There are many interesting tales about this hole.

One of them is as follows:

-Legendary Tale-

Once upon a time, a Buddhist saint in heaven made a beautiful mountain (Mt Kumgang) as a gift to the Earth.

What worried him was that if the Earth's crust underwent transformations over the course of long years, the mountain might lose its charm.

Actually, the gift embodied all his talents and energy.

He decided to pull the mountain back to heaven if such a phenomenon occurred.

He made a big hole in the summit of a peak, which would be used for hooking the mountain.

This is Hyolmang Peak.

Thaesang Section

This section is home to a wide variety of scenic spots—the Ryonggok Pool, in which it is said a dragon once lived and flew away, Samdan (three-tiered) Falls, Sujong (crystal) Falls with a low gradient, Manjoldong with a series of seven pools, Jongryong Pool, Kangson Rock and Sumi Pagoda, the best of its kind in the area.

Kusong Section

This section abounds in famous waterfalls, pools and rocks. Among them are the 50m-high Unsil (silvery spray) Falls, 8m-deep Samgak Pool, Kusul Falls sourced by a small stream, Raksang Falls and 31m-high Ogyong Falls, one of the four major waterfalls in Mt Kumgang.



Ogyong Falls

Pirobong Section

The most spectacular sight in this section is a chain of rocks standing in a zigzag on top of Piro Peak. If seen from afar, it looks like a ladder to heaven. It is called Silvery-golden Ladder, as it shows a silvery tint at sunrise and a golden tint at sunset.

Piro Peak is the highest in Mt Kumgang.

Its scenery varies greatly by the season: In spring, flowers are in full bloom; in summer, the valleys are clad in fresh verdure; in autumn, the leaves turn red; in winter, the peak is covered with snow and ice.

Sea Kumgang

This is a scenic area in Kosong County, Kangwon Province, on the east coast of Korea. As the name implies, it is a replica of Mt Kumgang in the sea.

The seascape of the celebrated mountain is really wonderful.

Samilpho Section

Known as one of the eight scenic spots in the Kwandong (northeastern) part of Korea, Lagoon Samil presents beautiful scenery.

Samil means three days in English. The name is based on a legend that in olden times a king came here to have a good day but stayed for three days, mesmerized by its gorgeous view.

The lagoon is about 5.8km in circumference and 9-13m deep. It is surrounded by craggy hills, and in the middle of it, is Wau Islet clothed in pine trees.

According to an old tale, the lagoon originated from a mirror sent down to the earth by a fairy in heaven.

It is characterized by crystal-clear water and tranquil atmosphere. Here you can enjoy boating while seeing the peculiar scenery of the area. Rocky islets such as Tansoam, Sasonjongtho,

Musonda and Machyangbi will come in sight.

There are some rocks inscribed with old letters. At the northern foot of a nearby hill is a sandy beach, where there is a pine grove. Sunbathing here and drinking wine or beer will be a pleasant experience.

Here you will see the Mong (dream) Spring, whose water is very refreshing, and hear an interesting tale about it.

-Legendary Tale-

Once upon a time an old monk wanted to build a temple in this scenic area, but could not find the source of water nearby.

One day he lay down on the grass, thinking how to find it. After a good while, he fell into sleep.

He had a strange dream, in which an old, grey-bearded man appeared and said that he could find a spring under the left rock.

Waking up, the monk dug under the rock pointed by the old man. Soon, clear water gushed out and it was cold and fragrant.

The monk exclaimed, "This is the nice, aromatic water that the old man said about in my dream."

He cleaned the site of the spring and left on the rock an

inscription about how the spring was discovered.

Another highlight in this section is the site of Haesan Pavilion.

Built in 1567, the pavilion afforded a comprehensive view of the nearby sea and hills.

To the west lies a series of hills, and on the south, you can see Sea Kumgang and Kuson Peak. Found in the north is Lagoon Samil.

Inscribed on the face of the cliff below the site is an old poem to the effect that it is the house of a heavenly being.

Sea Kumgang Section

This section includes myriad-shaped rocks, both under and above the sea, tall stone pillars, Sol Islet clad in pine trees, Sagong (boatman) Rock, Chilsong (seven stars) Rock, Lake Yongnang, Hyonjong Rock, Pae Rock and Okkyo Rock.

The sunrise over Sea Kumgang is a spectacular sight. When the sun appears above the horizon, everything in the sky and on the land shows a reddish tint.

Captivated by the gleaming scenery, you can see the sun shooting its golden rays all over the area.



Sunrise over Sea Kumgang

Rocky cliffs at Sea Kumgang



Historical and Cultural Relics and Remains

Mt Kumgang is home to a wide variety of historical relics and remains—dolmens and other types of tombs dating back to the early period of class society, and forts, structures, monuments, pagodas, Buddhist images, metalwork and woodwork from the Middle Ages. According to a historical record, there were over 100 temples in the mountain.

Phyohun Temple



With the exception of the forts, ancient tombs and some of the handicrafts, nearly all the relics and remains in the mountain are related with Buddhism.

The following is a brief account of some typical examples.

Phyohun Temple

Counted among the four major temples in Mt Kumgang, it nestles in Phyohundong in the Manchon section, a scenic spot of Inner Kumgang.

It was built in 670 and the present building dates back to 1778.



Originally, it had 20-odd buildings, but now there remain seven of them, including Panyabo Hall, Ryongsan Hall, Myongbu Hall, Rungpha Pavilion and Osil Pavilion.

On the way to the temple there is a rock, called Sambul, with the image of Shakyamuni in the middle, those of Maitreya and Amitabha on both sides.

Jongyang Temple

This temple is located halfway up a hill near the Panggwang Rock, just behind the Phyohun Temple.

Built in 600 and reconstructed in 661, it is well known for its comprehensive view of Inner Kumgang.

Originally, it had the Holsong Pavilion, Panyabo Hall, Yaksa Hall, three-storey pagoda and a stone lantern, as well as the Ryongsan Hall, Rahan Hall and others in the surrounding area, but the Holsong Pavilion, Ryongsan Hall, Rahan Hall and some others burned down in a bombing raid during the Korean war.

Podok Hermitage

This hermitage is beside the Punsol Pool, one of the eight major pools in the Manphok section of Inner Kumgang.

It was built in 627 and rebuilt in 1675.

The copper pillar supporting the hermitage and the steel wire attached to a rock were installed in 1511. The 7.3m-long pillar is halfway up the 20m-high cliff.

Inside the hermitage there is a cave, called Podok, which is 5.3m long, 1.6-2m wide and 1-2m high.

Jangan Temple

Located at the mouth of Inner Kumgang, this temple ranked among the four major temples in Mt Kumgang.

It was built in 551 and repaired several times. Most of the buildings which had survived until 1951 were reconstructed in the first half of the 18th century.

It consisted of many buildings, which were largely divided into two areas—one centred on the Taeungbo Hall and the other on the Sason Hall.

But the buildings were destroyed in a bombing raid in 1951, except some cornerstones.

Statue of Amitabha

A precious national relic of Korea, this statue was carved out of a 40m-high rock. It is the biggest of its kind in the country.

The height of Amitabha in a sitting position is 15m, and its width is 9.4m.

Its crossed legs are higher than the stature of a man and his fingers are more than 1m each.

His smiling eyes and lips are so lifelike, offering a striking contrast with its imposing size and dignified posture.

Mt Myohyang



Outline

Over 120km around and 1 909m above sea level, Mt Myohyang covers an area of 375 sq km comprising parts of Hyangsan and Kujang counties of North Phyongan Province, Nyongwon County of South Phyongan Province and the city of Huichon of Jagang Province.

From the historical point of view, the mountain is divided into Mt Kuhyang (Old Myohyang) which encompasses the area of the Panya, Wonmyong and Hyangchon valleys belonging to the regions of Puhung-ri, Ryujung-ri and Hyangchon-ri in Huichon to the north of Hyangbiro Peak, which was developed earlier, and Mt Sinhyang (New Myohyang) which covers the later-developed valleys where the present Pohyon Temple and the International Friendship Exhibition House are located. In regional terms, Mt Sinhyang is called Mt Nachyang (Inner Myohyang) and the area of Kujang and Nyongwon counties, Mt Oehyang (Outer Myohyang). When we say about Mt Myohyang, we imply the area of Mt Sinhyang (Myohyangchon Valley) which has the most beautiful scenery.

Mt Myohyang, as the Korean people has long described it as a mountain with 84 000 peaks, offers superb scenery which were created by the combination of peaks and rocks of fantastic forms, deep ravines and high cliffs, crystal-clear water and waterfalls, dense forests that provide cool shades in summer, leaves dyed in autumnal tints, snowscape in winter, twittering of birds and sound of water flowing and rolling.

Paths have been laid to the Sangwon and Manphok valleys and Hyangbiro Peak. They are furnished with safety apparatuses, rest areas and pavilions that blend well with the natural surroundings.

Situated at the foot of Thammil Peak, 1.5km away from Hyangsan Hotel, is the International Friendship Exhibition House with wing-shaped gabled roofs of blue tiles and eaves emblazoned with Kimilsungia, Kimjongilia and magnolia blossoms on a pink background.

Inaugurated on August 26, 1978, it houses the gifts presented to President Kim Il Sung, Chairman Kim Jong Il and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Un by party and state leaders, prominent figures and other people from all walks of life from many countries of the world, and international organizations.

For its combination of refined and majestic beauty, Mt Myohyang has been counted among celebrated mountains from olden times.



International Friendship Exhibition House

<div>84</div> <div>Famous Mountains of Korea</div>	<div>Mt Myohyang</div> <div>85</div>
<div>Natural and Geographical Environment</div> <p>During a long period, the mountain experienced external and internal geological actions including several complex crustal movements and erosions. Affected by the crustal movement in the third Neogene period of the Cenozoic era, the area around the Chongchon River valley lowered down, further increasing the elevation of Hyangbiro Peak and some other parts of the mountain, deepening the valleys and finally forming the present shape of the mountain. Its terrain consists of large mountain ranges stretching to the shore of the Chongchon to the west and to the Taedong to the east centring on the highest Hyangbiro Peak, as well as many valleys of the Myohyang, Paengnyong and Wonmyong streams.</p> <p>The mountain range stretching from Hyangbiro Peak includes Jingwi (1 832m), Wonman (1 820m), Hyangno (1 599.6m), Oson (1 365m), Pobwang (1 392m) and other high peaks, whereas the range extending from Horang Pass consists of Mt Paek (1 599m), Munphil (1 530m), Wangmo (1 402.5m), Hyongje (1 229m) and other peaks.</p> <p>The rocks are clean, beautiful, very white and fine-grained. As they contain quartz in the main, their broken pieces are also clear and so is the water flowing through their cracks and valleys.</p>	<p>Surrounded by high peaks, the area of the mountain is characterized by relatively warm weather without hard winds. The mean temperature is 11.6°C below zero in January, the coldest month of the year, and 23.7°C in August, the annual mean temperature being 8.3°C.</p> <p>Annual mean precipitation is over 1 300mm, 60% of which is recorded in July and August. With thick forests, heavy rainfalls and weak winds, its annual mean atmospheric humidity is 75%.</p> <p>There are streams joining the Chongchon River, noted for its clear water, and Myohyangsan mineral water. The typical one is the Myohyang Stream which rises in Kangson Peak and joins the Chongchon River in Hyangam-ri. It is 16.5km long and its basin covers an area of 71.8 sq km. Other large streams include the Paengnyong (40.5km long) in the area of Mt Oehyang (in the Kujang area), Pusong running through the Panya Valley of Mt Kuhyang (in the Huichon area), Wonmyong through the Wonmyong Valley and Jinmyong through the Hyangchon Valley.</p> <p>The Myohyangsan mineral water wells up on the shore of the Myohyang Stream between the Sangwon and Manphok valleys.</p> <p>A calcium bicarbonate spring with a pH of 5.8 and temperature of 12.5°C, it contains a total mineral amount of 1 657.42mg/L. It is efficacious for treating chronic gastritis, gastric and duodenal</p>

ulcer, chronic enterocolitis, cholangitis, chronic cystitis and mild diabetes. It is convenient to use as it is found on a mountain-climbing path. Habitual drinking of this water helps soften and beautify the skin.

The slope up to 500-900m above sea level is characterized by a mixed forest of pine and oak trees; the middle one up to about 1 100m by broadleaf trees like Mongolian oak, Manchurian linden and Dahurian birch; and highest one up to 1 400m by subarctic needleleaf trees such as fir, Korean spruce, Yezo spruce and Khingan fir.

Found at the top part above 1 800m are alpine plants including Sargent juniper, dwarf Siberian pine, Korean arbutus, rhododendron and blueberry.

The mountain abounds also with medicinal herbs and wild fruits like wild grape and gooseberry. Typical medicinal herbs include wild insam, forest asiabell, magnoliavine, *Angelica gigas*, serviceberry, *Codonopsis lanceolata* and Nepal crane's-bill.

Because of its excellent environment, it is also diverse in fauna resources; over 30 species of mammals, 220 species of birds and scores of species of reptiles and amphibians. In particular, there are many rare and beneficial birds. Out of 220 species of birds, many are migratory; in spring thrush, *Acanthis flammea* and *Bombycilla*

garrulus, which have wintered in the mountain, fly to their breeding places, and in May *Eurystomus orientalis*, *Oriolus chinensis*, cuckoo and *Eophona migratoria* return to the mountain. The Manphok Valley is widely inhabited by *Butorides striatus*, *Alcedo atthis*, *Cinclus pallasii*, *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* and *Buteo lagopus*, and Piro Peak by black-naped oriole, *Ficedula narcissina*, *Cettia diphone*, *Emberiza elegans* and *Cyanopica cyana*.

Streams are teeming with dozens of fish species including sweet fish, rainbow trout and *Pseudogobio esocinus*. Dozens of species of amphibians and insects are found in the mountain.

Mt Myohyang has many waterfalls, over 40 of which are well known for their size and shape. While some fall straight, some others slide through testudinate rocks. Still others spout water wide, or rise up like fountains after sliding.

Various mysteriously-shaped rocks add much to the mountain's beautiful and majestic natural scenery.

The mountain is formed mainly by granogneiss and granite. Because there are a lot of large rocks here and there, it looks like a huge monolithic mountain at a cursory glance.

Some of the rocks are covered with ever-green moss and others reveal their bare gray surfaces or carry pine trees with roots deep in their cracks.

<div data-bbox="0 0 77 75" data-label="Page-Header">88</div> <div data-bbox="77 0 966 75" data-label="Page-Header">Famous Mountains of Korea</div>	<div data-bbox="966 0 1854 75" data-label="Page-Header">Mt Myohyang</div> <div data-bbox="1854 0 1932 75" data-label="Page-Header">89</div>
<div data-bbox="320 144 653 189" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>Origin of the Name</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="81 248 892 642" data-label="Text"> <p>The name <i>Myohyang</i> came from the meaning that the mountain is fantastic in shape, fragrant and beautiful. The fantastic and majestic appearance of the mountain has something to do with the history of geological and geographical development of this area. The mountain owes its popularity of being a fragrant, beautiful mountain to the abundance in aromatic trees like magnolia, lilac, Sargent juniper and Korean arborvitae, which flourish in this area.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="81 658 892 898" data-label="Text"> <p>The mountain was explored long ago, but it is from the early 11th century that it was named Mt Myohyang. Earlier it had been called Mt Yonju as it belonged to the town of Yonju, and Mt Thaeback since the middle period of Koryo in the sense that the rocks of the mountain are unusually white and clean.</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="1207 144 1684 189" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>Scenic Spots and Highlights</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="1313 248 1576 293" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Sangwon Valley</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="1041 326 1852 456" data-label="Text"> <p>The valley is situated on the southern slope of Pobwang and Oson peaks. It was named after an old hermitage called Sangwon which is located about 500m halfway up the slope over the valley.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1041 467 1852 692" data-label="Text"> <p>There are many historical remains and relics like the Pulyong Hermitage, Chuksong Hall, Nungin Hermitage and stupas for renowned monks. Typically, the Pulyong Hermitage is a famous Buddhist building where the <i>Chronicles of the Feudal Joson Dynasty</i> was preserved in the days of the Imjin Patriotic War.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1041 703 1852 880" data-label="Text"> <p>Here you can see beautiful waterfalls like Tacha, Ryongyon and Sanju and limpid ponds like Sangsin, Onui and Sangwon Spring. There are many legendary tales and interesting stories associated with the places of the valley.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 939 1261 972" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Sangwon Gate</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="1041 986 1852 1067" data-label="Text"> <p>The Sangwon Gate was formed by a rock which was carried down and laid over a boulder in a flood some 40 years ago.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 1079 1669 1114" data-label="Text"> <p>The scenery of Mt Myohyang starts from the gate.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 1173 1271 1207" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Kumgang Gate</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="1078 1219 1804 1255" data-label="Text"> <p>The Kumgang Gate means an entrance to a picturesque place.</p> </div>

In the past Mt Myohyang was used as a pleasure resort for wealthy and powerful people.

They used to come to the mountain by sedan-chair amid the playing of music. But the gate was too small for their sedan-chairs to pass, so they had to get off and pass it on foot with their overweight bodies bent double. Although they complained that such a small stone gate made them bow, the scenery in the Sangwon Valley behind the gate was too tempting for them to give up and return.

Sangwon Spring

The Sangwon Spring is located about 50m away from the Kumgang Gate.



Sangwon Gate



Kumgang Gate

The air and water in Mt Myohyang are so pure and clean that a foreign businessman, after sightseeing the mountain, said he felt as if he had been relieved of the fatigue and aftereffects of pollution accumulated in him for 60 years and that he would like to bring the air and water in plastic bags back to his country.

Kumgang Falls

From olden times the Kumgang Falls has been renowned for its shape and exquisite scene around it. While it looks like a picture scroll in autumn when red maples hang over it, its winter scenery is also quite spectacular as the area around it is white with hoar frost.

Unlike ordinary falls in which water falls down vertical cliffs, the Kumgang Falls is a slant falls in which water runs over a sloping rock. On a rock on the left of the falls stands gable-roofed and softly-painted Kumgang Pavilion. The pavilion commands a bird's-eye view of the falls and its surroundings.

Kusul (Beads) Falls

The falls is so called because it looks like beads of clean waterdrops roll down. The falls is 15m high and the pond under it is 2.2m deep.

Tacha Falls

Tacha Falls is located beneath the Inho Rock. It is said that the falls has moved 10m backwards from its original location with the passage of time.

There is a hollow in the middle course of the falls. When the amount of water increases, water spurts up into the air after dumping into the hollow, creating a magnificent sight.

Ryongyon Falls

There is a deep pool called Ryong (dragon) Pool on the top of the falls. As the falls is formed by the pool's overflow, it falls down in the form of fish scales. According to a story a dragon flew up into the sky from the pool, making it overflow. Hence its name Ryongyon.



Sanju Falls



Ryongyon Falls

Sanju Falls

The Sanju Falls is called so because it looks like myriads of beads cascading down.

Sesim (Mind-purifying) Rock

In the olden times people inscribed the rock with the words "Save us, merciful Buddha!" and used to come here and purify their minds—hence the name.

The rock carries an old story about the witty Kim fooling the wives of high-ranking officials from Pyongyang.

Inho Rock

The Inho Rock (*inho* means being guided by a tiger) is located about 200m northwest upwards along a cliff from the Ryongyon Falls. Its name is associated with the legendary tale that a tiger guided a man who was wandering from the trail near the falls. There is the Inho Pavilion on the rock which lies on a cliff facing the Sangwon Hermitage.

The pavilion commands a full view of the picturesque Sangwon Hermitage. From olden times the scene around the rock has been known as one of the eight famous scenes of Mt Myohyang.



Inho Rock

-Legendary Tale-

Inho Rock and Tiger

There are two different tales.

One is that when a man was wandering having lost his way in front of a high cliff owing to an unseasonable snow and rain in May, a tiger appeared and guided him to the Sangwon Hermitage on a cliff.

The other one is as follows.

A monk living in Mt Myohyang, having heard that there was a good place for building a temple above the Ryongyon Falls, set

out on a trip to it. But en route he lost his way, caught in heavy snow. A big tiger came and guided him to the place. In this way the monk could build the Sangwon Hermitage in the place.

The legendary tales show that even a tiger regarded as the mountain god helped building the Sangwon Hermitage.

Sangwon Hermitage

The Sangwon Hermitage is situated on a fantastically-shaped cliff, from which the Ryongyon and Sanju falls flow downwards, with the Chonsin Falls as a backdrop.

The hermitage was built in the closing years of the Koryo dynasty (918-1392) and reconstructed in 1580 and its main building is characterized by its roof in which saddle and gable styles are combined.



Sangwon Hermitage

Su and Chilsong pavilions

Hanging on its front wall are two tablets bearing the name of the hermitage and the calligraphic writing that reads, “Most Beautiful Hermitage in Mt Myohyang.”

The hermitage has the Chilsong and Su pavilions as annexes and Myohyangsan pine and Sangwonam ginkgo in its front yard, both of which are living monuments.

Chuksong Temple

The Chuksong Temple is located shortly after the Ryonggak Rock.

As the front floor has no pillar to support the 8.83m-long beam laid over it, it provides a wide vista ahead and a cosy, homely atmosphere. Decorated with various sculptures and colourful painting, the temple clearly shows the architectural and painting techniques in the last period of the feudal Joseon dynasty.

Pulyong Hermitage

If you go down from the Chuksong Temple past the Oson Pavilion, you will find the Pulyong Hermitage.

As it faces the south, the hermitage enjoys the sun all day long and the moon at night.

Viewing the moon from the hermitage is called one of the eight best sceneries in Mt Myohyang.

The *Chronicles of the Feudal Joseon Dynasty*, a valuable cultural heritage of Korea, was kept here during the Imjin Patriotic War against the Japanese invaders in the late 16th century.



Pulyong Hermitage

Manmul Rock

It was so named because it commands a panoramic view of the picturesque Pobwang Peak, which is called Manmulsang (myriad-shaped peak) of Mt Myohyang. From here you can see Pobwang Peak, the highest peak in the range of Hyangbiro Peak, and Oson Peak to the east of Pobwang Peak and Kwanum Peak to the west.

Nungin Hermitage

The year of its construction is unknown, but it was expanded in 1780. A hermitage located at the highest place among the temples and hermitages in the Mt Sinhyang area, it is famous for its sculptures on bays and roof structure.

tiered) Falls and a descending route passing the Hwajang Hermitage.

It is not a long course, but it will take more than half a day to get to the Kuchung or Pison falls because the route is relatively steep and there are many fascinating waterfalls along the route. Therefore, visitors usually look round the Tangun Grotto in the afternoon after having lunch near the Kuchung Falls and descend via the Hwajang Hermitage.

Myohyangsan Mineral Water Site

The site is located on the shore of Hyangsan Stream, about 50m away from the Jogye Gate of the Pohyon Temple in the direction of the Hyangsan Hotel.

Chonju Rock

Standing on the middle slope of Thakki Peak (849.5m) on the right side of the route to the Manphok Valley, the rock is 43m high and 30m round. The rock was named so because it looks like a pillar supporting the sky.

It looks like the head of a snorting horse and an elaborately-hewn tower if seen from near.

The rock carries a legendary tale that Tangun, founder-king of Ancient Joseon (early 30th century BC–108 BC), practised archery every day on the Tangun Rock in the middle part of Hyangno Peak with the rock as the target.

It has another legendary tale that a powerful man preserved the exquisite scenery of the mountain by stopping the rain hole of

Pobwang Peak

Pobwang, the highest peak in the Sangwon Valley area, soars 1 392m above sea level. Down to the west of the peak, there is Hyangsan County town with rows of tile-roofed houses of the Korean traditional style and the Chongchon River and, far beyond them, Yaksandongdae. To its south, there are Munphil, Khal, Wangmo, Sonyu and Thakki peaks. You can see Thammil and Kwaenghak peaks, in front of which the International Friendship Exhibition House is located. And Hyangno, Chonthae, Sokka and Wonman peaks stand behind Oson Peak which is near to Pobwang Peak.

Manphok Valley

Situated along the southern slope of Hyangno Peak, the Manphok Valley was named so because there are many falls in the area.

In the valley there are many waterfalls of various shapes like Sogok, Murung, Unson, Yuson, Unjong, Pison, Kuchung and Unha, limpid ponds including Phal and mysteriously-shaped rocks like Manphok, Jangsu, Pison and Tangun. All these blend well with the surroundings to form wonderful scenery.

The distance from the bus stop to Tangun Grotto is 7.1km.

The mountain-climbing course consists of an ascending route from the entrance to the Tangun Grotto via the Kuchung (nine-

the sky with a stone pillar in the rainy season.

Thakki (Fluttering Flag) Peak

Thakki Peak is composed of several peaks in front of the Pohyon Temple. The peak was named so because the range of the peaks looks like a fluttering flag.

Sogok (prelude) Falls

If you climb about 400m up from the entrance to the Manphok Valley through dense dwarf pine trees, you will be greeted by this waterfall, the first of its kind in the Manphok Valley area. The falls is so called because it sounds as if it signals the start of a “symphony orchestra” played by scores of waterfalls in the area.

It is 5.9m high and 16m long.

Murung (Paradise) Falls

The Murung Falls is located about 250m away from the Sogok Falls.

A story has it that in olden times eight brothers living in Mt Myohyang used to have a break near the falls while gathering firewood. The waterfall was named so because its scene is as beautiful as a paradise.

It thuds down a 27m-high cliff, creating magnificent sound.

Unson (Fairies in Hiding) Falls

The name of the falls is derived from the story that in olden

times fairies from heaven used to hide themselves during their bath here if humans came around. The falls is quite spectacular with its water flowing through rocks as if playing a game of hide-and-seek.

Manphok Rock

The Manphok Rock affords a wide vista of the Manphok Valley as the Inho Rock near the Sangwon Hermitage does, and hence the name.

It is about 100m away from the Unson Falls.

You can see Yuson Falls (*yuson* denotes fairies enjoying themselves) and Phal (eight) Pools below and a large rock called Pongdutha above to its northwest.

To its south it commands a full view of the high peaks of Mt Myohyang including Thakki, Sonyu, Wangmo and Munphil, which are associated with the legendary tale of Haemosu (a legendary tale related to the founding of Puyo, an ancient state which splintered from Ancient Joseon in the 15th century BC and became fully independent before the 12th century BC).

Ssangbawi (A Pair of Rocks) Path

It is called so because it is laid out between two rocks.

An old story says that in olden times fairies who came down from heaven to the earth by the rainbow entered Mt Myohyang via this path and enjoyed sightseeing.



Ssangbawi Path

Yuson Falls

This waterfall is about 200m down from the Manphok Rock.

According to a legendary tale, fairies from heaven used to enjoy themselves in the falls and Phal Pools under it.

About 60m long, the waterfall pours down into the air in some parts and dashes above



Yuson Falls

steep rocks in other parts, forming eight pools of various sizes below it.

Suspended over the waterfall between dizzyly high cliffs is the breath-taking 30m-long Yuson Bridge.

The falls is associated with a touching love story between eight fairies and eight firewood-collector brothers of Mt Myohyang.

Pison (Flying Fairies) Falls

The distance from the Yuson to Pison falls is about 300m.

A typical vertical falls in Mt Myohyang, this waterfall is widely known for its exquisiteness and beauty.

The name Pison is derived from the old story that fairies used to ascend to heaven riding the



Pison Falls

rainbow hanging around the falls after enjoying themselves in the Manphok Valley.

The falls consists of two streams of water falling down from the top of a 46m-high cliff. If seen upward from the ground, both sides of the falls are densely covered with woods and the cliff is clung to the sky, giving an impression that the falls is pouring down from the sky itself. If you go near, you will find beautiful rainbows hanging around it. All this produces an impression that fairies are ascending to the sky with their graceful celestial robes softly swaying in the breeze.

Hwajang (Make-up or Flower-decorated) Falls

It is called so partly because it was a place where fairies used to make themselves up, and partly because the water of the waterfall forms flower patterns after splashing against rocks.

Unlike other falls, it flows down quietly between two cliffs, giving an impression of a timid girl.

It is 16m high.

Sungson (Ascending Fairies) Falls

The name of the falls is associated with the story that fairies went up to the sky along the stream of the falls after they made themselves up in the Hwajang Falls.

In ordinary times the falls winds its quiet way among rocks, but in rainy season it swells and rolls, looking as if fairies' celestial robes are swaying in soft wind. It is 58m long and 30m high.

Kuchung (Nine-tiered) Falls

The Kuchung Falls is located about 1km away from the Pison Falls. It is called so as it flows down over slanting flat rocks in nine tiers.

The falls, 99.2m high and 294m long, is the biggest waterfall in Mt Myohyang second to the Unha Falls.

As it flows in tiers over large rocks with a gradient of more than 40 degrees, one falls is above another and one pool is above another. Each falls and pool afford their own particular scenery, creating a replica of the Manphok Valley in which all splendours of falls are concentrated.

Tangun Grotto and Tangun Temple

A natural grotto 16m wide, 12m long and 4m high, the Tangun Grotto is about 1km away westwards from the Kuchung Falls.

It carries a legendary tale of Tangun, the founder king of Ancient Joseon.

Recent studies have verified that Tangun, who had been regarded as a mythological being, was the real founder of Ancient Joseon, putting Korea's ancient history on a scientific track.

The Tangun Temple inside the grotto has a portrait of the king and altars for memorial services for him.

Tangun Rock

The Tangun Rock is situated on the middle slope of Hyangno Peak.

The place is best known for its fascinating vista and evening-glow scene.

The rock is associated with a legendary tale that Tangun came up here every day and practised archery with the Chonju Rock standing on the middle part of Thakki Peak as his target.

Unha (Milky Way) Falls

The Unha Falls is located about 1.5km away from the Kuchung Falls along the sightseeing route. It is called so because it resembles the Milky Way in the sky.

Kama (Cauldron) Rock

About 1.2m high and 2m across, the rock is situated on the way to the Unha Falls from the Jungchon Gate.

As the rock is flat on the top and round at the bottom and lies on a big boulder, it is suggestive of a cauldron and hence its name.



Kama Rock



Jungchon Gate

Jungchon Gate

A gate-shaped stone located about 50m upwards from the Tangun Rock, the Jungchon Gate consists of a cliff on the left, a boulder beside it and a big rock wedged between them. It is about 2m high and 1m wide.

The gate looks like a bear supporting a rock with the head to prevent it from falling and marring the scenery of the Manphok Valley.

Myonggyong Rock

The Myonggyong (mirror) Rock is located about 120m upward

from the Jungchon Gate towards the Samchung Falls.

It is about 10m high and 15m wide. Although the rock carries the same name and same legend as that in Mt Kumgang, its shape is different from the latter.

A legend has it that if somebody stands before the rock, it will judge whether he or she is good-hearted or wicked.

Kaksi Rock

About 100m high and 80m wide, it is situated on the way from the Jungchon Gate to the Munsu Falls. The rock resembles a woman wearing black skirt.

Samchung (Three-tiered) Falls

The waterfall is composed of three tiers and located about 130m away upwards from the Munsu Falls in the direction of Hyangno Peak.

The lengths of the three tiers are about 0.8, 2 and 2.5m, respectively, about 6m in total.

Sonyu Peak

Located in the east of Thakki Peak and made up of five separate peaks, Sonyu Peak derives its name from the story that heavenly fairies used to come here and enjoy themselves.

The peak affords a panoramic view of exquisite and beautiful

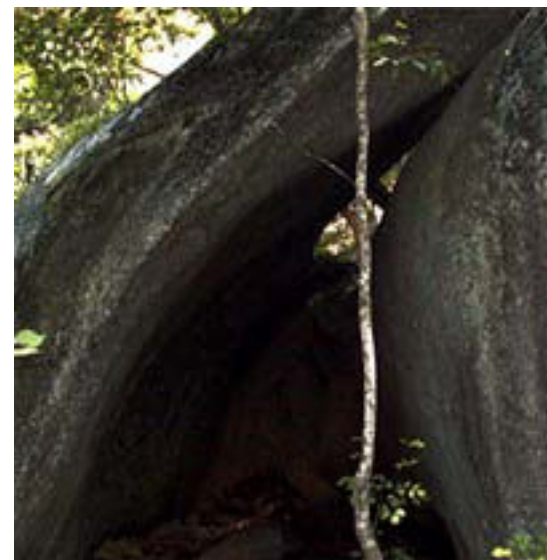
scenes surrounding it.

Hwajang Hermitage

Located 4km eastwards from the Pohyon Temple and built in 1654, the hermitage underwent several rounds of repair. The present one was built in 1818. Unlike other hermitages where Zen practitioners lived, it is a gaudy building of a unique architectural style. It was used as a school which taught Buddhist scriptures as well as Confucian literature.

Kadangun Grotto

The grotto is located about 150m down from the Tangun Grotto along its southern slope. A triangular-shaped grotto about 3m deep, it is composed of two rocks which lean to each other on the top part.



Kadangun Grotto

According to an old story, the magistrate of Nyongbyon County came to Mt Myohyang to perform a memorial service for Tangun. When his party reached a grotto (which was to be named Kadangun Grotto later), the palanquin bearers had been too exhausted to go on to the Tangun Grotto, his destination.

So they told him that the grotto was the Tangun Grotto. The official believed them and held the memorial service there. Since then he had taken it for the Tangun Grotto all his life. *Kadangun* means Fake Tangun.

Hyangno (Incense Burner) Peak

Hyangno Peak was named so because it looks like an incense burner.

A peak on the western range of Hyangbiro Peak, the main peak of Mt Myohyang, it is 1 599m high. Sargent juniper, Korean arborvitae and dwarf Siberian pine, blueberry and rhododendron are found on the peak.

Hyangbiro Peak Section

After hiking the Chonthae Valley, you can go up to Hyangbiro Peak through the Paegun Rock and climb down along the same route. Or you can take the other road leading to the Chilsong Valley.

Piromun Rest Area

This was named so because it was built at the entrance to the road to Hyangbiro Peak.

The area is always rich in water and beautiful in scenery because it is the confluence of the streams flowing from Hyangbiro, Chilsong and Kangson peaks.

Samchon Pool

It was so named in the sense that it looks like a map of Korea, which has been known from olden times as a 3 000-*ri* land of golden tapestry with beautiful mountains and limpid rivers.

This pool is 33m long, 13m wide and 5m deep.



Samchon Pool

Kobuk (Turtle) Rocks

If you walk about 50m up along the route to the Samgyong Site from the Piromun Rest Area, you can see two turtle-shaped rocks, one big and the other small, 200m apart from each other.

The rocks look like turtles staring at something with their heads raised upward. They look quite similar to the turtle in a legendary tale, which failed to carry out the order of the Sea God to bring him a rabbit and became a freshwater tortoise as a punishment.

An old tale has it that a couple of turtles that had lived in the sea for 300 years came here to see Mt Myohyang in disregard of their children's advice and were mesmerized by its wonderful scenery, gradually turning into rocks.

Habiro (Lower Biro) Hermitage

It was named so because it is situated on the lowest slope of Hyangbiro Peak, the main peak of Mt Myohyang, when it is divided into upper, middle and lower parts.

It nestles on a hummock, where the Chonthae and Chilsong valleys converge, about 6km away from the Pohyon Temple.

The temple was built before the 17th century and rebuilt in 1882.

It is a building in the form of a dwelling house with no special decorations. It is surrounded by such auxiliary buildings as the Poryon, Sansin and Chilsong pavilions. There is a yew tree in its front yard.

Habiro Hermitage



Chonthae Falls

It is called so because it is at the foot of the Chonthae Valley.

About 370m away from the Habiro Hermitage and 40m high, the waterfall flows down a 25m-wide rock.

Worth seeing here is a pond more than 5m deep below the waterfall and a pine tree growing on a big rock on its left side.

Isonnam Falls

It is located about 150m upward from the Chonthae Falls.

In ordinary times when the volume of water is small, it falls in two courses like intimate brothers.

The 22m-high falls, cliffs and rocks, pine trees on them, mist of waterfalls, a sunbow hanging low—all these combine to form fabulous scenery.



Isonnam Falls

Raengchon (Cool Wind) Valley

It was named so because one can feel cool wind in this valley.

It is situated about 200m away from the Habiro Hermitage on the way to the Kumgang Grotto.

As the name indicates, you can feel as if standing before a electric fan because a cool and refreshing wind always blows in this valley even in sultry summer.

Kumgang Grotto and Kumgang Hermitage

Located under a big rock some 2km northwest of the Habiro Hermitage, the grotto is 3m high, 10m long and 13m wide.

Nestled in the grotto is the Kumgang Hermitage.

A small hermitage built in the closing years of the Koryo dynasty, it is quite unique in that the big rock over the Kumgang Grotto serves as its roof.

The hermitage is well known for Abbot Sosan, a famous monk in Korea, lived there for over 40 years, training his mind and educating himself.

80 000 Blocks of the Complete Collection of Buddhist Scriptures were stored there in the period of the Fatherland Liberation War.



Kumgang Hermitage

Above the grotto is the Kangson Rock on which heavenly beings are said to have enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the mountain, and below it is a spring, called Myongansu, which means water that brightens the eyes.

Myongansu

The Myongansu spring is found under a 10m-high huge rock that stands 15m away eastward from the Kumgang Grotto.

This spring is filled with clear and fresh water all the year round. It is said that Abbot Sosan used to drink this spring water.

A legendary tale has it that a boy was cured of his serious eye disease after drinking this water.

Paegun Pavilion

On the pavilion you can find the Chonsang Mineral Water.

It is said that the taste of water is best in Jungbiro and viewing the cloud is best on the Paegun Rock.

Paegun Grotto and Paegun Gate

The Paegun Grotto was named so because it is located on the way to the Paegun Rock.

The area of Hyangbiro Peak has occasional rains owing to the topographical features of highlands. The grotto is used as a shelter from rain.

The grotto is 1.7m high at the mouth, 10m long and 2.5m wide.

Above the iron steps you can see the distinctive Paegun Gate.

The gate is 10m long, 6m high and 3m wide.

Paegun (White Cloud) Rock

Situated on the way to Wonman Peak, it commands a panoramic view of the peaks of Mt Myohyang.

It was named so because it is so high that it is wreathed in white clouds.



Paegun Rock



Paegun Gate

Chonsang Gate

Located just below Wonman Peak, it is called so because it looks like a gate to heaven.

If you look down to valleys girdled with clouds after passing through the gate soaring high against the background of dense woods, you will feel as if you became a legendary fairy who used to climb up and down Mt Myohyang by riding clouds and rainbows.



Chonsang Gate

Chonthap (A Thousand Towers) Peak

The peak (1 557m) is located 500m away from Hyangno Peak towards Hyangbiro Peak.

On the peak there are many small tower-shaped stone piles the tourists have made to commemorate their visit to the peak

from olden times. It is said that the stone piles number 1 000 and hence the name of the peak.

Distributed on the peak are silver fur and Khinggan fur. Some special species including *Bergenia coreana* and buck grass are found only in this area. And the peak is lush particularly with fiveribbed thyme, a species of flower whose fragrance is said to be carried as far as 40km.

Jingwi Peak

Rising 1 832m above sea level, the peak is located in the middle of the 2km-long path between Wonman Peak and Hyangbiro Peak.

It was named so because it is verdant with rare alpine plants.

This peak is also home to many rare medicinal herbs like wild insam and forest asiabell.

Hyangbiro Peak

Towering as high as 1 909m above sea level, it is the highest peak in Mt Myohyang as well as in the northwestern part of Korea.

It commands a bird's eye view of the beautiful and magnificent mountain made up of a myriad of marvellous peaks.

Forests of Sargent juniper, Korean arborvitae and dwarf Siberian pine spread on scores of hectares of the peak. While the peak is carpeted with rhododendron in late May, it presents an alpine scene of ripening blueberries in August.

Panga (Watermill) Falls

It was named so as it looks like a stream that powers a watermill.

The first waterfall in the Chilsong Valley, it is 10m long, 7m high and 710m above sea level.

Pidan (Silk) Falls

It was called so because it looks like two strips of silk.

The falls consists of two streams falling down onto a rock with Chilsong Peak as the backdrop.

It is 15.9m high, 34.7m long and 3m wide, and about 150m away from the Mangyong Falls.

Saja (Lion) Falls

The falls is 2km away from the Habiro Hermitage. It is 12.7m high, 5m wide and 69m long.

It was named so because it looks like a lion which roars shaking its head under the cascade of water.



Unsil Pool



Saja Falls and Saja Pond



Chilsong Pond

Water falls down along seven courses on a jutting rock. Below the falls is the Saja Pond, in which scores of lions are said to have taken a bath.

Unsil (Silvery Thread) Falls

Walk about 50m along the path enjoying the exquisite beauty of ravines past the Saja Falls, and you can see the 10m-high waterfall.

It was named so in the sense that it looks as if it is draped in silvery threads. Below the falls is the Unsil Pool, a large beautiful pond 40m long, 40m wide and 2.5m deep.

Sahyang (Musk) Pond

The pond is 25m wide, 20m long and 2m deep. According to an old tale, a musk deer, a specialty of Mt Myohyang, used to take a bath here. Hence the name.

Chilsong Pond

5m wide, 50m long and 8m deep, it is

the biggest pond in the Chilsong Valley.

Hyeongje (Brothers) Gate and Chilsong Rock

The gate was named so as it looks like two brothers standing side by side.

After passing through the gate, you can find the Sahyang Spring which never dries all the year round.

If you walk some 100m after passing through the Hyeongje Gate, you will find the moss-covered Chilsong Rock.

Chilsong Falls

It is called so because it is located below Chilsong Peak.

Situated on a valley 1 072m above sea level, it is 36.6m high, 12.3m wide and 83m long.

At the foot of the falls are three triangular ponds, each being 3m deep.

Chilgang Gorge

It is called so as it is located between Chilsong and Kangson peaks.

The gorge was formed along the dislocation lines which were created when Mt Myohyang rose to the present height. The gorge is about 900m long.

Underground Scenic Spots

There are several beautiful limestone caves in the area of Mt Oehyang (the Kujang area). They were formed through long process of limestone being eroded by rain and underground water.

They present bewitching sights of fantastic stalactites, stone flowers and stalagmites. Typical examples are Ryongmun and Paengnyong caves and Songam Cavern.

Historical and Cultural Relics and Remains

There are many historical and cultural remains and relics that are associated with the patriotic struggle waged by the Korean people.

It is best known as a place where Abbot Sosan (1520-1604) formed a volunteers army with the monks to repulse the Japanese invasion in the period of the Imjin Patriotic War (1592-1598). The Kumgang Grotto, where he developed his mind and practised martial arts, and his residence in the Pohyon Temple, which he

used during the war, are preserved in their original state.

The Pulyong Hermitage is the place where the *Chronicles of the Feudal Joseon Dynasty*, a typical classical book of Korea, was kept in the period of the Imjin Patriotic War. The book is a kind of government diary which records the historical facts during over 500 years, or over 180 000 days, of the feudal Joseon dynasty from 1392.

There are many historical and cultural relics that showcase the resourcefulness and talents of the Korean people.

Typically, the Pohyon Temple is a structure of high artistic value that can represent the architecture of Korea in the early 11th century.

Thanks to the policy of the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on preserving cultural relics and remains, the Taeung Hall and Manse Pavilion were restored to their original state, a depository was newly built for the 80 000 *Blocks of the Complete Collection of Buddhist Scriptures*, and the Kwanum Hall, Ryongsan Hall, Haejang House, Mansu Pavilion, Jogye, Haethal and Chonwang gates and other old buildings, as well as the tetragonal 9-storeyed pagoda, octagonal 13-storeyed pagoda and the monument at the Pohyon Temple are preserved as they were.



Depository built for the 80 000 *Blocks of the Complete Collection of Buddhist Scriptures*



Kwanum Hall



Taeung Hall



Bell at the Yujom Temple



Tabo Pagoda

Mt Chilbo



Outline

Mt Chilbo is a resort of unmatched beauty in the northeastern part of Korea.

It is often called *Mt Kumgang in North Hamgyong Province* for its breathtaking views of ravines, forests and seaside.

In 1542 a renowned Korean writer said after a fortuitous tour of the beautiful mountain, “Mt Chilbo has been secluded for thousands of years and, once known around the country, it will draw all those who love natural scenery. They will converge here, unimpressed with Mt Jiri and bored of Mt Kumgang.”

Among the natural monuments in the mountain are the Pyongyang Chestnut Tree in the Kaesim Temple, Kojin Pine Tree and Pho Jung Pine Tree.

Pine mushroom that occurs here ranks first among Korea’s edible mushrooms numbering over 80 species, in terms of taste, smell and medicinal value.

The mountain abounds in historical relics and remains which are illustrative of the Korean ancestors’ wisdom and architectural



Pine mushroom in Mt Chilbo

skills—forts, buildings, tombs, stupas and monuments.

All the peaks and scenic spots in the mountain carry interesting legendary tales, which entertain tourists all along. The Chilbosan Holiday Camp, Hwangjin Spa and other hot springs dot the landscape.

The Mt Chilbo area is divided into Inner Chilbo, Outer Chilbo and Sea Chilbo.

There are two sightseeing routes: One is to take a bus at the Myongchon Railway Station, pass the Myongchon County town,

cross Paktal Pass and arrive at the Chilbosan Holiday Camp, before touring Inner Chilbo, Outer Chilbo and Sea Chilbo in order; the other is to take ship at Odaejin or Chongjin and tour Sea Chilbo first, and then Outer Chilbo and Inner Chilbo in succession.

While touring the scenic spots in the resort, visitors will appreciate the unique beauty of the mountain and its fantastic scenery, enjoying fresh air and listening to interesting legendary tales.

Natural and Geographical Environment

Located on the shores of the East Sea of Korea, it occupies an area of 250 sq km between the Orang River in the north and the Hwadae River in the south.

The area is bordered to the northwest by the Hamgyong Mountains and to the east by sea, so it is largely affected by oceanic climate. The weather is cloudy and foggy for much of the year.

The annual mean temperature is 7.4°C and precipitation is 800mm.

The mountain boasts favourable natural and geographical conditions and diverse ecosystems.

The area was registered as a world biosphere reserve at the 26th

meeting of the UNESCO International Coordinating Council of the Man and Biosphere Programme.

It provides habitats for 39 species of mammals including bear, raccoon dog and badger and 192 species of birds including eagle owl, thrush and black-naped oriole, which account for more than 40 per cent of the animals and birds in Korea. The animals total over 270 species including amphibians, reptiles, insects and freshwater fishes.

The waters off Sea Chilbo are rich in pollack, octopus, sea urchin, seaweed and other marine resources.

The mountain is home to 800-odd species of plants, which make up 77 per cent of the plants in North Hamgyong Province—scores of species of trees that are of great economic value, such as pine, larch and oak; dozens of species of medicinal plants such as wild insam, forest asiabell and rhododendron; pine-nut, schizandra, Amur grape, tara vine and other wild fruit trees; pine mushroom, osmunda, bracken and many other species of edible herbs.

Origin of the Name

Legend has it that the mountain is called Chilbo (meaning “seven treasures”) because it has seven treasures—gold, pearls and others—in its bosom, but, actually, it was named so in the sense that it is a beautiful and invaluable mountain with peaks, myriad-shaped rocks, ravines, waterfalls, pools, forests and sea scenery.

The peculiar, ever-changing scenery of the mountain is a mysterious blend of majestic peaks, deep ravines and unspoiled seashore.

At dawn heavy fog wreathes the seaside valleys and whitish mist swirls around the peaks.

Found in the gorges are waterfalls, pools and an endless variety of flora, making the scenery vary according to seasons and weathers.

Korean ancestors called the mountain differently by the seasons: *Kkottongsan* (flower mountain) in spring, *Rogumsan* (verdure mountain) in summer, *Hongasan* (red-leaves mountain) in autumn and *Solbaeksan* (white-snow mountain) in winter.

Scenic Spots and Highlights

Inner Chilbo

Inner Chilbo is located in the inland area of Mt Chilbo.

It is enclosed by high hills.

The ranges and ravines are not very long or deep, making them favourable for visitors to tour.

The centerpiece of the scenery is Chonbul Peak, “guarded” by rocks of various shapes—humans, animals, buildings, objects, etc.

Inner Chilbo is divided into four sections—Kaesimsa, Sangmaebong, Naewon and Isonam—all connected by roads and paths for the convenience of tourists.

Kaesimsa Section

Starting at Kaesim Bridge, this section encompasses Handok, Okthae Peak and Sejon Peak to the south, Kage Peak to the east and the entrance to the Kumgang Valley to the north. It has such low valleys as Kumgang, Sudoam and Chonggye, and highlights with Chonbul Peak at the centre.

Huin (White) Rock

To reach the Kaesimsa Section, you have to cross Paktal Pass with numerous bends. At the foot of this pass you will find a jagged belt of white rocks, 10 to 15m high, extending 200m from east to west.



Huin Rock

It looks like it is covered with snow all year round and hence the name.

Hwanhui Ridge

This is a saddle-shaped ridge lying at the starting point of the pathway which leads to the Kaesim Temple.

See eastwards on top of the ridge, and high rocky hills will come in sight. Then you will exclaim “Fantastic!” Hence the name Hwanhui (ecstasy).

Hwanho Rock

This is a group of rocks on a hill north of Hwanhui Ridge. It resembles an array of travellers, who have come all the way to see the

celebrated mountain.

They look like cheering loudly at the sight of the wonderful scenery. Hence the name Hwanho (cheers).

Pothak Rock

Walk some distance through a narrow valley southeast of Hwanhui Ridge, and you will see this rock on top of a hill that rises to the northeast.

The rock resembles a mysterious gem on a table.

Chonbul Peak

Situated in the heart of Inner Chilbo, this peak reaches a height of 659m above sea level.

It is hemmed in by Mansa Peak, Jonggak Peak, Rahan Rock and Wonsungi Rock.

Legend has it that a god descended from heaven and built a temple and the five major peaks—Chonbul, Mansa, Jonggak, Rahan and Rojok.

Pubu Rocks

This is a pair of rocks, 15m high each, which resemble a man and his wife embracing each other warmly. Hence the name *Pubu* (a married couple).

The rock on the west looks like a man in armour with a helmet on,

and the other on the east, like a slender woman dressed in traditional *chima* (skirt) and *jogori* (jacket).

According to a legendary tale, they turned into rocks while hugging joyfully after a long separation.

-Legendary Tale-

Joy of Reunion

Once upon a time there lived a young man in the Naewon Valley. Though born into a poor family, he was diligent. He was married late to a tender-hearted girl in the same village.

Soon afterwards, news reached them that there was foreign invasion on the northern border of the country. With a firm resolve to defend his native land, the man left home promptly, leaving behind his beautiful wife.

One day, seven years later, she was told that her long-awaited husband, now a general, was on the way back home.

She was beside herself with joy, but soon got depressed and upset about her threadbare clothes.

Suddenly, a bright rainbow rose against the azure sky and a pretty fairy appeared before the woman's eyes. The fairy made a polite bow and gave her a silk dress, before ascending back to heaven.

Relieved to see her smart appearance, she rushed to a ridge where there was the Rahan Rock. There she saw her husband in a general's uniform striding towards her.

The couple hugged each other jubilantly. As they were sharing orgasmic feelings, the wife gave a sudden cry of embarrassment.

It was because she noticed that the elderly villagers, who had come to greet the triumphant general, were looking down from Jonggak Peak.

Ashamed, the couple stood on the spot for so long that they turned into rocks.



Pubu Rocks

Wonsungi Rock

Standing south of Chonbul Peak, this rock can be seen clearly from the Sungson Rock. It looks like a monkey pondering on something with its chin on one hand. Hence the name *Wonsungi* (monkey).

Sungson Rock

This is a flat and broad rock north of Kumgang Peak. Legend has it that fairies used to descend to the mountain and enjoy its fantastic scenery and ascend back to heaven from this rock. Hence the name *Sungson* (ascending to heaven).

Survey Inner Chilbo on this rock, and you can see enchanting rows of odd-shaped rocks on the slopes east and northwest of the Kumgang Valley.

Kumgang Peak

This peak is 1 000 or so metres south of the Sungson Rock. It is 642m high, divided into three parts—upper, middle and lower.

Standing on the upper part, you can have a bird's eye view of Inner Chilbo.

Composed of alkaline trachyte and rhyolite, the peak has been traditionally known for its magnificence.

The lower part shows a golden yellow tint and the middle part has a tinge of pink, reminiscent of a burning flame.

The peak has been registered as a natural monument, its petrographic faces proving significant in the research on the process of volcanic eruption and weathering.

In the lower part you can see two odd-shaped rocks—*Chonhamiin* and *Tongja*.



Kumgang Rock

Kumgang Cave

Some 400m down from Pisok Rock is this cave, 12m wide, 8m deep and 2.5m high. It was formed through the centuries-old process of stone erosion by rainwater.

At a bend in the cave is a bench-like rock, on which you can sit for relaxation. There is a fresh spring at the mouth of the cave and the broad rock beside it remains wet for most of the year. Though on a high location, this rock does not get dry even when the area is in the grip of severe drought.

Kuryong Pool

This pool is in the Kumgang Valley, some distance down from Naegyong Rock.

An old tale goes that there lived nine dragons in the pool. Hence the name *Kuryong* (nine dragons). Legend has it that a boy, called Won Sim, managed to dig up wild insam here despite appalling harassment by the dragons.

Posal Rock

This rock lies a good distance behind the Taemo Rock. The word *Posal* means a Buddhist saint in Korean. As it looks like a Buddhist saint, the rock was named so. It is unsightly—elongated face, deep-



Posal Rock

set eyes, upturned nose and prominent jaw.

Ttok Rock

This is a rock in a secluded corner of the Kumgang Valley south of the Naegyong Rock. The yellowish boulder is spotted with quartz stones, reminding one of a huge glutinous millet cake. The surface is bumpy, looking like a scatter of little cakes.

Here you can hear an ancient tale about a greedy man surnamed Man.

Sochaek Rock

This is a bookshelf-like rock at the northern foot of Kage Peak. The face of the rock has double crevices, making it look like a three-tier shelf.

Korean ancestors named the rock after the national treasure *Phalmandaejanggyong* (80 000 Blocks of the Complete Collection

of Buddhist Scriptures). According to one legend, a collection of history books turned into this rock by magic so as to prevent their loss.



Sochaek Rock

Ryemun Rock and Kama Rock

The Ryemun Rock is 60 or so metres away from the Kumjok Rock.

According to an old tale, the opening in this 8m-high rock was wide enough even for a sedan to pass. Now the space is so small that only a man can go through it. The following explains why it became narrow.

In a nearby village there was a local custom of a bride and her

groom passing on a sedan through this opening on their wedding day. They believed that such a couple would live happily for a long time. Later, the rumour spread quickly and so many couples, including the elderly, came here from afar.

The rock-keeper felt it so ridiculous that he vanished without trace after narrowing the opening.

However, the event on the wedding day existed for a long time.

Fifty metres away from this rock stands the Kama Rock. *Kama* means a kind of sedan that was used to carry a bride to her groom's house on the wedding day.



Ryemun Rock and Kama Rock

Manwol Rock and Muhui Rock

The Manwol Rock is a broad rock rising by an easy gradient, which is located approximately 100m north of the Kiwajip Rock. It is said that fairies used to descend from heaven at night and see the full moon here. Hence the name *Manwol* (full moon).

East of this rock is a flat and round rock called Muhui (dancing girls). An old tale goes that fairies would spend some nights here, dancing and singing in a circle. As summarized above, the peaks and rocks in the Kaesimsa section can be viewed from various rocks or along the sightseeing paths.

Sangmaebong Section

This section comprises Paktal Pass, Munam Pass, Sangmae Peak and Jorong Peak.

Paktal Pass

A gateway to Mt Chilbo, this pass reaches a height of 762m above sea level.

It remains obscure why it was named so. Some people say that the name takes its origin from the birch trees (*paktal*) abundant in the hill. Some others insist it was called *Panwol* or *Pandal* (half moon) as it was located at the centre of the half-moon-shaped Chilbo Mountains,

and later the pronunciation was changed into what it is now—*Paktal*.

Sangmae Peak

This peak resembles a ferocious hawk, hence the name *Sangmae* (hawk-like). It is also called Sangung since it looks like a hawk trying to spread out its wings, or Unmu as it is often shrouded in cloud and fog.

The summit of the peak commands a panoramic view of Mt Chilbo. Most spectacular are the sunrise over the East Sea of Korea and the evening glow over the mountain.

Munam Pass

Munam means a gate-shaped rock arching over a road.

To the northeast of the pass stretches a moor called Handok, which was once cultivated by slash-and-burn farming methods. A legend has it that a boy, surnamed Han, married a girl after saving her from being eaten by a tiger.

Natkari Rock, Hwangso Rock and Nongbu Rock

The Natkari (rice stack) Rock is located on the northeastern ridge of Sangmae Peak. Some way downwards are the Hwangso (ox) Rock and Nongbu (peasant) Rock.

Looking like exquisite sculptures, these rocks form an idyllic scene—an “ox” pulling a full-loaded cart and tramping towards a “rice stack,” watched by a “peasant” of large build. This group of rocks is remindful of a diligent peasant boasting about his rich harvest.

Naewon Section

This section encompasses Yongchundae to the south, Kumsu Peak to the east, the east side of Manwol Rock to the west and Sewang Peak to the north.

A tourist road leading to Outer Chilbo runs across this section.

Along the road to this section, you can see a number of scenic spots, among them the Pyongphung Rock, Myonggyong Rock, Myongnok Rock, Piryu Pool, Jumok Rock, Kyongsong Rock and Mal Rock.

Pyongphung Rock

Cross Kaesim Bridge, and you will see this rock first on the left side of the road. *Pyongphung* means a folding screen in English.

300m high and 100m long, the rock looks like a colossal canvas.

Piryu Pool

A swift stream drops into this pool, bursting into myriad tiny bubbles like boiling water.

Panwol (Half Moon) Peak

This is a low, half-moon-shaped peak located 150 or so metres down the main road from Ansim Bridge. Hence the name *Panwol* (half moon).

Seen on the peak are the Sango Rock, which looks like a pair of sharks jumping up, and the Mungwan Rock, which resembles a scholar in a sitting posture.

Tubu Rock

This rock is located halfway up Panwol Peak on the right of Ansim Bridge.

It is a pair of rocks, one on top of the other. The one underneath is a big, square rock and that above is shaped like a cube, each side being 1.5m long. *Tubu* means bean-curd. The rock looks like an intricately carved sculpture.

Just before the rock stands another rock shaped like a kitchen knife, which a legendary tale says was used in cutting bean-curd.

Kumsu Peak

This peak lies at the eastern edge of the Naewon Valley. There are many rocks of various shapes—birds and beasts—on the peak, hence the name *Kumsu* (*kum* means bird and *su* means animal).

The first rock that comes in sight on the way to the summit of the peak is the Jodu Rock, which is shaped like the head of a pig devouring something.

Follow a limpid stream nearby, and you can see the Saja (lion) Rock, on the right of which stands the Puongi (owl) Rock. And a few steps away from it lies the Kom (bear) Rock.

Next comes Sonpyok (clapping) Rock, which looks as if it were applauding the bravery of the animals. Some distance down there is the Puri (beak) Rock, which looks as if it were about to peck at something. Next to it stands the Ppokkugi (cuckoo) Rock.

At the edge of the peak lies the Tongja Rock, which looks as if it were surveying this group of animals with interest.

Phanwa Valley

This valley is located southeast of Yakthae Peak at the northwestern edge of the Naewon section.

The peak resembles a pile of packets containing herbal medicines.

The name of the valley originated from the wooden tiles that were made in the region. It is also called Nore. Found on the northern ridge of the valley are some rocks of exotic shapes—Kobugi, Thal and Kkottok.

Thokki (Hare) Rock and Hogu (Tiger's Mouth) Rock

These rocks are seen along the tourist road leading to Outer Chilbo. Pass Kumsu Peak, and you will see Thokki Rock just above a rock on the left side of the first bend.

It looks like a hare creeping away for fear of encountering a beast.

Turn around the bend, and the Hogu Rock, sometimes called Pom (tiger) Rock, comes in sight.

The “jaw” of the “tiger” points towards the road and its “teeth” and their “mandibles,” as well as the “bridge of its nose,” are lifelike.



Pom Rock

Songsae (Fort) Rock and Jangsu (General) Rock

These rocks are found at the western edge of the Naewon Valley contiguous to the Kaesimsa section.

The Songsae Rock looks like a fort with a big gate. Through this “gate,” you can see the Jangsu Rock.

It looks as if a general were ordering his soldiers to come out of the fort.



Songsae Rock

Sonnyo Cave

This cave is just below the Songsae Rock.

A legend has it that on *Ryudu* and *Chusok*, the folk holidays in June and August respectively, fairies used to enjoy the fantastic scenery of Mt Chilbo and spend nights dancing and singing on the Muhui Rock. When they saw humans approaching, they would hide in the cave.

Isonam Section

This section comprises Sejon Peak to the north, Tok Peak to the east, Sangmae and Okthae peaks to the west and the Namsan Rock to the south.

Situated south of Inner Chilbo, this section is characterized by big, graceful peaks and rocks of various shapes.

To reach this section you have to pass Phoha and Pho Jung in Outer Chilbo.

Follow the path along the Phoha Stream, and the Maemi (cicada) Valley comes in sight on the right.

This valley provides a good habitat for cicada and, when summer comes round, the sound of chirping fills the air.



Phojung Pine Tree

Satkkatsol (Phojung Pine Tree)

This is a pine tree, shaped like a sedge hat, located approximately three kilometres up the Phoha Stream, just at the mouth of the Maemi Valley.

Hence the name *Satkkat* (sedge hat).

The stump of this tree, over 200 years old, is 0.9m in diameter and its crown is 20m in diameter.

Its leaves are short and dark-green, resembling a silk quilt.

For its special shape, the tree was registered on the list of natural monuments.

Here you can hear an ancient tale about a widow and her brother-in-law.

-Legendary Tale-

Widow and Her Brother-in-law

Once upon a time, there lived a man and his brother's wife in a house at the Maemi Valley. The man was a bachelor and the woman was a widow.

One day, the woman heard that a widower in the nearby fishing village was going to take her away. Spending sleepless nights, she hit on a good idea.

Some days later, she told her brother-in-law what would happen that evening and asked him for help.

He agreed to help the poor woman as she was not the kind who would betray her dead husband. The boy changed into her dress and sat in her room.

The woman instructed him what to do—protest timidly without shouting but obey the intruders' demand.

That evening the “burglar” broke into the house and took away the “widow.” In order to calm down the “woman,” the man locked “her” in

the room of his younger sister who was old enough to marry.

The sister was very kind, sharing bed with the “woman” and consoling her. As the night drew on, the bachelor could not restrain himself. He abruptly hugged the girl, who gave a frightened protest, but in vain. Later they married.

Jonmang Peak

This small peak is seen on a range north of Hansampho.

It commands a good view of odd-shaped rocks scattered here and there.

What comes in sight first on the path up to its summit is the Kwangdae Rock.

Kwangdae Rock

Climb about two kilometres up the path, and you can see this rock.

The 20m-high rock rising above pine trees and shrubs is in the shape of a man dancing with a sedge hat on his head.

Jung (Monk) Rock

Lying to the west of Jonmang Peak, it stands alone in a pine grove. It resembles a monk chanting to Amitabha.

Ison Rock

The name of this rock means the spirit of two heavenly beings.

Lying to the northwest of the Isonam section, this rock looks imposing. No other rock in Inner Chilbo matches it in terms of magnificence.

Sinson Rock

This is a big, doll-shaped rock, standing above the Ison and Kunson rocks.

It looks as if *Sinson* (an old man of legend) were beaming at the fairies dancing and singing.

Ranggun (Husband) Rock and Anhae (Wife) Rock

These two rocks stand on the upper part of the western ridge that runs parallel to a range stretching long from Sejon Peak in the north.

The “husband” is tall and thin, and the “wife” looks large and busty with a small head.

Outer Chilbo

Outer Chilbo begins at Outer Chilbo Bridge and extends long towards the seaside.

Unlike Inner Chilbo, it is masculine because of its magnificent, awe-inspiring scenery.

According to its regional characteristics and sightseeing routes, it is divided into several sections—Jangsubong, Manmulsang, Rojokbong, Tokgol, Kangsonmun, Hwangjin Spa and Taphokdong. In the upcoming years it will have new sections such as the Sonam section in Myongchon County and the Ryongyon section in Myonggan County.

There is a pavilion on Joyakdae which is situated in the heart of Outer Chilbo. Here you can have a bird's eye view of the myriad-shaped rocks with a telescope set up in the pavilion.

There are two sightseeing routes: One is to look round the Naewon section in Inner Chilbo and go to the Jangsubong section; the other is to tour Sea Chilbo first and then go along the main tourist road starting at the Taphokdong section.

Jangsubong Section

This section extends long to the south of Jangsu and Maengsu peaks, comprising the Simwon and Kajon valleys.

Except for the Simwon Valley, most rocks and other highlights in this section can be viewed along the tourist road.

The starting point of this section is Naewon Bridge in the Naewon section of Inner Chilbo.

Suri Peak

This is a pillar-shaped, rocky peak at the entrance to the Simwon Valley. From olden times, eagles lived on the cliff of the peak. Hence the name *Suri* (eagle).



Suri Peak

Sonwang Peak

Standing in the heart of the Simwon Valley, you can see a peak in the west. This is Sonwang Peak. The peak is so precipitous that wild animals dare not approach it.

At the southern edge of the peak, there can be found the Jangsu Cave and Jangsu Spring, age-old scenic spots. Standing at the foot of the peak, you can hear the sound of a running stream. Actually, there is no stream nearby.

Track the sound, and you will arrive at the Jangsu Cave in an oval shape. Step inside, and you can see a gush of water from the left ceiling. Surprisingly, there is little water on the floor and the large amount of water drains somewhere else. This is the source of the Jangsu Spring.

A legend has it that a young man in the Simwon Valley lived in this cave, drinking the water and building up his body. Later he became a general, hence the name *Jangsu* (general).

Simwon Valley

Before crossing Simwon Bridge, you can see this valley on your left. Go deep into the valley along which the Pochon Stream flows, and you can see peaks and rocks soaring on both sides.

There are the Mangyong Falls and Tadan Falls at the northern

foot of Sonwang Peak in the upper part of the valley, and Tongsong Rock and Ojok Cave on the right.

Mangyong Falls and Tadan (Multi-tiered) Falls

Walk about 300m against the flow of a river skirting Sonwang Peak, and you can see the Mangyong Falls with a height of nine metres. The Tadan Falls is two kilometres away from the Mangyong Falls. Water flows down from a rock in the shape of a stone staircase. Maple trees are seen around it, adding elegance to the scenery.

Jangsu Peak

About 346m high, this peak is located at the eastern part of the Jangsubong section. It looks as if it were enveloped in a dense pine forest. Peak upon peak, rock upon rock—the scenery is really majestic. To the east of the peak stands Maengsu Peak.

There are many scenic spots in the valleys. You can see most of them along the tourist road.

Hyongje (Brothers) Rocks

These are a pair of rocks on the southern ridge of Maengsu Peak. Though different in height, they look like brothers. It seems that

they were brought here by a strong man.

Mae (Hawk) Rock

Lying to the southeast of the Pochon Stream in the Kajon Valley, this rock has a part resembling a hawk's beak.

Manmulsang Section

This section comprises numerous rocks on the cliffs of Manjang Peak and Munsu Peak and south of Kwolmun Peak, and their surrounding scenery.

As its name implies, the section is characterized by the mysterious scenery of myriad-shaped rocks and peaks.

There are three sightseeing routes: One is to go directly to the section after seeing the Jangsubong section; another is to go there after touring the Tokgol and Rojokbong sections; the last one is to follow the path from the six-tiered waterfall in the Rojokbong section to Saegil Pass.

Yongson Rock

At the entrance to the Manmulsang section you can see a high rock on the right side of the road. It is called Yongson, because it looks like a guide for tourists.

Joyak Rock

Walk 1.5km along the valley of Saegil Pass from the Yongson Rock, and you can see this rock. It commands a panoramic view of the Manmulsang section.

The rock protrudes from a 400m-high cliff. Stand on top of it, and you will feel dizzy.

Manjang Peak

Soaring skyward north of the Joyak Rock, the peak has a sharp-cut cliff on its south side.

It took its name from its high altitude. It abounds in many exquisitely-shaped rocks, for example, Thugu, Ryonkkot, Pongdae, Ryongma and Abai.

The Abai (old man) Rock is located on the southern ridge of the peak.

Kwolmun Peak

The highest peak (787m) in the Manmulsang section, this peak stands next to Manjang Peak.

When seen from the southeast side of the peak, there is a huge rock that seems to be cut off in the middle. It looks like a barred gate of a castle, hence the name *Kwolmun* (barred gate).

Munsu Peak

Located south of Kwolmun Peak, this is a rocky peak which looks as if it were standing on sentry.

Suthak (Rooster) Rock

This is a rooster-shaped rock on the mid-slope of a range running from Munsu Peak.

It looks like an exquisite sculpture—a short and hard beak, swollen belly, stiff crest and white excrement. A short distance down this rock is the Maeburi (hawk's beak) Rock.

Chokhyol Rock

This rock is not far away from the Suthak Rock.

It has many tiny holes on its face. According to a legendary tale, a young man, named Han Paek Ho, practised archery targeting this rock.

In actual fact, these holes are air bubbles that appeared in the course of lava cooling down.



Suthak Rock



Chokhyol Rock

Khungom Rock and Mansu Spring

The Khungom Rock is a huge rock lying near the entrance to the path to Saegil Pass at the foot of Kwolmun Peak.

In front of this rock is the Mansu Spring, which was named so, because it gushes out from the underground of Manmulsang.

The site of the spring is covered with moss.

The water temperature is approximately 10°C and it gushes out 0.3 litre per second. The spring is crystal-clear and it never dries out even in the drought season.

Janggun Peak

You can see this peak behind Kwolmun Peak. It is the second highest peak in the Manmulsang section.

The Janggun Rock is found on this peak, hence the name of the peak.

Sungchon Peak

This peak is just behind Janggun Peak.

An old tale goes that this was where fairies used to ascend back to heaven.

Hence the name *Sungchon* (ascending to heaven). At the southern edge of the peak is a staircase-shaped rock.

The tale has it that fairies used it when climbing the peak.

Rakson Rock

This is a horseback-like rock on the southern ridge of Sungchon Peak.

Its name originated from a legendary tale that fairies used to descend here from heaven to enjoy the marvelous scenery of Mt Chilbo.

North of this rock, you can see the heaven-kissing Kwolmun Peak and Jangsu Peak. And Munsu Peak is seen afar, looking like a sentry defending Kwolmun Peak.

Eastwards, you can see mysteriously-shaped rocks on a range stretching long from Wollak Peak.

Among them are Pakjwi (bat) Rock, Toksa (serpent) Rock, Tudoji (mole) Rock, Kangaji (puppy) Rock, Pidulgi (pigeon) Rock, Kirogi (wild goose) Rock, Toksuri (eagle) Rock, Kima (horse-riding)

Rock, Ppul (horn) Rock and Khunthokki (big hare) Rock.

Songnung Peak

On the way to the Jangsubong section, you can see this peak on the right of the tourist road. Found here are many rocks of exotic forms, for example Pongso, Jjok and Usum.

Pongso means a phoenix in a sitting position.

Near it is the Jjok Rock in a pine grove on the right of the tourist road. *Jjok* means a hoof of a cow, pig or goat in Korean. It is cut into two pieces with a height of ten or so metres.

Go further along the tourist road, and you can see the Usum Rock on the left. Usum means laughter in English.

Tokgol Section

A new section in Outer Chilbo, it is enveloped in a thick forest—pine, oak, aspen, birch and maple trees.

Mysteriously-shaped rocks, streams, waterfalls and ponds dot the landscape.

Indeed, it is a harmonious blend of water, rocks, trees and highlights.

Kiwon Rock

This is a rock that can be viewed on top of a western ridge 200m away from the entrance to the Tok Valley.

As a rock resembling a flaring flame stands in front of it, the rock looks like a man in an overcoat saying a prayer before an incense burner.

Kyemyong Peak

About one kilometre away from the Kiwon Rock is this peak on the east.

It looks like an ugly monster.

It was named so, because, according to an old tale, a rooster used to crow on top of the peak.

You can see a hen-like rock at the foot of the peak, and in front of it, another in the shape of a snake.

Mosong Rock

Situated at the southern edge of a hill via Kyemyong Peak, this rock looks like a tall mother holding a suckling baby in her arms and surrounded by many children.

Beside it is a smaller rock resembling a child who is playing with his toy.

According to an old tale, a newly-married couple lived in a plain in front of the rock.

Years passed after their marriage, but they had no child. Looking at this rock, they prayed that they would have many children. Soon afterwards, their first baby was born.

And to their great surprise, one child came after another year after year, totalling 12 in all. The couple lived happily with these children.

Pakjok Rock

This rock looks like a crayfish's leg. You can find legions of crayfish in the Tok Valley.

Tokgol Falls

Follow the sightseeing path, and you will arrive at this pair of waterfalls, one named Okgye and the other Sangdok.

They are situated symmetrically with the rocky Ryanggye Peak in between.

To the south of the peak is Okgye Falls, a two-tiered waterfall with a height of eight metres, and to the west, Sangdok Falls with a height of ten metres.

In front of these waterfalls is a wooden pavilion called Okgye.

Hwanho Peak

To the west of the Tok Valley soars this peak. The word *hwanho* means cheering in English. It was named so, because the peak looks as if it were raising cheers to welcome a general who is coming back home after driving out foreign aggressors. Of particular interest on this peak are the Ssangji Rocks and Sou Rock.

Located to the south of the peak, the Ssangji Rocks resemble two fingers. One is a big rock, 46m high, and the other is a slim one, 45m high. The latter is as thin as three metres from the ground level and then grows thick, and the bottom looks as if the rock could be pulled down by a slight touch of a finger.

Unpho Valley

This valley is found northwest of the Tok Valley, with a peak in between. It is bordered to the north by the Pochon Stream, to the south by San Peak, to the west by Phil Peak and to the east by Kyongsung Peak.

In the valley is the Towol Rock, where a monk is said to have taken a rest after having lost his way. Pass this rock and go into the valley, and you can see the Karae (spade) Rock and Chae (pole) Rock at the foot of a hill in the south.

Go further into the valley, and on your left you can see the

Roin (old man) Rock, 10m high, on a ridge. This rock resembles an old, haggard man.

Sonui Rock

It is situated in the depth of the Unpho Valley. On the eastern ridge two kilometres away from the Chae Rock, which is associated with a tale that the bridegroom told in the tale of the Kama Rock, you can see the Sogin Rock. Go deeper into the valley via this rock, and you can see another rock that is as high as a cliff. This is the Sonui Rock.

According to a legendary tale, fairies took off their clothes and put them on this rock, not frequented by humans, before having a bath in Ok Pond.



Sonui Rock

Sangdok Five Ponds

These five ponds are linked with one another at an interval of 30m, each being 5m in diameter and 1m in depth.

Water in the ponds is crystal-clear, and they are surrounded by clean rocks, on which tourists can take a break.

An old tale goes that five fairies took a bath in these ponds.



Sangdok Rock and
Sangdok Falls



Rojokbong Section

This section extends long along the Rojok Valley, encompassing Othae Peak to the north, the Pochon Stream to the south and Kkachi Peak to the west.

It lies to the north of the main tourist road, whereas the Tokgol section lies to the south.

The granite rocks in this section show a white tint and the scenery of waterfalls is extraordinary.



Rojok Peak and mysteriously-shaped rocks on it

Rojok Peak

This is a 57m-high peak at the entrance to the Rojok Valley on the lower reaches of the Pochon Stream. Composed of granite, it resembles a colossal grain stack.

From a geological point of view the rocky peak is of great significance, especially the fissured granite rocks and its location in the Paektu volcanic zone. And for its magnificent scenery the peak was registered as a natural monument.

Phungdol Rock

This rock lies at the edge of a ridge connected to the west with Rojok Peak.

It has three tiers. The rock on the top tier has a sharp bottom and looks as if it would fall to a slight touch or rotate in gentle breeze.

As seen afar, it looks like a peasant with both hands on his waist. It seems as if the “peasant” were seeing Rojok Peak with a resolve to reap a bumper harvest.

Changko Rock

This rock is located on the western ridge of Rojok Peak, approximately a hundred metres away from its summit. Buried in the depth of a dense pine forest, it looks like a storehouse. Hence the name *Changko* (storehouse).

Below the rock is a 5m-deep cave, called Migok. The name originated from a legendary tale that a peasant stored hulled grains in this cave.

Idan (Two-tiered) Falls

This is a two-tiered waterfall about two kilometres away from the entrance to Rojok Peak towards the Rojok Valley.

It is divided into two parts, each being eight or so metres high. A big pool lies in between and another small one at the bottom.

The latter has clear water, enclosed by maple and pine trees.

Kwimyon Rock

It looks like an ugly monster, hence the name *Kwimyon* (mask of a devil). On the top there is a big, slanting rock, where a small pine tree is rooted.

Kangsonmun Section

This is a sightseeing section in Outer Chilbo, bordered to the east by the seat of Pochon-ri, to the north by Jwasang Peak, to the south by the Jol Valley and to the west by the Tok Valley.

It is characterized by majestic beauty—soaring cliffs and a multitude of fantastic rocks. The highlights in this area look more attractive when viewed from above than from below.

Songnim Peak

Walk some four kilometres in the direction of the Jol Valley from the village of Hyonam, the seat of Pochon-ri, and you will see a peak with countless oddly-shaped rocks, big and small. Hence the name *Songnim* (rock forest).

The peak is famous for the seven valleys around and eight ridges with rocks of various shapes.

In old days there was a temple called Songnim at the foot of this peak, and the valley here was named Jol (temple).

Chilgok (Seven Valleys) and Phallung (Eight Ridges)

It was named so because Songnim Peak encompasses seven valleys and eight ridges. The valleys and ridges are famous for their peculiar scenes and mysteriously-shaped rocks.

Kangson Gate and Kangson Bridge

The Kangson Gate and Kangson Bridge are sandwiched between the sixth and seventh ridges of Songnim Peak.

The gate was named so, in the sense that fairies used to pass this gate when descending to Mt Chilbo from heaven.

The giant rock is shaped in an arch style. On top of this is a long rock, 3 to 5m wide, looking like a bridge. This is Kangson Bridge, which is said to have been crossed by the above fairies.

The path on the west side of the Kangson Gate leads to this bridge. This spot commands a view of the faraway waters off Phoha and Kyojon.

Taphokdong Section

This section in the southernmost part of Outer Chilbo is bordered to the east by Sea Chilbo, to the north by Soil Peak and to the south by Samgye Peak.

Noted for the superb beauty of valleys, it abounds in waterfalls and pools. Hence the name *Taphokdong* (an area with many waterfalls). These highlights differ markedly in shape and size.

The highlights in this section are largely divided into the ones in the Ryongso Valley and others in the Unmandae Valley.

Ryongso Rock, Ryongso Falls and Ryong Pool

These highlights lie to the west of Unmandae in the Ryongso Valley. According to a legendary tale, there was a dragon in the deep pool. Hence the name *Ryong* (dragon).

Follow the path on the left side, and you will see the Ryongso Rock on the ridge.

It is surrounded by numerous rocks, broad and flat. The water flowing from the upper valley cascades over the rocks. This is the Ryongso Falls.

Just below the waterfall is Ryong Pool, a well-known highlight with a depth of eight metres and in the shape of a boat.

Umnok Pool

Pass the Ryongso Rock and climb some 50m up the valley, and you will see a peach-shaped pool. This is the Umnok Pool, which is said to have been frequented by a pair of deer for its crystal-clear water.

Walled in by rocks, it reaches a depth of 3.4m and covers an area of 100 sq m.

Kumjik Falls

Walk 120m down the valley, and on the left side you will see an intersection with another valley. Ascend some more distance along the path on your left, and a 9m-high waterfall dropping over a rock face will come in sight, as well as a 4m-deep pool underneath. This is the Kumjik Falls.

Ascend 50m more past this waterfall, and two connected waterfalls will appear. One has a low gradient and reaches a height of six metres and another, ten metres high, drops vertically.

Climb some 100m up the valley, and you can see another vertical waterfall reaching a height of 12m. Seen from below, it looks as if hail were falling from the sky. Hence the name of the

waterfall *Chonu* (*chon* means the sky and *u*, hail). In the rainy months of July and August, the waterfall cascades down, making a thunderous sound.

The above three waterfalls are, altogether, called Kumjik Falls. The word *kum* means silk and *jik*, weaving in English. They are called so, because the one at the top resembles thread, that in the middle, spool and that at the bottom, a scroll of cloth, which are similar to the processes of weaving.

Idan Falls and Suryom Pools

The Idan Falls is a two-tiered waterfall in the main stretch of the Ryongso Valley, the upper tier and the lower one being of similar shapes and heights, and Suryom Pools, which also look alike, are just under them.

Go up some 100m along the stream from the intersection, and you can see these highlights.

Set against a dense forest of various trees, the two tiers of the waterfall have a low gradient, 8m and 10m high, respectively. The pools underneath are 3m and 4.2m deep, respectively.

Though not so high, the waterfall is reminiscent of two silky textures.

Clear water falls down the slippery rock face into the pools. Hence the name *Suryom* (a roll of silky cloth).

Ryongchon Rock

This rock is found on the left ridge 50m away from the Sangryong Falls. *Ryong* means dragon and *chon*, heaven in English.

According to a legendary tale, a dragon trained itself in Paengnyong Pool and, though not fully ready to fly, it attempted to ascend to heaven, only to run into this rock and make a hole in it. Hence the name *Ryongchon*.

Unman Falls

Cross a ridge south of the Taphok Valley, and this waterfall will come in sight.

The 33m-high waterfall drops right onto a flat rock, making a peculiar sound.

Hwangjin Spa Section

Situated in the north of Outer Chilbo, this section is enclosed by the East Sea of Korea on the east, by Songho Pass on the south, by Saegil Pass on the west and Samgak Peak on the north.

Here you can see a waterfall and a pool, both being famous for their association with various legendary tales, as well as numerous spas and mineral springs.

Hwangjin Spa

Six to eight litres of mineral water of 51°C gush out per second in this spa.

The water contains bicarbonate ion, chlorine ion, sodium ion and sulfur.

This sulfuric spa is highly efficacious in treating skin diseases, neuralgia and digestive disorders.

Found nearby are 12 springs of varying temperatures—42°C, 32°C and 19°C.

Talgol Mineral Spring

This spring is not so far from the main bathhouse in the Hwangjin Spa Section.

The water is clean and smells of boiled egg, hence the name *Talgol* (egg).

The temperature of this water is 19°C and about 50g of it comes out every second in all seasons.

It is widely known for its efficaciousness in treating gastroenteritis.

Koro Pool

This pool looks like a basket, lying about one kilometre into the Onsuphyong Valley from the Hwangjin Spa.

Crystal-clear water flows over a flat rock and falls into this pool, before draining through a narrow exit underneath.

Pine Grove

Beside a stream 200m south of the Hwangjin Spa stretches a plain area, where you can see a group of 40- to 50-year-old pine trees and a rim of white stones around it.

The stream skirts the area, making it an ideal amusement place for visitors to the spa.

Chilsong Valley

This valley lies west of Hwangjin Bay. It was named after the Chilsong Hall, which was set up here a long time ago. And as it is adjacent to a ferry, the valley is also called Naru (ferry).

The valley consists of the main stretch and several other small ravines, each boasting wonderful waterfalls, pools and rocks of fantastic forms.

Examples are the Kyejol Falls, Ongbaegi Pool, To Pool and Chilsong Falls.

Chilsong Falls

This waterfall can be rated top among the highlights in the Chilsong Valley. Crystal-clear water falls vertically from the edge

of a 14m-high cliff, making clouds of spray and landing on a 2.5m-deep pool.

According to a folk tale, fairies played here in this remote scenic spot as the last leg of their tour around Sea Chilbo.

Just above the waterfall are Ison Pools, quite similar in shape and size.

They are 1.6m long and 0.6m wide each.

Sonam Section and Ryongyon Section

The Sonam section encompasses the highlights in Tagokdong and Sonamdong in Tahoe-ri, Myongchon County—Taho Spa noted for its high temperature, Orum Cave in which ice chips are found even in midsummer and Samhyongje Falls associated with a tale about three brothers.

The Ryongyon section contains the highlights in Yangchon-ri and Ripsok-ri, Myonggan County, and among them are the Ryong Pool and fantastic rocks in the Honggadong Valley and Sondol Rock in the Ripsok Valley.

Sea Chilbo

Sea Chilbo stretches the length of the 60km-long coast from the Orang Headland on the north to the Musu Headland on the south. Highlights are scattered across the 35km-long area from Udong to the Musu Headland, as well as to the north of Udong, famous for a superb view of natural lakes.

Sea Chilbo features a good harmony of steep cliffs and fantastic rocks on the long coastline and offshore islets that come in various shapes and sizes.

The highlights in this area offer a striking contrast with one another—imposing and modest, masculine and feminine.

Pollack and other species of fish are abundant in the waters off Sea Chilbo, and the seaweed and kelp here are widely known for its good taste around the country.

The main sightseeing route is to take a tourist boat in Odaejin and see one highlight after another along the southern coastline.

If you intend to see Inner Chilbo and Outer Chilbo first, you can take a boat at Jungphyong, the seat of Pochon-ri, and tour the highlights in the north and then in the south or vice versa.

Sea Chilbo can be divided into five sections—Soldo, Chachwabong, Thapkojin, Talmun and Mugyeho—according to their

regional characteristics and sightseeing routes.

Soldo Section

This section, centred on Sol Islet, covers the coastal area from the Hyonam Village in Pochon-ri on the south to Poksudan in the Chachwabong section on the north, as well as the highlights in the sea.

Jul Rocks

This is a 300m-long line of rocks in the waters off Pochon-ri, hence the name *Jul* (line). It serves as a natural breakwater.

Waryong Chilbong

Located to the north of the Jungphyong Ferry is a 2km-long chain of seven peaks.

Waryong means a dragon lying on the ground and *Chilbong*, seven peaks.

In time of a severe storm the “dragon” seems to be wriggling and protecting the Pochon Village against violent waves.

Mujigae (Rainbow) Rock

This is a rainbow-shaped rock on the coast in front of the

Pochon Village, with one of its two ends rooted on a cliff and the other in seawater.

The rock is approximately 8m high, 10m wide at the base and 2.5m wide at the top.

Two old pine trees stand on the rock, presenting a unique scene of sublimity.

Sanho (Coral) Rock

This rock is some distance offshore, just in front of the Mujigae Rock. It was named so, because corals occurred in abundance under this rock in the olden times.

Chukjo Peak

Situated a short distance north of the mouth of the Pochon Stream, this peak has a cliff that looks like a wall of big and small bricks.

Hence the name *Chukjo* (brick-laying).

Farther away from the peak is a valley in which there is a village called Maho. *Ma* means insam and *ho*, lake in English.

In olden days there were wild insam fields and a lake in this valley.

This place commands a view of the rocks and peaks in the

Chilsong Valley, and the seaside, of Outer Chilbo.

Unson Cave

This is a rocky cave at the eastern foot of Moktan Peak.

An old tale runs that fairies used to come and see the scenery of Sol Islet and, if a human approached, hid themselves in this cave. Hence the name *Unson* (hiding).

Sol Islet

Located some 80m away from the seashore, this islet is



Sol Islet

sparsely scattered with dwarf pine trees. Hence the name *Sol* (pine).

Originally, this was part of the land but it was cut off and moved offshore over a long historical period.

The islet is divided into two distinct parts, with the Ryong (dragon) Cave in between.

The cave is half-filled with seawater, which is teeming with fish.

Stairs have been installed for the convenience of visitors.

Registered on the list of natural monuments, the islet is famous for its mysterious shape and beautiful scenery.

Chaehwabong Section

This section covers the coastal area from Poksudan in the Soldo section to the port of Chujin in Myongchon County on the north, as well as the numerous highlights in the sea.

Made up of white felsite, basalt, zeolite and other diverse rocks, it displays delicate tints of red, blue and yellow.

Hungnyong (Black Dragon) Cave

This is a half-moon-shaped cave located at the base of a rocky seaside cliff.

An old tale says that it was a black dragon's lair.

Inside, it is pitch-dark and half-filled with seawater, making you feel as if a monster is in hiding here.

Chaehwa Peak

This is a seaside peak located about one kilometre north of Hwangjin Bay. When seen from afar, it looks whitish and is sometimes called White Rocks.

Actually, the rocks on the peak show a broad spectrum of colours—blue, yellow, red, black and grey—making it look like a landscape painting. Hence the name *Chaehwa* (painting).

Khokkiri (Elephant) Rock

Some 500m north of Chaehwa Peak lies this rock on the coastline. It is called so, because it resembles an elephant putting its trunk in the seawater for drinking.

When seen from the north, it looks like an elephant, but from the south, it resembles a dog attacking something with its mouth open.

Jiktong Falls

Located in a valley two kilometres west of the Puhyang Village, this waterfall lies on the border between Myongchon County in the northern tip of the Chachwabong section and Myonggan County.

About 55m high, it looks like being suspended in mid-air, when seen from below.

The name *Jiktong* means pointing east.

Stock of Fiveribbed Thyme

This stock of rare aromatic plant occurs in a hill near the village of Udong to the north of the Chachwabong section.

Thapkojin Section

This section comprises the highlights in the coastal area extending from Jinjak Peak on the north to the port of Unmandae on the south.

It features row upon row of steep cliffs and towering rocks.

In particular, the sea off Phoha-ri boasts magnificent scenery.

Once a resort for the wealthy and privileged in the exploitative society, it has now been turned into a pleasure ground for the ordinary people.

Jinjak Peak

This peak is located on the southern coast some distance away from Jul Rocks in the Soldo section.

The seaside cliff has a reddish tint and looks like being covered with a mesh.

The peak was named so, because it looks as if thousands of birds are clinging to the rocky cliff.

Ryondae Peak

This peak, located on the coast east of Phoha-ri, is said to have had a pond in the west where many lotus flowers bloomed in summer.

Hence the name *Ryondae* (many lotus flowers).

Munphil Rock

This is an upright rock lying to the south of the mouth of the Phoha River.

It looks like a brush, hence the name *Munphil* (brush). Sometimes, it is called *Chottae* (candle).

The smaller rocks beside it resemble inkstone and ink-water bottles, all remindful of a full set of calligraphic tools.

A legend holds that a painter from heaven, who failed to



Munphil Rock

fully portray the scenery of Sea Chilbo, left the tools there to come back again to continue study in drawing.

Pucho (Buddha) Peak

This peak has a rock resembling a Buddha sitting cross-legged on its northern ridge.

Kojin

Make a detour around the coastline at a jutting of Ryondae Peak, and you will reach this famous fishing village.

An old tale says that there lived in this village a fisherman surnamed Thae, who caught pollack for the first time.

Okhwa Gate

This is a gate-shaped rock at the eastern entrance to the port of Unmandae.

It is flanked by a rocky cliff and seawater flows through the opening.

Subjected to erosion over a long period of time, the rock looks like an elaborate handicraft.

Thapkojin

This is a small, semicircular ferry lying to the south of the Kojin Ferry.

It was named so, because there is a rocky peak resembling *Thap* (tower).

The seashore is covered with sand and pebbles of varying sizes and shapes, making it a good recreational place for sightseers in Sea Chilbo.

Talmun Section

This section stretches all the way from Unmandae through Mokjin-ri to the Musu Headland. It is characterized by soaring, precipitous cliffs and myriad-shaped highlights.

Songbyok (Rampart) Rock

This is a rampart-shaped rock on the south coast of Rogadan. About 70m high and 300m long, it is an exquisite basalt structure resembling a fortress.

Sammyo Rock

A 7m-high rock in the waters off Mokjin, it looks like a mother cat sitting at the centre and two kittens on both sides. Hence the name *Sammyo* (three cats).

Chongsok Peak

This is a peak composed of rock columns located on a projected area south of the Mokjin Ferry.

It resembles a band of upright pillars, each tapering to the top.

The Kae (dog) Rock stands on the seashore in front of Chongsokbong. Follow the curved coastline southwards, and you can see mysteriously-shaped rocks like Sinson and Ryangju.

Ryangju Rocks

Located near the seashore away from the Sinson Rock, these rocks resemble two persons.

A tale goes that a man and his wife, who were touring Mt Chilbo, turned into rocks after a long quarrel. Hence the name *Ryangju* (a married couple).

Jolsung Peak

Pass the Ryangju Rocks, and you can see Jolsung Peak.

Jolsung means a wonderful view in English. Ridge upon ridge, rock upon rock—the peak is a wonderful sight of masculine beauty. It offers a wide variety of scenery according to seasons, as it abounds in pine, oak and maple trees and other flowering plants.

At sunrise the scenery is gorgeous, adding splendour to Sea Chilbo.

Tal (Moon) Gate

19m high, 12m long and 3.5-5m wide, this is a rock in the shape of a crescent moon, connected with a rocky slope at one end and dipping down into the seawater at the other.

A fairytale says that the moon, which rose over the East Sea of Korea, stayed on this spot all night long to enjoy the scenery

of Sea Chilbo and, during daytime, it remained here as it was unwilling to leave.

Seawater flows through the gate-shaped opening, presenting a mysteriously charming view.

Musu Headland

Located on the southern tip of Sea Chilbo, this is a 78m-high basalt cliff sticking out towards the sea.

Due to a strong wind, the waters off this cliff roars all the year round and, at its eastern edge, a rapid current from the north batters the rock face, tossing up much spray around it.

This is reminiscent of a dancing movement, hence the name *Musu* (dancing water).

If seen on top of the headland, the scenery of the East Sea is majestic—blue water, surging waves and strong splashes.

Mugyeho Section

This section comprises Lake Mugye at the northern end of the Mt Chilbo area and the highlights around it.

Fort in Jibang-ri

This fort is found on the road from Odaejin to Jibang-ri, which

is said to have been built by two generals—a brother and his sister—using wooden shovels.

Situated in Songdok, two kilometres east of the seat of Jibang-ri, this is a gourd-shaped, earthen fort skirting a valley.

Cliffs from its eastern, western and northern sides, reaching a height of over 50m each, and on the south, a stream flows into Lake Mugye and the Orang River, making the fort impregnable.

Lake Mugye

This is a natural lake south of the fort in Jibang-ri, which stretches northeast to southwest.

Located in the midst of dense forests, it was counted as the best among the scenic spots in the northeastern part of Korea.

Found in the limpid water are such fishes as silver carp, grass fish, goldfish, carp, catfish and shellfish.

Boating and angling here will be a great pleasure.

Changryolsa Pavilion

Situated south of Lake Mugye, this is a quadrangular-roofed building with double eaves.

Fenced by a stone wall, the pavilion is 3.3m long on the facade and 2.7m long on each of the flanks.

Inside it are two stone monuments.

A short distance away from the pavilion stands another monument with no pavilion but a stone fence around it.

These three monuments were built in the late 19th century.

Pucho (Buddha) Rock, Pudo (Stupa) Rock

These rocks of exotic forms are seen on a ridge west of the seat of Mugye-ri, which is located to the south of the Changryolsa Pavilion. They are near the port of Odaejin, where you can take a boat and enjoy the wonderful coastal scenery of Sea Chilbo.

Historical and Cultural Relics and Remains

Old forts, buildings, tombs, stupas, monuments and many other relics and remains dating from the primitive and ancient periods and middle ages have been unearthed in the Mt Chilbo area. They show the time-honouredness of Mt Chilbo and are illustrative of the Korean people's struggle against foreign invasion and their wisdom and talent.

Stone axe and stone knives found in Pochon-ri, Myongchon

County, stone arrowheads, stone spearheads and earthenware in Hwasong, Orang and Hwadae counties and dolmens in the Hanam Village, Ryanggyon-ri, Orang County are typical relics from the primitive and ancient periods.

Other typical historical relics are forts like the ones in Myongchon County town and Mt Jaedok, temples like the Kaesim Temple and temple sites, and the monument dedicated to Jong Sang In who opened a new route in the mountain.

The Kaesim Temple is located in Mt Pothak in Inner Chilbo. This temple was built in 826 in the period of Palhae and rebuilt in 1377 in the period of Koryo. It was repaired several times in the period of the feudal Joseon dynasty.

Originally, it comprised the Taeung Hall—the main structure—Manse Pavilion, Hyangno Pavilion, monks' rooms in the east and west and Sansin Pavilion. But the Hyangno Pavilion was renamed Kwanum Hall and the monks' rooms in the east and west were renamed Simgom Shrine and Umhyang Pavilion, respectively, in the 19th century. And the Manse Pavilion had been in its original state until the early 20th century but it was destroyed after the Japanese occupation of Korea. It has been restored to its original state thanks to the Workers' Party of Korea's policy of preserving the historical and cultural relics and remains.

Mt Kuwol



Outline

Kuwol, the highest mountain in South Hwanghae Province, covers an area of 110km².

The mountain has been known as a celebrated mountain from olden times for its beautiful scenery and limpid water.

Big peaks, cliffs, deep valleys covered with mysteriously-shaped rocks and dense forests, streams meandering through the valleys, waterfalls, pools and rapids present wonderful scenery.

Constituting the backbone of the Kuwol Mountains that stretch 60km long almost in parallel to the western coast of the Korean peninsula, it is a mountain of a large scale.

An old record reads that from a topographical point of view it resembles a dragon looking back towards the ancestral mountain. A tale handed down to date says that, as there is a sea to its northwest and the Taedong and Jaeryong rivers to its southeast, fishes and salt from this area are the best of those from the Hwanghae region, the



Mt Kuwol

wide Namuri Plain is fertile for farming, there are many Buddhist temples in the mountain and the mountain fort makes it a natural fortress.

For its majestic appearance, the scenery in four seasons and the many legendary tales associated with Tangun, the father of the Korean nation, the mountain has been called by several names.

Among the 99 peaks, the highest is Sahwang, and Jugo soars opposite to it.

Found in the mountain are historical remains and relics and the sites related with the revolutionary activities of

Kim Hyong Jik, an outstanding leader of the anti-Japanese national liberation movement in Korea,

And during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle Kim Il Sung, commander of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, dispatched small units and political working groups to the mountain area to set up a secret base.

The secret base, as a regional leadership hub of the Korean revolution in the western coast area in the latter half of the 1930s, served as a major base of activities for the small units and political working groups of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

The major secret camp was around Juga Peak. Unearthed here are the site of the camp, site where foods were cooked, site of a well, hand tools and other revolutionary remains and relics. Sites of other secret camps were also discovered. Some trees in the mountain bear the slogans written by the anti-Japanese guerrillas.

The mountain is also associated with the Kuwolsan People's Guerrillas, who fought against the US imperialist aggressors during the Fatherland Liberation War.

Natural and Geographical Environment

Mt Kuwol owes its beauty to its extraordinary geological structure.

Formed by granite, granitite and amphibole, the joint planes and crack surfaces had been cut for a long time of weathering and erosion, producing the present exquisitely-shaped rocks, cliffs, conical and pyramidal peaks and deep valleys.

The mountain, boasting extraordinary beauty, consists of peaks of various heights, including Sahwang (954m)—the highest peak in the mountain—O, Sam, Tangun, Inhwang, Jugo and Asa.

Though its peaks are all below 1 000m above sea level, the mountain gives an impression of splendour as it looks high by the effect of horizon of the nearby West Sea of Korea and as it covers a wide area.

The annual mean temperature is 10°C, and the annual mean precipitation is 862mm.

For the beauty of the mountain, the beauty of its valleys, picturesque scenery and rich ecosystems, the mountain was registered as an international biosphere reserve.

The mountain area is rich in animals and plants.

It is home to plants of over 600 species, among which 86 are tall trees.

Typical trees are pine, Korean pine, sawtooth oak, chestnut, maple, peppertree prickly ash and Korean evodia, and among the numerous species of grasses there are medicinal herbs including wild insam, membranous milkvetch, pilose asiabell, Chinese angelica and Chinese magnoliavine.

Living in the mountain are animals of 30 species including bear, wild boar, water deer, hare, roe deer, raccoon dog, fox, weasel, badger, wolf and hedgehog.

There are also birds of 100 species like pheasant, oriole, grosbeak, cuckoo, ringdove and scops owl.

Boletus, worm mushroom and pine mushroom are three major products of the mountain.

Distributed in the hilly area in Samchon County south of the mountain is *Rhododendron mucronulatum*.

A variant of azalea, it is known as a rare plant in Korea.

The shrub occurs in slopes lower than 200m above sea level.

As it grows among the communities of azaleas, it presents unique beauty in its flowering season.

Many pine trees, together with such broadleaf trees as Japanese silkworm oak, oriental white oak and Mongolian oak, are found in the area where the plant grows.

The plant is significant in decorative and academic value.

The mountain presents different scenery by season.

The mountain looks beautiful all year round—in summer with peaks clad in fresh verdure and majestic waterfalls in valleys, in winter with snow-covered trees, in spring with flowers in full bloom and their fragrance and in autumn with the tree leaves turned red.

Azaleas are a centrepiece of the mountain in spring.

In April azaleas are in full bloom on the mountain ridges, crevices of rocks, cliffs and hills, which is a scene rarely found in other mountains.

In autumn trees heavily laden with ripe persimmons and other kinds of wild fruits at the foot of the mountain blend well with the trees in the valleys, which have turned red, adding much to its scenery.

The water deer and frog indigenous to the mountain were designated as living monuments.

Origin of the Name

From olden times Mt Kuwol has been called in different names—Asadal, Kummidal, Paegak, Kwol, Kunghol and Sanwi.

Sometimes it was called Soak or Sojin in the sense that it is a mountain that defends the west, Son in the sense that heavenly beings were said to have enjoyed themselves in it, and Phungak in the sense that the mountain in autumnal tints looks exceptionally beautiful.

Some believe that the name *Kuwol* was derived because the autumnal tints in the mountain are beautiful or because it has 99 peaks.

Scenic Spots and Highlights

The scenic spots and highlights in the mountain are linked by a sightseeing road some 100km long.

The road is lined with pavilions, springs, waterfalls and ponds.

The Kuwolsan Resort is composed of the Tanphung, Phaltam, Jonggok and Sansong valleys.

Tanphung Valley

Originally, this valley was called Okryu as it is dotted with many limpid ponds.

Later it was renamed Tanphung as the autumnal tints in September are so beautiful.

The peak in front of the valley is noted for boulders.

There are many beautiful waterfalls like Jiwon and Okryu and ponds like Samhyongje, Madang, Kama, Toepak, Jjokpak and Paemjango of various sizes.

At the very end of the valley are three ponds lying side by side like brothers, hence their name Samhyongje (three brothers) Ponds.

The ponds tell a legendary tale.

Once upon a time, three fairies from heaven, while looking for a beautiful spot in Mt Kuwol, found three ponds with crystal-clear

water. They were so pleased that each occupied a pond.

The three brothers, who came to the mountain from Unnyul to collect firewood, happened to see the fairies taking a bath.

Fascinated by the beautiful fairies, they started playing the flutes.

Surprised at the sound, the fairies hurriedly put on their clothes and walked to the place where the sound of flutes was coming from.

Seeing the three stout young men, they fell in love with them and settled in Mt Kuwol.

The majestic cliff in the Obong and Kusong valleys is called Tangundae.



Samhyongje Pools

On the upper part of the southern edge of the cliff is a cave, which is 0.7m wide and 1.5m long. It is told that Tangun trained himself in martial arts in this cave.

In the Tanphung Valley there is a pavilion, outdoor dining and dancing areas and other areas, in which tourists can take a rest.

Sites of Tangun, Phaeyop, Hwajang and Hwasok temples and Tosol Hermitage are found in the valley.

Phaltam Valley

The Phaltam (eight ponds) Valley is called so, as there are eight ponds in the valley.

Found here are the Chongchun Spring, Unjong Falls and Lake Unjong.

The spring is associated with a legendary tale that this water helps man to regain his youth.

The Unjong Falls is 4.15m high and 2.16m wide.

Lake Unjong is 5.1m deep, 12m wide and 30m long. Delicately carved three sculptures of tortoise on the lake look so lifelike that they draw the attention of the tourists.

Take a rest here, filled with the fragrance of Amur grapes and tara vine fruits and go up some 4km along the road, and you can see a fork.

The Asabong Section can be toured along the 2 160m-long mountaineering path.

Near the summit of Asa Peak, you can see Tangunsongdol, where



Chongchun Spring

Okryu Falls

young Tangun is said to have played, a spot sunken as he once sat on it, and a spot told to be an imprint of his feet.

On the summit you can see the West Sea of Korea in the west, Jaeryong Plain and Jongbang Mountains in the east and Pultha Mountains and Mt Jangsu in the south.

To the west of the peak there is the Wonmyong Valley formed with a rocky cliff. Here there are sites of the Wonmyong and Pisan temples and Paengnyon Hermitage.

The Woljong Temple is situated in the Phaltam Valley.

This temple is the one and only Buddhist temple that has been preserved among the many buildings that existed in this mountain.

Jonggok Valley

The Jonggok Valley has been counted among the eight scenic spots in Mt Kuwol from olden times for the thickly-wooded forest.

In the valley there is the Samdan (three tiers) Falls, whose water drops in tiers, Samhyongje Ponds at each tier, Ryongyon Falls, Aegi Falls, Jiphaengi Pond and many other ponds, big and small. And the water flowing from them along the densely-wooded valleys go well with the scenery of the celebrated mountain.

The Samdan Falls is the highest of all the waterfalls found in the famous mountains of Korea.

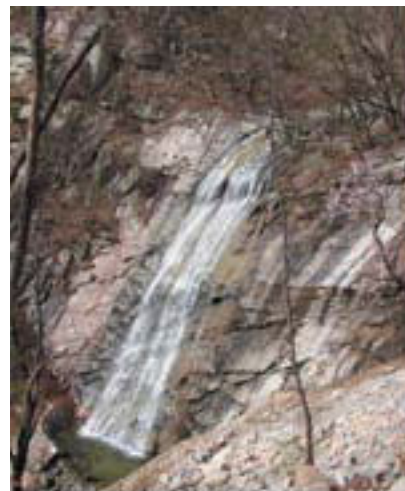
The first tier is 45m long, the second one 28m long, and the third one 16m long.

As the terrain features around the waterfall is so rugged and there was no path to it, few people among those living nearby had ever been there.

According to an old tale, some rich people tried to get to the waterfall riding donkeys or horses, but the mountain was so rugged that they gave up halfway.

But now it is easy of access as there is a 760m-long sightseeing road to it. Iron ropes are installed on the upward route, and iron chains on the downward route for the safety of tourists.

It is said that the water of the waterfall is highly efficacious and invigorating.



First-tier Falls



Second-tier Falls



Third-tier Falls



Aegi (baby) Falls

A legendary tale has it that a nobleman from Pyongyang came to the waterfall to drink its medicinal water. He managed to make it to the waterfall with the help of a walking stick. The more water he drank from it, the more invigorated he felt so much so that he could climb down the mountain without the stick.

The place where he threw away the stick became a pond. Later the pond was named Jiphaengi (walking stick).

The beautiful highlights, forests in summer, red tints in autumn and beautiful ponds around the waterfall blend well with the surroundings, presenting exquisite scenery.

There is a waterfall called Aegi (baby) Falls a little upward past the top tier of the waterfall. The waterfall is named so because it is so small in scope.



Jiphaengi (walking stick) Pool

The Ryongyon (dragon) Falls, the biggest waterfall in Mt Kuwol, is associated with a legendary tale that a dragon in the West Sea came to the waterfall. It lived in the pond below it for some time and laid eggs before returning home.

Later the pond was named Ryongyon Pond and the waterfall, Ryongyon Falls, in the sense that they are associated with a dragon.

The 15m-high waterfall pours a large volume of water down and the sound of the falling water is so loud that it is heard 4km away from it. In summer it offers a cool resting place, attracting many tourists.

In rainy season the width of the waterfall increases up to more than 10m.

There is a pond below the waterfall. 5. 5m deep at the deepest point, it is 3m deep on average and 40m around.

The exquisitely-shaped pond looks like a dove, symbol of peace.

The clear water of the waterfall is called an elixir as it contains medicinal elements from the mountain's famous wild insam, pilose asiabell and white broad bellflower.

According to an old tale, its water was so good for health that Abbot Sosan (1520-1604) would drink from the pond whenever he visited the mountain for sightseeing.

A suspension bridge 50m long was laid to provide a nearby view of the waterfall. And there is a pavilion of the form of a squirrel, the commonest animal in the valley.



Ryonggyon (dragon) Falls

The rainbow-shaped bridge on the lower part of the waterfall adds further to the beauty of the famous mountain. Outdoor dancing and dining areas, stone tables and stone chairs have been laid out for the tourists. There is also a place for posing for a photo in front of the waterfall.

The Ryonggyon Falls is a tourist attraction not only for the Korean people but also for foreigners.

There is also Sasondae, a large rocky cliff, where four saints are said to have enjoyed themselves, as well as the Jangsu Spring.



Sasondae

In the valley there are 22 big and small ponds with cultural and welfare facilities, outdoor dining areas and other service facilities and two pavilions for observation and three parking lots.

There are historical relics such as the sites of the Jonggok, Koson and Jangnim temples, the site of a Koryo celadon kiln and the site for melting iron.

Sansong Valley

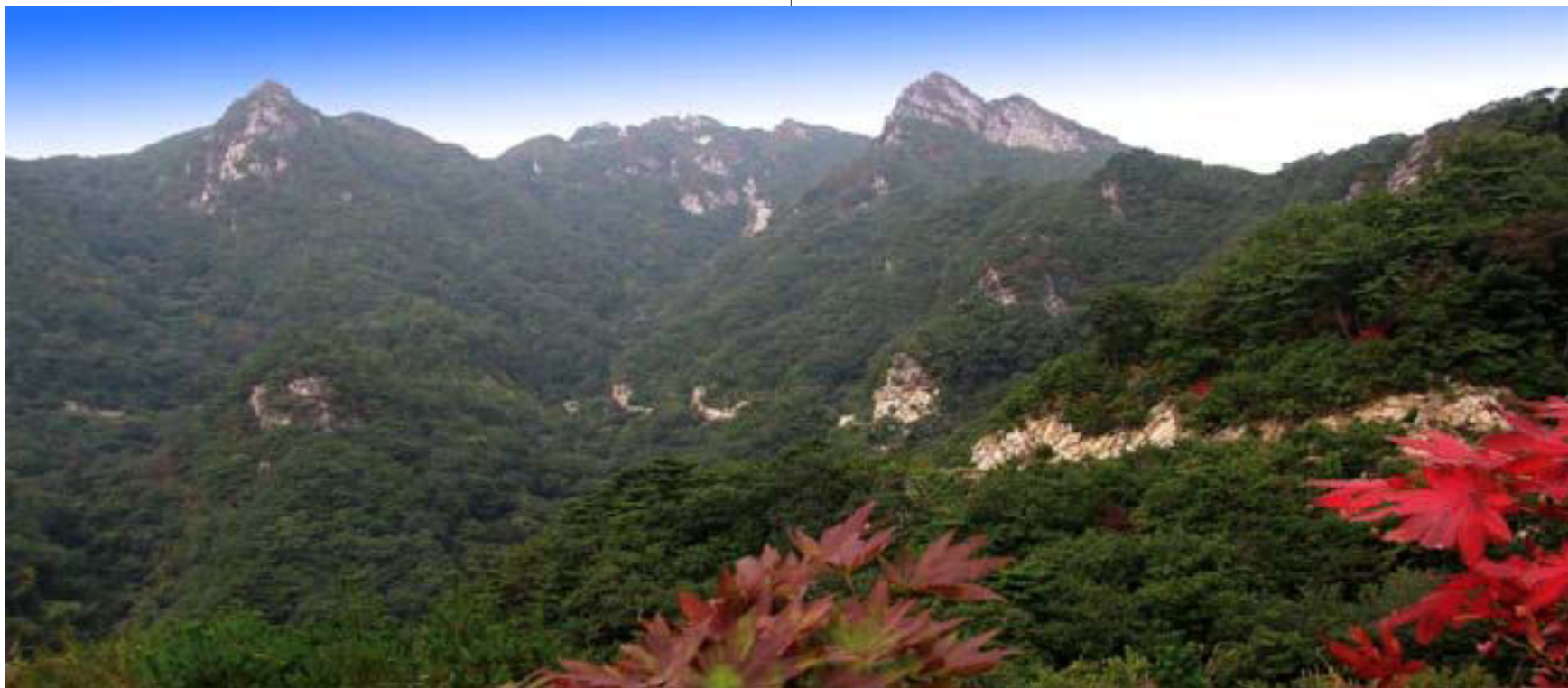
The Sansong Valley is located below Sahwang Peak.

On the summit of this peak, you can enjoy a view of Pyongyang in the north, the landscape of the countryside in the east, and the West Sea of Korea and sand beach of Monggumpho in the west and the south.

Sunrise and sunset seen on this peak are also fantastic.

There is the Kuwolsan Fortress in the valley, which was built in the period of Koguryo to fight against the foreign aggressors.

The Mt Kuwol area abounds in historical remains and relics, which showcase the wisdom and talents of the Korean ancestors, including the Tomb of King Kogugwon (Anak Tomb No. 3) in Oguk-ri, Anak County, and other tombs from the days of Koguryo, stone pagodas and more than 1 000 dolmens.



Sahwang Peak

Historical and Cultural Relics and Remains

Woljong Temple

The Woljong Temple, built in 846, is a historical relic of great significance in the study of architectural structures in medieval Korea not only for its long history but also for its compact and dynamically well-organized structure and form.

The temple has undergone repair several times.

It is composed of the Manse Pavilion, Myongbu Hall, Suwol Pavilion and other subsidiary buildings centred on the Paradise Hall.

The Paradise Hall is a gable-roofed building with three bays in front and two bays on both sides.



Woljong Temple



Paradise Hall



Picture of female monks

Picture of the god of the Big Dipper

The pillars are typical swelled columns that can be found in the old buildings of Korea, and the wooden structure between the pillar and roof is so unique that such structure cannot be found in other buildings. Hanging inside the hall is a picture of female monks painted 200 years ago and a picture of the god of the Big Dipper painted 100 years ago. The paintings are so delicate that the men's moustaches look quite real.

The temple is preserved in its original state thanks to the state's policy on the conservation of the national heritage.

Samsong Temple

Go 1.2km along the road in front of the guide map of the Kuwolsan Recreation Ground, and you will see the Samsong Temple.

The temple was originally called Tangun Temple. It is now called Samsong Temple because it was a place where memorial services for Tangun, his grandfather Hwanin and his father Hwanung had been held.

The renovated Samsong Temple consists of six buildings centred on the Samsong Hall, the main building.

In this main building there are portraits of Tangun, Hwanin and Hwanung.

The main building faces the Yongbin, Yanghyon and Jonsa halls and a lodging house, in front of which is the gate of the temple.



Samsong Temple

Phaeyop Temple

Known to be built by Abbot Phaeyop in the days of King Aejang of Silla in the early 9th century, the Phaeyop Temple was situated at the foot of O Peak, the third highest peak in Mt Kuwol.

Originally, the temple was called Kuyop.

It was the biggest of the Buddhist temples in the mountain and one of the four major temples in it.

With the Hansan Pavilion as the centre, there were Ungjin Hall, Chongphung Pavilion, Ryonghwa Hall, Jijang Hall and Chilsong Pavilion.

Jonggok Temple

The Jonggok Temple is said to have been built in the early years of Koryo or even earlier.

As one of the four major Buddhist temples in the mountain, it was preserved until after the liberation of the country but burned down in an air raid by the US imperialists during the Korean war.

Still remaining are the sites of seven buildings including the Taeung Hall, an embankment, the site of stone pagoda, stupa and stone monument.

Around the temple are sites of the Kilsang Hermitage, Jangbul Temple and other temples.

Kuwolsan Fortress

The Kuwolsan Fortress was built with Sahwang Peak as the centre and by linking its left and right ridges and many other peaks.

As it was situated at a key point for sea and road traffic in the western coastal area of the Hwanghae region, it played an important role from olden times in the struggle against foreign invaders, so it was regarded as one of the three major mountain fortresses in the region.

As a place for storing and supplying food grains and weapons in Unnyul, Anak, Samchon, Songhwa and Jangyon, it is a historical relic of significance as a national treasure.

The ridges and peaks where walls are built are cliffy or have steep gradients.

Resembling a ship, the fortress is high and long from south to north and short from east to west while the middle part is low. Though surrounded by mountain ridges, the western part of the fortress is low, so the water of the valleys in it runs out through the gutter in the west, forming a waterfall.

As long as 5 230m in circumference, its eastern, western, northern and southern walls are 1 780m, 1 500m, 1 100m and 850m long, respectively. Most parts of the walls are built with stones inside and outside, but stones were used in building only the outer parts of some of them.

The base of the fortress is as deep as 0.4-0.5m, on which quadrangular pyramid-shaped granites were laid one on another.

The walls are different in their heights according to the terrain features, the lowest part being 3.5m and highest part being 5.2m. The fortress has gates on its eastern, western and southern sides.

Several roofing tiles of various patterns and colours were unearthed at the sites of gates of the fortress. There is a bastion 2.5 metres wide and 19 metres long on the ridge of the mountain,

which links the western and southern walls.

There are parapets and holes on the ramparts, and the holes are seen at an interval of 12m.

There are sites of command posts on Sahwang Peak and in the central part of the fortress.

Many sites of buildings, earthenware and roofing tiles were found, and the source of water is abundant in the fortress. The buildings were those of armoury, food storage, barracks, as well as a pottery from the days of Koryo.

The food storages in the eastern and western gates were built during the days of the feudal Joseon dynasty. The food grains collected in the present Sinchon, Samchon, Anak and Unchon areas were stored in the western storage, and those collected in the present Unnyul, Songhwa, Kwail, Jangyon and Ryongyon areas in the eastern storage.

The fortress is associated with the struggle of the people, who fought against the feudal rulers and the foreign aggressors.

The peasant army led by Rim Kkok Jong, which was formed in the 16th century against the feudal caste system and severe exploitation, waged a courageous struggle by relying on the deep valleys surrounding this fortress.

The fortress served as a base for the anti-Japanese righteous volunteers before and after the Japanese aggressors occupied Korea.

Mt Kuwol and the Kuwolsan Fortress constitute historical relics associated with the struggle of the people and precious materials for studying the fortresses from the period of Koguryo.

Famous Mountains of Korea

Edited by Pak Song Il

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