

History and Culture of Kaesong



Tourist Attraction
Historical City



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Foreword

Kaesong, the capital city of Koryo (918-1392) which was the first unified state in the history of Korea, boasts of time-honoured history and culture.

It was King Wang Kon (877-943) who unified several feudal states on the Korean peninsula into one feudal country.

He named the unified country Koryo, and designated Kaesong situated in the central part of the peninsula as its capital.

Since then the city was the hub of the country's politics, economy and culture for about 500 years.

The city displays a large number of historical relics and remains from the days of Koryo, 12 of which, including the Mausoleum of King Wang Kon and Kaesong Chomsongdae Observatory, were inscribed on the world cultural heritage list.

Kaesong is reputed to be the place of origin of world-famous Kaesong Koryo insam.

A city located along the Military Demarcation Line, it is an epitome of Korea's painful history of national division.

It was at Panmunjom in the city, where the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in the 1950s.

The Editorial Board publishes this book to introduce some of the nature, history, scenic spots and historical remains and relics in Kaesong, a historical and tourist city.



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Nature and Geography

Kaesong lies on the central western coastal area on the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel, and stands 38m above sea level.

The topography is characterized by hilly plains and low mountains, and the land gently undulates as it sweeps down from north to south.

The general terrain consists mostly of mountainous areas.

The northern part is largely covered with relatively high mountains, which belong to the Ahobiryong Mountains, whereas the central and southern parts are hilly areas whose height is less than 300m.

The Ahobiryong Mountains, past Mt Suryong (716m) in Jangphung County, stretch to the southwest in the area of Kaesong. The main mountains are Myoji (765m), Chollim (762m) and Songak (490m).

The mountains consist of granite cliffs formed by weathering actions.

The low areas are the strips of plains along the Han and Ryesong on the southern and western periphery of the city and the plains along the Rimjin in the northeast.

A branch of the Great Paektu Mountains, which originate in Mt Paektu, forms the Ahobiryong Mountains in Mt Turyu (1 323m), which soars in the border area between Chonnae and Poptong counties in Kangwon Province, and Yangdok County in South Phyongan Province. This mountain range stretches down to Mt Songak.

Kaesong has several mountains including Janam (104m) and

Ryongsu (178m) with Songak (489m) at the centre.

Mt Songak stands on the 38 degrees north latitude in the north of the city. The mountain is so strongly associated with Kaesong that the city is also called Songdo or Songgyong, meaning that it is the capital city that lies at the foot of Mt Songak.

According to the historical book *Chronicles of Koryo*, it was a bare mountain with no pine tree, but Wang Kon's forefathers planted many pine trees on it and hence its name (pine-tree mountain-Tr.).

Another famous mountain in the city is Janam.

Its name Janam means that, if seen from the top of Mt Songak, it looks like a son or grandson of the latter.

The mountain is dotted with historical remains including the sites of old forts, which show the outstanding architectural skills and artistic talents of the Korean ancestors.

Mt Ryongsu situated opposite Mt Songak in the Kaesong Basin is characterized by its gentle appearance. The remains of the Outer Wall can still be seen in the mountain.

Kaesong has three rivers flowing around it—the Ryesong (187.4km) along the western border, the Rimjin (272.4km) along the eastern border and the Han (502.8km) on the southern border—all joining in the south.

One of the biggest rivers in Korea, the Ryesong rises at the southern foot of Mt Taegak (1 278m) of the Onjin Mountains in North Hwanghae Province, and empties into the West Sea of Korea.

In the days of Koryo, the river was extensively used by many

foreign diplomats and merchants who came to Koryo, and Pyoknando (present Yongang-ri, Kaesong) in its estuary to the West Sea of Korea was widely known as an international trade port.

Silk, celadon, mat, paper, fan and other goods produced in Koryo used to be exported to Japan, China and as far as the Arabian region through this port.

The Rimjin originates in the southeastern slope of Mt Turyu in the Ahobiryong Mountains and joins the Han in the east of Rimhan-ri, Kaesong, before flowing into Kanghwa Bay in the West Sea of Korea.

Kaesong does not stand high above sea level, and its northern part is locked by mountains. As its south is open to the sea, the city has a longer duration of sunshine and relatively higher temperature than other regions.

Its annual average temperature is 10.1°C and annual average precipitation is 1 329mm.

Up to now 616 species of animals have been found and registered in Kaesong.

The geographical distribution of animals in this region is mainly characterized by the fact that it is a typical distribution area of the species living in the lowlands.

They are mole, hare, squirrel, fox, wild cat, water-deer, ferret and pipistrelle.

Typical birds found in Kaesong are *Egretta garzetta*, *Fulica atra*, oriole and great tit. Korean terrapin growing in the Rimjin River as

well as in the near ponds and streams is the only species of fresh-water tortoise in Korea.

The region is a habitat for mascot snake.

As many as 141 species of *Rhopalocera* have been registered as living in the region up to now. In particular, *Oeneis walkyria* indigenous to Korea lives in the Mt Chollim area.

Fresh-water fish of 71 species occur in Kaesong.

As the city lies along the northern limit line of the southern temperate plant distribution zone, it has the characteristics between southern and northern flora.

Main species include oak, Mongolian oak, Japanese oak, looseflower hornbeam, trifoliolate orange and autumn olive.

The areas of Mts Chollim and Songak abound with Japanese jack-in-the-pulpit, marrow dwarf day lily, *Aster scaber*, broad bellflower and pine mushroom.

History

Kaesong is a city with a long history. It has been called by various names which are associated with historical facts.

When the city took the present name in the period of Koryo, it was called by various names—*Kaegyong*, *Kaeju*, *Kyongdo*, *Kyongsong*, *Songdo*, *Songak*, *Wanggyong* and *Wangsong*.

That it had different names was because of its topographical features and its position as the capital of a state.

As the area has fertile land, warm temperature and other natural and geographical conditions favourable for human habitation, it had been inhabited by Koreans from olden times.

This can be proved by many remains of the primitive ages like stone arrowhead, stone axe, stone adz, millstone, half-moon-shaped dagger and net sinker which have been found in the area.

Later, the primitive society collapsed and moved to a class society, that is, a slave-owners society. From before 3 000 BC, the area belonged to the territory of Ancient Joson (early 3 000 BC-108 BC), the first ancient state of Korea.

This can be proved by lute-shaped dagger, narrow brass dagger and spearhead, and brass sickle-shaped dagger, remains from the period of Ancient Joson, which have been unearthed in the area, and also by the historical fact that an altar, called Chamsongdan, where

King Tangun used to perform a sacrificial service for heaven, had existed on Kanghwa Island near Kaesong until the days of the feudal Joson dynasty (1392-1910).

Later, Kaesong belonged to the territory of Paekje (late 1st century BC-660 AD) and then to Koguryo (277 BC-668 AD) in the early 4th century as Koguryo expanded its territory southward pursuant to its policy of unifying the national territory.

After the ruin of Koguryo, the city belonged to Silla and then became the capital of Koryo (918-1392) at the time of its founding.

Koryo designated Kaesong as its capital because the area was its power base and had favourable natural and geographical conditions for human life.

Wang Kon's family, descendants of the Koguryo people, built up their political forces with Kaesong as the centre, and he finally founded Koryo based on these forces.

As Kaesong is situated on the central western coast of the Korean peninsula and nestled among wide, fertile plains in the basins of the Ryesong, Rimjin and Han rivers, it has favourable conditions for agricultural production.

And it is sandwiched between lines of large and small peaks with Mt Songak in the north as the centre, which make the city a natural fortress.

After it was designated as the capital of Koryo, its administrative districts were rezoned several times as befitted its political position.

The royal palace and central administrative organs were distributed in the well-aligned capital city from the initial years of the Koryo dynasty.

Many Buddhist temples were built in the city in the days of Koryo.

After the feudal Koryo dynasty proclaimed Buddhism as its state religion, it built ten Buddhist temples in 919 as important part of the capital city construction. They were followed by more than 300 temples, large and small, in the central part of the city and in the mountains in and around the city.

Kaesong was also the military, economic and cultural hub of Koryo.

The military authorities and Central Army were in Kaesong.

Kaesong was surrounded by strong forts and was the centre of the countrywide signal-fire and relay-post systems.

It played an important role in promoting the development of the economy, handicraft and commerce in particular.

The city was a major producer of various kinds of silk, ramie, paper, Indian ink, Koryo celadon that the world valued as treasures for its colour, patterns and shapes, and metalworks like bronze mirror.

As it developed as the centre of handicraft techniques and products from across the country were transported to it through the nationwide traffic network centred on it, its commerce flourished, which in turn promoted foreign trade.

One of the hotspots for trade with China and other foreign

countries was Pyoknando in the estuary of the Ryesong River, a famous international trade port in those days.

The port was so widely known internationally that when Ri Nyong, a painter of Koryo, was visiting Song China as a member of a Koryo delegation, the Chinese emperor was deeply impressed to see his painting *The Ryesong River* and gave him many gifts.

The port was always bustling with foreign vessels, envoys and merchants.

Kaesong was also the centre of education.

Kukjagam in Kaesong was the highest educational institute of Koryo, which taught the students Confucian scriptures, politics and practical issues, laws, mathematics and calligraphy. It was renamed several times, and finally called Songgyungwan.

Kaesong was the centre of Confucian culture, as well as Buddhist culture.

The Buddhist temples built in the days of Koryo were very large and almost as spectacular as the royal palace itself.

The Hungwang Temple built in 1067 had as many as 2 800 bays, and the Anhwa Temple was the best of all temples in Koryo in terms of decoration and scale.

The complete collection of the Buddhist scriptures was printed in Kaesong. Afterwards, the first metal type of the world was invented on the basis of the experience and techniques of printing the Buddhist scriptures with wooden blocks.

As the name Koryo was widely known to the world, envoys from even the Arabian countries, not to mention the neighbouring ones, visited Koryo, promoting foreign relations.

Since then Koryo has been used as the international official name denoting Korea.

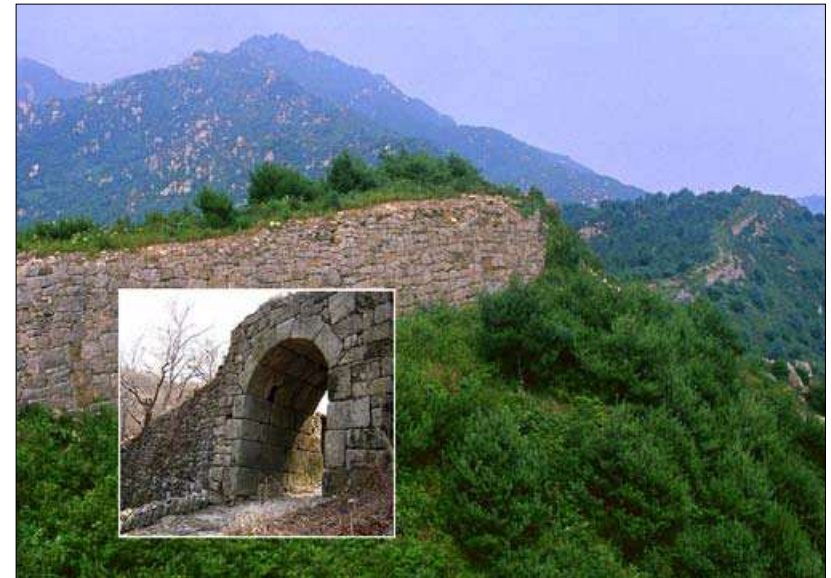
Historical Relics and Remains

Walls of Kaesong

The walls of Kaesong were for the capital of Koryo.

The walls consist of four parts—Royal Wall, Palace Wall, Inner Wall and Outer Wall.

The Royal Wall is located at the foot of Mt Songak northwest of the city. This wall connects the walls on the plain land and on mountains by taking advantage of the favourable mountain terrains and topographical features. Built in 919, the wall is 4 700m around



Walls of Kaesong

and covers an area of 1 250 000m². It was built with the Palocham Fort as the parent one. The oldest fort in Kaesong, it was built in 896 under the direct guidance of Wang Kon.

The Palace Wall is an earthen wall that surrounds Manwoltae, site of the royal palace of Koryo, south of Mt Songak. It is inside the Royal Wall. Having keenly realized the necessity of walls in defence of the capital city, Koryo planned to build an Outer Wall which would surround the whole of the capital. The Outer Wall was built from 1009 to 1029.

The Outer Wall was the largest of its kind in the history of Korea; it is 23 000m around, and covers an area of 24 700 000m². The wall was built along the high and low mountain peaks and hills including the Songak Mountains in the north, Mt Jine in the west, Mt Ryongosu in the south and Togam Peak and Mt Puhung in the east. Tributaries of the Ryesong and Sachon flow outside the wall.

The Inner Wall was built by blocking some sections of the Outer Wall. It looks like a half moon. It is 11 200m around and covers an area of 4 680 000m².

As the walls of Kaesong were furnished with all the conditions indispensable for a fort, they had a high defence capability, and are associated with the patriotic traditions of having repulsed the ceaseless invasions by foreign aggressors. And as they perfectly inherited the forms of the walls of Pyongyang built in the days of Koguryo, they constitute one of the nation's cultural assets which shows the culture and traditions of the Koreans, a homogenous nation.

Taehungsan Fort

Built in the days of Koryo, the Taehungsan Fort is in Pagyon-ri about 26km away north of Kaesong.

This stone wall was built along Mts Chollim and Songgo and other high and low mountain peaks of the Ahobiryong Mountains. So it is also called Chonmasan Fort or Songgosan Fort.

The period of its construction is unknown, but it played an important role in defending Kaesong, the capital of Koryo.

The present one was rebuilt in 1676. The wall is about 10km long; the section of 7 800m is built with stones, and the section of 2 300m uses mountain cliffs as they are. The wall is 3-5m high on average, 5-6m wide in the lower part and 3-4m wide in the upper part.



Taehungsan Fort

For its function of defence, parapets were built and bastions installed in ten positions on the wall. During the Imjin Patriotic War (1592-1598) the righteous volunteers fought against the Japanese aggressors with this fort as the centre.

With places of scenic and historic interest in and out of it, including the Pagyon Falls, Kwanum Temple and the mysteriously-shaped rocks in Mts Chollim and Songgo, it is now a cultural resort for the working people.

Kaesong South Gate

The Kaesong South Gate, built between the last days of Koryo and the early days of the feudal Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), is the southern gate of the Inner Wall of the Walled City of Kaesong, and it is the gate tower which still remains among the original seven gates.

The present one is at the central crossroads in Pungan-dong.

It was built between 1391 and 1393, and repaired in 1899.

It was burned down by the barbarous bombing of the US imperialists in December 1950 during the Korean war, and rehabilitated to its original state in 1955.

The gate consists of a rectangular-shaped platform made of granite slabs and a gate tower on it. In the gate tower there is the well-known bell from the Yonbok Temple.

Here the Kaesong people waged the struggle against the Japanese aggressors during the Imjin Patriotic War, and when the US and the European countries intruded into the country in the latter half of the



Kaesong South Gate

19th century, the locals built a monument inscribed with the letters, reading *Negotiation for peace with aggressors must be abandoned*, demonstrating their spirit of resistance.

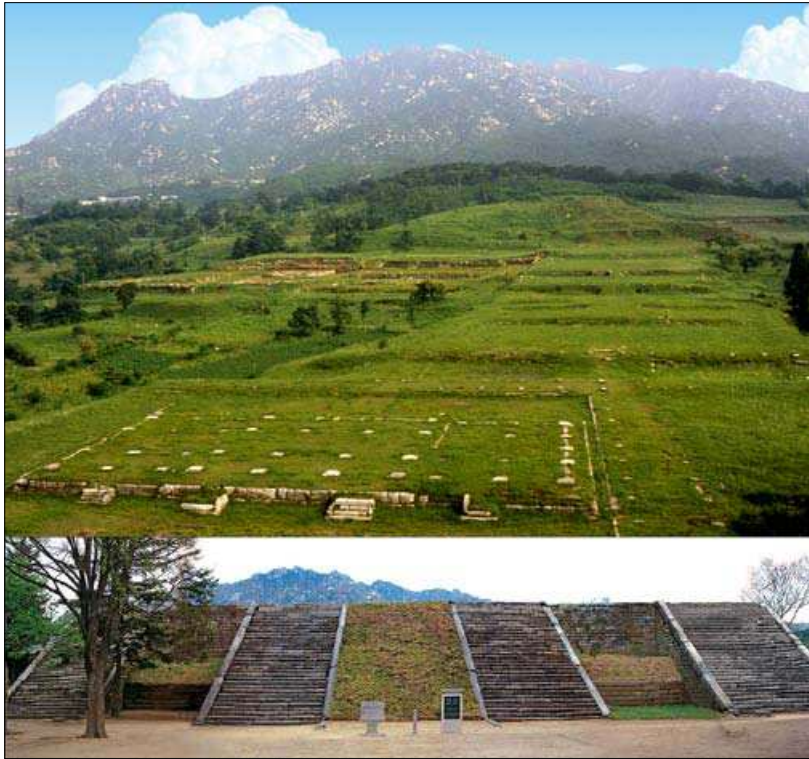
In 1893 the locals, by relying on this gate, launched an anti-Japanese and anti-feudal struggle against infiltration into Kaesong by the Japanese merchants and maltreatment of their feudal rulers.

As the gate represents the superb architectural skills and workmanship in the days of Koryo, it constitutes a structure of characteristic features.

Site of Manwoltae

Manwoltae is the site of the royal palace of Koryo.

Just unlike the Anhak Palace, royal palace of Koguryo, and



Site of Manwoltae

Kyongbok Palace, royal palace of the feudal Joseon dynasty, the royal palace of Koryo was merely called Manwoltae without its formal name.

The name of Manwoltae is believed to have originated from Mangwoltae erected to see the First Full Moon of the year in the royal palace. Covering a massive area of 1 250 000m², the palace is located in a good place south of Mt Songak, which provides a panoramic view.

It is characterized by a high platform and the Hoegyong Hall, a

hall for state ceremonies, and several auxiliary buildings, big and small, on the platform, which formed an architectural group and looked majestic.

This relic inherited largely the cultural influence of Koguryo in the architectural formation and composition. As the Walls of Pyongyang, the capital of Koguryo, had been surrounded by Inner Wall (palace wall), Middle Wall (royal wall) and Outer Wall, Koryo surrounded its royal palace with a palace wall and royal wall.

Remains and relics of Manwoltae are the cultural assets that showcase the architectural arts and the creative talents of the Korean people in the period of Koryo.

Mausoleum of King Wang Kon

The Mausoleum of King Wang Kon is located in the mid-slope of the southern hill in Haeson-ri.

Wang Kon was born in 877 into a family of large, influential feudal forces in the Kaesong area. He grew up and conducted activities at a time when the country was divided into Later Three Kingdoms, which were scrambling for the sphere of their influence.

Learning that the fellow countrymen were desirous of living in a unified territory, free from the sufferings of national division, he came to realize an urgent need of unification of the whole territory.

After founding Koryo in 918, he established the first unified state in Korea by inheriting the intention and aspiration of Koguryo.

The founder-king of Koryo died at the age of 66 in May 943; a



Mausoleum of King Wang Kon and his portrait

tomb was built that year and his remains were buried there, together with those of his wife, surnamed Ryu.

On May 5, 1992, President Kim Il Sung visited the tomb. After acquainting himself in detail with the preservation of the tomb, he said that as Wang Kon was the king who built the first unified state in the country, the tomb should be well laid out.

On learning that its reconstruction project had been finished, he wrote in person letters, reading, *Monument to Reconstruction of the Mausoleum of King Wang Kon, the Founder of Koryo* and ensured that the inauguration ceremony of the reconstructed mausoleum was held on January 30, 1994, which marked his 1117th birth anniversary.

The mausoleum covers an area of 55 000m² in total.

It is divided into a park area of 30 000m² outside the gate and a tomb area of 25 000m² inside the gate. The monument to reconstruction of the mausoleum in the east inside the gate is 6.08m high, 1.48m wide, 0.84m thick and 48t heavy.

The Memorial Service Hall is 9.8m long and 10.7m wide, covering an area of 80m². Hanging in the hall are seven pictures including the portrait of Wang Kon and those portraying the events noteworthy in his career and activities, such as the establishment of Koryo, the course of unifying the national territory, building Pyongyang and seizure of the northwestern area.

The portrait of Wang Kon is based on his real image preserved in the genealogy of his royal family, which was reprinted in 1918.

The mausoleum is built in three terraces: On the right and left

sides on the first terrace are stone posts; on the second terrace are a stone lantern and stone statues of two civil officials and two military officers standing symmetrically; on the third terrace are stone statues of two civil officials and two military officers standing on the right and left sides. The eight stone statues portray civil officials and military officers who contributed to unifying the state in support of Wang Kon or faithfully assisted him in his work.

The mausoleum not only is majestic in its scale but also forms a perfect harmony of big and small stone sculptures, presenting a comprehensive stone craftwork and giving a feeling of safety in the aspect of architectural structure.

The twelve-angled bottom of the tomb is walled with stone slabs and with stone railings around it. Two stone tiger sculptures stand at each of the four corners of the tomb, one male and the other female. The railings are inscribed with delicate and gorgeous patterns of various shapes including flower and cloud, and the stone slabs are embossed with the twelve spirits of the terrain. Stone tigers, portraying the Korean tiger, represent the spirit of the resourceful and courageous Korean nation; each male tiger is 2.7m long, 2m high and 15t heavy, while each female tiger is 2.2m long, 2m high and 13.5t heavy.

The interior of the tomb consists of the inner passage, tomb gate and coffin chamber.

The inner passage is 30m long, and stone slabs which are embossed with the twelve spirits of the terrain are plastered on the walls on both sides of the passage.

The coffin chamber is 3.2m long from east to west, 3.4m from north to south and 2.17m high. The chamber is built with monolithic blocks, and the walls are thickly applied with plaster. The coffin bier is placed in the middle part near the northern wall, and it is 2.98m long, 0.8m wide and 0.34m thick.

The mural paintings in the tomb sustain their antiquity still now even though over 1 000 years have passed. On the eastern wall are paintings of bamboo, Japanese apricot tree and blue dragon, on the western wall pine tree and white tiger, and on the northern wall eight red stars distributed from east to west and linked by a blue line.

Thanks to the country's policy of preserving the national cultural heritage, the mausoleum was excellently rebuilt as a symbolic structure which gives a glimpse into the appearance of Koryo, the first unified state of Korea, and as a witness to the homogeneous Korean nation. Now it is a favourite haunt of foreigners.

It is of great significance in studying the cultural development of Koryo and the structural system of royal mausoleum.

Mausoleum of King Kyonghyo

The Mausoleum of King Kyonghyo lies towards south halfway up Muson Hill that is stretched to the south from Mt Pongmyong in Haeson-ri, Kaesong.

King Kyonghyo (Wang Jon by name), the 31st monarch of Koryo, was born in 1330 and become the king at the age of 22.

According to *Chronicles of Koryo*, he was a man of stern and

prudent temperament and good manner. Among the successive kings of Koryo, he was known to have achieved considerable exploits.

The mausoleum consists of the tomb of King Kyonghyo and the tomb of the Queen. The two tombs lie in parallel. It was built from 1365 to 1372 under the direct guidance of King Kyonghyo.

The tombs are earthen ones with stone chambers.

The tomb section of the mausoleum consists of three-tiered terrace of rectangular shape and a wide slope terrace below it.

The first-tier terrace is 40m long from east to west and 24m wide from north to south.

The tombs stand in the middle of the terrace.

The tomb mounds are about 6.5m high and 13.7m in diagonal diameter. The stone slabs surrounding the tombs are embossed with the twelve spirits of the terrain.

In front of the tombs there is an altar supported by a large drum-shaped stone sculpture; it is 3.36m long, 1.82m wide and 0.45m thick.

At each end of the right and left sides of the front of the tombs stands a tall hexagonal stone post.

The tombs are girded with stone sculptures of animals portrayed alternately.

The second-tier terrace is 1.2m lower than the first-tier terrace, and extends 6m from north to south and 46.5m from east to west. On the front side there are two stone staircases towards the first-tier terrace and one on each of both sides, four staircases in all. Standing in front of each staircase on the front side is a stone lantern. On the right and left



Mausoleum of King Kyonghyo

sides are four stone sculptures of civil officials, and on the both sides of the third-tier terrace are four stone sculptures of military officers.

The third-tier terrace is the same in size with that of the second-tier terrace, and is 14m lower than the second tier. There are three stone staircases to the upper terrace—one on the front side and one on each of both sides. Down the front and side staircases is a slope terrace. The slope distance is 23m from the top to the Hall of Memorial Service and 10m in vertical height.

Stones are sparsely embedded in the slope terrace so as to prevent earth from flowing down.

The tomb of the king consists of inner passage and coffin chamber.

The coffin chamber is 2.97m from east to west, 3m from north to south and 2.29m high. It is built with plain granite slabs of good quality, and the ceiling is finished with a large plain granite slab.

The inner passage is in the central part. It is 9.1m long, 2.04m wide and 1.82m high.

Mural paintings are done on the eastern, western and northern walls of the coffin chamber. On the ceiling are the pictures of the Great Bear in the north, a pair of three stars in the south and the sun in the southeast of the Great Bear.

The mausoleum is permeated with the Korean ancestors' outstanding formative and artistic talents.

It represents the style of mausoleum in the closing days of Koryo, and the style was inherited by the feudal Joseon dynasty.

In particular, the stone sculptures of civil officials and military officers are the best ones among the old stone sculptures, which still remain.

The mausoleum is preserved as a relic of national value.

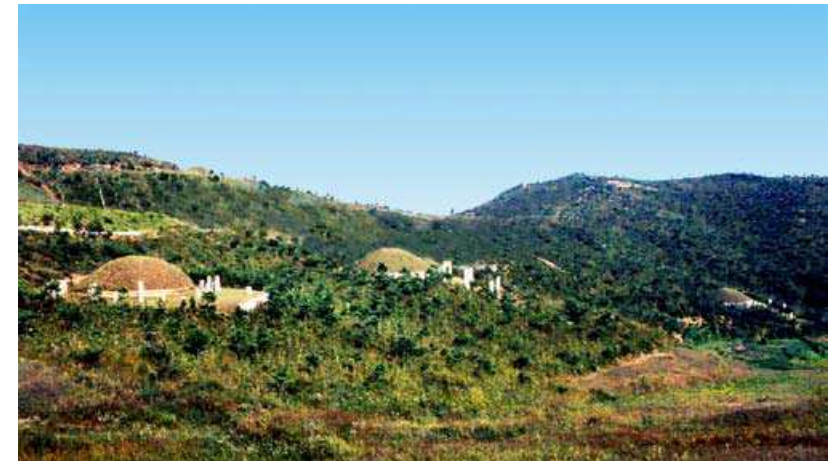
Seven Tombs Cluster and Myongrung Tomb Cluster

The Seven Tombs Cluster is in Chillunggol, Haeson-ri. The cluster is found on the southern foot of a low hill that stretches towards the southwestern direction of Mt Mansu. The tombs are numbered from the one in the highest place in the west to the last one in the east. They are placed at regular intervals.

About 1km south of Chillunggol over a hillock is the Mausoleum



Seven Tombs Cluster



Myongrung Tomb Cluster

of King Wang Kon, the founder of Koryo, and 600-700m northeast of the seventh tomb over a hillock is the Sonrung Tomb Cluster.

Who were buried in these tombs is not yet clear, but in view of their sizes, structures and the things buried together, it is believed that they might be the tombs of kings of Koryo or members of a royal family.

Their original structure underwent changes in their appearances during repair and they were raided several times.

The Myongrung Tomb Cluster is in Yonung-ri. The three tombs are on the middle ridge of a branch of Mt Mansu, placed from the west at an interval of 40-50m.

The first tomb is the one of King Hyonhyo, the 29th monarch of Koryo, and whose graves the second and third ones are is not known, but it is believed that they are of the kings of Koryo.

Tomb of So Kyong Dok

The tomb of So Kyong Dok (1489-1546), a representative materialistic philosopher of the 16th century in Korea, is on the back hill of Hwagok, Ryonghung-dong. So Kyong Dok, Hwang Jin I and the Pagyon Falls were called “three famous products of Songdo.”

In front of the tomb is the Songdo Reservoir, and Mt Ogwan is seen afar and a stream flows into the reservoir; they present scenery as beautiful as a piece of painting.

This is the place where So Kyong Dok was born, grew up, learned and brought up many disciples until the last days of his life.

The tomb is composed of an altar, tombstone, statues of two men of the pen, a stone pole and down them a marble monument inscribed with words written by Han Sok Bong, a famous calligrapher. The words are the longest of those written by Han.

So Kyong Dok built a small cottage here and hung a board that read *Sosa Pavilion*. The pavilion is now submerged in the Songdo Reservoir, and only the site of the other pavilion of the same name built at the lakeside still remains.

Living in the valley near the Hwadam Stream meandering in front of the pavilion, he devoted himself to academic studying and education of the rising generation. Hence his pen name Hwadam.

He employed a new method of study, accumulated experience



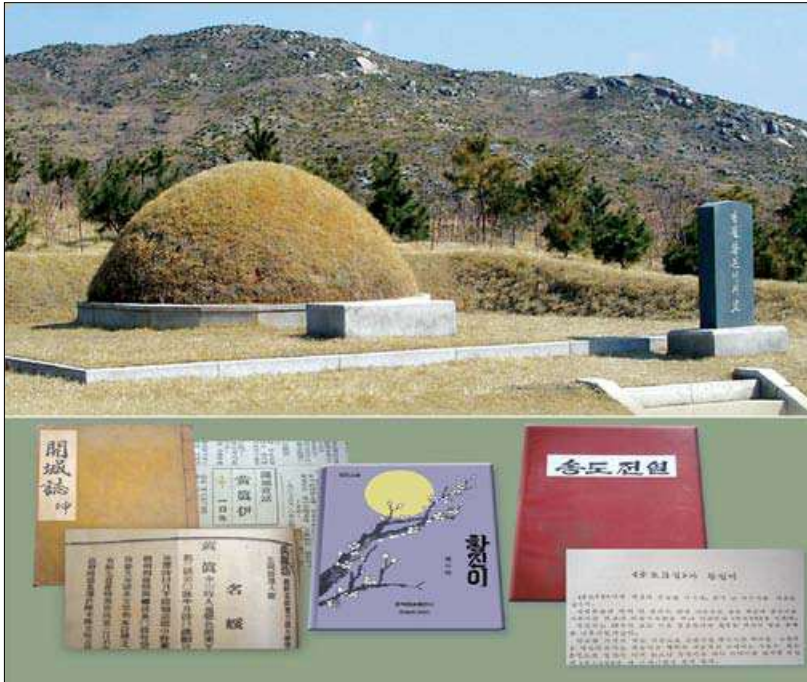
Tomb of So Kyong Dok and books he authored

through practice and conducted detailed observation of things, and on the basis of this, he put forward a materialistic and dialectical theory.

He taught himself energetically and the idea he advocated was widely known; for this, he enjoyed respect of the people.

Tomb of Hwang Jin I

Hwang was a famous poet in the 16th century. She was smart, beautiful and good at composing poems and singing songs from her



Tomb of Hwang Jin I and books about her career

girlhood. She wrote many poems throughout her life. Though she was a *kisaeng* (entertainment girl), she was not loose even when she was among the noblemen.

She left many anecdotes, and contributed to the development of folk music and poem.

She died at the age of around 40, and was buried opposite the tomb of So Kyong Dok, whom she had loved and respected so much in her lifetime.

Koryo Museum and Koryo Songgyungwan University

The Koryo Museum and Koryo Songgyungwan University, situated in Pangjik-dong northeast of the city, are on the site of the Kaesong Songgyungwan that existed as the highest institute of learning in the days of Koryo.

The Kaesong Songgyungwan was turned into the Koryo Museum in 1988.

Its original buildings from the days of Koryo were burnt down by the Japanese invaders during the Imjin Patriotic War, and the present buildings are the ones rebuilt between 1602 and 1610.

The several buildings occupy an area of 10 000m².

They are located along the north-south axis symmetrically.

As the biggest in size and well-balanced in structure among the existing old buildings in Korea, they are a valuable asset in studying the architectural skills of those days.

The buildings were first built as a special palace for Munjong,



Koryo Museum and Koryo Songgyunwan University

the 11th monarch of Koryo (1046-1083). Later they were used as a lodging place for state guests from other countries, and became an official educational institute after Kukjagam, the highest educational institute for training public officials, moved to this place.

Kukjagam, built in 992, had been inside the South Gate of the Outer Wall of Kaesong, and moved to Naesongdong and then to the present place in 1089.

Displayed in the museum are more than 10 000 relics unearthed

in and around Kaesong. The museum is characteristic in that it has indoor and outdoor display areas.

The indoor area is composed of four halls. The first hall shows the formation of Koryo and the history of its development. The second hall exhibits the relics that show the development of science and culture in the days of Koryo. The metal Buddhist image from the Jokjo Temple is on display in the third hall. Most representative of the metal

Buddhist images in the days of Koryo, it is a relic of national value for its large size and structural and artistic beauty. On display in the fourth hall are the relics showing the development of metal works, architecture, sculpture, and painting and the sculptures, murals and stone coffin from the Mausoleum of King Kyonghyo, as well as other paintings and murals that show the achievements made in the field of fine art in those days.

Displayed in the outdoor area are replicas of stone sculptures including the five-storied pagoda at the Puril Temple from the year

951, pagoda at the Hungguk Temple from the year 1021, seven-storied pagoda at the Hyonhwa Temple from the year 1020, monument at the Hyonhwa Temple from the year 1021, stone lantern at the Kaeguk Temple from the year 935 and stupa at the Wonthong Temple. There are also places for folk games like archery, swinging, seesawing, *ssirum* (Korean wrestling), etc.

The museum is a treasure house of the culture of Koryo and a base for studying the history of its culture.

When he was visiting Kaesong on May 5, 1992, Kim Il Sung first went to Songgyungwan, and instructed that, as the facility with a history of more than 1 000 years was the highest institute of education in those days, a university of light industry should be set up and called Koryo Songgyungwan University in the sense of carrying forward its excellent and long-standing tradition.

In 1992 Koryo Songgyungwan University of Light Industry was founded.

Sungyang Confucian School

Sungyang Confucian School is situated in Sonjuk-dong, facing southeast against the background of Mt Janam.

It was a private educational institute in the period of the feudal Joseon dynasty, built on the site of the house of Jong Mong Ju, a bureaucrat and famous Confucian scholar in the closing years of Koryo. The present one was built in 1573.

It shows the typical lay-out of Confucian school during the period

of the feudal Joseon dynasty.

Enclosed with high rectangular walls, there are east and west buildings with a yard in between; farther up there are three stone staircases leading to a lecture hall on a platform.

On the hill east of the gate there is a monument that indicates the site of the house of Jong Mong Ju.

Behind the lecture hall there is another gate, and past the gate, there is a shrine, the main building of the school.

There stand two stone monuments on the left and right sides in the yard of the shrine.

The monument on the right side was built in 1811; it is inscribed with the words about Jong Mong Ju's life and activities. The one on the left side, built in 1871, explains how Regent Prince Taewon left the school as it had been as required by national policy when other Confucian schools across the country were removed.

The school, a wooden structure from the days before the Imjin Patriotic War and one of the oldest buildings in Kaesong, is a historical



Sungyang Confucian School

relic that preserves the typical lay-out and architectural structure of the Confucian schools.

Kwanum Temple

The Kwanum Temple is situated in the Taehungsan Fort in Pogyon-ri.

Pass the north gate of the fort along a mountain path from the Pogyon Falls and walk through the valley about 1km to the south, and you will see the temple standing on the steep slope of Chongnyang Peak.

Behind the temple is majestic Mt Chollim, and on the west are mountains such as Mt Songgo and Indal Peak covered with dense forests.

A stream meanders in front of the temple, forming large and small ponds.

This stream is a source of the Pogyon Falls. This area, with the temple and waterfall, has been called Kumgang in Kaesong for its beautiful scenery.

The temple had been built by a monk in 970, and it was called Kwanum Grotto with two statues of Goddess of Mercy in the cave. Later, a temple was built, and it was expanded in 1393 and underwent repairs on several occasions. The present is the one rebuilt in 1646.

The temple originally consisted of five buildings. Now the main temple, monastery, seven-storeyed stone pagoda and Kwanum Grotto remain. On a rock by the path down the platform of the temple, there



Main hall at the Kwanum Temple

is a turtle-supported monument set up in 1660. The monument is inscribed with the history of the temple.

There were two statues of Goddess of Mercy in the Kwanum Grotto.

The milk-white marble statues, rare in those days, portray the well-figured, 1.2m-high sitting Goddesses in glamorous attire. The crowns look magnificent, the bodies are gaudily dressed, and the pleats of the clothes are delicate and beautiful.

Of the two statues, one is kept in the grotto, and the other in the Korean Central History Museum.

Bell from the Yonbok Temple

The bell was cast in 1346 for the Yonbok Temple in the days of Koryo. But, as the temple was burned away in 1563, it was moved to the gate tower of the South Gate in Pusan-dong.

Till the early 1900s, the bell was tolled to signal the time for the Kaesong citizens and open or close the wall gate. For instance, at 22:00, the bell tolled 28 times to indicate that the curfew would be put in place, and at 04:00 next morning it tolled 33 times indicating that it had dawned and they could pass through the gate. During the military occupation by Japan of the country, the bell was not struck even once.

With its mouth 1.9m in diameter, the bell is 3.3m high, 23cm thick, and about 14t heavy.

It is different from other bells cast in the days of Koryo in the shape and contents and arrangement of patterns.

The body is divided into two parts by several stripes around it in the middle; Buddhist images and scriptures, various patterns and the name of the bell are inscribed on it.

The rim of its mouth is curved rhythmically, and patterns of such animals as dragon, phoenix, deer, turtle, crab and fish are engraved on the wave patterns along the rim.

The pattern of dragon portrayed at the ring on top of the bell is so lifelike.

The bell is elegant in its appearance and delicate in its patterns, and its sound was so beautiful and clear that it is said to have been



Bell from the Yonbok Temple

heard at places scores of kilometres away.

The bell was injured on 27 spots and rolled down from the platform in December 1950 during the Korean war, when the South Gate was damaged by the brutal bombing of the US imperialists. In 1954 the gate was reconstructed and the bell was placed on its gate tower again.

Cast with copper alloy, it is excellent cultural heritage that showcases the metal casting and processing techniques of the people in the days of Koryo.

Sonjuk Bridge

The stone bridge in Sonjuk-dong was built in the days of Koryo.

Under the bridge, the Sonjuk Stream runs.

According to *Chronicles of Koryo*, it was built before 1216, and first called Sonji Bridge.

The bridge was renamed because, according to a legendary tale, a bamboo plant sprouted beside it on the night when Jong Mong Ju (1337-1392), an official loyal to the Koryo dynasty, was killed there by the supporters of Ri Song Gye (1335-1408).

Consisting of stone piers, slabs and railings, the bridge is 8.35m long and 3.36m wide.

There is another bridge beside this bridge.

In 1780 a descendant of Jong Mong Ju set up a new one beside Sonjuk Bridge, saying that people should not cross it, where his ancestor had been murdered.

Later in 1796, railings were installed on the bridge. The bridge is 2.54m wide and 6.67m long.

It is said that the red colour on a slab is the blood shed by Jong Mong Ju, and two of the railing stones bear letters of Sanskrit.

Next to the bridge stands a monument, whose inscription was said to be written by Han Sok Bong, a well-known calligrapher in the days of the feudal Joseon dynasty, and a pavilion with a monument set up in 1641 in praise of the loyalty of Jong Mong Ju. Inscribed on the monument are letters that read that the loyal and righteous mind of that time serves as a model for posterity. This monument is also called *Uppi* (crying monument) as it is always moistened as if shedding tears, even when it does not rain.

Opposite the monument is Hama (dismount from a horse) Monument, and on its west is the Phyochung (loyalty) Monuments.

The bridge, one of the oldest stone bridges in the country, is



Sonjuk Bridge

valuable in studying the architectural and stone-processing skills of that time.

Kaesong Chomsongdae Observatory

An observatory built in the days of Koryo, the Kaesong Chomsongdae Observatory is situated northwest of Manwoltae, site of the royal palace of Koryo, in Songak-dong.

Still remaining is the platform built with granite slabs.

Originally, there were instruments for astronomical observation on the platform.

The rectangular and plain platform consists of stone pillars and a table-shaped slab on them. It is 2.8m high, each side being 2.6m long.

Of the five pillars, four stand on the corners of the four sides and one in the centre. Each pillar is rectangular and it is based on a foundation stone. The table-shaped slab is on the framework made with rectangular stones. The framework is solid as the stones have been dovetailed tightly. At each of the four corners of the surface of the slab there is a hole 12cm in diameter and 9cm deep together with many other holes that seem to have been used for fixing the observation instruments.

As it is consistent with the four directions, delicate in its construction and tightly-dovetailed components, the platform is iconic of the architectural skills of that time.

According to *Chronicles of Koryo*, from early years of its founding,

Koryo set up an astronomical and meteorological observation organ, and the specialists affiliated to it recorded the observation results.

Astronomical observation in the days of Koryo was conducted in a more systematic way than ever before, and special attention was paid to promoting the accuracy of observation.

The sunspot was observed more than 50 times from 1105 to the last years of Koryo, according to the astronomical part of the *Chronicles of Koryo*.

In addition to the sunspot, *Chronicles of Koryo* records other astronomical phenomena such as solar and lunar eclipse, comet, meteor, Venus, rain, wind, thunder, snow, frost, fog and earthquake.

Observatory instruments witnessed development in these days.

According to the same historical book, in 1281 instruments



Kaesong Chomsongdae Observatory

were made to observe the movements of the sun and moon as well as their positions.

Based on the observation data gained, Koryo made and used various kinds of calendar as early as the 11th century.

Astronomer Kang Po, in his book written in 1343, presented a numeration table needed in many complex calculations based on the calendar used in those days. It explains the method of solving both biquadratic equation with one unknown and spherical trigonometry in a similar way. In view of it, it is easy to guess the development of astronomy and math, its basis, at that time.

The observatory is a piece of cultural heritage that shows the long history of ceaseless observation of the astronomical phenomena by Koreans and the high level of development of astronomy in the days of Koryo.

Phyochung Monuments

The monuments west of Sonjuk Bridge in Sonjuk-dong were set up in the days of the feudal Joseon dynasty in praise of the loyalty and fidelity of Jong Mong Ju, a highest-ranking official and a Confucian scholar in the last days of Koryo. The monuments are in a pavilion.

President Kim Il Sung, while seeing the monuments on May 5, 1992, said that though they were set up by the rulers of the feudal Joseon dynasty with the aim of imbuing the people and officials with the idea of loyalty to the king by putting forward Jong Mong Ju, they

should be well preserved as they were relics from the days of the feudal Joseon dynasty.

The pavilion of the Phyochung Monuments is the largest of such old pavilions that exist still now in the northern half of Korea. In the pavilion, two monuments, in the north and south respectively, stand eastward. The one in the north was built in 1740 on the order of King Yongjo and the other one in the south in 1872 on the order of King Kojong.

Each of the two monuments has the same formation and consists of a plinth, turtle-shaped pedestal, body and head. The body is made with black marble and all the other parts with granite.

The turtle-shaped pedestal, which was made by processing a monolithic stone weighing over 10t, is well composed with fine patterns on it.

Whatever the purpose of setting them up was, the monuments are valuable national assets created by the wisdom and talents of the Korean people.



Phyochung Monuments

Natural Monuments

Songgyungwan Ginkgo Trees

The trees are found in the garden of the Koryo Museum. They stand on the left and right sides opposite to each other.

The cone-shaped tree in the east is 31.5m high, 6.3m round at the root neck and 5.25m round at the chest. The crown is about 20m across.

The other one in the west is 33.7m high, 6.7m round at the root neck, 5.6m round at the chest and about 28.7m across at the crown.

The trees are over 1 000 years old and the tallest ones in Kaesong.



Songgyungwan ginkgo tree

Songgyungwan Zelkova

The tree is in the garden of the Koryo Museum.

The tree is 30m high, 8m round at the root neck, 5.25m round at the chest and 17m across at the crown. The tree's crown looks like a cone as its trunk goes up high with branches spread out thickly.

The tree was planted around 1490.



Songgyungwan zelkova

Manwoltae Zelkova

The tree is outside the site of the royal palace of Manwoltae in Songak-dong.

The tree, about 900 years old, is 20m high, 6m round at the root neck and 31m across at the crown. The tree looks beautiful.

Kaesong Bunge's Pine

The tree grows in the middle of a low mountain in Yongang-ri.

More than 500 years old, the evergreen tree is 18m high, 4m round at the root neck, 5.5m round at the chest and 19m across at the crown.

It looks like an umbrella as four branches, each being 1.8m round, grow out from the trunk at the height of 2m with many twigs.

The tree is a representative species of northern pitch pine. It is high in academic value as it is viable.



Kaesong Bunge's pine

Kaephung Gingko Tree

The tree grows in Nampho-ri.

It is more than 700 years old and 25m high, 7.2m round at the root neck, 6.7m round at the chest and 23m across at the crown.

Samgori Zelkova

This zelkova is in Pagon-ri.

The tree, which is over 400 years old, is 17.5m high, 7.5m round at the root neck, and 26m across at the crown.

Kaesong *Sophora Japonica*

The tree is found in Pugan-dong.

About 200 years old, it is 18m high, 3.5m round at the root neck and 2.8m round at the chest.

It is the tallest of the trees of the same species in the Kaesong area.

Specialties

Kaesong Koryo Insam

Kaesong Koryo insam, known as a medicine for longevity from olden times, is one of the Kaesong specialties which is famous not only in Korea but in the world.

Insam is a perennial plant belonging to the family *Acanthopanax sessiliflorus*.

Called a “miraculous medicine for longevity,” it is a special medicinal plant of Korea.

It is artificially cultivated, and its name originated from its shape as its root looks like that of a human. The plant of the same species that grows in mountains is called *sansam*.

From olden times, Korean people discovered *sansam*, and used it as a medicine.

Insam is called in different ways according to the way of its processing.

When it is dug out, it is called *susam*. When *susam* is washed,



Kaesong Koryo insam



Insam field and its products

stripped of its bark and dried under sunshine, it is called *paeksam*; it is yellowish white, crimped and hard.

When *susam* is processed by certain methods, it is called *hongsam*, and its surface is dark reddish brown or reddish. Its smell and taste is much stronger than those of *paeksam*.

Susam decocted in thick sugary water is called *tangsam*, and the dried rootlets left after processing *paeksam*, *hongsam* and *tangsam* are called *misam*.

Insam is sliced or milled when it is used to be as medicine. It tastes a little bitter and smells peculiar.

Insam contains more than ten kinds of glycoside unique to it, including ginsenoside, oil, amino acid, vitamins, monosaccharide, polysaccharide, inorganic materials and amylase.

The plant helps to improve the mental and physical working abilities, accelerate the biosynthesis of nucleic protein and fatty acid, secrete anti-ulcerative functional liquid, protect the liver functions, treat diarrhea, excite the central nerve system, and prevent inflammation and some cancers.

It is also used against general debility, chronic diseases, mental or physical fatigue, cardiovascular system disorders, diabetes, hypertension, ulcerative diseases, arteriosclerosis, tracheitis, mental and nervous diseases and sexual dysfunction. In the traditional medicine, it is used for improving the functions of the internal organs.

Insam is also used in the foodstuff and cosmetics industries.

The insam farm and Insam Institution in Kaesong are intensifying scientific research into insam, and are putting its cultivating techniques on a scientific basis. They are also modernizing its processing lines, and increasing the variety of products.

The Kaesong Insam Processing Factory, equipped with modern facilities including a refrigerator with a large capacity, is producing tens of kinds of insam products like *hongsam*, *paeksam*, insam decoction, insam tea and various injections and tonics.

The Kaesong Koryo Insam Liquor Factory has increased the variety of its products to more than ten and improved their quality. Not a few of its products have won the gold medals in international markets.

Kaesong insam not only is being used for the promotion of the health of the Korean people but is exported to many other countries.

Kaesong Peach

Peach has been cultivated in Kaesong from olden times, and the fruit is famous for its taste.

In view of the fact that there are many legendary tales about peach blossoms and peach villages from the days of Koryo, it is believed that the fruit tree was cultivated long before those days.

Peach grows well in a place where the climate is mild and the earth is dry and mixed with a little amount of sand, and Kaesong is one of such places.

Kaesong peach is a cultivar, developed through crossbreeding in about 1924.

The tree grows well, and the dense branches tend to spread out. There are many bearing branches with many floral buds. The buds open from late April to early May, and the flowers have not pollen. The round or round and flat fruits are even in shape. The fruit weighs 150 to 170g on average, and the flesh is soft and has little cellulose. The juice is sweet and a little sour. It ripens in the middle of August.

Kaesong peach is used for making canned fruit, syrup, liquor, jam, jelly and others.

Kaesong *jonggwa*, made by drying Kaesong peach a little, boiling it in sugary water and preserving it in honey, is the most famous of them.

Kaesong Brassware

Kaesong is famous not only with the long-standing tradition of Koryo celadon but also for brassware.

A historical book reads in part that brassware from Kurye and Kaesong were very famous.

According to the brassware dealers and old men who ran brassware shops before the national liberation on August 15, 1945, brassware from Kaesong was very popular in the period of the feudal Joseon dynasty and their dealers maintained a close relationship with their producers.

Their fame is attributable to their quality, the tinkling sound

pleasant to the ear and good shapes.

In this city there was a village, whose residents specialized in making brassware from olden times.

The area around the present Kurum Bridge is believed to be the site of the village. It is not known when the village came into being, but it is said that it had existed since long.

The dealers at the brassware shops in the city at first bought various works of brassware women had brought, and sold them, but later they took part in producing them.

They helped the artisans in the village build workshops producing brassware, and sold them themselves.

Oil-Coated Products

Oil-coated products were a specialty of Kaesong.

Most of them were produced in the present Koryo-dong at the foot of Mt Songak.

A historical book, while introducing specialties all over the country, counted the oil-coated products as a specialty of Kaesong.

Of the oil-coated products, oil-coated clothes and tobacco pouch were especially famous, and the raw material was very thin and soft cotton cloth.

Producers of oil-coated goods did not wash or smooth the cloth, but cut it in certain sizes and coated them with oil. Then they distributed them to women so that the latter made raincoats, tobacco pouches and others.

And after coating the cloth with oil, the dealers painted some patterns on it, and the cloth looked like glass.

The oil-coated products were also used for packaging and exported to foreign countries.

Mat with Flower Pattern

Mat with flower pattern is another specialty of Kaesong.

The mat was made by weaving or plaiting grass material like sedge, and several patterns like those of flowers and birds were embroidered on the mats of various shapes.

Mats of such kind could be produced in Kaesong in large numbers because Kaesong was favourable for the growth of sedge.

Sedge from Kaesong is yellowish and glossy, and it does not snap easily as it is soft and flexible. So mats made with this sedge are durable, and it is easy to embroider various patterns on them.

The local people split sedge and plaited the split parts evenly and closely with hemp yarn as if they were weaving cloth, drew patterns of flowers at the centre, and decorated the parts around the centre with the patterns of letter or lightning, before finishing the edge with deep blue or silver-gray silk cloth.

They dyed the bark of sedge with several colours like red, yellow and blue, and embroidered patterns with it.

The mat contains two-layer patterns, so it looks dimensional and beautiful, sustaining the national emotions.

For the excellent raw material they were made with, soft colours,

various flower patterns and elaborate workmanship, they were exported to the neighbouring countries in the past.

These mats with a long-standing tradition are now being developed as suited to the contemporary sense of beauty and emotions.

Koryo Fan

Kaesong fan was called Koryo fan in the past.

There were two kinds of Koryo fan—a folding fan and a tail fan—and the former was particularly famous.

As a historical record reads that folding fans were exported to Song China in the period of Koryo, it is believed that folding fans started to be produced from the days of Koryo, if not sooner.

White and pictorial folding fans were especially famous.

The former was made by pasting paper on bamboo ribs and connecting them at the end with a silver or copper nail of an animal shape.

The latter was decorated with silver or gold foil and landscape or figures were painted on the paper.

Songson and *Samson*, kinds of tail fan, were famous from the olden times.

The following is part of a writing by a foreigner about Koryo fan:

“If unfolded, it is so wide, and if folded, it is as thin as two fingers drawn together.”

Koryo fans became more elaborate in the days of the feudal Joseon dynasty.

The colours became diversified—yellow, black and white—and they looked like paulownia or plantain leaves or lotus flower.

The shapes and colours developed also for the gender and age of the users; for example, blue one was for a bridegroom, red one for a bride, white one for a mourner and the elderly and the ones of the various other colours for ladies and children.

The tradition of Koryo fan is being carried forward now.

Pagyon Falls

Situated in Pagyon-ri 26km away from the city of Kaesong, the waterfall is one of the major scenic spots in the area as well as one of the three famous waterfalls in the country, together with the Kuryong Falls in Mt Kumgang and Taesung Falls in Mt Sorak.

From olden times, the Kuryong Falls has been called “Sacred Falls,” the Taesung Falls “Mysterious Falls” and Pagyon Falls “Beautiful Falls.”

This waterfall, 37m high, is formed by the water that flows down through a steep valley between Mts Songgo and Chollim in the Ahobiryong Mountains and around a large rock and gathers in a pond called Pagyon, before falling down over a cliff.

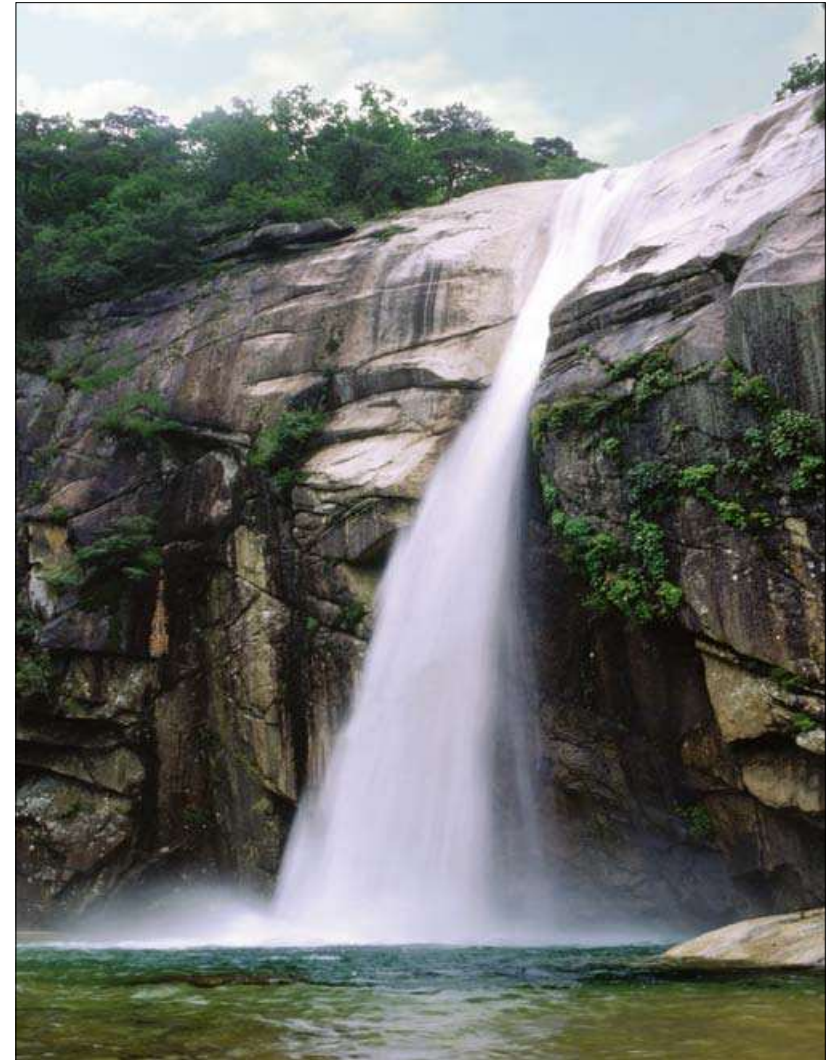
The speed of water falling down is faster than that of other waterfalls, and it sounds roaring, forming a misty fog.

The words carved on the cliff wall in the Chinese characters add more to its antiquity.

In the middle of the dipper-shaped pond, Pagyon, is a large rock, on which several people can sit.

Under the waterfall is Komo Pond, 120m in circumference and 40m in diameter.

On the shore of the pond is a round rock called Ryong, half of which is submerged in water. The rock is so wide that dozens of persons can sit on it. A poem in Chinese is carved on the rock, which



Pagyon Falls

reads, “As flowing water falls down straight from so high a place, I wonder whether the Galaxy is falling from the sky.”

According to a folk tale, Hwang Jin I, one of the three famous products of Kaesong, wrote the poem with her wet hair after washing it.

On the eastern hill of the Komo Pond stands the Pomsa Pavilion.

Around the waterfall there are many historical relics associated with the long history and cultural traditions of Korea, and the landscape is superb.

Larch, pine, pine-nut and fir trees form a deep forest in every valley. The scenery varies by season; in spring azaleas, royal azaleas and camellias bloom in the crevices of rocks covered with wisteria, in summer fragrant flowers of various colours such as magnolia and rose are in full bloom, and in autumn the tree leaves turn red.

Wild animals running in the thick forests and the chirping of birds make the visitors feel relaxed.

Panmunjom

Panmunjom, about 8km away from Kaesong, is the historic place where the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the United States concluded the Korean Armistice Agreement.

It is situated along the road that links Kaesong and Seoul through the then Jangdan County in Kyonggi Province in the southern half of Korea, over several kilometres south of Koknyong-ri, Thosong Sub-county, Kaepfung County, Kyonggi Province, where the 38th Parallel, the military demarcation line before the Korean war, ran. After the war, Koknyong-ri was renamed Haeson-ri in the sense that the military demarcation line on it was moved to somewhere else.

The name Panmunjom originated from the tale that many taverns, set up by piling up planks prepared for building Panmun Bridge over the then Panjik Stream, were there, and that a king drank spring water while passing there and set up a wooden door to drink it again on his way back.

Later the area was called Phyonghwa-ri as the building, where the Armistice Agreement was signed, bringing peace on this land after the Fatherland Liberation War ended with victory of the Korean people, was located there. And Panmunjom-ri was instituted separately as Panmunjom is located in it.

As a result, Panmunjom, which had been known only to the peddlers travelling between Kaesong and Seoul, became a famous



Monument inscribed with the signature of President Kim Il Sung



Building where the Armistice Agreement was signed

place drawing the world's attention as the signing ceremony of the armistice agreement was held there.

It was in June 1953, when ceasefire was actually feasible, that the issue of construction of a building where the armistice agreement was to be signed became an urgent problem.

At the time, in order to weaken the significance of the signing ceremony even a little, the US side was dead set against construction of a building, proposing holding the ceremony in a tent or in the open air. It was their intention not to leave any trace or witness after signing the agreement. They did not want to leave any trace of the shameful and pitiful sight of their signing of the armistice agreement after suffering a military, political and diplomatic defeat.

In the long run, the building where the Armistice Agreement was signed became a witness of history and a symbol of victory the heroic Korean People's Army won against the US, a so-called "great power."

Chairman Kim Jong Il visited Panmunjom several times including in November 1996.

In Panmunjom, there are the monument inscribed with the signature of President Kim Il Sung, buildings where the ceasefire talks were held and the armistice agreement was signed, Panmun House and Thongil House.

Kim Il Sung, who devoted his heart and soul to achieve national reunification, the long-cherished desire of the Korean nation, wrote his signature on a document concerning the country's reunification on the day before his death.

In order to hand down for ever the exploits he performed for national reunification, the Korean people erected a monument bearing his last signature.

In the past, the Military Armistice Commission met in Panmunjom, exposing the US's blatant violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement. It has also witnessed several functions concerning national reunification held there.

On March 3, 2012, the respected Comrade Kim Jong Un visited it, where even the air seemed to be highly charged owing to the acute confrontation between the DPRK and its enemy, and expressed his firm will to achieve national reunification.

In the present era, it attracted the attention of the world once again as two rounds of inter-Korean summit and one round of DPRK-US summit were held there.

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