



Mt Kumgang

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Foreword

As one of Korea's best scenic attractions, Mt Kumgang has been known worldwide since long ago. It is a mountain endowed with all scenic beauties of nature—valleys, tableland, lakes, coast and landscape.

The scenery is so mysterious that it has been said since olden times that “It seems all superb scenic beauties have gathered here as stones do ten thousand tricks, water does one thousand cute things and trees are admirable,” and that “Don't talk about the beauty of mountains and rivers before seeing Mt Kumgang.”

The Korean people treasured and loved the mountain from thousands of years ago, but they could not make a sightseeing tour of it owing to the exploitation and oppression by the successive feudal rulers and then the harsh colonial rule by the Japanese imperialists.

The mountain has been turned into a cultural resort for the people and a world-level sightseeing resort in the era of the Workers' Party of Korea.

The book introduces the mountain and the legends and episodes related with the scenic spots and highlights in the mountain that are associated with the wisdom and talents of the Korean people as well as their manners and customs.

Overview

Mt Kumgang is located on the east coast of Korea.

Sprawling over an area of more than 530km², it is 40km long from east to west and 60km from north to south.

It is composed of gneiss and migmatite in the Archeozoic era and biotite granite in the Mesozoic era.

It was formed by the asymmetrical upwarping (tilting) movement in the late Miocene of the Tertiary.

Owing to the ages-long weathering and erosion, cliffs, deep valleys, myriad-shaped peaks, plate, pyramidal and angled stone pillars and other fantastic rocks were formed to unfold mysterious scenery. The abrasion and sedimentation by the East Sea of Korea produced Sea Manmulsang, maritime cliffs, rocky islets, lakes, sandy beaches and plains.

The mountain is blessed with countless peaks, high and low. Among them there are more than 100 famous peaks, including Piro

Peak, Kwanum Peak chain, Chail Peak, Paengma Peak, Junghyangsong Peak, Chaeha Peak, Jipson Peak and Sejon Peak. These peaks have many mysteriously-shaped rocks and valleys, over 20 lookouts, eight natural stone gates and several caves.

It has numerous valleys showing their deep and graceful beauties, the most beautiful of which is the Manphok Valley.

As it has much precipitation and thick forests, the area is rich in water. The water of streams, waterfalls and pools flows through the granite area, so it is very clear.

There are a large number of waterfalls, including Kuryong, Pibong, Ogyong and Sibi that are called four famous waterfalls in the mountain.

There are also Samil and many other natural lakes, Okryu and other pools of different sizes, the largest being Okryu, Oegumgang Hot Spring and mineral springs like Kumnosu, Kamnosu, Kumgangs

and Samnoksu.

The area is relatively warm, and has much precipitation.

As it has indigenous plants and various other species, ranging from those found in the southern part of the temperate zone to those in the subarctic zone, it resembles a grand natural botanical garden. Plants, numbering 2 298 species, are found in Mt Kumgang, of which 1 292 species are spermatophytes and pteridophytes, and 1 006 species are spore-bearing plants.

In the mountain grow many rare plants such as *Kumgang-kuksunamu* of the family *Spiraeaceae*, the plant of the only species of the only genus, and *Kumgang-chorong*, an indigenous plant of Korea.

The mountain has a lot of relics and remains, such as dolmens of the primitive ages, tombs dating back to the early days of class society, and forts, buildings, towers, monuments, Buddhist images, metal and wooden crafts of the middle ages.

Before the Fatherland Liberation War (June 25, 1950–July 27, 1953), there were relatively many temples

including the largest ones in Korea.

But owing to the barbarous bombings by the US imperialist aggressors during the war, Yujom, Jangan, Singye and many other temples were completely destroyed and only their sites remained. Still preserved are three halls, two houses, a pavilion and an auxiliary building of the Phyohun Temple, two halls of the Jongyang Temple, as well as the Podok Hermitage, Pulji Hermitage and Chilsong Pavilion, an auxiliary building of Mahayon.

In the mountain there were also a large number of historical and cultural relics, including Buddhist images, monuments, pagodas, stupas, bells, pictures and various Buddhist altar articles. But the Japanese aggressors plundered most of them during their military occupation of Korea (1905–1945).

Since ancient times, the mountain has been called Phungak, Kaegol, Sangak, Son, Pongnae or Nolban.

The name Kumgang is derived from the fact that in spring the mountain looks like a diamond as it is clad in fragrant flowers; Pongnae,

from the fact that white clouds settle on the peaks and cliffs, with the forests in fresh verdure and birds chirping; Phungak, from the fact that in autumn all peaks are ablaze with autumnal tints; Kaegol, from the fact that in winter the peaks covered with white snow look like bones; Sangak, from the fact that the white peaks are sharp-edged like a bayonet; Son, from the fact that it is a beautiful mountain to which heavenly saints descended; and Nolban, from the Buddhist scriptures that one is carried away by the beautiful and mysterious scenery of the mountain.

The mountain is divided into Outer Kumgang, Inner Kumgang and Sea Kumgang according to the geographical features and shapes of scenic highlights.

Outer Kumgang has steep and rugged ridges with fastigiated peaks and mysteriously-shaped rocks, whereas Inner Kumgang has round ridges with plain terrains and gentle slopes.

Unlike them, Sea Kumgang is characterized by clear lakes, fantastic rocks and peculiar seascape.

People likened Outer Kumgang to a father, Inner Kumgang to a mother, and Sea Kumgang to a quiet and honest daughter or a mischievous son.

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.

Land and sea routes to the mountain had been opened already in the early fifth century, and it had become a trend for the upper class in the country to tour it from the late seventh century.

Isabella Bishop, a British traveller, said after touring the mountain in 1894:

Mt Kumgang transcends any of the world's celebrated mountains in terms of beauty. Articles about it are no more than a list. This large-scale gorge full of all the elements of beauty is fascinating enough to numb the people.

Krügel, who had been a German consul in Korea in the closing years of the feudal Joseon dynasty, wrote:

The grand view, bold composition of the mountain body, pendant cliffs, unaxed primitive woods, pure waterfalls, fast-flowing rapids and deep pools emitting alternating light and colour. Ah, no one will find a match for it anywhere else in the world!

The mountain has been developed into a resort for the people in the era of the Workers' Party of Korea.

President Kim Il Sung and

Chairman Kim Jong Il visited the mountain several times, with a view to developing it into a cultural resort and tourist destination for the benefit of the people.

As the saying goes, "Seeing is believing."

While touring the celebrated mountain, any visitor will be carried away by its fascinating, magnificent and refreshing scenery and feel delight throughout their life.

Ten famous scenes of Mt Kumgang

1. Sunrise over Piro Peak
2. Autumn-tinted Kusong Valley
3. Sound of flowing water in Manphok Valley
4. Mists and clouds over Paegun Rock
5. Natural sculptures in Manmulsang
6. Majestic Kuryong Falls
7. Beautiful scene viewed from Sejon Peak
8. Height of Sibi Falls
9. Enjoying the moon at Chongsokjong
10. Boating at Lagoon Samil



Outer Kumgang

Outer Kumgang comprises a chain of peaks, stretching from north to south centred on Piro Peak, the major peak in Mt Kumgang, and the east coast leading to Sea Kumgang.

It is blessed with mountain and valley scenery with grand, magnificent and curious features.

They include Poru Peak, Sejon Peak, Chaeha Peak, Ongnyo Peak, Mt Chonbul, Chonsondae, Kuryongdae, Onjong Pass, Kaejan Pass and other sharp-edged, majestic and high peaks, mountains and lookouts, myriads of fantastic rocks, Kuryongyon, Hanha and other renowned valleys, and big and small waterfalls and pools. They all go well with one another.

There are eleven scenic sections in Outer Kumgang.



Onjong Section

Its name is derived from the fact that the Kumgangsán Hot Spring is located on the shores of the Onjong Stream, which leads to the Hanha Valley.

As the central section for the sightseeing of Mt Kumgang, the section is surrounded with ranges of steep peaks and thick forests of pine and pine-nut trees on the Onjong Stream, unfolding peculiar scenery.

It is also called gate to the mountain, as the paths leading to Kosong Port, Inner Kumgang, Lagoon Samil, Sea Kumgang, Yujom Temple and Kuryong Pool start here.

In the northwest of Onjong-ri is

Mt Maebawi (255m above sea level), in which there are rocks looking like such animals as hawk, cat, tortoise and seal. The Mae (hawk) Rock is ideal as a lookout. Beside Mt Maebawi stands Taeja Peak, which commands a good view of sunrise over the East Sea of Korea. To the south of it stands Mt Tagalbawi, another mountain in the shape of an egg. Here you can see the Tagal Rock, a huge, egg-shaped rock sitting on a boulder.

According to an old tale, a general cut off the head of a snake with a sword when it was creeping up to eat an egg.

The rock was designated as natural monument No. 217 in



Mt Maebawi



Mt Tagalbawi

January 1980.

To the south of the rock is Mangsu Peak (289m above sea level), which was used as a lookout for foreign invasion.

The Kumgangsán Hot Spring is located on the Onjong Stream at the dead end of the west valley in the Onjong section.

As a silica hot spring containing radium and other minerals, it belongs to a weak radioactive radon spa with a temperature of 37-44°C. The water is colourless and transparent, and soap-soluble. It has a special virtue for the treatment of non-tuberculous,

chronic arthritis, neuralgia, heart disorders, hypertension, spinal disorders, chronic inflammations, etc.

In Onjong-ri there is also an ancient fort, which was built along the ridge of a hillock in the period of Koguryo (277 BC-AD 668).

It was built by making the most of the topographical features: It is hidden by a peak, then it comes into sight, so it is possible to attack the approaching enemy at a stroke between the peak and the ramparts.

The ramparts, 530m around and 3-4m high, are built with trimmed stones with a size of 30-40cm.

Kuryongyon Section

Concentrated on the section are many famous waterfalls and pools, including Pibong and Juryom falls, Ryonju and Okryu pools.

Located in the valley stretching down between Sejon and Ongnyo peaks and Kwanum Peak chain, the area is divided into Singye, Okryu and Kuryong valleys, from its lowest part where there is the site of the Singye Temple.

The Singye Valley comprises the highlights from the entrance to the Kuryongyon Valley, beyond Wonho Pass, to the Kumgang Gate.

At its entrance are a thick grove of pine trees and the site of the

Singye Temple. And in the valley are the Mokran Restaurant, Mokran Bridge, Son Pool, such mysteriously-shaped rocks as Kaeguri (frog), Thokki (rabbit), Kobukson (turtle-shaped ship), Jara (terrapiin) and Okhwangsangje (heavenly king), as well as Hoesangdae and Samnok Spring.

The Singye Temple stands on the Singye Stream at the entrance to the valley.

Built first in 519, it is known as one of the four major temples in the mountain, along with Yujom, Jangan and Phyohun temples. The hip-saddle-roofed building looks refreshing and neat.



Singye Temple

In the yard of the Taeung Hall in the temple stands a three-storeyed pagoda, one of the three old pagodas in the mountain.

It consists of a two-tiered plinth and a three-tiered body. It is 3.35m high and a side of the plinth is 2.27m long.

In architectural structure, it looks solemn and high with the lower part finished to be wide and weighty and with the upper part narrow and light.

Across the pass in the valley is Jipson Peak that resembles a folding screen, and on the peak is a rock that looks like a parent bird feeding its baby, which has stretched out its beak, food it has brought. The rock is called Jachu or Sarang (love) in the sense that the parent bird loves its baby.

Pass the rock and walk some distance before looking back, and you will see a hole on the left of the rock. The hole, through which the sky can be seen, is called Ryongchulgu (hole through which dragons flew into the sky).

A legend says that the hole was made when nine dragons, which were

defending Mt Kumgang, competed with 53 monks from India in their strength and tricks.

Along the Singye Stream there is a small pool, called Pae, as it looks like a boat. It is also called Son. The hillock, situated on the road from the Onjong Village to the Kuryong Pool, is called Paeso as it is near the Pae Pool.

This place with Sinsondae, which is called so as it is said saints lived there, unfolds beautiful scenery with *Kumgang-chorong* and other rare flowering plants including royal azalea covering 1km.

The valley covering an area from the Kumgang Gate to the confluence of Juryom Falls and the Unsa Stream is called Okryu as crystal-clear water meanders. Its prides are famous waterfalls and pools and mysteriously-shaped rocks.

A legend has this to say. Four heavenly saints came to this valley by boat to see a heavenly flower on Chonhwadae. After anchoring it, they climbed the terrace. On the terrace they enjoyed the beautiful scenery unaware of the passage of time. In the



Chonhwadae

meantime, their boat sank down, and the Okryu Pool came into being there.

The pool, the largest of its kind in the mountain, is over 600m² in area and 5-6m deep. The source of its water is the 50m-high Okryu Falls.

In the middle of the stream is a stage-like flat rock, on which scores of persons can sit around.

The Ryonju Pools, designated as a natural monument, were named so as they look as if two blue beads were linked by a thread. The upper pool

is 6m wide, 10m long and about 6m deep, and the lower one is 9m wide, 30m long and about 9m deep.

Over the pools is Ryonju Falls, which looks like a transparent roll of silk cloth. When the water volume is great, the falls unfolds magnificent scenery.

The pools and falls, whose water is crystal-clear, look characteristic and go well with the surrounding forests, adding beauty to the Okryu Valley.

A legendary tale has it that two

beads lost by fairies turned into the pools.

Pibong Falls, a natural monument, is one of the four major falls in Mt Kumgang.

The 165m-high waterfall flows down a tiered rocky cliff from mid-slope of Sejon Peak. The clouds made by the falls look like a phoenix dancing with its long tails swinging. Hence the name Pibong (flying phoenix).

After enjoying its view, a foreigner



Okryu Pool

said that it is a mysterious view born of nature and an acme of fantastic beauty.

A Korean had already said, "When



Pibong Falls

falling vertically, it is a waterfall; when falling inclined, it is a roll of silk; when scattered, it is pieces of beads; when gathered, it is a pool; when drunk, it is medicinal water.”

On the right of Pibong Falls is Mubong Falls.

The water strikes the protruding rocks, forming clouds and sprays. The scenery looks like a dancing phoenix, hence the name.

Found in this mysterious Okryu Valley are a large number of broad bellflowers, a medicinal herb.

Chonhwadae surrounded by white flower-like peaks looks as if it were a magnolia blossom or a white gem spear.

The rocks to the north look like a bear and rabbit sitting face to face, telling a story about a diligent rabbit and a lazy bear.

The two rocks on the ridge look as if they were receiving and seeing off tourists. Hence their name Pubu (couple).

Across Muyong (dance) Bridge, which is called so as those crossing it felt as if they were dancing, is the

Kuryong Valley.

The valley consists of the area from the confluence of the streams down Muyong Bridge to Kuryong Falls and Kuryong and Upper Eight pools.

Found in this valley are such highlights as the Unsa Stream, Juryom and Kuryong falls, Kuryong and Upper Eight pools, Kuryongdae and Piryongdae, Sejon Peak and Pisa Gate.

The Unsa is a narrow stream meandering through rocks like a silk thread on Ongnyo Peak to the north of Kuryongdae.

Kuryong is the best of the four famous waterfalls in Mt Kumgang. The water drops 74m down from a cliff, over 100m high, all year round. The waterfall is 4m wide.

The cliffs around the waterfall are formed of biotite granite of the Mesozoic era.

The waterfall presents a beautiful scene with a deafening sound, water drops that look like millions of beads, spout on a protruding cliff forming a curtain that resembles a long roll of



Kuryong Falls

silk cloth and rainbow formed by the spout; all these look majestic, imposing and overbearing.

The waterfall was designated as a natural monument.

The Kuryong Pool down the waterfall is 13m deep. A legend has it that the nine dragons that had fought with 53 monks in the pool at the Yujom Temple lived here.

As drops of water spray, creating a whirlwind in the valley, and the large spout looks as if dropping on one's head directly, a poet of the old



Sejon Peak

times wrote:

*Is it a lightning shaking the whole valley,
The majestic mettle would swallow the East Sea.
Does the Milky Way fall from the high sky,
Thunderous is the sound on a sunny day.
As the angry water drops marvellously,
The viewer has become wide-eyed.*

Legend Men with Seeing, Hearing and Locomotive Impairments

Once in ancient times men with seeing, hearing and locomotive impairments came to the Singye Temple to have their disabilities treated. As they failed despite one hundred days of praying before the Buddhist image, they agreed on touring Mt Kumgang as they were in the mountain. The man with hearing impairment carried the man with locomotive impairment piggy-back, and the man with seeing impairment

followed them with the help of a stick. As it was spring, various flowers were in full bloom and the sounds of falling and flowing water and chirping birds filled the mountain. When they reached Kuryong Falls, the fog disappeared, presenting the scenery of the majestic waterfall. Struck with admiration suddenly, they found themselves cured of their diseases.

In the valley above the waterfall there are eight pools that look as if they were beads linked with one another.

In summer the surroundings are all green and shrouded in clouds and mists created by the waterfalls, whose water volumes have increased to the maximum. In autumn the red tint adds to the beauty of the area.

This scenic place with crystal-clear water tells a story that eight heavenly fairies would come down here to take a bath.

At a corner of the path from the Kuryong Pool to Piro Peak is a rock

on a natural stone gate, called Pisa. Scholars called it Chaek (book), saying it looks like books piled one above another. Hungry persons call it Glutinous Rice Cake or Bread.

Sejon Peak rises between the Kuryongyon section and the Sonha section. The summit of the

peak is flat.

Found here are trees and vines, which are hundreds of years old. Because of the strong wind, the trees grow sideways, and they look like shrubs.

The pool beyond the Upper Eight Pools is called Ku.



Upper Eight Pools

Manmulsang Section

This section, representative of mountain beauty, unfolds a characteristic natural scene and natural sculptures with steep precipices and mysteriously-shaped rocks.

It consists of Manmulsang and Hanha and Mansang valleys.

A writer, who had been to this area, wrote:

The rocks are sharp and steep. The higher you climb them, the more mysterious peaks and rocks stand in front of you in groups. The light one looks flying, the sharp one breaking, the dense ones intimate, the fat one stupid, and the thin one agile. All

these are beyond description.

The Hanha Valley was named so as it is characterized by cold fog.

In the valley is a chain of peaks called Kwanum. The chain is famous for its grandeur and majesty.

The chain consists of Sanggwanum (1 132m), Junggwanum (892m) and Hagwanum (892m) peaks.

Found in this valley are Rojang, Kom, Ryukhwa and Jangsu rocks, Munju Pool and Kwanum and Ryukhwagejol falls.

The Kom (bear) Rock is on a cliff on the mid-slope of Junggwanum Peak.

The rock tells the following legend.

There lived an old bear in the Pirobong Valley.

After waking up from winter sleep, he felt hungry. In search of anything to eat, he went to a sunny place in Sujong Peak. When crossing Junggwanum Peak on the way, he heard the loud sound of a flowing



Manmulsang

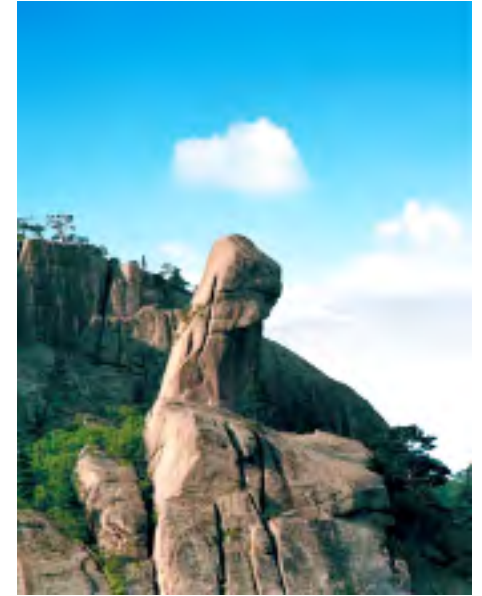
stream. He looked down, and his eyes mistook the bead-like small stones at the bottom of the crystal-clear water of the Munju Pools as acorns from the previous autumn. He jumped down from the peak, but fell on the mid-slope of a cliff. He could not move his body as he could not pull out his feet from the rock, but the foolish bear protruded his neck to look down at the pool with a single thought of gulping the acorns. Time passed, and the bear turned into a rock.

Kwanum Falls drops down a cliff in the Junggwanum Valley. It is 20m high, 43m long and 4m wide.

A large stone is sandwiched in a rock, and the water falls down after hitting the stone in mid-course.

In the mid-slope of Munju Peak is Pom (tiger) Rock that looks like a tiger squatting. The following legend tells:

A tiger that was living in the Manmulsang Valley was coming down round Munju Peak in search of prey, when he saw a man reciting a poem in praise of beautiful Mt



Kom (bear) Rock

Kumgang on a moon-lit night. Moved by the man passionately enjoying the scenery of Mt Kumgang even at night, the tiger felt remorseful for failing to love the mountain as ardently as the man, and turned into a rock squatting down.

On the west of the Onjong Village there is a mountain that looks like a collection of all things of all shapes in the world. Hence the name Manmulsang. Here there is a peak (1 025m), called Seji. It was named after a Buddhist saint.

The terrace on the peak commands a fine view of the East Sea. And on the peak and its neighbouring peaks are cliffs and mysteriously-shaped rocks. The rocks are called Tongja (boy), Chottae (candle), Raktha (camel), Mangaji (foal) and Mal (horse). These rocks tell the following legend.

Three boys swore to be brothers, and came here. They engrossed themselves in studying day and night. Animals in the mountain grew curious when they saw a candle lit even at mid-night. But what they saw were three boys studying hard under the candlelight. Feeling that the boys were admirable and they should not disturb them in their studies, the animals broke up. The clever ones ran away first, and the dull ones followed behind only to turn into the present rocks.

There stand three rocks in a row on the left side of the entrance to the peaks. These rocks, called Samson, are inscribed on the list of natural monuments.

Legend of Samson Rocks

Once upon a time, three heavenly saints, who were fond of sightseeing and travelled around in search of scenic places, arrived at Mt Kumgang, the last destination of their journey. They toured every scenic spot in Inner Kumgang and Sea Kumgang, and reached the entrance to Manmulsang in Outer Kumgang via the Hanha Valley.

Thick blanket of clouds obscured the natural landscape of Manmulsang, but, before long, the clouds scudded away in an instant, gradually revealing its superb scenery.

The saints stood for a while, admiring the scenery, and began to climb up the ridge towards the high peaks.

At the moment, a rainbow appeared in the sky over the valley, and fairies were descending to Chonsondae by the rainbow.

The saints were so captivated by the scene that they even forgot to go on their journey.

Meanwhile, the sun began to

set. The saints turned back and were climbing down, when they decided to settle down there and greet the fairies. As they reached the entrance to the valley, they came across some demons on a sightseeing tour of Manmulsang. As soon as they saw the saints, the demons turned and took to flight, but one of them was caught by a speedy saint and turned into a rock. The rock is called Kwimyong (demon's face).

The three saints also turned

into rocks, as if they were warriors defending Manmulsang, and the rocks were named Samson (three saints).

The Kwimyong Rock, a natural monument, stands northwest of the Samson Rocks.

As it looks like the face of a demon with a round stone on its head, the rock gives an abnormal but mysterious feeling.

There is the Mangjang Spring on the path to Chonsondae. Its name



Samson Rocks

originated from the tale that a drink of the spring water makes one forget about the walking stick and go up to Chonsondae at a dash.

Halfway up Seji Peak is the Jolbu Rock, with a mark looking as if chopped by a man with Herculean strength. It carries a legend about the love between a fairy, who descended from heaven to make an embroidery of Mt Kumgang, and a young woodcutter.

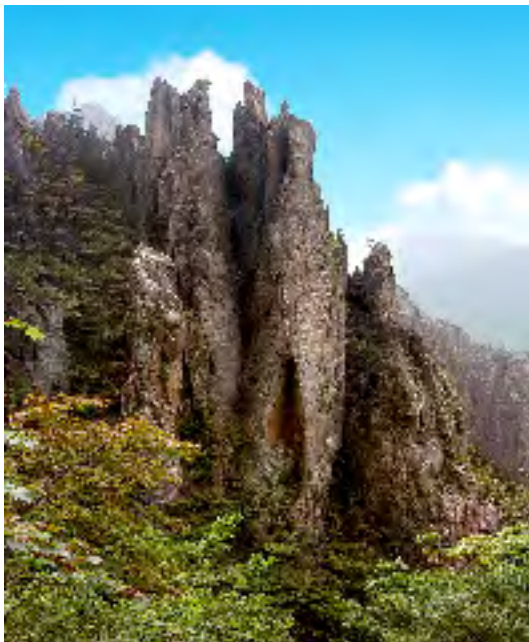
Past the rock and climbing up a steep slope with the inclination of 70-80 degrees will lead you to a saddle-shaped terraced spot. It is called Ansimdae, because one feels relieved after either climbing up steep and rugged path to the spot or descending from Chonsondae safely.

The terrace with an elevation of 936 metres is known to be a place where



Kwimyon Rock

Jolbu Rock



Chonsondae

fairies from heaven enjoyed the fantastic scenery of Mt Kumgang. Wide enough for more than ten persons to stand, it was designated as a natural monument.

In the middle of the cliff scores of metres from the terrace in the north are two pools.

They are Chonnyohwajang Pools, or make-up pools for fairies.

On both sides of the bigger pool are two small and dry holes, where it is said the fairies placed their make-up articles.

Chonnyohwajang Pools



An old tale says that fairies descended from heaven to Upper Eight Pools to have a bath, made up their faces by these pools, played the *konghu* on Chonsondae and then

returned to heaven by rainbow.

Go 200 metres farther to the right of the fork some distance from Chonsondaе towards Ansimdae, you will reach Hugodaе. It offers such a magnificent view of Chonsondaе that the tale about the fairies is plausible. Rays of the setting sun reflected on Chonsondaе diagonally add sparkling lustre to the terrace and Mt Pongjon under the bright moonlight. And the terrace shrouded by white clouds and faint mist looks like a mirage flying up to heaven.

Jubongdae, one of the terraces in Manmulsang, commands a broad view of mysteriously-shaped peaks and other adjacent peaks.

Those peaks with myriads of shapes and sizes look as if they are rushing forward.

On this terrace you can enjoy different views of the clouds, fogs and sunlight at different angles at the time of their appearance.

Go 200 metres up on the safety ladder on the precipitous cliff, and you will reach Chonhaegwan that commands a panoramic view of the

sky and the sea.

It is exhilarating to see an endless expanse of the East Sea of Korea.

Go up the right slope some 100 metres, you will reach Mangyangdae, where you can enjoy an unobstructed view of Piro Peak, Kwanum Peak chain in the Hanha Valley, a peak chain in the Chonbul Valley, and other high and low peaks as well as a limpid stream meandering through valleys.

Go farther to the east, and you will see another terrace on the summit of Seji Peak. Here you can see various peaks in the Sea Kumgang and Sujongbong areas and the back of the Chonbul Valley.

Sujongbong Section

The Sujongbong section is noted for the unique scenery with naturally occurring crystal, which was designated as a natural monument of Mt Kumgang.

Sujong Peak, 773m high, has crystalline rocks of various colours, so it gleams with hints of gold in the sunlight and glitters like gems under the moon.

In this area are such highlights as the Jara (terrapiп) Rock, Pidulgi (pigeon) Rock, Sonsu Rock, Sujong Gate, Kangsondae and Kumgang Cave.

On the path up to the peak is the Sujong Gate, the biggest rock gate in Mt Kumgang. The rock of arch shape is 2-3m thick and 10m wide and high, respectively.

A peak, 488m high, to the northeast of Sujong Peak looks like an overturned brass bowl, hence its

name Pari. It is wide enough for over a thousand people to sit on. There are large and small hollows, in which rainwater is collected.

As those hollows look like pots, the peak is also called Paekjong, or Pal, a shortened form of Pari. Sometimes, it is called Chima (skirt), as those hollows made by rain look like pleats of a skirt.

The Kumgang Cave is found beside the road to the Pari Peak. In the cave is a spring called Kumgang.



Sujong Peak

Sonha Section

The Sonha section comprises areas between Jipson and Chaeha peaks, between Jipson and Sejon peaks, and between Chaeha and Sejon peaks.

The valley with the scenic spots between Jipson and Sejon peaks is called Tongsok. It is also called Yuson as saints are said to have enjoyed there, or Hundulbawi Valley.

There is a rock called Hundul or Tongsok at the foot of Sejon Peak.

The rock, scores of tons heavy, looks as if it would be easily levered with a small stone to move or sway. It

is also well known for its surrounding scenery. Maples, dogwoods and oaks growing between the crevices of the dark red, white and brown rocks dye the area with a harmonious blend of red, yellow, orange and other colours. The Tongsok Pool is beside the Hundul Rock.

In the area between Jipson and Chaeha peaks are such highlights as Hapsumok and Ryonju falls, Ryonju Pools, and Chollima, Kobukson and Ryongson rocks.

Above Ryonju Falls stands a steeply inclined broad and flat rock,



Tongsok

from which Paengnyon Falls cascades like a reel of white silk. And in the upper and lower parts of the falls are two rocks in the shape of a tortoise craning their necks. There is the Pae (ship) Rock on top of the slope east of Sejon Peak.

These three rocks carry a legend about the tortoise brothers which were so enchanted by the scenery of Mt Kumgang that they failed to return to the Palace of the Dragon King.

Legend *The Tortoise Brothers That Failed to Return to the Palace of the Dragon King*

This happened a few days before the 60 000th birthday of the Dragon King in the East Sea. The Dragon King instructed his subjects that the court ladies should be clad in white silk clothes and a sumptuous birthday party be prepared. The tortoise brothers volunteered to fetch silk cloth from a scenic spot on the east coast.

The Dragon King immediately had a big stone ship built and ordered

the subjects to send the tortoises on board it.

The tortoises arrived at Paengnyon Falls, but were so fascinated by the silky stream of water that they forgot their mission.

After a long while they turned into rocks, and their ship also turned into a rock in the middle of the mountain.

Chaeha Peak is comprised of sharp-edged rocks of mysterious shapes, and a waterfall called Chaeha, 30-40m high, rises in the middle part of the peak and cascades over a rugged precipice.

At the dead end of the Sonha Valley is the picturesque Sonha Falls dropping on the middle part of a cliff.

Chaehagodae, the third terrace on Chaeha Peak, commands a bird's eye view of the peaks in the southwestern direction of the peak as well as the Songnim and Mangyong valleys.

Jipson, soaring skyward in the east of Chaeha Peak, is a peak with the sharpest edge in Mt Kumgang. It is composed of a whole rock, so not a single pine tree is rooted there.

Paryonso Section

The Paryonso section comprises the Ryongsin and Paryon valleys in the east of Jipson Peak and other scenic spots around them.

The Ryongsin Valley is located east of Jipson Peak, and it affords a fine view of the East Sea of Korea. There was the Ryongsin Hermitage here.

In the valley are the 10m-high Jonju and other falls including Odan, Ryongyon, Tungryong and Ryongsin.

There is a man-shaped rock under the high peak to the east of Jipson Peak.

As it looks like a gentleman sitting down or a Buddhist image, the monks called the rock Pucho (Buddha) and erected a hermitage to propagate Buddhism.

On the southeastern slope of the peak to the south of the Ryongsin Valley was the Paryon Temple. So the valley was named Paryon.

There are a bowl-shaped small pool, a waterfall with a length of 60 metres and an inclination of about 40 degrees, and the Phokpho (waterfall)

Rock on it.

Go up some distance past the rock, and you will see a wide, long and flat rock. It is called Kyesuran (mythological birds on a cinnamon tree).

The Paryon Cave is found at the entrance of a small valley to the left of the two pools under the Kyesuran Rock.

And on the summit of a ridge to the left of the valley sits the Kyesu Rock looking like a big bird on the ridge.

Mujigae (rainbow) Bridge in front of the site of the Paryon Temple was built in the period of Koryo (10th century-14th century).

An arch bridge across the Paryon Stream, it is supported by foundations of well-trimmed stones piled up vertically on the rocks on the stream, and built in 25 tiers with over 40-odd dressed granite blocks, each weighing well over one ton.

Seven of the granite blocks were broken into halves, but it stands securely.

It is 8.55m long, 3.1m wide and



Mujigae (rainbow) Bridge

7.1m high at the pivot. It blends well with the natural landscape and shows excellent architectural beauty.

Some distance away from the bridge, you can see the site of the Paryon Temple.

It was set up in the latter half of the 8th century by a monk with the Buddhist name Jinphyoryulsa. There goes a legend about the construction of the temple.

At the age of 12, Jinphyoryulsa left home to become a Buddhist monk. He devoted himself to the study of Buddhism and gained an enviable reputation. One year, while touring scenic places in Mt Kumgang, he thought the Paryonso Valley with

picturesque landscape would be a good location for a temple. Then he had the Paryon Temple built there.

Afterwards, he brought his old parents from his native place to the temple. His father died at the temple. As a woman was disallowed to live in a Buddhist temple, his mother settled in a valley some eight kilometres away over a pass.

The monk crossed the rugged pass every day, rain or shine, to see his mother and cook a meal for her with his own hands. Greatly impressed by his filial devotion, people named the pass Hyoyang, meaning that a filial son crossed it to take care of his lonely mother.

Songnim Section

The section, located in Outer Kumgang, is comprised of highlights in the ravine between Ilchul and Poru peaks and the valley of the Paekchon Stream that flows from the southeast of the valley.

It is characterized by thick forests of pine trees.

It abounds with highlights such

as the Sibi Falls, one of the four renowned waterfalls in Mt Kumgang, and precipitous cliffs and round, big and white rocks scattered on the bed of the stream, unfolding a unique beauty of valleys.

The Songnim section is divided into Songnim, Mansang and Songmun valleys.

The Songnim Valley is covered with green pine trees, starting from Paekchon Bridge at the lower reaches



Songnim Valley

of the Paekchon Stream and ending at the Songnim Cave.

There are Paekchon Pool, 62m long, 32m wide and 4.5m deep, in the north of the Paekchon Stream, and Chongsong Pool, 86m long, 31m wide and 4m deep, which is always tinged with green as it mirrors the green forests on both sides of the Kophum Pool.

The Kophum Pool, 32m long, 13m wide and 4m deep, was named after the foams caused by the two-course, inclined waterfall.

In addition, there are the Ssangpho Pool, Chima Rock formed by the rainwater running off the 1 000m-high rocky mountain, Songnim Cave with three smaller caves, and the site of the Songnim Temple.

The Songnim Temple was first erected in 1172, in a scenic place with the Chima Rock at the back and in the centre of the pine forests.

The area had been covered with dense forests of hundreds-of-year-old pine trees, but random felling during the military occupation by

the Japanese imperialists stripped it off the trees, and a few tall pine trees remain at present.

On the upper reaches of the Paekchon Stream is the Mansang Valley, whose name originated from myriads of shapes found between the steep cliffs.

The thickly wooded, deep valley comprises high, precipitous cliffs and clear streams leading to various waterfalls, pools and rocks, such as Hapnyu, Kodun, Idan and Mansang falls, Ryong, Poksunga and Mansang pools, Mae and Pom rocks.

The Mansang Pool is on a big, flat rock resembling a bed stone of a grinding mill.

Around the pool are found round and longish white rocks in two or three rows, one of the conspicuous highlights being a rock looking like an upside-down earthenware steamer comfortably seated in the pool and another one of similar size sitting on it. A nearly 3m-high waterfall is found on the steamer-shaped rock, like a silk thread skein. This is Mansang Falls.

Water from the falls drops straight

down on the steamer-shaped rock and then flows to the Mansang Pool.

Past the narrow path is heard the echoing sound of Sibi Falls, and the area encompassing the rest of the valley is called Songmun. The waterfall rises from the upper valley in the Mansang Valley and flows between Chaeha Peak (1 588m) and Soban Plateau (1 482m) before dropping in 12 tiers along the southern cliff of Chaeha Peak.

It is the highest of the four major

waterfalls in Mt Kumgang, so it was designated as a natural monument.

Below the falls, 289m high, 390m long and 4m wide, are a vast stretch of broad and flat rocks, and the spectacular sight viewed from below seems as if water pours from the sky with thunderous roar.

It is so high that only a half of it is seen from below, so its full view can be seen on the Unson and Puljong rocks on the opposite cliff.

There are also Songmun, Segallae and other falls, rocks of mysterious

Sibi Falls



shapes and pools.

Go 200 metres up along the narrow and deep valley to the northwest of Sibi Falls, and you will see the Saji Rock on the left peak, and another one kilometre upward leads to the second Kumgang Gate. And the Songmun Cave, a natural rock cave, 2.5m high and 4m long and wide respectively, is a little distance away from it. The cave is square and even inside.

As it is located in the thick forests, you will feel cold in it even in hot summer.

The Taejang Valley is past Ransa, Kumgang and Tolmun falls and at the edge of the Songmun Valley.

It was named so, because there had been the Taejang Temple. White rocks piled up in layers look like a collection of several hundred volumes of Buddhist scriptures, hence the name Taejang.

There is Paekchon Bridge in the area, and a monument to its reconstruction stands nearby.

According to the monument, the bridge that had been washed away by flood was erected again in 1686.

Go over Kaejan Pass to the southwest of Paekchon Bridge and reach Samgori, and there are the Ryong Stream at the right fork and a monument to it erected in 1755.

Unsondae Section

The section is on the southern edge of Outer Kumgang to the west of the site of the Yujom Temple.

It is comprised of Ryongchon, Hyoun, Kuyon and Okkho valleys.

The valley on the lower reaches of the Ryong Stream, a tributary of the Nam River in the south of the section, is the Ryongchon Valley.

In the pine grove of the valley is the site of the Yujom Temple, known to be the first temple built in Mt Kumgang.

In front of the site flows the Ryong Stream and a low hill of Mt Ryongme stands behind it. The site is nestled in a picturesque place.

It is said that the temple was surrounded by a dense forest of armful-thick elm trees grown for hundreds of years. The name of the temple is derived from it.

There is the site of the Othak Spring, which is said to have been discovered by flocks of crows.

The Yujom Temple was first erected around the 9th century. It was expanded in the mid-12th century

to have 500 bays, and again in the early 15th century to be 3 000 bays in scale.

It was burnt to ashes by indiscriminate bombings by the US imperialists during the Fatherland Liberation War.

In front of the temple site are two stone bridges in arch shape. They are built with 13 granite blocks, each weighing well over one ton. The structures are 3m high, and are mounted on the foundations some 5m in width.

The two bridges stand at an interval of 8 metres.

The bell of the Yujom Temple, cast in 1729, is noted for its elegant shape and large size among those found in the temples in Mt Kumgang. During the Fatherland Liberation War this bell was preserved thanks to the combatants of the Korean People's Army. It is now on display at the Myohyangsan History Museum.

The Nungin Hall of the Yujom Temple had housed 53 Buddhist images, which had been cast in gold or in gilt bronze. Though small in

size, measuring between 4 and 15 centimetres, they surpassed similar ones in sculptural techniques.

However, they were robbed during the Japanese military



Monument to the Yujom Temple

occupation of the country.

There are several stelae around the temple, which date back over 300 years.

To commemorate Abbot Kiam (1552-1634), who was famous among the monks in Mt Kumgang, a monument was built in the 17th century with records about him

inscribed on it.

North of the Ryongchon Valley is a confluence of two streams, right side of which is the Hyoun Valley with Kuryong and Ssanghwak pools, Pari Falls, Unsondae, Chilbodae and other scenic spots.



Kuryong Pond

The Kuryong Pond is known to be where nine dragons living near the site of the Yujom Temple came before flying to the Kuryong Pool. Kuryong means nine dragons. The pond is 19m long and 15m wide, and has nine big hollows; four or five of them are filled with water.

Having a tale that saints used to play on it, Unsondae commands a good view of Ilchul, Wolchul and Poru peaks to the northwest and Chaeha and Jipson peaks and Sobandok to the north.

In particular, Sibi Falls cascading down the long southern cliff of Chaeha Peak is magnificent.

Chilboda is situated northwest of Unsondae. It is a rocky hill, the shape of which looks as if it were ornamented with seven kinds of gems.

This hill with myriad-shaped rocks commands a magnificent view of the peaks including Ilchul and Chail, as well as Miruk Peak chain around a pine-nut tree grove.

An area which is on the left side from the confluence of Lake Ryong is the Kuyon Valley, where such highlights as the ship-like Son Pool, falls like Huinbidan, Tujul, Kuryon, Kuyongyejol and Hwaldung, and Hyangno Peak are located.

The 10m-high Pisol Falls makes water sprays resembling snowflakes.

Go upwards from Pisol Falls and you can see a beautiful valley with



Panya Rock

waterfalls and crystal-clear pools. This is the Okho Valley.

Okho Falls, named for its beauty comparable to jade in a pot, is a cascade which is 15m high and 30m long.

The area with falls as the centre and 1km in radius has a peculiar beauty among others in Mt Kumgang for the sloped valleys in the front and at the back.

The area also has the site of Jungnaewon, a hermitage situated on the highest place in Mt Kumgang, and Thaeul Rock.

Near the Thaeul Rock is also a rock, which is over 50m long. Its name Ryong (dragon) Rock originated from a tale that one of the nine dragons going to Kuryong Pool via Kuryong Pond in the Hyoun Valley hid under the Thaeul Rock and turned into a rock.

Chonbuldong Section

This section comprises Mt Chonbul and Munju Peak.

As there is Mt Chonbul, known to have one thousand rocks,

resembling Buddhist images, and its valley is at the centre, this section is called Chonbulsan or Chonbuldong.

The section is divided into Sonam, Chonphok and Chonbul valleys.

Mt Chonbul, a 465m-high rocky mountain, is nearest to the beach among other peaks.

The lower half of the peaks in Mt Chonbul are thickly-wooded valleys while myriad-shaped rocks resembling pestle or wooden roller stand on the upper half. Streams starting from the mountain gush out of cracks and flow on the rocky bed, so it tastes cool and refreshing; the bluish pools here and there and falls present enchanting scenery.

Found here are such highlights as Tujul and Idan falls, Pom, Iri and Ryukson rocks, Sonin Cave and Ryukson Pool.

Two lines of water flow down a sloped rock forming Tujul Falls. They are 15m and 6m long respectively, and there is a 3m-deep triangular pool below them.

As a valley with many waterfalls,

the Chonphok Valley comprises an area from the Ryukson Rock to Idan Falls.

A cascade called Sanju Falls is over 15m long, the water of which hits a rock and makes a spray resembling beads. And it flows quietly compared to other cascades.

The waterfall commands a fine view of fantastic rocks resembling a man, Buddha, animals, birds and others.

Ryonju Falls, which is 20m long, is above Sanju Falls. Its water stops twice while flowing down, resembling a chain of beads.

Samdan (three-tier) Falls, which are 15m, 15m and 40m high

respectively, Kyohyang (symphony) Falls, whose water makes a sound that resembles that of a symphony, and Pidan (silk) Falls changing its colour according to seasons are also in this valley, as well as the Kunson Rock, the name of which means saints standing in line.

Hundreds of metres above the Kunson Rock is a naturally formed stone gate, leaving only a narrow gap in between. It is named Tonghae.

Paeksa Falls is in the Chonbul Valley. It is 50m high and over 10m wide, and its water falls down the cliff with mists resembling white thread.



Tujul Falls



Kyohyang Falls



Pyol Kumgang



Rocks in the Chonbul Valley



Rocks in Pyol Kumgang

Under the falls is the Paeksa Pool with many rocks of fantastic shapes like frog and tortoise.

At the end of the Chonbul Valley, there appears another waterfall called Chonbul, which is 30m high.

Sonchang Section

The Sonchang Stream, which empties into the East Sea of Korea, is in this section which comprises the peaks surrounding the stream.

A pool surrounded by cliffs is

called Kumgang, which is 52m from east to west, 26m from north to south and 1m deep.

A legend has it that once upon a time, a mysterious crystal shining colourful beams day and night in Mt Kumgang was lost on the ridge of Sujong Peak and retrieved in this place.

The Sonchangchon Valley presents its own beauty with rocks, beautiful waterfalls and pools of various shapes.

The valley can be divided into Pansokdong with big rocks on the stream bed and Wonsokdong with round rocks.

Pansokdong comprises an area from Juhom Bridge north of Kosong County Town to Sumun Pool.

Found here are the Puttae, Paeksang, Kunsang, Mudae and Pidulgi rocks, Mulgae, Ryong, Ssanggidung, Som and Paekchong pools and Kari Falls.

Wonsokdong covers an area from the upper area of Sumunso to Sonchang Falls.

Here are such highlights as

Kom Rock, Sumunso, Unsil Falls, Sonchang Falls, Punju Falls and Kumju Falls.

Paekjongbong Section

This section comprises Paekjong Peak and Pari Peak southwest of Unjon-ri.

Paekjong Peak is 748m above sea level, a rocky hill located some three kilometres southwest of the seat of Unjon-ri.

Paekjong means one hundred cauldrons or one hundred wells. The peak carries a legend to the effect that a young boy in a nearby coastal village, while fishing for his neighbours, met Princess Su Yang, daughter of the Dragon King.

Legend A Young Fisherman and Princess Su Yang

Long known as Smaller Kumgang, the Paekjongbong section belongs to Outer Kumgang. The panoramic view of the section is much more beautiful when seen from the sea than from the land.

Paekjong Peak, the main peak

of this section, looks like kissing the heavens, and it overlooks a chain of peaks and mountains in various shapes that stretches southeast towards the sea, including Kumsu Peak, Mt Sonchang and Mt Pongjon.

The magnificent scenery comprises an odd sight resembling a shy girl—a small ridge nestling between Habaek and Sangbaek peaks, an hour's sail seawards from Chongsokjong.

The ridge, sometimes looking like a fingertip, is almost hidden by the adjoining hills, so it is not easily visible when you are sailing in a boat.

Fishermen in the locality call this ridge *Al*, and the nearby waters, which was named after it, carries the following old tale.

There once lived a boy called Chon Soe in a small fishermen's village near Paekjong Peak. His parents died when he was a child, and even after turning twenty, he was still a bachelor. He got along fine with his neighbours, catching

fishes and picking medicinal herbs.

One summer day an old man from a nearby village came to see Chon. His request was to obtain a lockington for his ailing wife. The fish was already out of season, as it usually occurred there in spring and autumn.

Seeing tears gathering in the old man's eyes, the young fisher accepted his request and told him to wait for a few days.

Upon sending him off with a smile, Chon sailed to the deep sea and managed to catch two lockingtons that day.

The old man was very pleased to receive them, but the boy, being caring and generous by nature, sailed back to the sea in hopes of getting more.

While his boat was at sea, a whirlwind arose. With the mast and rudder breaking off, the boat capsized and the boy went unconscious.

After a long while, Chon recovered consciousness. Opening his eyes,

he realized that some grotesque creatures were carrying him deep into the sea.

He was dragged into a crystal palace, where he met a princess called Su Yang. The princess threatened to punish him severely for violating the laws of the Palace of the Dragon King, but he stated that he had not done anything wrong. Impressed by his mettle, she ordered her subjects to give him a treat that night and release him.

On his way back home, Chon encountered a shark and fought bravely with it. The princess rescued him and took him to the beach near Mt Kumgang. She gave him lockingtons and an elixir, which she assured would help the ailing woman recover.

Then she requested him to guide her around the mountain, adding that she had made full preparations for the tour.

Chon agreed and rushed to his village with the fish and his fishing implements. Returning to where the

princess was waiting, he took her past Habaek Peak and followed a steep mountain path in a forest of pine trees.

After a while, they reached a small pond called Paekjung, to the east of which was a high cliff. The princess clapped her hands at the sight of a bell toad swimming in the crystal-clear water. She recalled that she and a tortoise had been there before, adding that she had not gone further because of the slow-moving creature.

She offered to go deeper into the mountain.

They passed the mid-slope of Habaek Peak with long rows of mysteriously-shaped rocks and arrived at a boulder which overlooked a chain of small ponds. These ponds came in various shapes—cauldron, manger, stone mortar, etc., which looked as if they had been manually dug.

Being shown around, the princess gave an exclamation of delight. The boy told her that there were a total of 100 ponds looking like cauldrons

or wells, adding that Paekjong, the name of the adjoining peak, was derived from them.

After touring Habaek Peak, they made their way towards Sangbaek Peak. The mountain path wore the princess out, and when they walked past a rock surrounded on three sides by rocky cliffs and arrived at a steep ridge, a narrow path on a bluff appeared in front of them.

The path on the edge of a precipice looked as if it had been roofed with rocks. Though trembling with fear, the princess insisted on going ahead. She asked Chon to hold her in his arms and cross the cliff.

Blushing, the boy held her in his arms and followed the narrow path.

Reaching the summit of Paekjong Peak, they enjoyed the beautiful scenery: To the east, the boundless blue sea was dotted with some islets and the white belt-like sandy beach looked like a folding screen, and to the south, the mountains and peaks including Mt Sonchang, Mt Pongjon and Seji

Peak were reminiscent of the dark green waves approaching towards Paekjong Peak. In particular, Kumsu Peak covered with thick forests offered wonderful views.

The boy and the princess climbed down and arrived at a valley, where the latter suggested having a rest.

While she was having a bath, Chon stripped the bark from a linden tree on a nearby hill to make a net.

When he came back, the princess Su Yang told him that Mt Kumgang was more beautiful than her palace and she would live there with him weaving nets and catching fish.

So, they built a small cottage on the sunny side of a nearby hill and lived there. A few days later, after getting up at dawn, Chon was preparing to go out to the sea, when Su Yang said to him, "When you are at sea, please look in this direction time and again. I will be waving my hand and my fingers will indicate where there are shoals of fish. And

as long as I am here, there will be no storm where you are.”

Afterwards, they got married and Chon often went fishing in the sea. As his wife said, there were shoals of fish where her fingers indicated, especially near the ridge of Paekjong

Peak. And even when the sea was stormy, it was placid where Chon was netting.

Chon worked hard, always thinking of his beautiful wife.

The villagers in and around the port of Tubaek were admiring the

couple. The man and his wife had many children and lived happily for a long time.

The low hill, where Su Yang is said to have turned into a rock while waving to Chon Soe, is now called Al Peak. The name Al means an

indication of a lot of fish and calm sea.

Fishermen in this region often relate this legend about the couple and Al Peak.



Inner Kumgang

Inner Kumgang comprises the western part of Mt Kumgang.

It borders on Outer Kumgang to the east, and is flanked by Piro Peak, the highest peak of Mt Kumgang, and others extending northwards, such as Ongnyo Peak, Sangdung Peak, Onjong Pass, O Peak and Kumsu Peak, and those extending southwards, including Wolchul, Ilchul, Chail, Paengma, Horyong and Wonsang peaks.

Inner Kumgang is famous for its wide and tranquil valleys. Its geographical features are relatively mild compared to those of Outer Kumgang.

There are many oddly-shaped stone gates, grooves and towers in valleys. So, the scenery of Inner Kumgang has long been noted for its feminine beauty, in striking contrast to that of Outer Kumgang.



Pirobong Section

This section comprises Piro, Yongnang, Poru, Wolchul, Ilchul and other main peaks.

Piro is the highest peak in the Mt Kumgang area. Its scenery varies by the season: In spring, flowering plants are in full bloom; in summer, the valleys are clad in fresh verdure; in autumn, the leaves turn red; and in winter, the peak is covered with snow and ice.

The valley near Yongnang Peak is

called Yongnang.

Here you can see the Sarang Rock, which looks like a mother holding her baby in her arms. According to the legend, a couple had a son after two decades of climbing the nearby pass to pray to the mountain god.

Pass this rock, and you can see a chain of rocks standing in a zigzag. Known as Silvery-Golden Ladder, they have silvery tints under the morning sun and golden tints under the setting sun. Hence the name.



Silvery-Golden Ladder

On a ridge between Piro and Yongnang peaks there is a broad and flat area called Pirogodae. All the trees in this area look as if they were lying down on the ground. Some subarctic alpine plants and such shrubs as Dahurian rhododendron, rhododendron and royal azalea are found here.

Kumgang County is located east of this area, and Piro Peak, 1 639m high, is on the border between this and Kosong County.

The most spectacular views from this peak are sunrise over the East Sea of Korea and the mountainscape under the setting sun.

Among the round rocks on the summit of this peak is one in the shape of a ship, called Pae.

Standing west of this peak is Yongnang Peak (1 601m), which is said to have been haunted by gods.

Walk along the path leading to the summit of Yongnang Peak, and you can see hundreds of species of plants. On a ridge adjacent to it is a big rock, which resembles a man on one side and a baby on his left shoulder on the

other. So, it is called Aegi.

In the Yongnang Valley you can also see Poru Peak resembling a general standing on a battery, as well as Wolchul and Ilchul peaks which offer majestic views of the mountain.

Sandwiched between Ilchul and Chail peaks is Anmu Pass linking Inner Kumgang with Outer Kumgang.

Manchon Section

This section starts at the Naegangri Village and ends at the Kumgang Gate (Wonhwa Gate) in Inner Kumgang. The name Manchon means ten thousand streams.

The section is divided into Naegang, Kumjang, Jangan and Phyohun valleys.

The Naegang Valley, situated at the entrance to Inner Kumgang, is the starting point of touring Inner Kumgang. In the vicinity of it is the site of the Jangyon Temple, where you can see one of its cornerstones and a three-tier pagoda.

A stone pagoda standing on four lion-shaped rocks is at the site of the Kumjang Hermitage which is located

on a hill to the left of the Kumjangam Valley. It is an old relic of historical value.

About 1km away from the site is Pidan Falls cascading down from a folding-screen-like cliff. The waterfall is 65m high, 103m long and 3m wide. A long narrow pool is between the tiers.

Above it is another two-tier waterfall called Hwabyongdae. In spring it was a picnic spot where flower pancakes were made; in summer, a shelter from the hot sun;



Pagoda at the site of Kumjang Hermitage

and in autumn, a place for enjoying the scenery of beautiful tints.

The valley where the Jangan Temple was located is called Jangan. With a length of about four kilometres, it covers an area from Naegang-ri via the site of the Jangan Temple to the Sambul Hermitage. With the Manchon Stream at its centre, it is flanked by a chain of peaks and covered with pine-nut trees.

The Jangan Temple, one of the four major temples in Mt Kumgang, was at the opposite side of Manchon Bridge at the entrance to the Jangan Valley. It was originally built in the 6th century and renovated or repaired several times thereafter. It was during the Fatherland Liberation War that the temple was destroyed in a US bombing raid.

Besides, the Manchon section includes many scenic spots, such as Ul (crying) Pool, Samhyongje (three brothers) Rocks and Sambulam Bridge (also called Yongson meaning a bridge for greeting heavenly saints), as well as Panggwangdae, Kaesimdae and Chonildae with fantastic views.



Ul Pool



Samhyongje Rocks

Legend of Panggwangdae

One day Wang Kon, the founder king of Koryo, was touring Inner Kumgang. Upon reaching a pass, he said he would not go further unless the Bodhisattva showed up. At that moment a light glared from a peak on the opposite site. The king took it as a sign of the Bodhisattva's coming and bowed deeply towards it. Later, the peak was called Panggwangdae (beaming light) and the pass, Paejae (bowing).

The section also has the Sambul Rock engraved with three Buddhist images. According to a source, Ra Ong, a monk in the period of Koryo (918-1392), proposed doing so.

The front of this rock has the images of Maitreya, Shakyamuni and Amitabha; its left side, two small



Sambul Rock

Buddhist images; and its back side, the images of 60 disciples of Buddha.

The Phyohun Valley comprises the scenic area from the Sambul Rock to the Kumgang Gate (Wonhwa Gate) in the Manchon Valley of Inner Kumgang.

The Phyohun Valley is noted for having wide stretches of pine and pine-nut forests, hills with fanciful rocks, and crystal-clear streams.

The Phyohun Temple is at the entrance of the Manphok Valley. Built



Phyohun Temple

in 670, the temple underwent repairs on several occasions and renovation in 1778.

Go past the Sambul Rock, and you can see the site of the Paekhwa Hermitage on the right side. Adjacent to it is a pavilion called Suchungyong, where the images of patriotic monks including Abbot Sosan and Samyongdang were preserved.

At the back of the site are four monuments and five stupas, including the monument to Abbot Sosan, most

of which were built in the early 17th century.

The monument to Abbot Sosan is also called monument to Saint Chonghodang Hyujong. It was built in 1632 in recognition of his remarkable contributions during the Imjin Patriotic War.

North of the Phyohun Temple is another temple called Jongyang, which commands a bird's-eye view of all the peaks and hills in Inner Kumgang. The temple was named so

for its location on the sunniest place on Mt Kumgang. Built in 600, the temple underwent repairs.

Manphok Section

Manphok means ten thousand waterfalls. The section was named so because there are a lot of waterfalls in this area from the Kumgang Gate (Wonhwa Gate) to the Hwaryong Pool.

Go some distance from the Phyohun Temple towards the Man Stream, and you can see the Kumgang Gate. It is also called Wonhwa Gate, which means the gate to a sea of flowers.

Go past the Kumgang Gate, and you can see crystal-clear streams flowing in the valleys, pools, grotesque rocks, cliffs and peaks. It seems as if the Kumgang Gate were the entrance to all these scenic beauties.

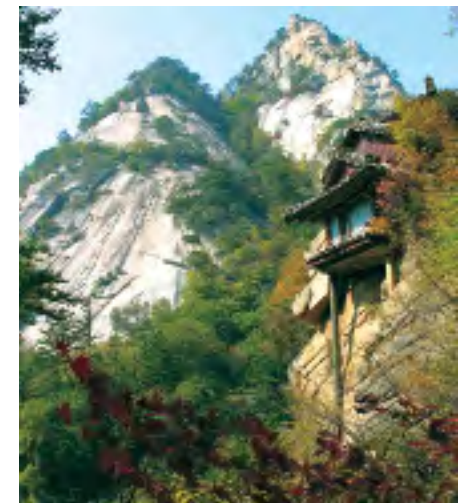
Among the scenic beauties are the Kumgang Gate, Kumgangdae, Hungryong Pool, Pipha Pool, Punsol Pool, Kwanum Falls, Jinju Falls and Saja Rock. On a boulder in the brook above Kwanum Falls is a round

hollow, called Sedubun, 74cm deep and 48cm in diameter.

Seen under Popkki Peak in the Manphok Valley is a succession of eight pools, which is called Inner Eight Pools, meaning eight pools in Inner Kumgang.

Another relic of historical interest in the Manphok section is the Podok Hermitage, which is said to have been built in the period of Koguryo. The hermitage perches on a 20m-high cliff southeast of Punsol Pool, one of the Inner Eight Pools.

Hanging halfway up the cliff, this is a single-room building supported



Podok Hermitage

by a 7.3m-long pillar. Behind it is the Podok Cave, 5.3m deep, 1.6-2m wide and 1-2m high.

The hermitage is said to have been built in 627, and it was rebuilt in 1675 and repaired in 1808.

Still precariously perched on the cliff, the hermitage has survived those long years of weathering and eroding.

In the Manphok section there is a tortoise-shaped rock. According to the legend, a tortoise from the Palace of the Dragon King came via a passageway to Mt Kumgang. The animal enjoyed the beautiful scenery, drinking water of high medicinal value at the Manphok Valley in Inner Kumgang. When it was high time for its return, it found itself too fat to enter the passageway and ended up turning into a rock.

Paegundae Section

This section comprises the area from the Hwaryong Rock to Sason Bridge on the upper portion of the Manphok Valley and, to the north, the peaks and gorges between Paegun Rock and Ryongchu Peak.

It is divided into Paegun, Sorok and Suryuhwagae valleys.

The Paegun Valley covers the area from Mahayon through the Manhoe Rock to the Paegun Rock. Some distance away from the Paegun Valley are oddly-shaped peaks which look like jade sculptures. Found in the nearby valley is *Kumgang-chorong*, a plant unique to Mt Kumgang.

Above the Hwaryong Pool, the last one of the Inner Eight Pools, is the site of the Mahayon Temple.

It was a big temple with 53 rooms, each having an area of about 7m². Built in 661, it was repaired and rebuilt several times. The last building dated from 1831, which was destroyed in a US bombing raid during the Fatherland Liberation War.

Being located at the centre of Mt Kumgang, the temple served as a lodging house for those who toured Inner Kumgang and Outer Kumgang.

On the left side of this site is a small stream. Some distance up the stream, you can see Chilsong Pavilion, an annex to the temple, and at a 600m point, Ryonhwadae

preserved in its original state.

Lying at the junction of sightseeing paths, the site offers wonderful views. Here you can see a pavilion. The pavilion, 48m² in area, was built in 1964. Being located on a flat area, 846m above sea level, the site leads to Piro Peak and Outer Kumgang via the Statue of Amitabha.

Northeast of the Paegun Rock, famous for Kumgang Mineral Spring, is Junghyangsong Peak with towering stone pillars displaying gorgeous tints of white and grey.

Climb Ryongchu Peak on the left side of the site of the Manhoe Hermitage, and you can see a valley called Sorok. It is also called Kasop, which was named after the Kasop Cave in the valley. It is noted for dense forests and scenic spots such as Sorok Pool, Hwangok Pool, Naemanmulsang and Ryongchu Peak.

There is a valley called Hwagae or Suryuhwagae, which starts at the Puljigol Stream and ends at Sason Bridge. And in the Pulji Valley is the Pulji Hermitage, the name of which is derived from a tale that a Buddha was

dug out in this place.

In front of the hermitage is a spring called Kamnosu.

Legend Paek Un Hak Discovers Kamnosu (Kumgang Mineral Spring)

Once upon a time there lived a man named Paek Un Hak in the Kumgang Village.

Having suffered from a stomach disorder since his childhood, he was weak and infirm.

One day, after a bout of severe pain, he fell into a nap. He had a strange dream, in which he saw an old man calling himself the god of Kumgang. The old man said that there was a mineral spring under a high cliff of Mt Kumgang, adding that the water was a cure for all diseases, including his stomach disorder.

Waking up, Paek was reminded of an old story about a mysterious spring in the mountain. He immediately set off for the Manphok Valley. His long search all over the mountain yielded nothing. One day, trudging with a stick on his way back to the Manphok

Valley, he saw a Manchurian crane flying in the direction of the Paegun Rock, seemingly with one of its wings injured.

After a good while, the crane circled overhead with its wings spread wide.

Paek wondered why and made his way to the Paegun Rock, where he discovered a trickling stream of blue water. He tried a handful of it, and then drank two more handfuls. In no time he found himself cured of the chronic disease. Feeling invigorated, he returned home.

Afterwards, it was named Kumgang Mineral Spring. It soon became widely known, attracting an endless stream of people from across the country.

Walk some distance past Hwagae Pool, and the site of the Myogilsang Hermitage comes into sight. Behind it is a cliff embossed with a 15m-high and 9.4m-wide image of Buddha in a sitting posture. This is the Statue of Amitabha, the largest of its kind in Korea, which dates back to the period

of Koryo. Found around it are the flowers of *Kumgang-chorong*, which was registered on the list of natural monuments.



Statue of Amitabha

Myonggyongdae Section

Cross Manchon Bridge, and, to the right, you will see the Paekchon Valley. The Myonggyongdae section, noted for the scenery of large rocks, comprises the Paekchon Valley and the adjoining valleys—Ryongwon and Paekthap—as well as Paengma and Chail peaks. It is divided into

Paekchon, Ryongwon, Suryom and Paekthap valleys.

A valley between Sokka and Sibwang peaks, Paekchon has such scenic spots as Paekchon Falls, Paekchon Pool, Ori Rock, Okkyongdae and Okkyong Pool.

This valley is noted for a yellowish boulder, called Myonggyong Rock. Lying on a hill beside Okkyong Pool, it is a mirror-shaped rock with a flat surface. Some 90m high and 30m wide, it shows

silvery and golden tints under the setting sun.

A legend has it that this is a mysterious rock mirroring a person's innermost thoughts.

Also found in this valley are such natural caves as Hukssa and Hwangsa.



Myonggyong Rock

Ryongwon is one of the deepest valleys in Mt Kumgang. Noted for its tranquillity and sublimity, the valley has Jothapjang, Udumamyon Peak, the site of the Ryongwon Hermitage, Okchodae and Chilsong Rock (a chain of seven queer rocks in the shape of the Great Bear).

Okchodae, which commands a bird's-eye view of the Ryongwon Valley, consists of five rocks standing in a zigzag near the site of the Ryongwon Hermitage. An old tale goes that a monk of the hermitage used to play a jade flute here, seeing cranes and other birds dancing to the tune of his music.

Okchodae has a desk-shaped rock in front and Yongwoldae on the opposite site.

Adjacent to the site of the Ryongwon Hermitage is the Michul Rock.

There is an old tale connected with this rock. Once upon a time, a monk called Ryongwon built a hermitage in this out-of-the-way valley. There he focused on his studies of Buddhism, living on the grains of rice sent by Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha through a hole of a nearby rock. Contenting himself with the supply of this rice, he studied hard and mastered the doctrine of Buddhism. Eventually, his untiring efforts earned him fame within his Buddhist sect. After his death, a greedy man came there and

poked at the hole to get more rice. From then on, no more grains came out.

The Suryom Valley, famous for having many clear brooks flowing down on large rocks, has such scenic spots as Ryonhwa Pool, Panya Rock and Suryom Falls.

Suryom Falls is a 32.5m-long, low-gradient waterfall, and above it, there is a stone hollow, 50cm in diameter and 1m or so deep.

The Paekthap Valley is well known as a beautiful valley with many natural stone towers.

Among the stone towers are



Tabo Tower

Mun (a pair of rocks, both over 20m high), Jungmyong (30m high) and Tabo (50m high and 20m in diameter). Along with these, the two-tier waterfalls like Jungmyong and Sibwang, both with the height of 30m, and 70m-high Kangson Falls add beauty to the valley.

Manggundae Section

This section comprises Manggundae and the Songna Valley.

Manggundae commands a panoramic view of Inner Kumgang.

The Songna Valley was named after the Songna Hermitage in the valley.

The valley is noted for having dense forests of broadleaved trees and a shallow brook.

Here there are many famous waterfalls, including those that flow only in the rainy season, as well as Songnadae, Kumgang Fort and the site of the Songna Hermitage.

Songnadae commands a panoramic view of valleys and peaks, Piro Peak in particular, between Inner Kumgang and Outer

Kumgang.

Some distance away, you can see Kumgang Fort, also called Manggun Fort for its location in the Manggundae section.

It affords a fine view of Songnadae, and Uija, Ponghwang, Mae and other oddly-shaped rocks, as well as precipitous cliffs and narrow paths.

A peak north of Songnadae, Manggundae has white rocks on its summit. It is also called Manggodae, being the second best lookout in Mt Kumgang after Piro Peak.

Hyolmang Peak faces Manggundae. When viewed from Manggundae, it has a big hole on its summit. A legend has it that this hole was made by a dragon or the god of thunder.

Manggun Fort was built around 935, a semicircular stone structure, 260m long, 3m high and 2m wide. It was a bulwark against any possible enemy attack from Naegumgang-ri. On the top of it there still remain piles of large stones.

Thaesang Section

The Thaesang section comprises a valley with the Thaesang Stream which is a tributary of the Man Stream, the Wonthong Valley in the left fork of Kumgangdae in the Manphok Valley, and the nearby Sumi Valley.

Its scenery is characterized by placid waterfalls and pools and fairly big rocks.

In the Wonthong Valley are waterfalls and pools in tiers along the stream, and they are noted for their smooth watercourses and peaceful scenery.

There are the Chongho Pool of indigo-blue water in a deeply cracked rock, the gourd-shaped Phyjubak Pool under a waterfall, Ryongsang and Ryonggok pools carrying a legendary tale of a dragon having descended on them, Simdan Falls cascading down in three tiers through the tortuous cracks, and Sujong Falls which flows smoothly from some two-metre-high flat rock and thus looks like a curtain of crystal beads.

Go past Sujong Falls, and you can

see Ryongchudae on the right and Haksodae on the left, both known as lookouts offering wonderful views.

In the Sumi Valley, where it is said the Sumi Hermitage was once located, are a pool with a wonderful view, mysteriously-shaped rocks and natural stone tower.

Seven beautiful pools in the Sumi Valley and the Kuyu Pool at the end of the Wonthong Valley are referred to as Sumi Eight Pools.

Jijang Peak soars in the direction of the north linked with Kangsondae, and halfway up the peak is the Janggun Rock, nearly 20m tall, in the shape of a man.

Under it is the site of the Son Hermitage, and to the west are the Kom (bear) Rock, Taramjwi (squirrel) Rock and Mundap Rocks in the shape of Buddhist monks talking to each other.

Under the rocks is Chongkok Spring associated with a legendary tale of General Chongsok who fought to defend Mt Kumgang.

In the Sumi Valley is the Sumi Tower, a natural stone tower. It looks

swollen at the bottom and becomes narrower upwards, and is capped with several layers of flat stones on a big stone.

On the top are two horn-like stones. Natural stone towers in the Sumi Valley, including the Sumi Rock, are 50-60m tall and rotund.

As such natural stone towers are scattered in large numbers at the end of the valley, it was also called Kunok, meaning the valley of stone towers stringed en masse.

The Kunok Valley has three other stone towers that are looking round and soft-lined. Though they differ in size and shape, they offer a spectacular view in good harmony with the surrounding forests.

Kusong Section

The Kusong section comprises scenic spots in the Kusong Valley at the southeastern fork from Tanphung-ri of Kumgang County and the Jinbu (Kimbu) Valley.

It is divided into Hagusong, Sanggusong and Jinbu valleys.

The Hagusong Valley includes

the area between the mouth of the Kusong Valley and Ogyong Falls.

There is a wormwood plot in the village to the east of the seat of Sinphung-ri. According to the legend, there lived a man named Kim Tong Ji in the village. One day he came across three saints on Sinsondae and enjoyed a pleasant time with them before having a sleep. He woke up and went back to the village, only to find that half a century had passed. He had no family, and his home was overgrown with wormwood.

In the Hagusong Valley are 4m-deep Kuil Pool and 16m-high Kuil Falls. On entering the Kusong Valley on the left of the Kuil Pool and going for a while along a path between cliffs, there is Kumsu Falls, 12m high and 3m wide. The pool under the waterfall is three times deeper than the Kuryong Pool with a depth of 13 metres.

In addition, there are beautiful scenic spots including Kusongryonju, Unsil and Kugi falls and Kugi Pool.

Ogyong Falls (31m high and 3m wide) is at the junction of the



Ogyong Falls

watercourses from Ongnyo and Yongnang peaks in the upper part of the Hagusong Valley. And in the valley on its left is Raksang Falls formed by the water funnelling through Raksin and Sangdung peaks. It is also called Sokjo for the fantastic view under the setting sun.

The Sanggusong Valley abounds with myriads of rocks, big and small waterfalls and pools.

Head Wolmyong's Bean Field lies between Yongnang and Ryongho peaks.

Legend Head Wolmyong's Bean Field

Once upon a time there lived a diligent and kind-hearted old man in a small village, called Pongjon, in Hoeyang County.

One day the old man entered the Kusong Valley to collect firewood, when he saw a young man in white dress and with a blue straw hat on. Out of curiosity he followed the stranger, until he saw a cosy, little cottage deep in the valley. As he approached the cottage, the door

opened and a beautiful girl appeared.

Warmly welcoming him, she introduced herself as Head Wolmyong living in the Kusong Valley. Two other girls ushered him into the cottage.

In the middle of the room was a big table groaning with fragrant wine and all sorts of delicacies. Enjoying the lavish hospitality of the girls, the old man drank unreservedly. After a while, he suddenly thought of home and rose to go back. The girls told him to wait for a moment and went out with some soybean seeds in their hands.

He looked out through the window to see the girls sowing seeds on a low hill behind the cottage. Strangely enough, the seeds, as soon as they were sown, sprouted, came into leaf, produced fruits and ripened yellow.

Filled with wide-eyed wonder, he suddenly remembered that there was a rumour of saints living in the Kusong Valley. "The girls are the very saints," he thought and kept an eye on them.

The girls came into the house, each with an armful of ripened soybean stalks, prepared bean

curd in an instant and served him, and packed foods for his journey. After repeatedly acknowledging their favour and saying goodbye, he left the cottage and arrived at his village in the evening. Then he was surprised to find no traces of his house which had been there until that morning, but only overgrown weeds and grasses.

Though he visited the neighbouring village, he could not find any acquaintances. He then called on the village's elder. After listening to him, the elder said, "Only their descendants are now living here."

Then the old man understood, "An old saying goes, 'A day in the Heaven is equivalent to hundreds of years in the human world.' When I was enjoying a day in the Kusong Valley, hundreds of years passed here."

Since then, the Pongjon Village was called a "wormwood-grown village" and the tableland, on which the girl Wolmyong farmed soybeans, "Head Wolmyong's Bean Field."

Sea Kumgang

Sea Kumgang comprises Kosong and Thongchon counties in Kangwon Province along the East Sea of Korea. It provides unique scenery of Mt Kumgang's magnificent and peculiar branches stretching to the sea having been influenced by tidal wave, abrasion and weathering.

It counts among the best coastal scenic beauties of Korea, together with Monggumpho and Kumipho on the West Sea of Korea.

Sea Kumgang is noted for the beautiful scenery of lakes, seaside and sea floor.

Lagoon Samil, Lake Yongnang and Lake Kam impress the people with refreshing, pure, and serene views. And Sea Manmulsang, Chongsokjong and other rocks on the seaside and wave- and weather-worn rocks on the sea floor make another wonderland.

The scenery of Sea Kumgang is famous for having both the masculinity of Outer Kumgang with many peaks and the femininity of Inner Kumgang with many valleys, and also for its peculiar beauty of coasts and lakes.



Samilpho Section

This section includes such scenic spots as Lagoon Samil including its islets and Janggundae, Pongnaedae and Ryonhwadae, Mong Spring, Kumgang Gate and the site of Haesan Pavilion.

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 view. Covering an area of 0.78km², the lagoon is about

6.5km in circumference, 2km long, 0.4km wide and 9-13m deep. Around it is a bamboo forest of 300 hectares. Most of the bamboos are more than 10 metres tall.

Janggundae, Pongnaedae and Ryonhwadae and other lookouts and Wau Islet clothed in pine trees are also the scenic spots around the lagoon, which all harmonize with the seascape.

There is Mong (dream) Spring at the foot of a mountain north of



Lagoon Samil

Lagoon Samil.

According to the legend, an old monk planned to build a temple in this scenic area, but could not find any source of water nearby. One day he lied down on the grass, thinking how to find it, and fell into sleep. In his dream an old, grey-bearded man on a fog 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 delicious. He cleaned the site of the spring and left on the rock an inscription about how the spring was discovered.

Going up about 100 metres from the spring, there is the Kumgang Gate on a hill. Two huge rocks stand face to face and a broad flat rock is on them as if it were the roof. This is the natural stone gate, 5-6 metres high, 1.5-2 metres wide and 4-5 metres long, which is one of the typical stone gates in Mt Kumgang.

In this section are Rojok, Hambak, Ttan, Yeryun and Siru peaks, as well as Kuson Peak (187m) which

has a legendary tale that nine saints descended to this picturesque peak from the Heaven to enjoy a dancing party.

Sea Manmulsang Section

This section covers the coastal area from Suwondan in Haegumgang-ri, Kosong County, to Hagubongsong at the mouth of the Nam River, as well as Lake Yongnang and Lake Kam to the south of the river.

It comprises myriad-shaped



Sea Manmulsang



Parts of Sea Kumgang

rocks in the sea, resembling those of Manmulsang, islets clad in pine trees, and lagoons.

An old saying goes that without seeing Sea Manmulsang you could hardly know the beauty of Kumgang.

Sea Manmulsang means myriad-shaped rocks standing in the sea.

Found underwater are lots of blue mussels, oysters, sea urchins, trepangs, sea cucumbers, etc.

Here you can see the Haegumgang Gate designated as a natural monument, picturesque tall stone pillars with a few old pine trees on them, and Sol Islet, a 50m-high rock

islet clad in pine trees.

Also, there are such rocks as Chilsong (seven stars), Saja (lion), Pubu (couple), Pae (boat), Sagong (boatman) and Hyonjong, as well as Lake Yongnang and Lake Kam.

Chongsokjong Section

This section comprises scenic spots in the northern part of Mt Kumgang, including stone pillars and Kumnan Cave in Thongchon.

It is widely known for having angular stone pillars soaring on the seashore and rocky cliffs with many caves formed by the erosion of seawater.

On the slope of the seaside are tens of thousands of hexagonal basalt pillars, both long and angular, that stretch more than 1 000m. Basalt pillars range in length from 15m to 20m, one side of their hexagonal shape being 90cm at the longest.

The distinctive caves rooted in the blue seawater are associated with an interesting legend. The sunrise over



Chongsokjong



Samhyongje Rocks

Chongsokjong and its night scenery have been famous since olden times. In its vicinity there are a natural stone bridge, Pubu (couple) Rock, Kobuk (turtle) Rock and other myriad-shaped rocks. And seen in their crevices are nests for sea swallows and common murre.

Located on the seashore east of Thongchon County Town,

Chongsokjong is a mass of stone pillars that come in various shapes—lying, standing, sitting, etc.

Legend of Chongsokjong

Once upon a time, there lived a boy and his sister in a small village in the Thongchon area commanding a bird's-eye view of Chongsokjong and Kuk Islet.

After losing their parents to Japanese pirates, they toiled for years as servants of a landlord in the neighbouring village. One summer day they got up early and left home. They were gathering firewood in a deep mountain, when a grey-haired man with a stick in his hand appeared before them. The old man told them that he had practised martial arts in Mt Kumgang for decades, promising that he would accept them as his disciples.

From then on, they often climbed the mountain to learn swordsmanship and other skills.

Meanwhile, they joined the villagers in setting up a fort near the beach. The brother sailed out to

Kuk Islet, where he gathered up big rocks in a mountain to chisel them into hexagonal pillars. On the other hand, his sister carried those pillars one by one and put them up on the seashore.

One day, being engrossed in his chiselling work, the brother saw Japanese boats edging closer to the islet. He immediately took up his weapons and rushed towards the boats. He jumped onto one boat after another and mowed down the Japs. He was soon joined by his sister, who dashed in from the land. At that moment, dark clouds gathered and a terrible storm arose, overturning all the pirate boats. Along with them had gone the brave boy and his sister. The islet looks as if it were cut off on one of its corners, which is said to be where the brother tore down a mountain to obtain big rocks, and it is also said that Chongsokjong is made up of those pillars carried there by his sister.

To the east of Thongchon County Town, you can see a hill affording

an extensive view of Chongsokjong that features stone pillars in various shapes—lying, standing and sitting.

About 500m away from Thongchon County Town, there are islets like Chon, Tongdok and Sa. A scenic spot in this area is the Kumnan Cave which is about 7km southeast of Chongsokjong on the northern coast of Kumnan-ri, Thongchon County. It is five to seven metres high, three to four metres wide and 15m deep. The deeper you go into the cave, the higher it gets in elevation. Its width decreases from five to three metres, so only a small boat can enter it.

At the mouth of this cave a 30cm-long plant, called herb of eternal youth, is said to be hanging upside down from a crevice.

In the waters off Kumnan-ri which is 12km away from Thongchon County Town (9.82km away from Kumnan-ri), there is Al Islet that was designated as a seabird breeding ground.

Tongjongho Section

This section comprises scenic

spots in the northern part of Mt Kumgang between Kuk Islet in the waters off Thongchon County, Amnyong headland and Thongchon County Town.

The scenic spots include Kuk Islet, Lake Tongjong, Lagoon Chona and Lake Sijung.

The section is noted for having myriad-shaped stone pillars on Kuk Islet, which can be called the archetype of Sea Kumgang, and a sandy beach with sweet briars and flocks of wild ducks. It abounds with mud of high medicinal value.

Kuk Islet is in the waters off Mt Ja in Thongchon County. It is 0.1km² in area, 1.31km in circumference and 41m at the highest point.

Found on this islet are *Echinopanax elatus*, dwarf sumach, *Malus baccata*, mulberry, arrow bamboo and medicinal wormwood.

Three sides of the islet are cliffs, which provide habitats for such seabirds as cormorant, spectacled guillemot, common guillemot and sea gull.

The scenery of the islet is dotted

with stone pillars standing in tiers and other fantastic rocks such as Khokkiri (elephant) Rock and Mulgae (seal) Rock.

Lake Tongjong is a lagoon located in Kunsan-ri in the northern coastal area of Thongchon County, Kangwon Province.

It is 19km in circumference, 4.84km² in area and 2.8-5m in depth.

It is used for such purposes as fish farming, irrigation and cultural recreation.

It is teeming with dace, trout, carp, goldfish, snakehead, grass fish, silver carp, sea bream, eelsucker and other fishes of high nutritive value. Corbicula in particular is in growing demand among tourists.

There is an endless stream of people who come here for mud treatment.

Lagoon Chona is some distance south of Lake Tongjong.

It forms a chain of lagoons, along with Lake Tongjong in the north and Lake Sijung in the south.

It is 14.7km in circumference, 3.01km² in area and 1m in depth on average.

The name Chona (Koni) is derived from the swans that migrate here for wintering. The birds come to the lagoon in late October and fly away in next April.

There is a flat plain around the lagoon, and sweet briars occur on the 4km-long, narrow beach, adding beauty to the scenery.

The lagoon is famous for having a three to four metre-thick layer of mud containing sand and hydrogen sulfide.

The watery mud is widely used for the treatment of inflammation, neuralgia, ulcer and injuries.

Lake Sijung is also a lagoon, 10.1km in circumference, 2.72km² in area and 3.5 to 6m in depth.

About 300m away from it there can be seen the East Sea of Korea and clusters of stone walls, giving an impression that the lake is linked with the sea.

The low hills surrounding the lake are thick with pine groves, and sweet briars bloom on its sandy beach. In autumn, the nearby persimmon trees bear fruit.

There stands a pavilion to the east of the lake, where you can enjoy the seascape comprising seven islets like U (Thoran), Song, Cho, Juk, Sok,

Sung and Paek.

Here you can have a pleasant time sunbathing, boating and angling.

It is also famous for having ash-gray, odourless and soft mud of high medicinal value.

The mud piles up layer by layer with the passage of time, and it is highly efficacious in treating various diseases, among others, inflammatory and neurological.

The Sijungho Sanatorium covers an area of over 566 000m², a modern treatment facility with mud treatment room, mud preparation room, physiotherapy room and sunbathing section.

An ideal angling site, the lake is teeming with carp, goldfish, eel, dace, gray mullet, etc.



Mt Kumgang

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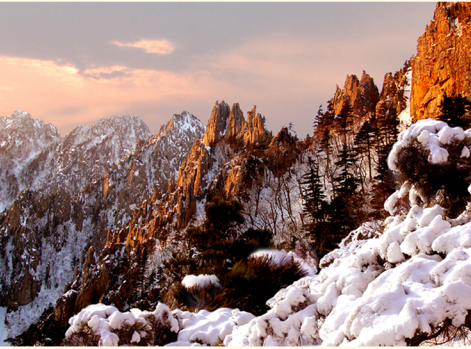
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