

## THE NORTH: MT. PAEKDU & SAMJIYON

*Oh Paektu, sacred mountain  
The mountain crests are folded in your hands  
Like the spikes of a fan. / Your grey mane floats on high above the clouds  
And for thousands of centuries you have seen  
All that lies below you.*

- From the revolutionary poem Mt. Paektu (1947) by Chon Jo Ki.

*The Millennium Eruption of Mt. Paektu (known as Changbaishan in China), circa 946 AD, is one of the largest in the historical record... The eruption is thought to have formed the 5-km-wide caldera at its summit that host Lake Chon.*

- Ri et al. 2016

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Tradition says that the Korean people originated from the wilderness around volcanic Mt. Paekdu – a charming folk story of a tiger and bear undergoing a garlic-involved ritual here that led to the creation of the first Koreans can be explained by your guides. At 2,750m, Mt. Paekdu is the peninsula's highest peak, a massive sleeping volcano topped with the beautiful Lake Chon (Heaven Lake), the lake formed from one of the largest eruptions in recorded human history. The region is also closely associated with the guerilla struggle to liberate Korea from Japanese colonial rule and thus has great spiritual, historic, and revolutionary significance for the Korean people.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Mt. Paekdu is only accessible by special charter flight (1 hour) from Pyongyang in August or September arranged for group tours. It is possible for private tours to ride the same flight and continue a private tour on arrival. Contact us for more details and available dates.

The roads around Mt. Paekdu are bumpy and rudimentary, but the scenery and how it changes from dense forest to scrubland, to remote mountainside is remarkable and well-worth the effort. Timber is produced, berries are harvested, and one of the most fascinating sights is that of groups of Korean visitors from other parts of the country marching through the area dressed in the style of the 1930s-40s guerilla army – learning about the past while re-enacting it at the same time.

## MT. PAEKDU ATTRACTIONS & ACCOMODATION



◇◇ **Mt. Paekdu crater rim and Lake Chon**  
Ascend to the highest point in all of Korea (on foot, or by funicular railway) for amazing views of the highest crater lake in the world, sitting in the caldera of the volcano. A breathtaking and remote place of stunning and unique scenery - unforgettable in fact. From the top one can either walk down or cable car (weather permitting) to the lake itself to sample the crystal-clear waters. Basic facilities on site, but a picnic lunch to maximise the time here is recommended.



**Mt. Paekdu Secret Camp**  
The guerilla headquarters of General Kim Il Sung during the anti-Japanese struggle set in hidden alpine valley lined by towering peaks and said to be the birthplace of leader Kim Jong Il. See the reconstructed camp telling of how the guerillas lived year in and year out.

**Pochonbo Revolutionary Site**  
Site of the first conventional battle between leader Kim Il Sung's guerilla army and a Japanese garrison. Here you can see monuments commemorating the battle and the former command post, town, etc. from colonial times.



◇ **Rimyongsu Waterfall**  
A scenic waterfall which never freezes due despite chilling alpine winters. The waterfall also provides hydroelectric power to neighboring villages.

**Samjiyon Schoolchildren's Palace**  
Centre of extracurricular activities in the arts, music, and sports for local children with a performance available on weekdays.

### ACCOMODATION

**Pegaebong Hotel**  
The only option in this area. Located on the edge of Samjiyon Town. A well-maintained place offering hospitable service, a range of potato-based dishes (spuds are the main crop in this area) as well as billiards and a very nice garden area. The hill opposite (Pegaebong means 'pillow hill') has a ski run on it, open only in deep winter, when it is almost impossible to get here! The hill itself is made out of lava erupted from Mt. Paekdu.



◇ **Samjiyon Grand Monument**  
Vast complex of bronze statues, including one of President Kim Il Sung, and stone monuments next to a scenic alpine lake. One of three 'grand monuments' in the country and a truly impressive scenic/propaganda wonder. On the site that the army paused before their first major military engagement. Look for Mt. Paekdu in the background on a clear day.







photo credit: Austin Andrews