

## Lake Chon on Mt Paektu



Lake Chon is located on the crest of Mt Paektu (2 750m), the highest mountain of the Korean peninsula. The lake was formed on the crater of a volcano erupted about a million years ago

It is 9.17 sq kilometres in area, 384 m deep and contains 1 955 million cubic metres of water. It is the deepest of the crater lakes in the world.

Its magnificent looks, secrets about the activities of ancient volcanoes and peculiar natural phenomena have attracted the attention of geologists, volcanologists and explorers from olden times.

A waterspout rises now and then on the lake. A gale kicks up a column of water hundreds of metres high, which spins round and round making a big vortex and wrapping the lake with thick fog. When a whirlwind bursts, it blows off dusts,

pumices and stones hundreds of metres high, often covering the area of hundreds of square metres. Ancient people believed that such a phenomenon was caused by a dragon flying up to the sky and venerated the lake calling it Dragon Pond.



Sometimes a gale blows at random and subdues suddenly creating primeval tranquility. Other times clouds over the lake disperse in an instant revealing the blue sky and casting a reflection of peaks of the mountain on the crystal clear water of the lake.

The weather of Mt Paektu is ever-changing. It is not uncommon that torrential rains suddenly stop, followed by a fall of large snow flakes and hailstones and rhododendrons bloom in snowy season.

Colourful clouds and double rainbow often appear in the sky over the lake. Also quite spectacular is the nocturnal scene of the lake when the moon and stars are mirrored on its serene water.

Piping hares, moose freshwater turtles, chars and other animals of special species live in and around the lake. Seabirds like gulls and albatrosses have been found. Even the yellow-eared turtle, which is a rare animal in the world, has been spotted several times.

The water of the lake is recognized as an ideal drinking water in terms of chemical composition and hygiene.

During the first half of the last century, President Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) organized the anti-Japanese armed struggle to liberate Korea with Mt Paektu as the centre. And Chairman Kim Jong Il was born on February 16, 1942 in the mountain amid the flames of the struggle.