

**LEGENDS OF THE  
KUMGANG MOUNTAINS**

# **Legends of the Kumgang Mountains**

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**Foreign Languages Publishing House  
Pyongyang, Korea  
1990**

## **Editor's Note**

Our country boasts a five-thousand-year-long history and brilliant national culture; many folk tales have been handed down through the generations.

The Kumgang mountains in Kangwon Province in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, are renowned for their beautiful scenery and many legends.

The 12,000 magnificent peaks of the Kumgang mountains, and the rocks and ridges there, have given rise to many interesting stories which have been handed down to us by our forefathers.

Our editorial board has selected 25 stories from among them and publishes them in translation in several languages.

March, 1990

## CONTENTS

A Mysterious Spring  
The Turtle That Failed to Return to the Dragon King's Palace  
The Ballad of the White Bellflower  
The Fairy of the Kumgang Mountains  
Mirror Rock  
A Tal Flower  
The Hyoyang Pass  
The Picture Drawn on a Silk Skirt  
The Twenty-Year Pass  
The Old Man in the Mannyang Valley  
Mangyang Rock  
Poyong and Jangsoe  
Unsadari and Kumsadari  
Frog Rock  
A Minister from the Sky Deprived of His Coronet  
Handol and Tudol  
Hare Rock  
Hanbong and Podok  
Jangsu Rock  
Nodo Chestnut Trees  
Three Brothers and a Pony  
The Girl from Kumnosu Village  
Unson Rock  
The Wise Otter  
The Bear That Failed to Eat Acorns



## A Mysterious Spring

The majestic and awe-inspiring peaks, picturesque valleys and dense forests of the Kumgang mountains are covered with flowers in spring and turn to a blaze of autumnal colours in autumn; the scenery is superb.

But you cannot speak of the beauty of the Kumgang mountains without mentioning water.

There are many interesting legends associated with the streams flowing through the deep and shallow valleys of the Kumgang mountains; there is even a legend told about a small spring which gushes out halfway up a cliff.

Once upon a time a kindhearted and hard-working old man and his wife lived in Onjong village in the Kumgang mountains.

Every day the old man went up the mountain to collect the famous medicinal herbs there, while his wife tended the vegetable plot in front of their hut and wove hemp cloth. Theirs was a happy life.

One sultry summer day the old man as usual went up the ravine below the Peak of Ten Thousand Forms to collect herbs, a stick in his hand.

It was so hot that the old man felt extremely thirsty and went to look for water, without having gathered many herbs.

He came across a spring of crystal-clear water gushing out halfway up a cliff. Being thirsty, he drank his fill.

His whole body suddenly felt languid, as if he was drunk. He yawned several

times and then fell asleep at the side of the spring.

When he awoke after a long sleep the sun was setting over the Onjong Pass.

"Dear me! I've slept late. I must go now," he muttered to himself and started for home, slinging his net bag over his shoulder. He felt so well and so invigorated that he reached home before dusk.

He entered the yard and found his wife busy preparing supper in the kitchen.

She looked at him but failed to recognize him.

She usually rushed out to the brushwood gate to meet him and take his net bag from him. Hurt by her strange behaviour, the old man said: "My dear, have you lost your sight today? I've been up the mountain in the sweltering heat, but you look at me as if I were a stranger."

At this his old wife became angry and said, with a poker in her hand, "What? Are you out of your mind? Am I your wife? Nonsense. Young man, behave yourself. How dare you call me, a grey-haired old woman, your wife? Curse you!"

Amazed, the old man could only stare at his old wife as she advanced, poker in hand.

He wondered whether she had gone mad. She did not recognize her husband who had left her only that morning!

The old man, who was staring in front of her with unseeing eyes, removed his net bag and, producing a wrapped lunch box from it, threw it in front of her. "Isn't this the lunch box you gave me this morning? Are you so old?"

The angry old man made his way to the stream in front of his hut.

Once at the stream he dipped his hands into the water to wash his face. But, when he saw in the water the reflection of the face of a young man looking up into his, he was so startled that he fell on his buttocks. The old man gazed into the water again, blinking his eyes, only to see a young man looking up at him, blinking his eyes.

The reflection of the young man's face in the water reminded him of when he was a young man.

"Why, that is the reflection of my face! Yes, I looked like that when I was



married," he thought.

His face was lit up by a smile and he was beside himself with joy.

"How have I become so young?" he wondered.

The old man pondered, passing his hand over his face, and then suddenly slapped his knee and said to himself: "Oh, I know! It was because of that spring water. It is the mineral water that makes old men young. That was why I was able to return home without the aid of my stick. How wonderful!"

The old man hurried into the yard and told his wife about the mysterious water he had drunk that day.

Then everything became clear to the old woman.

"It seems like a dream. I hope it's not a dream," she thought to herself. She suddenly shrugged her shoulders and plumped down on the earthen verandah, saying, "What a shame! I am now over seventy, how can I live with a man who looks like my grandson?"

The old man understood what was on her mind. The next morning he took her to the mysterious spring in the valley of the Peak of Ten Thousand Forms, helping her along.

"Here we are. This is the spring water that has made me young," the old man, who had run up to the spring, called out to his wife.

On seeing the spring the old woman, who had followed her husband with difficulty, exclaimed, "My gracious!"

Halfway up the cliff, which was barren of plants and moss, crystal-clear water was gushing out, raising a mist.

"Now, drink your fill of the spring water."

The old man scooped up some water with a cup made of the leaf of a tree and handed it to his wife. She drank the water that was as cold as ice. Before long drowsiness overcame the old woman, and she fell asleep. While sleeping, she grew younger and younger. At first her hair, which was as white as the roots of a scallion, turned black and then the wrinkles disappeared from her face, leaving not a trace. Presently her back was unbent and her whole body recovered its full vigour. In a moment the old woman was as young as a girl of twenty.

What a wonderful thing! the old man thought. At the sight of his wife, who had become young again, the old man was beside himself with joy. He shook her awake.

"Hey! That's enough. Wake up! Now you're as young as I am. You look as pretty as the day you married me."

Overjoyed, the old man clasped her hands in his. The old woman woke up and saw her face reflected in the spring water.

"I really look as young as a girl. Even my voice sounds young." She was filled with joy.

"You're another woman."

"Now there is nothing in the world for us to envy."

The happy old couple looked over the scenery with delight.

From the blue sky over the sheer rising cliff the setting sun beamed down upon them, and they could see magnificent Chacha and Chipson Peaks in the distance, rising above a sea of golden mist.

"My dear, is this really our Kumgang mountains?"

Delighted by the beauty of the scenery, the old woman spoke as if she had never been there before.

"Certainly, this is the Kumgang mountains. We have worked hard to earn our living every day and have failed to enjoy the wonderful scenery before."

The old man blinked his eyes, deeply impressed.

"Truly our Kumgang mountains are the most magnificent mountains in the world," said the old man.

"Yes, you're right."

For a long time the old couple feasted their eyes on the twelve thousand peaks and valleys of the beautiful and magnificent Kumgang mountains. Their hearts overflowed with the happiness and pride they felt in living in the Kumgang mountains.

They left the spring when the sun was low over the Onjong Pass, but still they reached Onjong village before dusk.

When he was told of what had happened to the old couple, the rich man in the

village was overcome by greed.

"Tomorrow morning all the farmers in the village will surely go there to drink the spring water. What shall I do if they drain the spring?" the rich man thought, his eyes bulging. Then, suddenly, he slapped his knee with glee, saying, "All right! I must get there first." Hastily he made his way through the pitch dark to the mysterious spring in the valley of the Peak of Ten Thousand Forms.

"Didn't they say I'd become young again if I drank this spring water?" he thought.

He knelt by the spring and drank greedily.

The rich man, after drinking his fill of the water, fell asleep near the spring.

But, he had drunk so much that he was changed into an infant the size of a finger.

The rich man, now an infant, cried all night, crawling around the spring.

The next morning the old people of Onjong village went up to the miracle-working spring, led by the rejuvenated old couple.

They all drank the spring water and became young again. They danced for joy.

Suddenly an infant's faint cry was heard from a grove. They all strained their ears.

They made their way to the grove and found an infant, as tiny as a finger, crying and stamping its feet.

"Is there another infant as small as this in the world?"

"I wonder who left this infant in the grove," the villagers said. They placed it in their hands and watched it with curiosity.

Meanwhile, the wife of the rich man was coming up to the spring, her broad hips swinging.

The moment it saw her coming, the infant stopped crying and said, "It's me," and hurried down to meet her.

However, it could not walk and tripped or fell flat on its face each time it took a step forward.

His wife looked blankly at the sorry sight of her husband and then took to her heels without a glance behind her.

"My dear, please take me on your back," the rich man cried faintly, crawling after his wife.

At the pitiful sight of the rich man, the villagers laughed until their sides ached.

It is said that the villagers, who had become young again after drinking the mysterious spring water, worked hard in full vigour and enjoyed a happy life for a long, long time.



# The Turtle That Failed to Return to the Dragon King's Palace



If you go uphill for a short distance along the Manphok Valley, the Valley of Ten Thousand Waterfalls, you will reach a small pond. This is Kobugi-mot or Turtle Pond.

By the pond there is a rock shaped like a plump turtle and a broad, flat rock with a large hole in it.

The following is a traditional tale concerning the turtle-shaped rock and the hole in the broad, flat rock.

Long, long ago, there lived a turtle in the Dragon King's Palace in the East Sea.

One day the turtle heard interesting news from some trout that had been to spawn in the River Onjong in the Kumgang mountains.

According to them, the Kumgang mountains were famous, beautiful mountains a mere glimpse of which would improve one's eyesight. The turtle had been suffering from failing eyesight, so he presented himself before the Dragon King and asked to be allowed to visit the Kumgang mountains.

The Dragon King readily granted the request of the diligent and kindhearted turtle. But he told him he must not fail to return before the maple leaves fell.

"Yes, I will do as you tell me," said the turtle.

Much delighted, the turtle set out on the long journey to the Kumgang mountains.

The king, realizing that the turtle could only move slowly, used his magic



cane to cut a straight tunnel for him to the Manphok Valley in the Kumgang mountains.

The hole through the broad, flat rock is said to be the exit of the tunnel made by the Dragon King's magic cane.

The turtle crawled out of the tunnel into the Manphok Valley.

"Oh!"

The turtle was dazed by the enchanting scenery unfolded before his eyes.

It was autumn and the whole valley was ablaze with autumnal colours.

A waterfall thundered down over sheer cliffs, sending up silvery clouds of spray to form a beautiful mist in the sky.

Beneath the waterfall was a pond brimming with crystal-clear, sky-blue water.

Overwhelmed by the wonderful scenery, the turtle stood riveted to the spot for a long time before walking around the pond to take a look at it.

As the trout had said, his eyesight seemed to be improving.

He went around the pond again. The more he saw, the more beautiful and awe-inspiring it seemed.

The turtle was so delighted by the blue pond that he did not want to leave the place.

He went round and round the pond, now drinking its clear water and now trying the ripe hawthorn fruit growing by its side.

Day followed day.

The turtle went around the pond more than fifty times.

He had forgotten all about going back to the Dragon King's Palace.

One day the turtle went to the side of the pond to drink and was quite astonished to find that the pond was littered with red and yellow leaves.

Immediately he raised his head and looked around.

All the trees were almost bare of their tinted autumnal leaves.

"Dear me! What shall I do?" said the turtle, reminded of the Dragon King's words that he should return before the fall of the maple leaves.

"I shall be punished for being late," he thought.

Terribly worried, the turtle hastened to the hole in the rock through which he

had come and thrust his head into it.

But alas! His body would not pass through it.

He twisted and turned his shoulders and body, but all his efforts were to no avail. The hole was not big enough for his body.

"I came through this tunnel. What's the matter?" he wondered.

The turtle took his head out of the hole and considered. He racked his brains to find the answer. He made another attempt to get into the hole, but in vain. The turtle, exhausted, threw himself down on the broad, flat rock.

The turtle had grown stout in the several days he had been enjoying the beautiful scenery, drinking the water of the pond in the Manphok Valley. But the turtle failed to realize this.

No one knows when he was changed into a stone, as he did all he could to push himself into the tunnel, with the sole desire to return to the Dragon King's Palace.

# The ballad of the White Bellflower

Many songs are sung about the Kumgang mountains, which are beautiful and a lovely place in which to live.

The valleys are strewn with aromatic cherries, strawberries, wild grapes and tara vine; on the mountainsides and by the streams can be found rare plants such as Forsythia ovata, and these have given rise to many songs.

Among these plants the white bellflower in Ongnyudong is widely known for its deliciousness and medicinal value. The following is a traditional tale told about it.

Once upon a time a girl named Ippun lived in a village far away from the Kumgang mountains.

Ippun, just as her name tells us, was pretty and kindhearted.

In the daytime she helped her parents diligently in their farming and in the evening she wove hemp cloth by onlight.

Many years passed and she was now eighteen years old.



She married a hardworking and kindhearted young man called Kangsoe, amid the blessings of the villagers.

From the first day of their married life Kangsoe and Ippun lived happily.

One spring day Kangsoe fell down a mountainside while collecting firewood and badly injured his head. So he lay ill in bed.

Her heart heavy, as if weighted down by a stone, Ippun remained at his bedside.

"Ah, Kangsoe. What's to be done?"

She passed day after day, even a year, in tears and sorrow, heartbroken.

One day the elder of the village called on her and said that stewed white bellflower was the best remedy for her husband and would get him back on his feet.

"White bellflower?"

Ippun was overjoyed to hear this.

But she knew of white bellflower only by hearsay; she had never seen it. Then she became sad, not knowing how and where she could get it.

She sighed faintly, looking into the pale face of Kangsoe.

Then an idea came to her mind. Suddenly, she rose from her seat, readjusting her coat string.

"My dear, please bear up a little longer until I return," she whispered to Kangsoe.

Then she left home, a large bamboo basket on her arm.

Ippun went straight to an old man who was living in a recess in a deep mountain, growing medicinal herbs.

The old man nodded, listening to what Ippun told him, and advised her to go to Ongnyudong in the Kumgang mountains to gather white bellflowers.

He showed her the way she should take to Ongnyudong, and even drew a picture of a white bellflower for her.

"Old man, thank you very much."

With this Ippun bowed low to the old man.

With the picture of the white bellflower in her breast, Ippun set out on the long

and difficult journey to the Kumgang mountains.

Sheer cliffs and torrential rivers lay in her way.

When steep cliffs faced her, she would climb them inch by inch, and when wide rivers crossed her path, she would make a detour of many miles.

The thought of Kangsoe groaning in his sickbed dispelled her fear and fatigue.

At last, after three days and three nights, she reached Ongnyudong in the Kumgang mountains.

The valley was covered with many beautiful flowers and pervaded with a delicate fragrance.

"Which is the white bellflower?" she wondered.

She took the picture of the white bellflower from her breast.

Then she started searching for the flower, looking in all directions. But the flower was not to be seen.

"Why can't I see a white bellflower?" said Ippun, her heart beating heavily.

With a sigh she turned her eyes to the valley opposite.

Instantly Ippun's eyes shone brightly.

On the far side of the valley she could see snow-white flowers smiling at her, as if waving to her to come.

"Oh! Those are white bellflowers!"

With a cry of joy, she rushed towards them.

White bellflowers with fully-open flowers crowning sturdy stalks were swaying gently in the breeze.

"So, are you the white bellflowers I have been longing to find?"

As she stroked the stalks of the white bellflowers, she was beside herself with joy. She carefully dug up the roots of one of the flowers. The roots were so sturdy and thick that they filled nearly half the bamboo basket. She dug up another white bellflower and put its roots into her basket. She was so delighted that she made up a song and sang it.

*White bellflower, white bellflower  
Of the Kumgang mountains, Kangwon Province.*



*The roots of one or two flowers  
Are enough to fill a basket.  
Eheyo, eheyo, eheyo.  
I am so glad to see you.  
I am delighted by your beauty.*

After a while, she looked up to see a white bellflower growing in the crevice of a rock.

Then another verse escaped from Ippun's mouth.

*White bellflower, white bellflower  
Of the Kumgang mountains, Kangwon Province.  
Do you grow in the crevice of a rock  
With no other place to settle?  
Eheyo, eheyo, eheyo.  
I am so glad to see you.  
I am delighted by your beauty.*

Carrying her basket full of white bellflowers, Ippun ran down the ravine by Kuryong Pool.

She hurried home, carrying the bamboo basket on her arm.

When she reached home, she found her husband seriously ill.

"My dear!" she said to him anxiously, as she sat at his bedside and wiped the cold sweat from his forehead.

She went into the kitchen and quickly made a fire; she scalded the roots of the white bellflowers in the kettle.

Then she fried them with sesame oil and seasoned them with spiced soy.

She took them to her husband and, sitting at his bedside, said, "Please eat. This is the white bellflower I have brought from the Kumgang mountains."

A lump rose in Kangsoe's throat as he thought of her devotion.

"Thank you, my dear!"

Kangsoe warmly grasped the hands of Ippun, but words failed him.

The day after Kangsoe ate the white bellflowers from the Kumgang mountains he rose from his sickbed.

Ippun was overjoyed.

Delighted, she went to the well with a light heart.

There she sang and sang the song which she had hummed while picking white bellflowers in the Kumgang mountains.

*White bellflower, white bellflower  
Of the Kumgang mountains, Kangwon Province.  
The roots of one or two flowers  
Are enough to fill a basket.  
Eheyo, eheyo, eheyo.  
I am so glad to see you.  
I am delighted by your beauty.*

The villagers around the well were attracted by her sweet voice.

The more they listened to the song, the more they liked it.

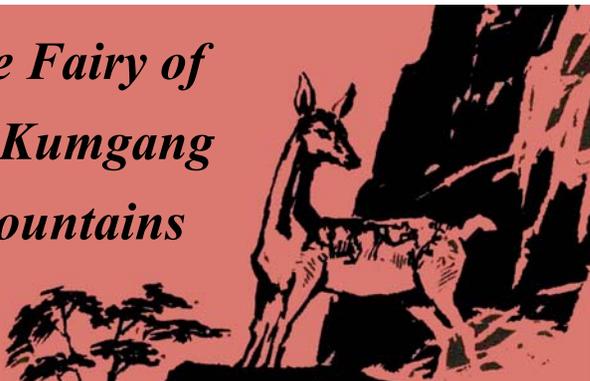
The villagers hummed the song as Ippun sang it.

The song was passed from mouth to mouth.

This is how the "Ballad of the White Bellflower", which is popular in Korea, originated.



## *The Fairy of the Kumgang Mountains*



If, after enjoying the scenery of Kuryong Pool, you climb the stone steps of steep Kuryong Rock, go across a suspension bridge, and look down beneath you from the overhanging rock, you will have a picturesque view of a string of eight blue pools cut deep into a valley that is surrounded by woods and consists of one sheer drop after another.

They are the renowned Phaldam, or Eight Pools, of the Kumgang mountains. This series of pools deep in the mountains gave rise to a lyrical tale which has been handed down through the generations.

Once upon a time there was a village called Ongnyudong nestling in a deep recess in a valley of the Kumgang mountains; there Kuryong Pool could be found.

Behind the village rose Chonhwa Rock which resembled a large, beautiful flower, and in front of it a clear brook rippled past

In picturesque Ongnyudong a young woodman called Pau lived together with his old, widowed mother.

Pau dearly loved the Kumgang mountains, where he was born and grew up. In spring he planted flowers on the mountainside behind his village and tended them carefully; he also looked after the habitats of birds and beasts so that they flocked there.

When he was collecting firewood, Pau never touched living trees but gathered dead trees and fallen twigs.

The villagers praised him for his diligence and kind heart. This made his

mother very happy.

However, her heart was always weighed down by the thought that she was too poor to find a wife for her son.

One summer day Pau was, as usual, gathering firewood on the mountain.

He was binding the firewood together when a deer darted out of a grove, apparently being chased by someone. Its hind leg was bleeding.

It limped up to Pau.

"Help! I'm being chased by hunters! Help me!" begged the deer, panting.

The kindhearted young man untied his bundle of firewood and hid the deer inside it. Feigning innocence, he pretended to bind another bundle of firewood.

After a while he heard the sound of the thickets being searched; then some bearded hunters appeared.

"Hey, young woodman, has a deer come this way?" one of them asked, coming up to him.

Pau's heart beat heavily, but he tried to appear calm.

"A while ago I saw a deer running that way, limping."

He pointed to the gloomy valley in front of him.

"I see," said the hunter.

After readjusting the quivers on their backs, the hunters went off towards the valley to which the young man had pointed. Only then did Pau breathe a sigh of relief and wipe the sweat from his forehead. Then he cautiously approached the bundle of firewood.

"Deer, you're safe now. You can come out."

Pau untied the bundle of firewood.

The deer was trembling, its forelegs together, and it looked up at him with fearful eyes.

"Don't worry. The hunters have gone far away."

Pau took the deer in his arms and put it down on the grass. He tore off his coat string and carefully bandaged the deer's bleeding hind leg with it. The deer wept, moved by Pau's kindness.

The deer knelt down before Pau and said:

"You saved my life. I shall never forget your kindness. I will help you to the best of my ability. Please tell me whatever you want."

Pau felt deep affection for the deer.

"Don't mention it. I have nothing to ask of you. Please go home."

Pau gently pushed the deer away.

The deer lingered for a while, as if reluctant to leave him; then it knelt before him again and said:

"I will visit your home one day to see your children and to express my gratitude."

At this Pau laughed aloud.

"I don't mind if you visit my home. But I have no children and no one to return your greeting. Ha, ha, ha!"

Pau laughed aloud again, stroking the deer's head, and told him that he was not yet married.

"Is that so?"

At these words the deer's face brightened instantly. "If so, I have a good idea for helping you."

The deer came closer to Pau and said:

"If you go further up this valley you will find eight large pools deep in the mountains. On the fifteenth of every month, fairies from heaven descend to the pools on a rainbow to bathe there."

The deer suggested that he conceal himself near the pools beforehand and hide the winged dress of the fairy he liked best.

"Without her winged dress she cannot ascend to heaven. Then propose to her. She will have no other choice but to marry you."

Hearing this, Pau felt as if he were in a dream.

"But you must remember not to return her winged dress to the fairy until you have four children," the deer said in earnest before trotting away into the thickets.

A few days passed and it was the morning of the fifteenth of the month.

Pau told his mother the whole story and headed for the place, as the deer had told him.

There were eight large moon-shaped pools in a line in the deep valley, hemmed in by dense woods.

Pau was enchanted by the wonderful sight of the eight pools.

When he had feasted his eyes on and admired the eight pools, one after another, he suddenly heard the faint sound of a jade flute coming from the sky.

Surprised, Pau concealed himself behind a large rock and gazed skywards.

The jade flute sounded louder and louder and a rainbow began to descend over the valley, spanning the middle of the largest of the pools.

A short time later, eight fairies in winged dresses came down the rainbow to the eight pools.

At the side of the pools the fairies enjoyed the cool air and laughed merrily.

They took off their winged dresses and hung them on tree branches before jumping into the water.

The fairies enjoyed themselves, now washing their faces and now dabbling in the mirror-like water, unaware of how time was passing.

Entranced, Pau looked furtively at the scene, carefully concealing himself behind the rock. Unnoticed, he gathered the winged dress of the fairy he liked most and concealed it within his coat, as the deer had suggested.

After a long while the sound of the jade flute was heard again coming from the sky. It was the signal summoning the fairies.

The fairies came out of the pool and began putting on their winged dresses.

But one of them went round and round the pool, wide-eyed and at a loss,

"Unbyol, what is the matter with you?" the oldest fairy asked her.

"Sister, my winged dress is not here."

Unbyol was tearful and restless.

"What?"

"Your winged dress is missing?"

All the fairies were surprised and gathered around Unbyol.

They searched around the pool for Unbyol's winged dress. But they could not find it.

In the meantime the rainbow had come to hang over the place where the



fairies were, and the jade flute sounded louder and louder, calling them back.

"Oh my!"

"What shall I do?"

All the fairies were anxious and stamped their feet.

"Unbyol, when we are back in heaven, we will send a jade lantern down to you to help you to find your winged dress. If you find your dress, wait until the fifteenth of next month," the oldest fairy said, stroking her shoulder.

"O how can I stay here alone, when all of you have left?"

Unbyol writhed in despair.

"Unbyol! I'm sorry. Please wait until then."

The fairies went up the rainbow one after another.

"Sisters! Sisters!"

Crying anxiously, Unbyol jumped onto the rainbow, but was unable to go it up because she was not wearing her winged dress.

Her face turned pale and she burst into tears.

"Unbyol!"

"Unbyol!"

The fairies called to Unbyol at the top of their voices, as they went up the rainbow to the sky.

"Sister, sister!"

Left alone by the side of the pool, Unbyol stamped her feet in despair and looked towards the sky, where her sisters had gone.

The sight of Unbyol made Pau feel heartbroken. He was tortured by the guilty thought that she had been separated from her sisters because of him.

But her beauty so captivated him that he was reluctant to return her winged dress to her.

"I will take care of Unbyol just as her fairy sisters did. Later she will probably pardon me for what I did today," Pau thought.

He walked out from behind the rock, taking care not to frighten her.

"Er...Miss!"

Pau summoned up the courage to call to Unbyol.

Frightened by a man's voice, Unbyol turned round and stared at him, overcome with fear.

"Please don't be frightened. I am a woodman living in the village over there," Pau said quietly without looking her in the face.

"But what has brought you here...?"

Still she looked startled.

"Er... I came to collect firewood and, finding you alone deep in the mountains,..."

He made a plausible excuse, but blushed crimson at the thought that she might see through it.

But he summoned up the courage to approach her.

"Miss, it will soon be dark. Let's go to my house. My old mother is at home."

She agreed, otherwise she would have been left alone deep in the mountains. She had been immediately attracted by Pau, touched by his kind words.

With a sigh of grief Unbyol followed Pau.

From that day on Unbyol lived in Pau's house, cared for by him and his mother.

As time passed Unbyol came to appreciate the kindness of Pau and his mother, who did all they could for her.

To think that there were such kind people in the world!

In spite of herself, Unbyol gradually became attached to the simple and honest Pau.

One day Pau opened his heart to Unbyol:

"Unbyol, I hid your winged dress. I'm ready even to pluck a star from the sky if you ask me to. I want you to live with me and my mother."

Pau said this passionately, clasping her hands tightly.

Unbyol could not refuse his sincere proposal. She could not reject the deep love Pau and his mother showed her.

Unbyol was too happy to say anything; she hung her head, biting her coat string. Tears of happiness started from her eyes and fell on the back of Pau's hand.

From the next day Unbyol began a happy, new life as Pau's wife.

She drew water and prepared meals helping her old mother-in-law. In the evening she wove hemp cloth on a hand loom.

Pau and his mother's faces were lit up with smiles of happiness.

Ten years passed before Unbyol was aware of it, and she was the mother of three beautiful boys.

Pau and his mother came to love her more deeply as the days went by.

Now a mother of three, Unbyol had become accustomed to family life. Her past life of idleness in heaven no longer appealed to her.

But she wished to put on once more the winged dress she had worn as a girl.

One evening Unbyol was chatting with Pau about farming, sitting by the smudge built in the centre of the yard.

While they talked a full moon rose from behind the hill in front of the village.

"Look! The full moon is rising."

Unbyol gazed up at the full moon, pressing her hands to her breast. She became strangely excited at the sight of the full moon which rose slowly, shedding its silvery rays over the night sky. The Milky Way meandering through the dense wood of cinnamon trees seemed to her like an unrolled picture. She could clearly visualize the faces of her dear sister fairies who had always been kind to her.

She sorely missed the days when she used to fly to the Kumgang mountains in her winged dress, together with her sister fairies.

"My dear, where do you keep my winged dress hidden?" Unbyol asked Pau cautiously.

Unbyol's face showed how she longed for her winged dress.

Pau understood what Unbyol was thinking.

"I'd completely forgotten your winged dress. If you wish, you may have it."

Pau was strangely delighted.

He went to an upper room, took the winged dress from a chest and came out into the yard with it.

"Here it is. This is your winged dress."

Pau handed it to Unbyol, forgetting what the deer had said to him.

"Oh, my winged dress!"

On receiving it, Unbyol was beside herself with joy, like a child, pressing it to her cheek.

"Mummy, try it on, please," her eldest son begged her, clinging to her skirt.

"You'll look ten years younger if you wear it," Pau said.

Unbyol could not conceal her joy and hesitantly began to put on the winged dress.

When she had put her dress on, her body suddenly began to float upwards.

"Mummy!"

"Mummy!"

"Mummy!"

Frightened, her three sons clung to the skirt of their mother's dress.

Unbyol hastily picked up her three sons and put two of them under her arms and the youngest on her back, and then flew high up into the sky.

"Darling!"

With a cry of surprise, Pau held up his hands to the sky. His mother rushed out of the kitchen, but did not know what to do.

"Dear Mother!" Unbyol cried in a choked voice, as she flew upwards.

"Unbyol!" Pau shouted himself hoarse, looking up to the sky as Unbyol disappeared.

"Oh, what is to be done? Why didn't I remember what the deer said?"

He writhed in agony, beating his chest. But repenting was of no use now.

From the next day Pau lived in deep sorrow. When he returned home after a day's work, his heart was rent with sorrow, haunted by the vision of his dear Unbyol and his three children who used to rush through the brushwood gate to meet him.

One day Pau lay on the grass after gathering a load of firewood from the mountain and was shedding unbidden tears over his dear Unbyol and children, gazing up into the blue sky.

Suddenly he heard noises from a thicket and a deer appeared before him. It was the deer he had rescued from the hunters.

"Why, what are you doing here?" Pau asked.

Pau was so glad to see the deer that he hugged its neck. The deer nodded with joy at seeing him.

Having met the deer, he missed Unbyol even more.

Unable to conceal his grief, he eventually burst into tears. He told the deer what had happened.

As he listened to Pau's story, tears appeared in the deer's eyes.

"If you had remembered my words, such misfortune would never have happened."

The deer sympathized with him and thought deeply for a while before raising its head and saying, "Don't worry so much. There is a way for you to meet fairy Unbyol and your three sons."

The deer told him that after Pau had concealed the fairy's dress ten years before, the fairies of heaven had not come down to the eight pools, but had drawn water from them with a silver dipper when they wanted to bathe. If he was to cling to the dipper, he would be able to ascend to heaven.

"It will be full moon tomorrow, and they will draw water with the silver dipper. Please do as I've told you. It will be all right," said the deer before disappearing into the woods.

Early the next morning, Pau went up to the eight pools.

He waited impatiently, looking up into the sky. Abruptly he heard the noisy clangor of iron chains coming from the distant sky. Then a large silver dipper descended on chains.

The silver dipper entered the water with a splash and was filled with water.

Pau, who had been waiting for this chance, darted out, emptied the dipper and jumped into it.

With a noisy clanging the silver dipper went up skywards, pulled up by the chains.

"Mother, whatever happens, I will bring Unbyol and my children back with me," Pau said, looking in the direction of Ongnyudong as he went up into the sky.

In the meantime, Unbyol had met her dear sister fairies in heaven after the

interval of ten years.

Each of her sister fairies shed tears of joy, hugging Unbyol.

Unbyol was very happy to meet her sisters back in heaven.

She had tried her winged dress on, prompted by curiosity, but things had gone too far. This caused her endless remorse and pain.

The thought of her beloved husband and mother-in-law in the Kumgang mountains nearly broke her heart.

Unbyol was impatient to return to the Kumgang mountains.

This embarrassed her sister fairies. "What? What are you saying?"

"Do you know how much we missed you while you were away?"

None of her sister fairies would let her go, and they held on to her dress.

They now consoled her and now tried to persuade her to stay.

However, this could not relieve her sorrow.

"My dear, pardon me. Mother, what shall I do?" she said.

Unbyol spent day after day in tears.

One full moon evening, Unbyol, as she sat under a cinnamon tree with her three sons, was shedding tears profusely, missing her husband and mother-in-law.

Suddenly she heard her older sister's breathless voice from behind her.

"Unbyol! Look who is here!"

The instant she looked round, she uttered a cry of surprise and stiffened as if she was stone.

She saw her husband Pau walking up to her.

"Father!"

The children rushed towards him and clung to his sleeves.

"Unbyol, I've come. It's me!"

He stroked the heads of his children, and then went up to Unbyol.

"Darling, am I dreaming?" Unbyol said, sure that she was in a dream.

"Ha, ha.... It's no dream."

Unbyol could not understand what was happening, but Pau told her how he had ascended to heaven.

"My dear!"

"Unbyol!"

Pau and Unbyol cried with joy, clasping each other's hands. All the fairies wept as they watched this scene.

"Darling, let's go down to Ongnyudong," Pau said, holding Unbyol's hands in his.

"Yes, I agree."

Unbyol looked round at her sister fairies and told them what she intended to do. They could no longer try to dissuade her and nodded their approval,

Unbyol, Pau and their three sons mounted a steed brought to them by the other fairies and flew down to the Kumgang mountains amid a warm send-off from the fairies of heaven.

On reaching the Kumgang mountains, Unbyol threw her winged dress into one of the eight pools. She became a resourceful woman of this land and a hard-working and dutiful wife. She lived happily for many years, helping her husband and mother-in-law and building up Ongnyudong.





## *Mirror Rock*

If you enter Paekchon Valley in Inner Kumgang, you will find a huge rock with a mirror-like surface which is 90 metres high and 30 metres across.

This is the famous Mirror Rock of the Kumgang mountains.

From olden times many interesting stories have been told about Mirror Rock.

One of them goes as follows:

One day a man called Pong Dok went to see the sights of the Kumgang mountains, taking with him sufficient money for his journey.

After a few days he reached a roadside inn from where the Kumgang mountains could be seen in the distance.

After taking his supper in the inn, he went to bed. He had learned that the inner room had been taken by a traveller. Later, a monk entered the outer room of the inn where he lay, to share the room with him.

In the small hours a great commotion was heard from the inner room, and a man wearing a hat broke into the room where Pong Dok was sleeping.

"You've stolen my master's money! Out with it!"

He tried to snatch away Pong Dok's bundle.

Clutching his bundle, Pong Dok protested, saying, "Never in my life have I laid hands on the property of another."

"You rascal! It's only you and that monk who are sleeping here. Should I suspect the monk? Keep quiet and let me see your bundle," the man in the hat insisted.

Thinking that it was useless to protest, Pong Dok undid his bundle for the man

to see.

Strangely enough, the wad of paper money the nobleman had lost was found in Pong Dok's bundle.

Then the hatted man beat Pong Dok and bound him, accusing him of theft.

This unexpected problem nonplussed Pong Dok. He looked for the monk who had been sleeping with him to vouch for his innocence. But the monk was nowhere to be seen.

The hatted man took Pong Dok to the local magistrate's office.

On the way Pong Dok, falsely accused, felt as if his heart was breaking.

"I wonder who has played this trick on me. If I knew who it was, I'd...." This thought made Pong Dok grit his teeth.

He was upset that he might not see the sights of the Kumgang mountains even though he was so near.

At the local magistrate's office, Pong Dok begged the traveller to let him have a sight of the Kumgang mountains if only for a day.

After some thought the traveller from Seoul complied with his request. He did so not out of kindness but because he knew that if he let Pong Dok look into Mirror Rock it would tell whether he was guilty or not.

The nobleman allowed Pong Dok to go to the Kumgang mountains, accompanied by the hatted men.

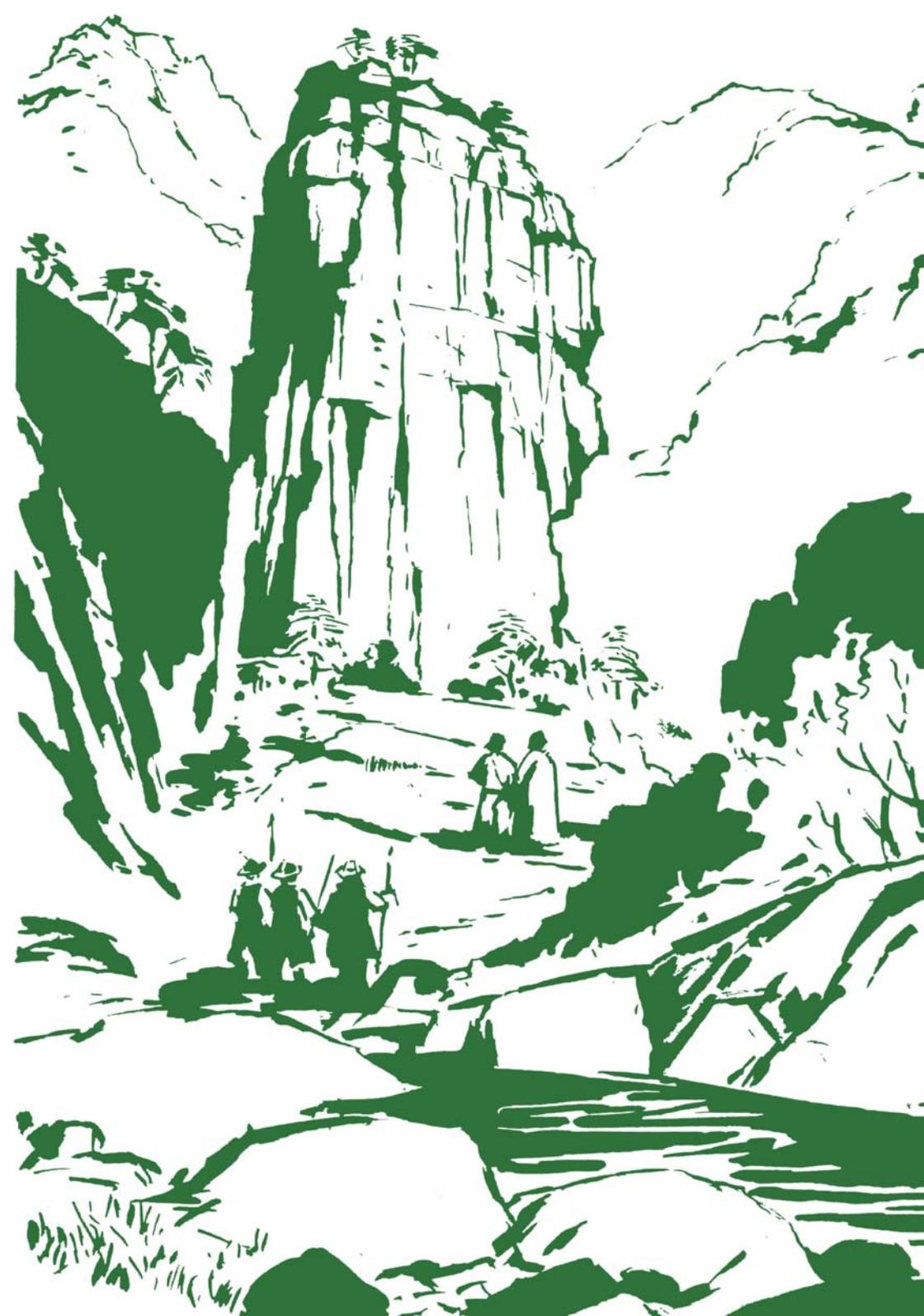
As he enjoyed the sights of the Kumgang mountains, Pong Dok became so enchanted by their picturesque scenery that he completely forgot that punishment awaited him at the local magistrate's office.

Successive cries of admiration "Oh!" and "Ah!" escaped from Pong Dok's mouth. Pong Dok was as delighted as a child at the sight of rocks of fantastic shape, crystal-clear streams and aromatic, fully-grown flowers strewn across the valleys.

Those who accompanied him brought Pong Dok to the Paekchon Valley where Mirror Rock was.

At the sight of the rock Pong Dok stood aghast.

The rock rising high in front of him had a mirror-like surface.



He could not stop himself approaching the rock.

Pong Dok was surprised to see a man staring out of the rock at him.

"How is it that a man is standing inside the rock?" he wondered.

It was so strange that he blinked his eyes.

The man inside the rock did the same.

Feeling hurt at this, Pong Dok frowned.

The man also knit his brow and scowled back.

Out of curiosity Pong Dok went up to the rock and, rubbing his eyes, gazed at the man.

"Who is this?"

Startled, Pong Dok stepped back. The man inside the rock looked like himself. It was his own reflection in the rock.

He wondered whether there was another such rock in the world and looked blankly at the mirror-like surface of the rock.

Seeing his behaviour, those who accompanied him judged that he was, without doubt, innocent. "I should go down and tell my master of this," they thought. Just then a monk approached Pong Dok, who stood in front of Mirror Rock. It was the monk who had stayed in the inn with him the previous night.

"Sir!" called Pong Dok happily to the monk.

He thought the monk would no doubt help him out of his trouble.

"Er... Sir!"

Pong Dok walked towards the monk to address him. But, ignoring him, the monk exclaimed, pointing to Mirror Rock:

"How fantastic the shape of that rock is!"

"Certainly. It reflects my whole body like a mirror. It's incredible!" said Pong Dok, looking round at Mirror Rock.

"Does it reflect your whole body?"

Tilting his head to one side with a dubious expression, the monk walked boldly up to the rock.

Standing before the rock, the monk gazed at it, rubbing his eyes.

But, strangely enough, his body was not reflected on the rock's surface.

The monk became angry and grunted, "Stop your fooling. Where is my reflection? What a stupid man you are!"

Pong Dok's companions, who were watching the scene, approached Mirror Rock.

They found that the monk's reflection could not be seen in the rock.

The hatted man looked at Pong Dok and the monk alternately, and took out a rope.

Pong Dok was sad at the thought that now that he had enjoyed the sights of the Kumgang mountains, he was to be tied up again.

But, to his surprise, they bound the monk with the rope. "You rogues, stop your impudence!" the monk bawled at them, stamping his feet with rage.

At this, one of the companions boxed his ears, saying, "You rogue, do you think this is an ordinary rock? This is Mirror Rock which can tell good and evil. It mirrors honest men like Pong Dok but not bad men like you."

The hatted man slapped the monk across the face once again and accused him of the theft.

"Er, er...", the monk faltered and lowered his head.

It turned out that he was a notorious thief who had disguised himself as a monk.

He had followed the nobleman and his company from Seoul and had stolen the money from the nobleman and placed it in Pong Dok's bundle the previous night. When he was about to make off with the bundle, things had suddenly taken an unfavourable turn. So he had disappeared, pretending to know nothing.

Pong Dok's money was given back to him after he had been proved innocent by Mirror Rock, and he enjoyed the sights of the Kumgang mountains to his heart's content before returning home.

Since then honest people have come to Mirror Rock and enjoyed themselves being reflected on the surface of the rock.

However, it is said that the rich, noble and feudal government officials who visited the Kungang mountains kept away from Mirror Rock, fearing that their criminal acts might be brought to light.





## *A Tal Flower*

In olden times our forefathers valued neighbourly friendship and gladly undertook to relieve their neighbours of their suffering, even at the risk of their lives.

Chonson Rock on the Peak of Ten Thousand Forms in the Kumgang mountains is associated with a story about a praiseworthy girl named Chaksil who did her level best to save her fellow villagers from illness.

Long, long ago, there lived some poor sharecroppers in a village far from the Kumgang mountains.

One spring the villagers, who had been living on grass and tree bark before the barley harvest, began to fall ill one by one, their bodies swollen.

They went to the landlord and begged him to lend them a little rice. The heartless landlord, however, would not

give them a single grain of rice, although he had a large store of it in his barn. All the villagers were angered by the landlord.

But they heard that fairies from heaven sometimes descended to the Peak of Ten Thousand Forms in the Kumgang mountains and that if any sick person inhaled the fragrance of the mysterious Tal (moon) flowers that grew on the

moon, which the fairies would pick if asked, he would recover immediately.

The villagers gathered and discussed who should be sent to fetch the Tal flowers.

It was the job of a strong man to make the long journey and climb the craggy Kungang mountains. But all such men were ill. "There is nothing for it but for all the villagers to die," they said.

The villagers felt their faint hope dashed and spent days weeping in sorrow.

One day a girl went to the village elder and said:

"Sir, I'll go to the Kungang mountains."

It was Chaksil from the family of Tolmak. She was well known for her diligence and kindness.

"You?"

The old man stared at her with surprise and shook his head in disapproval.

"Ho, ho.... I can understand why you wish to go. But how can you, a weak girl, undertake such a long and hazardous journey?"

She knelt before the old man and said:

"Though I'm a weak girl, I have made up my mind to go. Please let me go."

"I see. But I wonder whether you, a young girl, are equal to the important task of saving the lives of all the villagers."

The old man shook his head.

"However long and difficult the journey is, I'll go, even if I must crawl inch by inch. I must go."

Chaksil was firm in her resolve. No one could dissuade her.

"You're right. No matter how distant and craggy the Kungang mountains are, they lie under the sky. With such great resolve, I think, you might even pluck a star from the sky."

The old man stroked his beard with satisfaction. He felt a lump rising in his throat, as he gazed at the girl with affection.

The next morning Chaksil left the village, carrying a bundle of plantain-mixed rice cakes her neighbours had given her.

On the morning of the third day after her departure, she reached Onjong



village.

She was utterly exhausted, but she did not rest. She struggled up towards Chonson Rock, inch by inch up the pathless, steep mountainside past Ryukhwa Rock.

The magnificent sights of Mansangjong, Samson, Kwimyong, Chilchung and other rocks spread successively before her eyes, up to the Peak of Ten Thousand Forms, but she ignored them.

All she wanted was to meet the fairies and to get the Tal flowers from them as quickly as possible.

Chaksil reached Chonson Rock at last and, utterly exhausted, sank to the ground by the rock. Presently, in spite of herself, she fell into a deep sleep.

A long time passed.

She heard the faint, gentle melodies of the lute which came to her ears as if in a dream, and she awoke, rubbing her eyes. Overjoyed, she sprang to her feet, looking up at the sky.

Fairies from heaven were coming down a beautiful rainbow to the valley where she was standing.

"Oh! I'm sure they will give me some Tal flowers if I ask them"

Her heart beat heavily at the sight of the fairies coming down the rainbow.

The fairies, when they alighted on the mountainside, were very surprised to see Chaksil. They had been coming down to Chonson Rock in the Kumgang mountains for decades, but they had never seen a stranger before. After a little while a fairy walked cautiously up to Chaksil and asked:

"Where do you live and why have you come all this way?"

At the fairy's kind words Chaksil felt a lump in her throat.

Holding back her tears, Chaksil told her that she had come to get Tal flowers.

The fairies, having been told by her of the miserable plight of the villagers, sighed as they said, with tears in their eyes, "Your devotion is enough to move heaven."

"Don't worry, we'll help you to meet your wish," the fairies said and took her to the mirror-like blue Lake Hwajang where they scooped up water to wash

Chaksil's face.

Chaksil's face became as pretty as that of a fairy, and she instantly became a beautiful fairy.

However, Chaksil was not aware that she looked pretty.

One of the fairies ascended to heaven on the rainbow. She came back with a beautiful dress for Chaksil and made her change into it. Then she took a snow-white flower from her breast, and said:

"This is the Tal flower. Please take it."

She put the flower in Chaksil's hand.

"Oh! A Tal flower!"

She grasped the flower and pressed it to her cheek.

The fairy said, "Chaksil, this flower blooms once in a hundred years, so it is treasured even on the moon. I give you this flower in consideration of your devotion. Leave at once and save your villagers. When all of them are cured we'll send down a rainbow over the small well in your village. Then you must throw the flower onto the rainbow."

"I see. Dear Fairies, thank you very much."

Chaksil bowed to the fairies time and again and hurried back to her village.

Back in the village she found that all the villagers were ill in bed, and that their illness was more serious.

She first let the village elder smell the Tal flower, and then went from house to house to cure the villagers.

At last she came to her own home and let her mother smell the Tal flower, with the villagers gathered in the yard of her home.

"Look at her, a fairy! A fairy from heaven has come to save us," they said.

They watched her with bated breath.

Her mother smelt the Tal flower, and came to herself. But she did not recognize her own daughter who had returned home a pretty fairy.

"You pity us poor people and take care of us; I am very grateful to you," her mother said in a tearful voice and bowed deeply to her. All the villagers who had smelt the Tal flower knelt down in the yard and bowed to her.

She was nonplussed for a while, not understanding, until she was reminded that the fairies had washed her face with clean water by Chonson Rock.

She found a piece of broken mirror in the corner of the room, picked it up and looked into it.

"Oh my!"

Chaksil was surprised to see that she looked like a beautiful fairy.

She helped her mother and the villagers bowing on their knees to their feet, grasping their shoulders, and said, "Please don't behave like this. I'm Chaksil."

"What? You're Chaksil?"

Her mother and the villagers were taken aback. They couldn't believe their ears.

She told them the whole story of how she had met the fairies from heaven by Chonson Rock. Only then did they understand what had happened to her. They all shed tears of joy and hugged her.

"You're a good girl. Your devotion moved heaven. Good for you!" the village elder said in a choked voice, stroking her shoulder. That evening the villagers gathered at her home and celebrated late into the night.

The next morning the landlord ran to Chaksil's house, his eyes open wide.

"You bad girl, out with the so-called Tal flower immediately!"

Once in the house, the landlord insisted that she give him the Tal flower.

Her heart sank. She made up her mind not to yield the treasure to the landlord. Quickly she took the flower from a chest and slipped out through the back door.

The landlord pursued her, flourishing his stick.

She ran for all she was worth, her teeth clenched.

As they approached a small well, and as the landlord was about to seize her, a beautiful rainbow rose in the sky.

Chaksil threw the flower onto the rainbow with all her might, as the fairy had told her. The Tal flower floated up into the sky on the rainbow.

The landlord was seized with cramp. He collapsed by the well, resembling the rotten stump of a tree. He was suffering from nervous anxiety. His illness grew worse as the days went by.

"If I had the Tal flower, I would become rich right away," he thought.

He thought only of the Tal flower as he moaned in his sickbed, a towel bound around his head.

One day the landlord sent his only daughter Kuknyo to fetch a Tal flower. She left for the Kumgang mountains with a bland smile.

After travelling for several days Kuknyo reached Chonson Rock and was delighted to find Lake Hwajang there. She scooped up water from Lake Hwajang and washed her face so that she would become pretty.

Then she looked into the water to see her reflection.

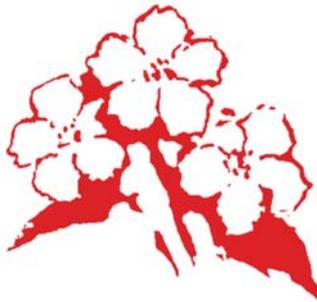
"My gracious!" she shrieked, frightened, and ran her hands over her face. Her face was pockmarked.

Kuknyo fell to the ground, tears running down her cheeks. Then a shower of hot sand fell from the sky.

Flurried, she took to her heels to shelter from it.

When his daughter returned without the Tal flower and with her face pockmarked, the landlord sank in sorrow and died.

From then on, every autumn the villagers visited the Kumgang mountains and played by Chonson Rock where Chaksil had met the fairies and been given the Tal flower, taking with them delicious food they had prepared from the year's new harvest.





## The Hyoyang Pass

Once upon a time a boy called Tori lived in poverty with his ailing mother in a village near the Kumgang mountains.

For his mother he went begging from village to village, but nobody could satisfy their hunger.

One day Tori said to his mother:

"Mother, I'll become a farmhand for the nobleman living beyond the pass and bring you food."

At this she was surprised.

"I'd rather die of hunger than let you become a farmhand."

His mother flatly rejected the idea, and would not allow him to say more.

Tori, however, said that no one would provide them with food to eat and land to till, and that even if they were to share crop, they would hardly be able to afford to eat even watery gruel. In their circumstances, he continued, it would be better for him to work as a farmhand. With this argument he pestered her time and again. Finally his mother was forced to agree, though she shed tears of sorrow.

The following day Tori became a farmhand of the nobleman on a three-year contract.

In the evening of his first day Tori sat at table and pretended to eat the meal he was given for his supper, telling the whole story of his life to the old man with whom he worked. Then he began to run towards his home to give the food to his mother before it got cold.

Tori ran, forcing his way through brushwood; he took a shortcut to his home.

When Tori entered his mother's room with a bowl of food inside his coat, the



food was still warm.

His mother, who had not eaten for several days, ate the food with great relish, and said that she felt more cheerful already.

Tori was immensely happy to see his mother rejoicing and went down to the kitchen to light a fire in the fireplace before returning over the pass on trembling legs.

On arriving at the gate of the nobleman's house he found that the household was in uproar.

"He slipped away after eating a bowl of food. Why are you still fooling around? Go and fetch him back at once!" The master was growling at the old man angrily.

Tori was seized with fear. It seemed to him that he was in real trouble and he thought of going back home. But the thin face of his mother who had been ill from hunger rose in his mind, and the old man being scolded in his stead touched his heart. So he could not return.

Tori collected himself and stepped into the yard.

With his eyes glaring the master seized him by the scruff of his neck and made him kneel on the stone verandah. After flogging him for a good while, he told him to remain kneeling until daybreak.

Before long Tori felt his knees trembling under him and his head reeling with hunger. He could not bear it.

But Tori compressed his lips, and determined to tolerate any pain or insult in order to be able to give his ailing mother even one meal a day.

For three years from that day, rain or snow, Tori brought food to his mother every night without the knowledge of his master.

As a saying goes, devotion can make a flower bloom even on a rock, his mother was completely restored to health.

One day, Tori's mother climbed awkwardly up the pass, prompted by a desire to see the hill path along which her son had come and gone every day for three long years, in spite of fatigue and hunger, so as to nurse her back to health, while working for his master.

A mountain trail ran through dense thickets and the footmarks of her son, who wore straw sandals, were printed distinctly on it.

"Had my dear Tori used to push his way through such dense thickets in the dead of night?"

Her heart was heavy with sorrow.

When Tori's mother at last reached the top of the pass, she saw a boy with close-cropped hair coming up along it. It was Tori who was coming home after completing his time as a farmhand at the nobleman's house.

"My dear son!" she shouted in a choked voice, and hurried down to hug him warmly. Feeling sorrowful and choked, she could only weep, unable to utter a word.

Tori also sobbed; it seemed to him like a dream that his mother had climbed to the top of the steep pass without any support.

That day there was an unusually large number of travellers passing. Deeply touched by the sight of the mother and her son, they spoke highly of Tori's filial devotion and began to call the pass with its new shortcut the "Hyoyang Pass" (Filial Devotion Pass).

Today those who go over the Hyoyang Pass in the Kumgang mountains speak happily of Tori's filial devotion to his mother.



## The Picture Drawn on a Silk Skirt

Long ago, in a village in the Kumgang mountains, there lived a boy called Hwadong who was very fond of drawing pictures.

When he went to the mountains to collect firewood he usually drew a cliff, tree or other things on the ground with a stick before starting to work.

When, on his way home with an A-frame carrier laden with firewood on his back, he would take a rest by a brook, he would dip the end of his finger in the water and draw fishes or flowers on the rock.

One day the woman who lived next door brought a white silk skirt to Hwadong's house.

"Hwadong's Mother, just look at this. This is the silk skirt sent by the family of my eldest daughter's fiance as her wedding dress."

The woman spread the skirt on the floor, proud of it.

"Let me see how it is woven," said Hwadong's mother.

She was short-sighted, so she took the skirt up to the small window, only to upset the oil lamp which stood on the windowsill so that oil flowed freely over the dress.

"Oh no! What shall I do?"

Hwadong's mother was horrified as she stood with the oil-stained silk skirt in her hands. Her neighbour was on the point of weeping.

Hwadong felt very awkward, as if he himself was to blame.

He took the silk skirt and examined the oil-stain on it for a moment. He



smiled. It seemed that a happy idea had occurred to him.

"Don't worry. I'll make it all right," said Hwadong, comforting the neighbour before letting her go home.

"How can you remove the oil stain?" asked his mother, sighing sadly.

"Mother, don't worry", said Hwadong, smiling.

He climbed the hill behind the village, taking with him the silk skirt and all his paints.

He sat on a flat rock and looked out over the twelve thousand peaks and ravines of the Kumgang mountains; he began to run his paint brush over the silk skirt.

In a moment the twelve thousand peaks of the Kumgang mountains had appeared on it.

The drawing was so vivid and delicate that the gurgling of the streams in the valleys could almost be heard from it.

The following day Hwadong visited his neighbour with the skirt.

"Neighbour, take this please."

The woman received the dress, looked at it and asked in surprise:

"My dear! Where have you got this?"

"That is the silk skirt you brought to my house."

"What?"

She stared at him as if unable to believe him.

"Neighbour, it seemed to me that however hard I tried, I would not be able to remove the stain, so I drew a picture on it."

"Is that so?"

She looked closely at the silk skirt again.

"Oh! You're such a skillful painter!"

She seemed amazed.

"It's nothing to do with painting skill. I've simply pictured the beauty of the Kumgang mountains as it is, that's why it's so beautiful", replied Hwadong, chafing his hands together.

"Is there a more valuable skirt than this in the world? Even a princess does not

wear such a silk skirt."

The woman smiled, beside herself with joy.

"When I see you so pleased, it makes me happy, too," said Hwadong, smiling as he looked at her.

The skirt instantly became the topic of conversation in the neighbouring villages.

Women, old and young, tried to be the first to call on Hwadong with white cloth.

Hwadong drew on the cloth the azaleas and peonies that bloomed in Ongnyudong, and the scarlet-tinged leaves that adorned the Manphok Valley in autumn.

It is said that after this all the women of Kumgang village wore colourful skirts that pictured the beauty of the Kumgang mountains.



# The Twenty-Year Pass



A long, long time ago, a brother and a sister, he with a large bundle on his back and she with a small one on her head, were going into a recess in a valley under Piro Peak.

They were helpless orphans who were seeking a quiet place to make a living. As they were resting on a rock, an old man came down from the upper valley. "Where have you come from?"

His voice sounded like a mountain echo.

The brother and sister told him how they had got there.

After hearing them out, he said that they had come too deep into the valley, and added brusquely:

"This is the garden of my house, where I live alone. Although you are in the mountains, you should not live in the garden of another's house. So get out of here." With this he went, with light steps, to the recess in the valley, without turning his head.

His words were so absurd that they could not help laughing.

They could not believe that he had talked about that wide mountain recess being the garden of a solitary house.

So, they paid no attention to him and settled down there.

They built a cosy thatched hut on the sunny hillside and lived in that isolated valley recess.

One day the sister, who had gone to the brook to wash wild vegetables, called loudly to her brother who was mending an A-frame carrier in the yard.

"Brother, come here. I've found a strange flower."

The brother went to see it. There was a strange flower blooming beautifully in the green field. It was red.

He smelt it.

It gave out a strong, sweet smell.

He pushed aside the grass and uprooted the flower.

Its yellow root looked like that of bellflower.

"That's good. It'll be nice to eat if it's boiled."

His sister clapped her hands with joy, but the next moment her eyes were open wide in astonishment.

"Oh my! It's bleeding!"

Her brother watched closely and found that pinkish sap was oozing from a tip of a root which had been hurt when he had dug up the flower. It was strange indeed. The brother and sister silently and wonderingly looked down at the yellow root oozing red sap.

At that moment they heard approaching footsteps.

They turned their heads and saw the old man they had met some time before. He looked furious.

"Why do you lay hands on the precious things of others?"

"Is this root, too, yours?"

They asked him this because they could not understand him.

"Do you know what root this is? You have dug up a valuable treasure that I have been tending throughout my life."

The old man flared up and scowled at them.

Now the brother and sister could see that it was no ordinary root.

They remembered that, when they had arrived some time before, he had told them to leave because they were trespassing.

They guessed that what he had said then had something to do with this root.

"From olden times it has been said that there is no remedy for bleeding root. So, what are you going to do?" said the old man, pressing them hard.

They could do nothing but beg his pardon over and over again.

"Bring a jarful of clear water from beyond that little pass and pour it on this



root every day for twenty years. Then it may live again."

With this the old man walked away towards the upper recess of the valley.

From that day the brother and sister fetched a jarful of water every day, forcing their way through thorny bushes and climbing up and down the steep pass, and poured the water over the root. Rain or snow, they carried out their task with devotion, never missing a day.

At last, the morning of the twentieth year dawned.

When they poured the water for the last time, something miraculous happened.

The withered plant absorbed the water, grew green leaves and then developed a beautiful red flower.

"Oh!" the brother and his sister exclaimed with joy.

Just at that moment the old man came up to them.

He looked at the flower, his face beaming with joy.

"What a relief! You youngsters have done a fine job."

He looked at them with affection.

"This is *sansam* (wild ginseng). To obtain this precious medicine I have spent my whole life in the Kungang mountains. You have helped me and brought it back to life. I'm very happy."

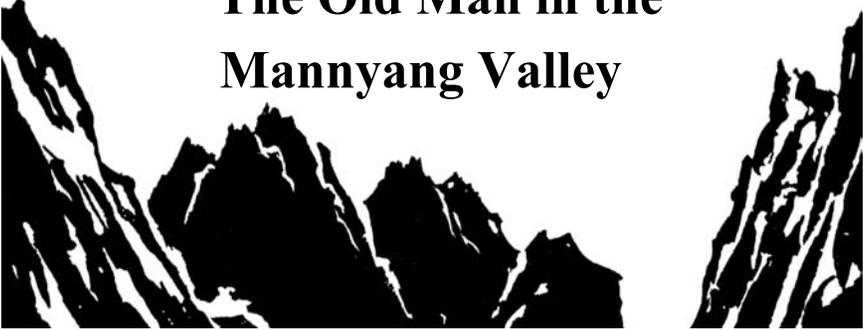
He laughed loudly.

"From today this *sansam* is yours. When autumn comes, gather its seeds and sow them all over the valley under Piro Peak." With this he passed away peacefully in the arms of the brother and sister, with a smile of satisfaction on his face.

From that day the brother and sister, remembering the noble intention of the old man, grew *sansam* widely in all the valleys of the Kungang mountains.

The pass they walked every day for twenty years to fetch water began to be called Twenty-Year Pass by gatherers of *sansam*.

# The Old Man in the Mannyang Valley



An old man lived in Yangjin village in the Kumgang mountains.

He was a poor old man who had spent most of his life as a farmhand for a landlord, only to be dismissed not long before for his age and infirmity and to return to his home village.

All he owned was a short pipe and a tobacco pouch worn at his side.

The old man had been lamenting over his ill-spent life and had run out of provisions, so he left for a ravine beyond the Kwanum Falls with the intention of obtaining even some grass to eat.

But the ravine was deep and the slope was overgrown with bushes. Also his old age made him weak. So, the higher he climbed, the more laboured was his breathing.

He sat to take a rest under an old chestnut tree, the large boughs of which spread a shadow.

He was perspiring profusely and had an intolerable thirst.

He stumbled towards the stream to drink some water.

But he tripped on something and almost fell over. He looked down at his feet and found a root peeping through the earth. Thinking that it might be a bellflower root, he dug up the soil with his hands. As he dug, he found that the root thickened and was deep-rooted.

After drinking some water and after a lot of effort, he dug it up.

It was as big as a fully-grown radish. He held it in his hands and examined it



carefully.

At that moment, several herb collectors appeared from the bushes.

They stared in wonder at the root the old man was holding in his hands.

"Where did you find such a large *sansam* root?"

"I've never seen such a large one before."

All the herb collectors looked at the root in envy. Only then did he realize that the root he had dug up was a *sansam*, but he found it hard to believe. He looked at it again and it seemed to him that it undoubtedly looked like *insam*.

But he was bewildered, wondering how a root could grow as big as a pestle bar at a mill.

The news spread and from the next day more and more people called at his house to see the *sansam*.

They exclaimed in admiration at the sight of it and passed remarks: some said that their greatest wish would be to obtain such a *sansam* root and others said that the old man would be rewarded liberally if he offered it to the county magistrate's office.

Then, inadvertently, visits to see the *sansam* root became opportunities to bid for it.

Since no one had ever seen such a large *sansam* root on sale, this was yet more interesting for the people, so they stayed there. Medicinal herbs grown in the Kumgang mountains were expensive because of their fine properties, so, they said that as this one was so big, its price would be exorbitant.

In order to fix its price, the root was weighed. It turned out to be worth far more than ten thousand *nyang* (Mannyang).

They had heard of *sansam* worth one thousand *nyang*, so it was truly wonderful to see such a rarity with their own eyes.

A rich man who had come from a town to see the Kumgang mountains bought it for ten thousand *nyang*.

Everyone was delighted, saying that now old man could buy a farm and cattle and regain his health.

As he was advised, he bought some cultivated land and a small fruit garden.

He grew as many melons and watermelons as he could tend and, in the autumn, set up a stall at the side of the road to Manmul Rocks.

Sitting by his stall all day long, he would call to the visitors who had come to enjoy the scenery of the Kumgang mountains and tell them stories about each of its twelve thousand peaks.

He gave them the melons and watermelons he had grown on his land. But he never asked for any money.

He invited all passersby to sit by his stall, irrespective of age and sex, so visitors to the Kumgang mountains would stop and rest there.

At first, there was talk of his being a strange old man, but before long people would feel sorry if the old man was not seen by his stall at the foot of Manmul Rocks.

The old man always wore coarse cotton clothes and was not particular about his food.

One day an old man who lived in the neighbouring village called on him and said reprovingly that, towards the end of his life, he had obtained the fabulous sum of ten thousand *nyang*, but never had a proper meal and insisted on doing something good for others at all times.

At this he laughed heartily and said in a low voice:

"I lived my life as a farmhand for a landlord from my childhood until my hair turned grey.

"The thought that I would die without having done anything good for other people made me sad.

"But thanks to the *sansam* I found, I am getting along with people and laughing merrily with them. This is immeasurably more valuable than ten thousand *nyang*."

Later, the people liked to remember the kindhearted old man, so as time passed, the valley came to be called Mannyang Valley.

## Mangyang Rock



Once upon a time a young man named Hoga lived in a village near Ryukhwa Rock together with his sister Maehyang.

Hoga and Maehyang lived happily; in spring they tilled the land, sowed seeds and wove cloth.

One spring, Maehyang suddenly felt feverish and ill; she could not eat for days and was confined to bed.

Hoga nursed his sister with great care.

He would have prepared tasty dishes with the well-known white bellflower, anise and aralia shoots from the Ongnyu valley, but Maehyang would not eat them.

One day she said that she wished to eat some mackerel.

Immediately Hoga set off for Changjon, a famous fishing village on the east coast.

Upon arriving there he met some fishermen, told them about his sister and asked them to catch some mackerel for him.

"Mackerel is very tasty, but the trouble is that the mackerel season is in June."

They were regretful and worried, as though the problem was their own.

It was May, so he would have to wait for a month to catch mackerel. Hoga loved his sister dearly and determined to return home with some mackerel, even if it took a year to catch.

From that day the fishermen taught him to row and prepare fishing tackle.

In this way a month passed.

Hoga put to sea in a boat he had hired from the fishermen.

He was rowing hard when he heard splashing sounds from both sides of the boat.

He looked down and saw fish teeming beneath the boat.

The minute he cast his line a fish as big as his arm was hooked; in this manner he caught fish after fish.

However, he caught not a single mackerel.

Hoga rowed out further in search of mackerel.

Suddenly the calm sea began to billow and rise.

His boat rocked dangerously from side to side, driven by the raging waves like a fallen leaf in the water; then it was turned upside down.

Hoga swam with all his energy, clutching at the oar, but he was a poor swimmer. Before long all his strength was gone and he sank below the waves.

In the meantime, rain or storm, Maehyang would climb up to the high rocky peak of the mountain behind the village and look out intently over the sea, waiting for her dear brother to return.

Even after nightfall she would remain there as though glued to the spot and would gaze towards the distant sea veiled in darkness, forgetting to return home.

The mountain animals felt sorry for her and would fetch wild fruit and lay them beside her. Korean scops owls and other night birds of the Kumgang mountains would gather to sit with Maehyang through the night, each one lighting the darkness.

She was tearfully grateful to them for their kindness, though they could not talk.

Meanwhile, Hoga, who was sinking deep under the sea, was amazed to see turtles rushing in swarms towards him.

They had been dispatched for Hoga by the Dragon King of the East Sea in recognition of his noble deeds.

Hoga, seated on the back of a turtle, was taken into the Dragon King's Palace.

After hearing his story the Dragon King nodded and said: "The affection



between you and your sister is so deep that I'll help you. There's no need for you to worry."

Then he called some mackerel to the front of the Crystal Palace.

The mackerel, not knowing what the matter was, were trembling and unable to raise their heads.

"Can you compare your sinful acts with the noble deeds of this young man from above the sea?

"You brothers do not get on together and brawl with one another noisily, so you have been thrown into prison. Do you really understand how dreadful your behaviour is?"

In this way the Dragon King chided the mackerel sternly and went on:

"I want to give you a last chance to repent, so listen to me carefully.

"You must go to the Kumgang mountains at once to cure the illness of this young man's sister."

No sooner had the Dragon King given his instructions than the mackerel began to shout in chorus, nodding their heads backwards and forwards:

"We will do as we have been told."

Hoga, after spending a few days at the Dragon King's Palace eating delicious food, left, riding a turtle and escorted by mackerel.

Although it was thousands of fathoms deep, the sea was opened up by the shoal of mackerel in front, and the turtle carrying Hoga on its back floated up to the surface of the calm sea.

They were swimming fast towards the shore when suddenly a school of ferocious dolphins appeared and headed straight for them, raising white foam.

The situation was perilous.

At that moment the mackerel, sharpening their fins, rushed at the dolphins, shouting battle cries.

Overpowered by hundreds of mackerel, the cowardly dolphins fell back and turned tail.

The turtle resumed its course and forged ahead.

When Hoga raised his head, the twelve thousand peaks of the Kumgang

mountains were dimly visible in the distance.

Hoga stopped at Al Islet for a rest, and it was already noon when he arrived at Changjon, from where he looked at the Kumgang mountains with affection.

As soon as he alighted on the sandy beach a deer ran up to him. The deer was an old acquaintance who lived on the hill behind Ryukhwaam village.

The deer knelt on the ground, urging Hoga to mount him.

At the sight of the deer Hoga felt an intense desire to see Maehyang.

He wanted to be at his sister's side as quickly as possible.

But he hesitated because he felt sad at parting with the turtle and because he did not know what to do with the mackerel.

At that moment thunder rolled and lightning flashed, followed by heavy rain and strong winds. In an instant the turtle and mackerel, which had been in front of him just a moment before, had disappeared.

The deer, with Hoga sitting puzzled on its back, ran to the hill behind Ryukhwaam village. Hoga jumped from the back of the deer, his eyes open wide.

His beloved sister was standing like a stone statue looking out over the East Sea.

"Maehyang!"

"Brother!"

Brother and sister rushed to meet each other with cries of joy.

"Brother! Brother!"

Maehyang pressed her face to her brother's chest and sobbed.

Hoga and Maehyang were beside themselves with joy at their reunion, but they had a sudden surprise.

The turtle and mackerel were playing in the water of a big rocky pool.

Hoga told Maehyang of his journey to the Dragon King's Palace and, leading her by the hand, took her to the pool. The mackerel swam out to the water's edge to greet them, each lashing its caudal fin; an odd smell was coming from them. Smelling it, Maehyang felt quite refreshed and invigorated.

Looking down at the mackerel playing in the pool, their caudal fins moving right and left, Maehyang said:

"Dear mackerel, I thank you dearly. I'm now well again, so you can return to the Dragon King's Palace."

Hoga was touched by the tenderness of Maehyang, who cared for the mackerel even though they were no more than fish of the sea.

"Mackerel, don't worry any longer, but go home, please.

"My sister Maehyang is well again, so the Dragon King will be pleased with you," said Hoga, looking at the fish with affection.

But his heart was heavy at the thought of sending the turtle and mackerel back.

At that moment thunder rolled, shaking the earth and sky, and heavy rain fell. The pool overflowed and flooded the valley, and the turtle and mackerel were carried back to the sea on the tide of the flood.

And from every corner of the forest animals emerged, and birds, including Korean scops owls, flocked together.

The birds sang merrily above the heads of Hoga and Maehyang and the deer, antelope and roe deer danced gaily to the singing.

Later the towering rock on which Maehyang had stood, rain or storm, waiting eagerly for her brother to return from the sea, was called "Mangyang Rock" (the rock commanding a view of the sea) by the people of the Kumgang mountains.



## **Poyong and Jangsoe**

A long time ago a beautiful princess named Jinrang lived in the Kingdom of the Sky.

The King brought her up with the tenderest care.

Under her father's warm affection she grew up quickly into a beautiful maiden.

One year the King fixed the date of her engagement ceremony.

The Kingdom was unusually lively and gay with the approach of the day of Princess Jinrang's engagement ceremony.

The elves were writing fine speeches and composing good poems, and the fairies were very busy preparing their dresses.

However, a few days before the auspicious day, Princess Jinrang suddenly fell seriously ill.

Famous doctors of the Kingdom came and prescribed medicine and treated the patient, day and night, but nothing was effective.



Her illness worsened day by day.

The Kingdom, which had been full of life and energy, was plunged deep into grief.

One day, a physician who came from a village on the Moon said, after feeling her pulse, that she would undoubtedly get well if she took extract of the golden helleborine which grew on a high part of the Kumgang mountains called Ryondae Peak.

The King was delighted to hear this.

He immediately summoned his fairy-servant, whose name was Poyong.

"Go down to Ryondae Peak right away and fetch some helleborine. Every second counts, so go quickly."

At this Poyong was nonplussed.

"I've never seen helleborine before, so how can I find it?" she said to herself.

It was quite a problem.

But a waiting maid could not disobey the King's order.

The fairy Poyong immediately put on her winged dress and flew down to the Kumgang mountains.

Having arrived in the mountains she climbed up and down the ridges of Ryondae Peak and combed the ravines for the golden plant, but she could not find it anywhere.

She beat her breast in frustration, looking up at the sky.

She felt a chill creep over her at the thought that if she failed to find the helleborine, she would be punished by the King and would be forbidden to return to the Kingdom.

Already she had spent two days looking for the helleborine.

She was climbing wearily up a slope when she missed her footing and tumbled down the slope, screaming.

When she came to herself and opened her eyes, she found herself lying on a heap of dry leaves in a cave. She was frightened and tried to rise. But she could scarcely move even a single finger. She felt as if her body was as heavy as lead and as if she was sinking into the ground.

At that moment a young man, who had been watching her with concern from the entrance of the cave, came up to her and said:

"How do you feel now? It seems that luckily you haven't been injured seriously. Something awful might have happened to you."

"Thank you. I don't know how I can repay your kindness...." the fairy Poyong said, glancing up at the man with a shy and grateful look. She could say no more and turned her face away to hide her tears.

The young man lived in a seaside village not far from the cave; his name was Jangsoe. Though he was poor, he was kindhearted and diligent and lived a happy life supporting his parents.

That day, Jangsoe had come to collect firewood and happened to find a strange girl lying senseless at the foot of a cliff; he had moved her into the cave.

Jangsoe asked the girl how she had come to be wandering about alone deep in the mountains.

"I... well... I live in the village beyond the pass. My mother is so ill that I came looking for helleborine, but...", Poyong said.

She was lying for the first time in her life, because she thought that if she told the young man that she was a fairy who had come down from heaven, he would be ill at ease and, moreover, that if word got out that she had been sent from heaven for the helleborine, it would make things difficult for her.

Jangsoe felt sorry for her.

"So you have problems. I've also heard of the helleborine, but no one has ever seen it. Anyway, you're too hurt to be able to return home, to say nothing of obtaining the helleborine. So, let's go to my home and you can recover there. My mother will do her best to look after you."

Poyong was deeply moved by the warm sympathy shown by the young man. However, since it was strictly forbidden for fairies to mix with people on Earth, she said, with tears in her eyes:

"I have no words to thank you for the sympathy you have shown me, a poor girl, but I will not leave here before I find the helleborine."

Jangsoe realized that he could not shake her resolve, so he went home and told

his mother all about the girl. Pitying her, his mother prepared a bowl of thin rice gruel and gave it to Jangsoe. She would have liked to go herself to give it to the girl, but her poor health did not allow it.

As the girl gradually recovered her spirits, Jangsoe's mother sent her boiled broomcorn millet and tasty wild vegetables. Poyong ate the food with relish and was back on her feet after three days.

Yet still she had no hope of finding the helleborine, and this troubled her greatly.

"Let's search for the helleborine together, then we'll surely be able to heal your mother," said Jangsoe, soothing Poyong.

"Oh, what a kindhearted man he is!" she thought to herself and glanced at him with emotion.

Jangsoe's heart beat fast as he, too, looked at the girl, who seemed to him like a sweet brier.

They left the cave together.

While the fairy Poyong and Jangsoe were searching a deep ravine for the herb, a dazzling golden light flashed near their feet. It was so bright that they had to shade their eyes with their hands.

"That's helleborine shedding that golden light," said Jangsoe, running towards the light.

Excited, Poyong ran after him.

A fresh flower emitting golden rays was swaying softly in the breeze. The lovely flower was sending out a strong aroma.

Jangsoe was more delighted than Poyong to see it. He dug up the helleborine without hurting even its finest root and placed it in the hands of Poyong.

"Please take it."

"Thank you. A thousand times thank you. I'll take it to my mother and then I'll come back. Please wait for me."

The fairy Poyong left reluctantly, and she turned round more than once to see Jangsoe.

Scarcely had Jinrang taken extract of the helleborine brought by the fairy

Poyong than her lips became pink and her breathing even. She soon recovered her health completely.

The joy of the King was indescribable.

He summoned the fairy Poyong.

"You deserve high praise. I should like to reward you for your devotion. Ask whatever you want."

The fairy Poyong knelt down and said:

"May I humbly inform you that the greatest desire of this girl is to go down to live in the Kumgang mountains, which are famous throughout the world for their scenic beauty."

The King was reluctant to grant her unexpected request. He was very sorry at the thought of parting with her.

However, having declared that he would comply with whatever she requested, he could not refuse her.

The King remained silent for a while, looking down at the fairy Poyong. Then he sighed a long sigh and said: "If it is your earnest desire, you may go." He was reluctant to part with her. But Poyong descended again to the Kumgang mountains where she met Jangsoe and told him everything.

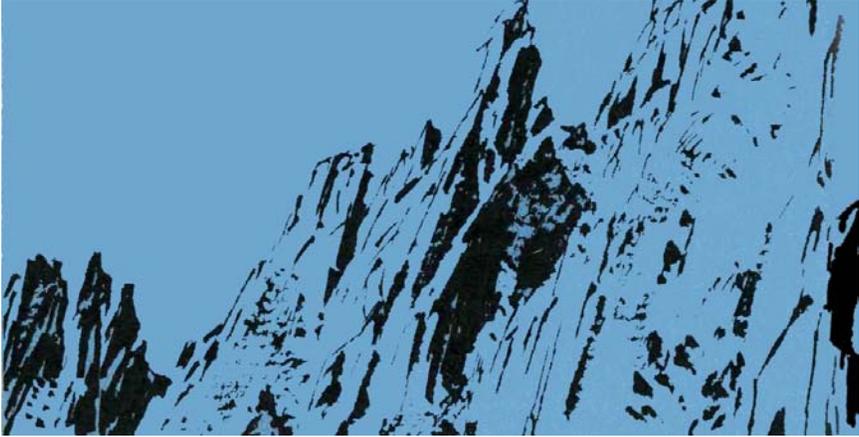
Jangsoe's joy was boundless.

Jangsoe took her to his village on the coast, and there he married her.

On the morning of the day of their wedding, a screen-shaped rock ten times taller than a man fell down from the sky to stand deep in the sea not far from the coast.

It was a screen sent by the King of the Sky Kingdom as a wedding gift.

Later Jangsoe and Poyong built a cosy house with nut pine trees from the Kumgang mountains on top of the screen-shaped rock and called it the "Chongsok Pavilion".



## *Unsadari and Kumsadari*

Once upon a time, in a deep valley below Piro Peak, lived an orphaned brother and sister.

The sister took good care of her nine-year-old little brother, just as their parents had done, and the brother lived happily together with his only sister, relying on her.

One spring his sister fell seriously ill. Overcome with grief, the boy simply wept, holding his dear sister in his arms.

One day an old doctor from Paegang Village visited her and said that if she ate a basketful of the fruit of the cinnamon tree growing on the moon, she would be cured of her illness.

"Fruit of the cinnamon tree!" said her brother, making up his mind to go to the moon and fetch the medicine for his sister, no matter how far it was.

The next morning, to set his sister at ease, he told her that he would go to the mountain to gather herbs, and he left for the distant and rugged Piro Peak.

He had once heard someone say that Piro Peak was the nearest point to the sky.

However, once he had climbed up to Piro Peak, he had no idea how to get to the moon.

He grew impatient and looked up at the sky all day long. Dusk fell and the stars began to appear in the sky.

Abruptly he heard a rattle from somewhere. He was so frightened that he hid himself behind a rock and peered round it.

A dazzling white ladder had come down from the sky and a fairy was stepping down it, a beautiful water jar in her arms. He was enchanted by the sight.

When the fairy had alighted on the ground, the silvery ladder immediately went up into the sky.

The fairy stepped lightly down the valley, the water jar in her arms.

After a while she returned with her jar full of water and approached the rock behind which the boy was hiding. She thrust her hand into a hole in the rock, took out a luminous stone and directed its rays to the sky.

Then a golden ladder came down from the sky.

The fairy put the strange stone back into the hole in the rock and climbed up the ladder to the sky.

As the fairy climbed up, so the golden ladder, too, went up.

The boy, having seen this wonderful sight, came out from behind the rock without fear and, putting his hand into the hole, took out the stone the fairy had left there.

It was a big gem glittering with all the colours of the rainbow.

Having discovered the secret, the boy was so overjoyed that he rubbed the gem against his cheek.

He directed its rays to the sky as the fairy had done.

Then the golden ladder came down with a clatter.

The lad quickly grasped the golden ladder and climbed up it to the moon.

Meanwhile, his sister lying in her sickbed was worried about her brother who had left saying that he would go to gather medicinal herbs, but had not returned



even though it was late at night. She got out of bed with difficulty and left the house in search of her brother, a paper lantern in her hand.

The sister searched all over the valley below Piro Peak for her brother, calling his name until her voice was hoarse.

However, her pitiful cries were drowned by the noises of the forest and the wind.

Her brother, having arrived on the moon, went to the cinnamon grove and picked a basketful of gourd-shaped cinnamon fruits.

The King of the moon was angry when he learned, just as the boy was leaving the cinnamon grove, that a man from earth had ascended to the moon.

In a fury, the King shattered into splinters with his cane the two ladders which led to the moon, saying that a ladder once climbed by a man could not be used by fairies.

The silver and golden ladders were broken into thousands of pieces, which fell down on Piro Peak with a great noise.

The King of the moon summoned the boy to the royal palace.

The King stared the boy in the face for some time before asking him why he had come to the moon.

Through his tears the boy told him everything and implored him to let him take the cinnamon fruit away.

On hearing the boy's story, the King relented a little towards him and showed him some sympathy.

"I did not know that such profound affection existed between brother and sister on earth. I'm sorry that I broke the silver and golden ladders in my temper."

The King regretted his action and said, "It cannot be helped. I will give you a horse. Return to your sister on it."

The boy on the horse flew like the wind down to Piro peak.

The moon was so far away that it took the swift horse half a month to reach the earth.

In the meantime, the sister, who had cried bitterly for her dear brother in the valley below Piro Peak, breathed her last without meeting him again.

However, strange to say, the lantern she held in her hand remained alight long after her death. Later it turned into a beautiful flower.

The boy, who wept and wept for his sister, called the flower "Kumgang Chorong (lantern)".

This flower, which can be found nowhere in the world but in the Kumgang mountains, is said to be the spirit of the sister who, having nowhere to go, cannot leave the valley below Piro Peak.

The two rock pillars standing on the top of Piro Peak, formed from the rocks into which the pieces of broken silver and golden ladder were converted, are still called "Unsadari" and "Kumsadari", as of old.



## Frog Rock

Once upon a time in a well in a village there lived a mother frog who was said to have travelled the world when young and to have seen all the most beautiful scenery.

She used to say to her little frogs, "Children, the outside world is nothing special. There is nothing to look at there. Whatever people say, the well where we live is the best. As you see, the water is always clear and pure. Also, the moss-covered wall is quite magnificent."

The mother frog often boasted to her children about their well.

So, all the little frogs thought that there was nothing in the world more beautiful than their well.

One day a magpie came and cawed above the well.

The little frogs popped their heads out of the water and looked up at it.

They vied with one another in boasting of their well.

"Magpie, magpie, try a mouthful of this clear, pure water."

"Please come into our well and look up at the round sky," the little frogs cried aloud one after another.

Listening to their boasting, the magpie held his sides with laughter.

"Frogs, of course your well is a good place to live. However, listen to me, children."

The magpie told them ardently about the countless varieties of beautiful peaks



he had seen in the Kumgang mountains.

"What?"

"Does such a place exist?"

The frogs tilted their heads, doubting the magpie's words. It seemed to them that the magpie was making fun of them.

"Magpie, do you really mean it?" the mother frog asked, her eyes open wide.

"Yes. If you don't believe me, come with me to see the Kumgang mountains," said the magpie, wagging his tail.

The mother frog became impatient. She could not believe the magpie without seeing for herself.

"Magpie, will you carry me on your back to the Kumgang mountains?" she asked, looking up at him.

"Yes, I will."

The magpie flew down into the well and put the mother frog on his back. He braved the winds and flew and flew through the clouds to the Kumgang mountains.

The magpie put the mother frog down halfway up to Ongnyo Peak saying, "Well, here we are in the Kumgang mountains.

The mother frog stared wide-eyed at the mountains.

Peaks rose above the clouds here and there, while crystal-clear streams flowed quietly through ravines, glistening in the sun, like rolls of silk.

The mother frog cried out in admiration.

She had never seen such scenery before, although she had travelled the world when she was young.

To think that there is such a fine place as this on the Earth!

She wondered if she was dreaming.

Fascinated by the beautiful scenery of the Kumgang mountains the mother frog remained transfixed.

Day followed day, but she remained on the slope of Ongnyo Peak as if rooted to the spot.

Captivated by the beautiful scenery, the mother frog completely forgot her

little children who were waiting impatiently for her in the well.

"Mother frog, you have seen enough. Now let's go back," the magpie chirped over her head.

This reminded her of her little frogs.

"How forgetful I am! I will go back now and tell my children about the scenery of the Kumgang mountains," she said to herself.

The mother frog was on the point of going home.

But she was reluctant to leave the fascinating scenery.

"Magpie, magpie, let me have another look," she said, looking up at the magpie.

The frog gazed in fascination at the twelve thousand peaks of the Kumgang mountains and their ravines.

After a long time the frog, looking wide-eyed at the peaks of the Kumgang mountains, was turned into a rock.

The big rock resembling a wide-eyed frog, which stands halfway up the slope to Ongnyo Peak, is said to be the rock into which the mother frog was changed.

## *A Minister from the Sky Deprived of His Coronet*



If you climb further up the Ongnyu Ravine, through which streams flow sending up gem-like sprays, you will find a big rock resembling a bareheaded man squatting on his haunches.

It is said to be the rock into which was changed a minister from the sky who was punished by an old man who had lived in the Kumgang mountains tending medicinal herbs.

One sultry summer day a minister from the sky came down to see the Kumgang mountains.

He descended to Piro Peak and looked over the numerous peaks of the Kumgang mountains stretching as far as the eye could see. As he had heard, the beautiful scenery was beyond description.

He came down to the ravine by Kuryong Pool.

Since it was noon, he was sweating all over.

The minister from the sky, as he

passed by Ryonju Pool, could no longer stand the heat. So, he took off his coronet and clothes and jumped into the pool.

He felt immediately refreshed. As he bathed he lost all sense of time and muttered to himself, "Now I understand why the fairies often descend to the eight pools of the Kumgang mountains to bathe."

"Who are you bathing there?" Suddenly he heard a loud shout above his head.

Frightened, the minister plunged his body deeper into the water and looked in the direction from which the shout had come.

An old man was staring sternly down at him, standing in a dignified manner on a broad, flat rock.

The minister felt relieved and said, raising his voice slightly, "Old man, who are you and why do you shout at me, without knowing who I am?"

"I am a man who lives in the Kumgang mountains, growing herbs. The water streaming down the ravines of the Kumgang mountains washes over the roots of all the different herbs, so it is very good for the health. Don't you know that? Those who visit the Kumgang mountains sample this water before anything else. But you are bathing in the stream. Don't you think that's a terrible thing to do?"

Thus the old man severely reproached the minister from the sky.

The minister was embarrassed.

"Old man, I've made a great mistake. The fact is..."

The minister looked up at the old man and begged his forgiveness.

"You are bathing in the most important stream, and that in the daytime. How dreadful! You should be punished!"

The old man severely scolded him, beating the rock with his stick. He picked up the minister's coronet and took it away without looking back.

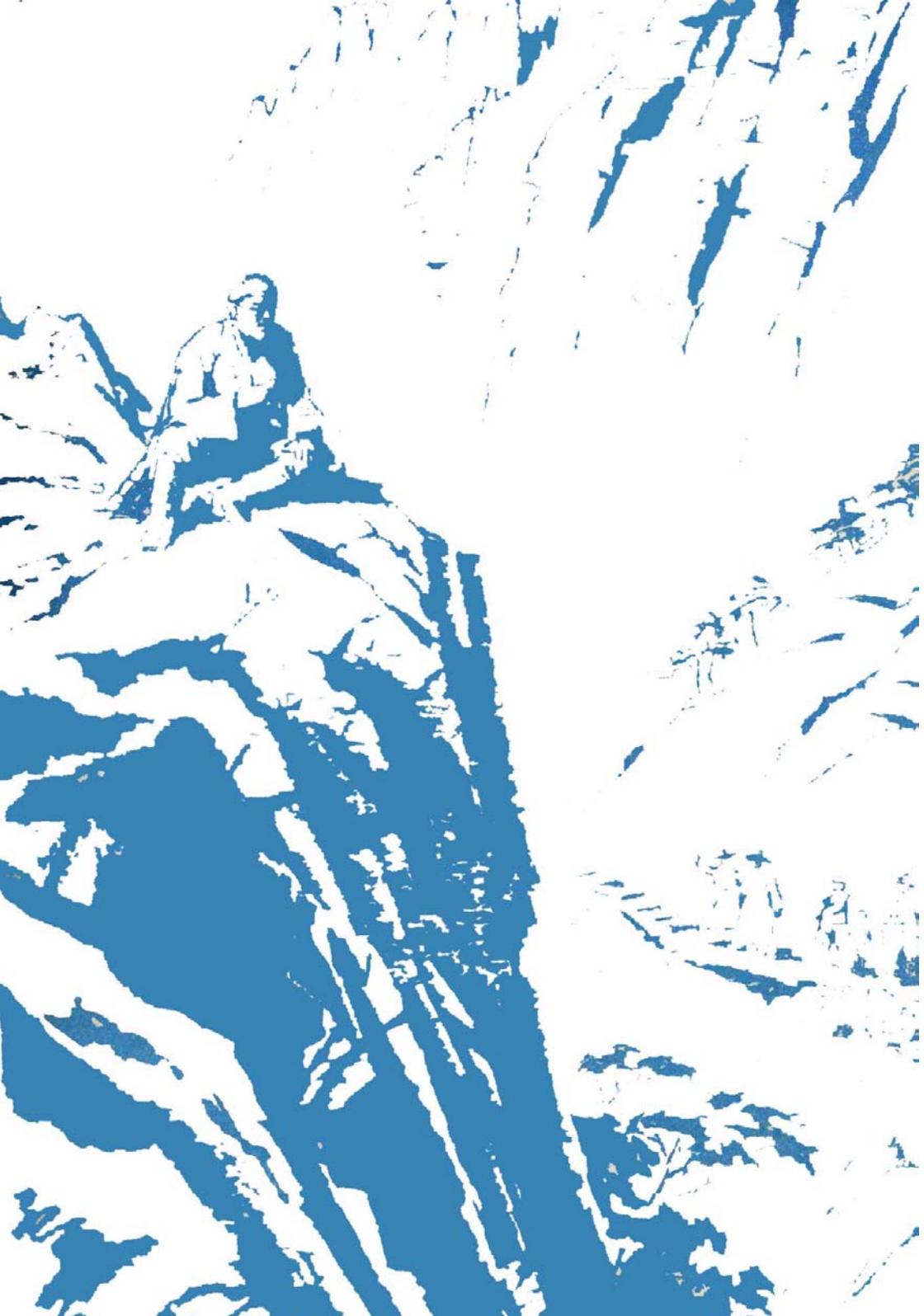
The minister quickly got out of the pool and put on his clothes.

However, having lost his coronet, he was unable to return to the sky, because only by wearing his coronet could he ascend.

He called for the old man everywhere in the valley, but in vain.

"What shall I do now?"

Bareheaded, the minister sat on a rock and heaved a deep sigh.



Then he heard human voices coming from down the valley. They were people coming up to the eight pools along the valley by Kuryong Pool.

The minister from the sky was so afraid of being discovered by the people that he hurried up the valley.

He hid himself behind a rock, fearing that someone might see him.

"To think that I have bathed in the clear stream in which not even the birds dare bathe," he thought.

The more he reflected, the more guilty he felt.

The sun set behind Piro Peak and dusk was deepening.

Stars began to appear one after another in the sky.

"I cannot ascend to the sky without my coronet. What shall I do? I must have been mad," he thought.

The minister sat up all night, beating his breast. He became more and more sorrowful as the days went by.

Long years passed and the bareheaded minister who failed to return to the sky is said to have been turned into a rock halfway up the slope to Sejon Peak.

On misty and cloudy days, the rock is concealed in the mist and clouds, but on fine days, his guilty image is exposed. Then he is said to say, blushing for shame:

"I was punished for my imprudence in jumping into a clear stream in the Kumgang mountains and defiling it. Now I fully understand how much the people living in the Kumgang mountains value and prize even a nameless stream in a ravine. The noble hearts of the people of this country add to the beauty of the Kumgang mountains."



## *Handol and Tudol*

Long, long years ago there lived two boys, called Handol and Tudol, in a village at the foot of Piro Peak.

They grew up under the care of their old widowed mothers. Their fathers had gone off to war a few years before and had been killed at the same time.

Sharing the sorrow of being fatherless, Handol and Tudol were always very close, like twins.

When they found a wild pear floating downstream, while playing on the riverside they shared it and when they gathered a handful of hazel nuts, they shared them, too.

One spring day when they were 18 years old, people in felt hats and carrying clubs on their shoulders came to the village and took Handol and Tudol away, saying that they must join the army.

"It is enough that their fathers died on the battlefields. Are you going to take away our only sons? Take us old women instead," their mothers implored the

government officials, clinging to their sleeves.

However, the officials took Handol and Tudol away, unperturbed.

Pressganged into military service, Handol and Tudol could not sleep at night, worrying about their old mothers back in their home village. The thought of them broke their hearts, and whenever they ate, they seemed to be chewing sand.

One day a misfortune befell Handol. Several hundred bags of rice were stolen from the military supply store over which Handol kept guard at night.

He was tried and sentenced to death and thrown into the guardhouse.

To make matters worse, a few days after he was confined to the guardhouse came news that his mother's illness had become serious. Tudol was the first to be told the news. The commanding officer did not bother to convey it to Handol.

Tudol called on the commanding officer, told him about Handol's family circumstances and implored him to allow Handol to see his mother just once before his execution.

"He will be beheaded in five days, so what is the use of his seeing his ailing mother?"

The commanding officer ignored Tudol's request. This rent Tudol's heart. It was dreadful that Handol had been sentenced to death on a false charge. Also, Handol's mother was critically ill. At this thought everything went dark before his eyes.

Was there no way for him to see his mother just one more time before she died?

Tudol remained deep in thought; his heart was heavy. After serious consideration he called on the commanding officer again and told him he had an idea.

"Put me in the guardhouse in place of Handol, and I'll stay there while he goes home."

The commanding officer was surprised because there were only five days until Handol's execution.

Although he knew that they were unusually close, he was moved by Tudol's offer to be confined in place of his friend.

After a while the commanding officer asked:

"There are only five days until Handol's execution. If he does not return by then, you will be executed instead of him. Is that all right?"

"Yes. Otherwise, I would not have dared to make such a request. But, I am sure Handol will be back in five days. If for some reason he fails to come back in time you may execute me instead."

He was absolutely determined.

The commanding officer complied with his request.

Prior to his departure for home Handol wept and wept, hugging Tudol as he was about to be walked off into the guardhouse in place of him.

Tears ran down the cheeks of the onlooking soldiers.

It took Handol two full days to return to his home village. He went straight to Tudol's house to see Tudol's mother first.

Strangely enough, he found the house empty.

So he hurried to his own house, where he found Tudol's mother tending his own sick mother.

"Mother!"

Approaching the earthen verandah, he called out in a choked voice.

"Oh, is that Handol?"

Tudol's mother ran out to welcome him.

However, Handol's mother did not know that her beloved son had come and still lay in bed, her eyes shut, as if dead.

"Well, is Tudol well, too?" asked Tudol's mother, stroking Handol's shoulders.

"Yes, he is well...."

Handol felt guilty about telling a lie. He turned his face away, feeling that Tudol's mother knew everything.

"You have come just in time. It seemed that your mother would not survive this night but, if she sees you, she will recover."

She seated him at his mother's bedside.

"Mother, it's Handol, I'm here," Handol whispered in her ear.

However, his mother did not reply, and her eyes remained tightly closed.

"Mother, Mother...."

Shaking his mother, Handol called her impatiently.

The next morning his mother was still not conscious. She was critically ill. Handol never left his mother's bedside.

However, he was haunted by the image of Tudol languishing in the guardhouse in his place.

"Tudol, I wonder whether there is another such man as you, who is ready to sacrifice his life for his friend. I will return soon. Wait a little longer."

Handol bit his lips and made them bleed.

"My mother is in a hopeless condition. There's nothing I can do. I have no regrets now that I have seen my mother. On no account will I let Tudol die in my place."

With this thought he rose to his feet.

"Tudol's mother, please look after my mother. I must leave now," said Handol kneeling before Tudol's mother.

"Oh dear! What's the matter? What do you mean by leaving your seriously ill mother?"

Tudol's mother jumped to her feet in anger.

"Tudol's mother, I must ... must leave now."

Unable to tell her the whole truth, Handol shed bitter tears.

"Military discipline is so cruel, isn't it? No, you must not go," said Tudol's mother, refusing to let go of his sleeves.

"Tudol's mother, let me go now. I will tell you everything later, but I can't tell you now," Handol implored her.

"Why can't you tell me now? If you can't I won't insist. Don't worry about your mother, take care of yourself...."

Tudol's mother could speak no more, choked with emotion.

Handol knelt and bowed low to his unconscious mother before leaving his house, weeping.

In the meantime, on the fifth morning, Handol was being criticized at the

barracks.

"You never know what goes on in other people's minds. To think that Handol has not come back yet, leaving his best friend in the jaws of death!" one said.

"I feel sorry for Tudol. To think that he will lose his life because of his false friend!"

The soldiers wept, pitying Tudol who would be executed in place of his friend.

At last the time came for Tudol to be executed. The commanding officer took him to the execution site.

Showing no sign of bearing a grudge, Tudol walked unperturbed and in silence.

"Tudol!"

"Poor fellow!"

Soldiers called to him in choked voices from all sides.

Tudol acknowledged them with a wink, looking towards them.

The commanding officer stood him at the edge of a precipice and asked:

"Tudol, don't you have any regrets?"

"No, none at all. I'm glad to think that Handol has met his mother. He will no doubt be coming back. What I want to say is that I would like you to show him mercy if he comes," Tudol replied, throwing out his chest.

"Fine. I will grant your request."

Having nodded his agreement, the commanding officer took a few steps back and raised his hand.

The archers aimed at Tudol and drew their bows to the full with trembling hands.

Just as the commanding officer was about to give the signal to shoot, the loud clatter of horse's hooves was heard coming from the valley.

The commanding officer turned and looked in that direction.

A white horse was approaching, running like the wind and raising a cloud of dust.

The man on the horse was shouting something at the top of his voice, waving

his hand.

"Isn't that Handol?"

"Yes, it is him."

Excited, the soldiers watched the white horse as it drew near.

Before long the horse drew up at the edge of the precipice at which Tudol was standing.

"Tudol!" called Handol, jumping down from the horse. He rushed to Tudol and embraced him.

"I'm here now, so, shoot me, please!" Breathing hard, Handol looked the archers in the eye.

All the soldiers gathered there stared at him in astonishment.

But Tudol was more surprised than any one else.

He had never expected Handol to be back in five days.

He had thought that it would take Handol more than fifty days, not five, to cure his sick mother and return.

His only idea had been to save Handol by sacrificing himself, true to comradely loyalty.

"Handol!"

"Tudol!"

They called to each other in choked voices and hugged each other.

"Handol, did you see your mother?" Tudol asked impatiently.

"Yes, I did. And your mother, too," said Handol, moved to tears.

"Well, why did you come back without nursing your mother back to health?" asked Tudol, beating Handol's chest.

"What are you saying? What's the use of my surviving alone after you have sacrificed yourself in my place?"

Handol felt a lump rising in his throat and hugged Tudol more tightly.

"Tudol, you must have suffered much because of me. I did my best to return quickly...."

Handol felt guilty and, blinking his eyes, told Tudol the following story.

Having said farewell to his sick mother, Handol hurried on his way. But,



while climbing a hill, he fell over a stone and hurt his ankle.

His ankle was so swollen that he could not take a single step forward.

He lay groaning on the hill, clutching his injured ankle.

"Tudol, Tudol! Oh! How terrible it is that you will die for me! Tudol!"

Handol wept bitterly, pounding the ground.

A horse trader who was climbing the hill heard his cries and hurried up to him.

The horse trader listened to Handol's story and said, "Your friendship will move heaven. Take this horse and hurry." Then he gave him a white steed.

Whipping the horse, Handol covered the remaining distance in a flash.

The soldiers had listened to what Handol said in breathless suspense, and were greatly excited.

Handol's action in hurrying to certain death to rescue his friend had really moved them, to say nothing of that of Tudol in not hesitating to choose death in place of his friend.

The commanding officer, who was standing to one side, studied the faces of the excited soldiers and after some thought said, looking at Handol:

"So, Handol, now you are to be executed. Come forward."

There was a derisive smile on his face.

"Why, he is really going to kill Handol!"

"What a cold-hearted, evil man he is!"

The soldiers were restless, trembling with indignation.

At that moment an old soldier came forward and said, "Fellows! I will tell you everything. It was the commanding officer who stole the provisions from the store."

"What?"

This unexpected statement astounded the soldiers.

"You rascal! Don't talk such nonsense," said the commanding officer, glaring at him as if he were ready to swallow him.

"I was on patrol that night, and with my own eyes I saw him stealing provisions from the depot in collusion with thieves. I was a fool. I pretended to know nothing, fearing the commanding officer. I deserve to be punished. Kill me

instead of Handol."

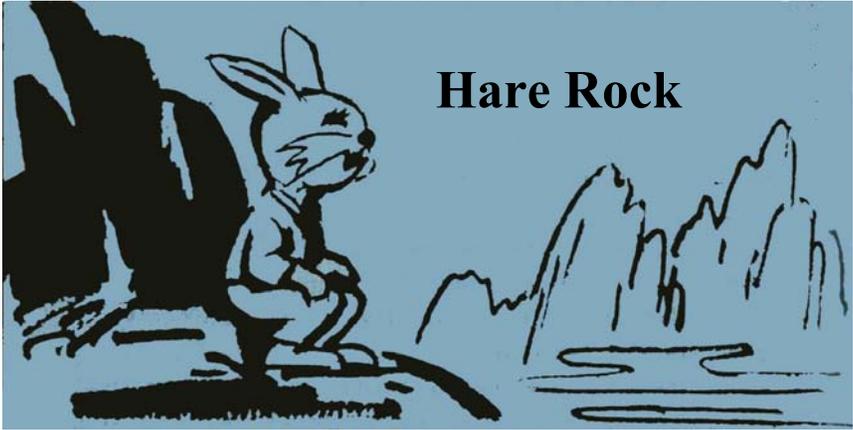
The old soldier wept, beating his chest with his fist.

"The man who shall be executed here is not Handol or Tudol, but the commanding officer!" shouted a soldier, holding up his spear.

"Hear! Hear!"

In a body the soldiers raised their spears and surrounded the commanding officer. Bursting with indignation, they quickly finished him off.

After that Handol and Tudol returned to their village and cured Handol's mother of her illness. They lived happily ever after, looking after their mother with complete devotion.



## Hare Rock

If you look up at Sejon Peak, you will see a rock resembling a large hare squatting on its haunches.

It is said to be a hare that lived in the sky.

So why was it turned into a rock in the Kumgang mountains?

One warm spring day the hare was sitting on a stone in the sky, pounding rice for the birthday party of the King of the Sky.

He was in high spirits as he pounded; a fairy approached him with a small gourd brimming with water. She was the pretty fairy, Oktol, who had returned after decking herself up in the Kumgang mountains.

"Hare, drink this water and cool yourself," said the fairy offering the gourd to the hare.

"Thank you" the hare said. Then he smiled and drank the gourd dry in one gulp.

"Oh! How delicious! Where did you bring it from?" asked the hare, licking his lips.

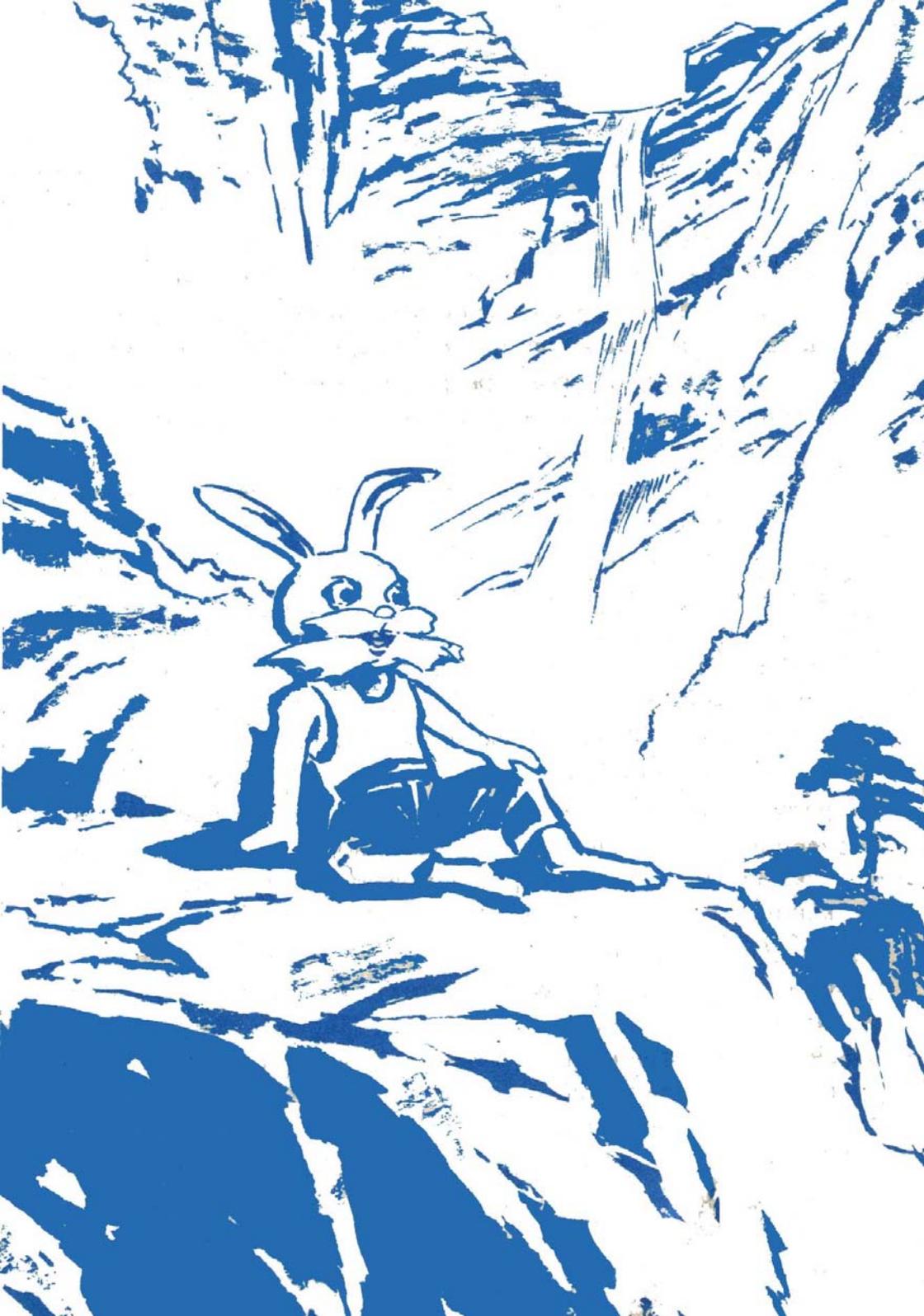
"This is water from the Kumgang mountains."

"What? The Kumgang mountains?"

"Yes," she said, nodding.

Then she began to praise the Kumgang mountains.

There seemed no end to her praise of the Kumgang mountains, of the streams,



rocks, flowers and clouds there.

"Oh! I want to go and see the Kumgang mountains," said the hare, putting his forelegs to its chest and looking at the fairy with envy.

After what the fairy had told him, the hare no longer wanted to pound rice.

He felt that he could never again pound rice until he had seen the Kumgang mountains.

The hot-headed hare immediately called on the King of the Sky.

"Your Excellency the King of the Sky, I have been told of the famous Kumgang mountains on Earth. If I see them just once, my lifelong desire will be fulfilled.

"Please allow me to go down and see the mountains just for a day."

The King of the Sky did not reply, but asked:

"If you go, who will pound the rice?"

"I will stay up twelve nights to finish it," the hare implored him.

His request was so earnest that the King of the Sky could deny him no longer.

"If it is your wish, go. But you must be back before sunset. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I will do as you say."

The hare bowed.

He borrowed a rainbow ladder from the pretty fairy and immediately went down to the Kumgang mountains.

He set the ladder up against the egg-shaped mountain at the entrance to Outer Kumgang and climbed up to Sejon Peak which commanded a bird's-eye view of the innumerable peaks of the Kumgang mountains.

The hare was full of admiration for the wonderful scenery unfolded before his eyes.

Chonhwa Rock soaring high in the foreground reminded him of flower in full bloom reaching up towards the sky, and the waterfalls in Ongnyu Ravine resembled rolls of patterned silk.

Magnificent PiPong and MuPong Waterfalls and mirror-like pools were a charming sight.

It was really wonderful scenery that could not even be imagined in the Sky.  
Cries of admiration passed the hare's lips.

Enchanted by the scenery, the hare looked down over Kuryongyon Ravine, not noticing how the hours were slipping away.

Before he knew it the sun had set behind Piro Peak and dusk began to fall.

Only then did he come to his senses, pinching his ears. He hurried back to the egg-shaped mountain against which he had set the rainbow ladder.

But the ladder was nowhere to be seen.

Puzzled, the hare stood there, his eyes wide open.

At that moment he heard the angry voice of the King of the Sky.

"You rascal! You are as lazy as the tortoise in the Dragon's Palace. I can't even trust you with pounding rice to make rice cakes for my birthday party. Don't think you can come up to the Sky again."

After shouting at the hare for some time, the King of the Sky took up a firebrand.

Then a thunderous peal was heard as if the sky were being rent and a fireball hit the hare on his back.

The hare screamed and collapsed, unconscious.

When he came to a little while later, he felt an acute pain in his back. Looking over his shoulder, the hare screamed, for his back resembled a turtle's shell.

This was the punishment given to him by the King of the Sky.

"Help me!"

The hare beat his chest and stamped his feet. His thoughts were bitter.

Tears gathered in his eyes. He cried and cried all night, reproaching the heartless King of the Sky.

The next morning the sun rose like a fireball above the East Sea, shedding golden rays.

Then the twelve thousand peaks of the Kumgang mountains began to blaze in the sun like pillars of fire.

"Hurrah!" the hare cried out in admiration in spite of himself.

The beautiful scenery of the Kumgang mountains banished the sorrow from

his mind.

The hare climbed halfway up to Sejon Peak, where he had been the previous day.

Then he looked down in fascination over the valley by Kuryong Pool. Gradually his heart lightened.

"Ha!" the hare sneered at the sky. Although, because of the King of the Sky's punishment, his back was cracked like turtle's shell, the hare felt happy at the thought that he was to live in the beautiful Kumgang mountains.

"The King of the Sky gave me a blessing rather than a punishment," the hare said to himself.

The hare was very happy.

From then on, the hare lived in the Kumgang mountains, feasting on its beauty to his heart's content.

Many years passed and the hare with a turtle-like-shell was changed into a rock.

The hare that was turned into a rock is crouching as ever halfway up the slope to Sejon Peak, enjoying a bird's-eye view of the innumerable peaks of the Kumgang mountains.



## Hanbong and Podok

When you enter Manphok Ravine, a spot of unparalleled beauty in Inner Kumgang, ascend the steep path past Hungnyong, Pipa and Pyokha Pools and reach Punsol Pool, you will see a small, three-storey temple called Podok Temple nestling halfway up Popgi Peak. The face of the hill serves as the back wall of the ground floor of the temple, and in the middle of this rock wall there is a cave.

This large cave is called Podok Cave, and there is a legend about it handed down from olden times.

A long, long time ago, a boy by the name of Hanbong lived for three years in a deep ravine in the Kumgang mountains, reading books to become a great scholar some day. In a little thatched cottage he had built in the woods, he devoted himself heart and soul to his reading, with the birds and the beasts as his neighbours and with the wind and the moon as his companions.

One day, at noon, he was reading in his cottage. In a corner of the room lay a large pile of books which his mother had handed to him when he had left for the Kumgang mountains. "Mother told me to devote myself to my studies for ten years, without concerning myself with worldly thoughts," he mused. "But when will I finish all those books?"

For some time now he had been growing weary of his studies. He stretched and yawned widely. He closed his book and went out into the yard. Sitting under the zelkova tree which stood at one side of the yard, and leaning against it, he



looked up at a white cloud sailing high across the sky.

"Oh, how happy that cloud must be! It will never feel unhappy as I do."

While absorbed in this thought, he heard singing above his head. Raising his eyes, he saw a cicada screeching "Mem, mem" on a branch of the tree, quivering its wings.

"The cicada is such a good singer even though it has never studied," he thought enviously.

He wanted to abandon his studies there and then and return to his dear mother. As he had read a fairly large number of books, he felt equal to anything.

Hanbong rose and went off to stroll round Manphok Ravine. As he was going down the steep path, a pretty girl suddenly appeared before him. She held a flower in her hand and was coming towards him with a smile.

"You're Hanbong, aren't you?" she said. "My name is Podok."

With this, she pinned the flower to Hanbong's chest, smiling gently.

"Podok?" the boy echoed and, before he knew what he was doing, he had taken the girl by the hand. The girl stepped back, her cheeks flushed crimson and, turning round, scampered off in a hurry.

"Oh, Podok! Podok!"

Calling her name, Hanbong ran after the girl. But although he ran as fast as he could, his legs failed him. He tried to catch up with the girl, but, all of a sudden, she had disappeared.

"Heavens!" he cried and looked about him with wide-open eyes. Then he saw a white kerchief hanging from a branch of a tree by the stream. He approached it quietly. Drawing near, he saw the girl washing her face in a basin filled with water.

Hanbong's heart beat loudly. "Hullo, Podok! Here I am!" he shouted joyfully and ran towards her.

The startled girl looked up at him in astonishment and then, without a word, took the white kerchief from the branch and ran off up the ravine.

"Podok! Podok!" Hanbong called after her, running in hot pursuit. But going round a bend, the girl had vanished into thin air. The boy was very upset to have

lost sight of the girl. He looked round for her, and his eyes sparkled with delight. He saw the girl's white kerchief fluttering in the wind in the distance, halfway up the slope to Popgi Peak. The girl was looking down at Hanbong, with her kerchief in her hand fluttering in the wind; then she quickly retreated into a cave in the cliff.

With his heart beating loudly, Hanbong struggled up the cliff inch by inch, holding on to the stalks of shrubs, until at last he came to the cave. He went in and searched every corner of the dark cave, but the girl was nowhere to be seen. He could not find her hiding-place. All he could see was a large stone desk in a corner.

Holding his breath, Hanbong stared at the strange desk. At that moment the girl appeared from a corner on the other side of the cave, holding a large, golden book in her hands. She said, "Hanbong, I've brought you to this place to give you this book," and she held out the golden book to him. Hanbong took it. It was a strange book with the title "How to Understand Everything" inscribed in glittering characters on the cover.

"Why, reading this one book will save me the trouble of reading all the books mother gave me!" the lad exclaimed in great excitement, and pressed the book to his breast.

Then he opened it and looked at it. The pages were packed with tiny characters. But he could not make out even a single character. He thought that the girl had fooled him, and demanded, "So, who on earth are you?"

"Like you I, too, have come to study in the Kumgang mountains," the girl answered with a smile.

"Is that so? So why have you given me this golden book full of baffling characters?" Hanbong asked in a huff.

"Every day I have gone up to your cottage and watched you study. But it seemed recently that you were becoming lazy, and I didn't know why," she said in reply. Then, pointing to the piles of books lying by the stone desk, she went on, "I've read all of those books as many as a hundred times, and now I know the meaning of all the characters in the golden book."

The girl's voice was full of tenderness for the boy as she said this. Hanbong blushed hotly in shame. He was terribly ashamed that he had tired of his studies and become homesick even though only for a short time.

Grasping the hands of the girl, he said, "You're right. I'll never long for my home again until I have gone through all the books my mother gave me."

No sooner had he said this than he dashed back to the cottage and opened a book. From that day he immersed himself in reading sentence after sentence. After ten years he had read all the books and become a respected scholar esteemed and envied by all.

Hanbong never forgot the girl who had made him aware of his mistake and led him back to the right path, and later he named the cave where she had been studying Podok Cave and built the Podok Temple there in her memory.





## Jangsu Rock

Once upon a time there was a tiny village which lay halfway up to the Peak of Ten Thousand Forms in the Kumgang mountains, called Arrowroot Village because of the rank growth of arrowroot vines there.

The young men of this village grew up drinking crystal-clear medicinal spring water and were as strong as oxen and as swift as tigers by the age of 15.

Strongest among them was a young man called Oksoe; when he hurled a javelin and shot arrows, leaping from hill to hill, even rocks could not stand up to them.

He was also as quick as lightning and could catch a tiger of the Kumgang mountains alive and tame it in his yard, uncaged.

Oksoe was a good singer, too.

When he sang a song while ploughing the fields and sowing seeds in company with the young people of the village in the spring, even the twelve thousand peaks of the Kumgang mountains seemed to dance to the tune of his beautiful singing.

One summer there came a report that a gang of Japanese pirates had landed on Al Islet in the sea near the village and while collecting tens of thousands of sea gulls' eggs, were looking for a chance to steal into the Kumgang mountains.

"We must not allow the Japanese to set foot on our land

"Al Islet, too, belongs to our country, so we should go across there and thrash out Japanese enemies!"

Oksoe said this, clenching his fists with rage.

He went to the shore, his hunting spear in his hand and his bow and arrows slung over his shoulder.

At dusk he left port aboard a boat which had no sail so that the enemy would not spot it.

The smooth sea resembled a piece of silk, but it grew rough as he drew closer to the islet.

He rowed the boat towards Al Islet. Unluckily, however, day broke before he could reach the islet.

Having spotted Oksoe's boat, the Japanese stormed out raising a great commotion. They closed in on Oksoe's boat from all sides.

"You rascals!" shouted Oksoe, his eyes flashing fire.

Like a flying tiger, he leapt into one of the Japanese boats that bumped into his.

He thrust at the Japanese standing at the side of the boat with his spear, sending them into the sea.

Then he leapt into another boat.

This time he did not use his spear, but grabbed his enemies by their collars and threw them into the water. He did this so swiftly that he looked to be picking and throwing radishes in a field.

The dead bodies of the Japanese filled the wide sea.

"Damn you. What are you doing there?" shouted the enemy commander, standing on the foredeck of his boat.

But, too frightened by Oksoe's tiger-like ferocity, not an enemy dared lift a finger against him.

Without pausing for breath, Oksoe rowed towards the enemy commander's boat.

At that moment, an arrow flew and pierced Oksoe's shoulder. It had been shot



by the enemy commander.

"Ah!" Oksoe groaned, and he grasped the arrow that had pierced his shoulder.

Fresh blood gushed through his fingers and streamed over the collar of his coat, turning the floor of the boat red with blood.

Oksoe hurled his javelin at the enemy commander with all his might.

The enemy commander caught the flying javelin in his hand and snapped it into pieces like a dry twig.

The enemy commander was also a man of great strength.

Oksoe swiftly jumped into the enemy commander's boat.

After beating down the soldiers, Oksoe pressed forward step by step on the enemy commander.

A man-to-man fight began between the two strong men.

Each struggled for a long time to overpower his opponent, and finally Oksoe, weakened by loss of blood, was forced down by the enemy commander.

The enemy commander used all his strength to try to strangle Oksoe.

Meanwhile the boat was drifting far out onto the distant sea, washed away by the waves.

Oksoe glared up into the ugly face of the enemy commander and suddenly jerked himself up with a cry, summoning all the strength he had been given by the medicinal spring water of the Kumgang mountains. The next moment Oksoe lifted the enemy commander above his head and threw him into the sea.

Exhausted, Oksoe collapsed on the deck of the boat. But the boat carrying Oksoe was drifting aimlessly, at the mercy of the waves.

Suddenly a large flock of sea gulls from Al Islet appeared above the boat.

Phew! Phew! Phew!

A wind blew from the sea gulls' fluttering wings, and the boat began to turn around.

Sometime later Oksoe came to himself and found his boat ashore.

He heard the cries of sea gulls.

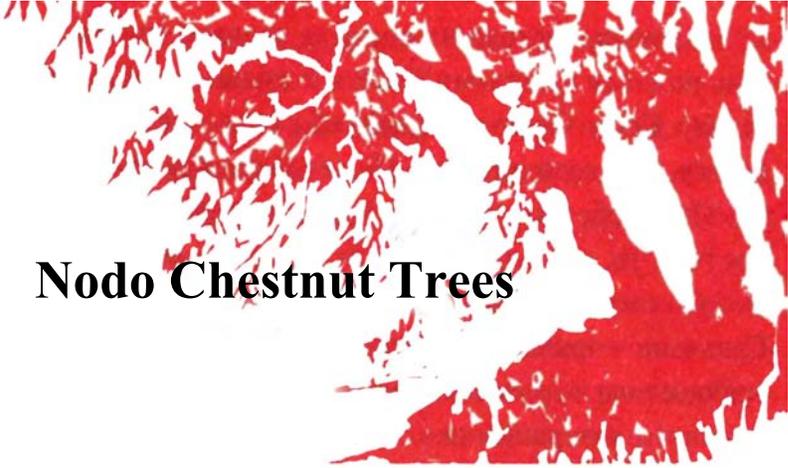
They were so grateful to Oksoe for having saved their nests that they were even shedding tears as they flew low over his head.

Oksoe, who had thrown the enemy off the islet, returned in triumph to his village.

The villagers hailed him as a man from Arrowroot Village with superhuman strength and held a feast for three days in honour of his triumphal return.

It is said that, although the young ox of Arrowroot Village is now sleeping sitting upright at the base of Ryukhwa Rock, he will wake and sweep away the enemy if they dare to pounce upon us, taking up once again the spear and bow and arrows he used before.





## Nodo Chestnut Trees

In a valley in the Kumgang mountains lived a happy couple.

For many years the couple had remained childless until when they were well past 40 years of age, a son was born to them.

Their joy was unbounded. They named the child "Murok" (to grow fast and strong).

Murok grew up rapidly under the warm care of his parents, without a day's illness.

On the day when Murok took his first step, a tiger the size of an ox entered the yard of Murok's home.

The couple went pale with fright.

They were horror-struck.

"I come from the valley below Piro Peak. Don't be so frightened, for I have come to ask a favour of you," said the tiger in a man's voice. And then, sitting on the earthen verandah, he smoked some tobacco.

After smoking a basketful of tobacco, he took 100 fist-sized chestnuts from his pocket and said:

"Please plant these 100 chestnuts and grow 100 chestnut trees. In ten years I will be back for the trees." With that the tiger lumbered out of the yard. But then the tiger turned round and said, after some hesitation:

"Unfortunately, if the chestnut trees don't number 100, I shall be obliged to take away your son."

The tiger told them that he had once lived in the Kingdom of the Sky but, punished by the High King, he had been changed into a tiger and sent down to Earth. Only if he was to return to the Kingdom of the Sky in ten years with 100 chestnut trees would he be pardoned.

But, should the number of chestnut trees fall short of 100 by even one, he would have to kidnap a boy and take him to the High King instead.

The parents of Murok were shocked by what the tiger had said. Everything went dark before their eyes, as if their son was being taken away to the Kingdom of the Sky right then.

"Tiger, we will grow 100 chestnut trees. So, please don't touch our Murok," the parents of Murok implored the tiger, their voices trembling.

"If you do so, I shall be most pleased," the tiger said, bowing deeply to the couple before going away.

After the tiger had left, the parents of Murok planted the 100 chestnuts in the yard with the greatest care.

The next spring green chestnut buds began to sprout. The couple counted the buds carefully, but they had a shock. There were only 99 sprouts.

They dug up the chestnut that had not sprouted. Only an empty shell remained; its flesh had been eaten by a rat.

"Good Heavens! What shall we do?" the parents of Murok said, sighing deeply as they squatted on their haunches.

"There's nothing we can do. While we grow the 99 chestnut plants, perhaps we may find a way out," said Murok's father.

Unable to sit and lament, he carefully transplanted the 99 young plants on the mountain behind the house.

The couple tended the chestnut field with such great care that not even a single weed grew, and every day they poured a jarful of water on each plant.

The chestnut trees grew rapidly, quickly growing branches, as if in response to their devoted care.



Several years later the 99 chestnut trees had grown thicker than an arm, and they shut out the sky.

Nevertheless, Murok's parents did not feel at all content.

Whenever they remembered the missing chestnut tree, they felt their hearts rending. They searched all the valleys, deep and shallow, of the Kumgang mountains for a chestnut tree.

For all their efforts, they found no chestnut tree.

The day before the ten year period stated by the tiger was to end, the couple were again searching for a chestnut tree, crossing steep mountains.

They searched all day long, their faces scratched by thorny bushes, but they failed to find a single chestnut tree.

The sun was setting over the western mountain in a red evening glow.

The couple sat down heavily on a flat rock and began to weep.

"Tomorrow the tiger will carry away our Murok."

They wept loudly, pounding the rock with their fists. Just at that moment, they heard a voice, "I'm a chestnut tree!" The voice was coming in front of them.

The surprised couple looked in the direction from which they had heard the strange voice. They saw a tree in the wood shouting continuously and swaying, "I'm a chestnut tree! I'm a chestnut tree!"

Rubbing their eyes, Murok's parents looked at the tree again.

Then they cried with joy. A tree like a chestnut tree was waving its branches at them. They were so delighted that they rushed towards it, crying, "Yes, you're also a chestnut tree (Nodo-pamnamuda)!"

They hugged its trunk and danced for joy around it.

"You've saved our Murok!"

"Thank you! Thank you!"

The couple kept embracing its trunk, shedding tears of joy.

Next morning, the tiger came to the home of Murok as promised.

"Tiger, Tiger. We've raised 100 chestnut trees in all. There are 99 growing on the mountain behind us and one on the mountain in front beyond those three hills. So, Tiger, you won't be taking our Murok to the Kingdom of the Sky, will you?"

the parents of the boy said, looking anxiously at the tiger.

"You've gone to a lot of trouble," the tiger said, kneeling before the couple.

"If I go up to the Kingdom of the Sky with the 100 chestnut trees you have grown for me, I shall be pardoned. But I shall not be going."

"Why not?"

The parents of Murok became nervous, fearing that the tiger was going to make some trouble for them.

"I would like to stay on here in the Kumgang mountains. I shall be happier as a tiger of the Kumgang mountains than as a tiger of the Kingdom of the Sky, where there is no water or vegetation."

With this the tiger looked at Murok's father and mother as if seeking their opinion.

The couple were deeply touched by his words.

"How beautiful the Kumgang mountains are that the tiger thinks thus!"

The more they thought, the more they were filled with joy and pride in living in the Kumgang mountains.

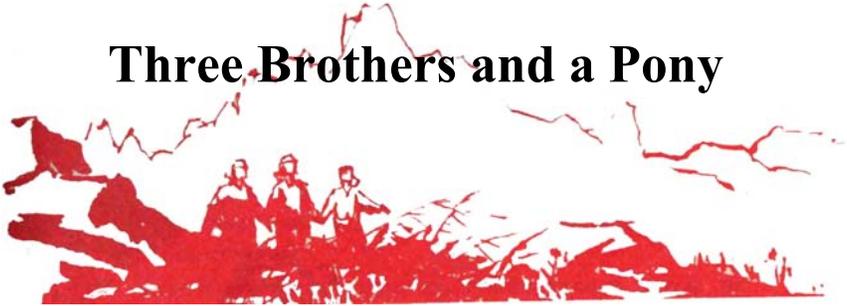
"Tiger, you're right!"

"Of course. It's much better to live in the Kumgang mountains with their beautiful hills and clear water than in the barren Kingdom of the Sky!"

The couple patted the tiger on the back.

Later they named the tree they had found in the wood the "Nodo" chestnut tree, grew many saplings from it and transplanted them in all the valleys of the Kumgang mountains. Even today "Nodo" chestnut trees are swaying, with their green branches outstretched, in the valleys of the mountains.

## Three Brothers and a Pony



Once upon a time three brothers lived happily together.

In the daytime they helped their parents by working hard in the fields and collecting firewood.

When night fell, they set a resin oil lamp on the twin rocks on one side of the yard and read, "Mountains, mountains, Kumgang mountains, the most beautiful mountains, Kumgang mountains."

At night a large number of the beasts on the Kumgang mountains gathered together around the lighted lamp.

Deer, squirrels and goats came and owls flew to the place. Seeing the three brothers absorbed in their reading, they would leave, thinking that they should not disturb them.

One night a pony happened to see the light of the resin oil lamp. Following its mother, the pony was romping along from peak to peak of Outer Kumgang, being trained to harden its hooves.

"Mother, I will put that light out at one go with my hooves," the pony said, kicking the rock.

Having seen the light of the resin oil lamp, the mischievous pony felt impatient to attack it.

"Go on, try," said the mother horse looking down at the pony in satisfaction and nodding her approval.

The pony ran up to the rock where the resin oil lamp was burning. The mother



horse followed the pony.

Suddenly the pony and mother horse stopped. In the dark, they heard sonorous reading, "My country, the beautiful land of golden tapestry! The best of all lands, my country!"

Blinking their eyes, they saw the three boys seated side by side, absorbed in their reading.

The boys were intent on their reading and had no idea that the pony and its mother were behind them.

Their voices echoed through the valley like a merry song

The pony and its mother listened to the voices of the boys.

They were overcome by strong emotions, and nodded, "What praiseworthy boys," said the mother horse, quietly leaving the scene to avoid disturbing the boys' reading. However, the pony kept listening to them, not moving even an inch, as if frozen to the spot.

The mother horse wanted to call to the pony, but she was afraid of disturbing the boys; so she just beckoned to the pony again and again to leave.

The pony was absorbed in listening and forgot that his mother was waiting for him on the opposite hillside.

The pony echoed their reading, "Mountains, mountains, Kumgang mountains, the most beautiful mountains, Kumgang mountains."

He was now completely intoxicated by the voices which resounded through the valley like a song.

The pony was entranced by the boys' reading and could not awake even after days and months. Then it turned into a rock.

The mother horse waiting for the pony, too, turned into a rock.

"Boys Rock", "Pony Rock" and "Mother Horse Rock" located halfway up to Seji Peak, tell the story to this day.

## The Girl from Kumnosu Village



At a bend in the road leading from Onjong-ri to the Onjong Pass a small spring gushes all the year round without ever running dry.

There is a story attached to this small spring which tells of the tender hearts of the people of this area who love the Kungang mountains.

A little girl named Noul was living in a roadside house at the foot of the Onjong Pass. She laid out a wayside spring for travellers across the Onjong Pass, and always had a gourd dipper ready for them. One sultry summer day Noul had cleaned the spring and laid out white pebbles on its bed, when a group of mounted soldiers came trotting up, raising a cloud of dust.

"You girl, give me a gourdful of water," the mounted commander said as he looked down at Noul and licked his lips.

The commander must have come a long distance because his clothes were drenched with sweat.

"Yes, sir."

With this, Noul went up to the spring, collected a gourdful of clear water and took it to him.

Learning that the young girl looked after the small spring for travellers, the commander praised her. "You're a good girl!" he said.

The delighted officer asked for another drink. The water was as cold as ice and tasted sweet.



Slapping his knee, the commander shouted in admiration:

"The water of this spring is really Kamnosu (honey dew)."

Then, looking round at his soldiers, he said, laughing heartily:

"From olden times it has been said that just one drink of Kamnosu will keep you young for ever, so drink your fill of this water."

The soldiers drank the water offered by the girl and cooled themselves.

Then they galloped over the Onjong Pass and rushed to the battlefield to defeat the enemy.

The soldiers, who had drawn strength and courage from the praiseworthy conduct of the nameless young girl they had met at the wayside spring, bravely cut down the foreign invaders like grass. Then they returned across the pass.

Noul was standing by the spring as usual, and she joyfully welcomed the triumphant soldiers.

The commanding officer jumped down from his horse and affectionately patted Noul on the shoulder, saying with a loud laugh:

"Little girl, you are truly kind-hearted. We drank the water you gave us and we all became formidable warriors."

After that people called this anonymous spring Kumnosu (water of eternal youth) because it was marked by the noble mind of Noul who loved the Kumgang mountains, and they also called her village Kumnosu village.



## Unson Rock

Once upon a time there lived a fairy called Chaeson in a village on a star. She was a servant of grandfather Palmanong (80,000-year-old-man), who was so called because he had been living in the village for 80,000 years.

The old man had almost all the heavenly treasures. Nevertheless, he was not content. So the old man sent Chaeson to the moon to pick fruit from the cinnamon tree there and sent her to the sun for warm fire stones.

One day the old man heard that a bead lantern would improve his eyesight.

The old man Palmanong told Chaeson to go to the Milky Way river to fetch Milky Way beads. Chaeson flew to the Milky Way river in her winged dress and collected all the beads there. There were no more than ten. She wrapped the beads in her skirt, but on her way back, she tripped on a cloud and dropped them all. Chaeson was terribly upset and did not know what to do.

When she went to the old man and told him in a faltering voice, that she had lost the beads, the old man said in a fury.



"What?! Lost the beads?"

Looking angrily at Chaeson, the old man took his sky mirror and looked below the clouds.

After gazing into the mirror for some time in search of the beads, the old man Palmanong looked up and said:

"The Milky Way beads you dropped are lying in a clear pool in a valley of the Kumgang mountains. Go quickly and fetch them before someone finds them."

With this, the old man sent Chaeson down to the Kumgang mountains.

Chaeson rode down to the Kumgang mountains in a flying cart. She landed at a spot near Chilbo Rock in Songnim Valley in Outer Kumgang, where she was enchanted by the fascinating scenery stretching out before her eyes. Grand and rugged peaks were decorated with colourful flowers, and rocks were covered with pine trees several hundreds of years old, their green branches outstretched.

A waterfall cascaded down the cliff, shaking the sky and the earth and sending up misty sprays of water; a beautiful rainbow rose above the clouds of spray.

Forgetting her errand to look for the beads, Chaeson stood for a long time under the spell of the Kumgang mountains' scenic beauty. Then Chaeson came to herself and went to find the pool of which the old man had spoken.

Chaeson found the ten Milky Way beads lying together at the bottom of the crystal-clear blue pool; it seemed more than two fathoms deep.

Chaeson could not dive, and she stood for a long time looking into the water, sighing deeply and wondering how to collect the beads.

Then she heard drumbeats, "Boom, boom" coming from the sky. It was a signal from the old man Palmanong urging her to return quickly with the Milky Way beads.

Chaeson felt uneasy and dispirited. She went round and round the pool impatiently, but it was beyond her power to gather the beads from the depths of the water. In anguish she covered her face with her hands and began to sob, standing at the edge of the pool, her shoulders shaking. At that moment she heard footsteps approaching behind her. In surprise, Chaeson turned round and looked.

"Dear me!" she cried in great embarrassment.

A boy carrying firewood on his back was striding towards the pool.

This was the first time Chaeson had met a human being, and so she trembled with fear. Moreover, she was frightened that he would take the Milky Way beads.

"Who are you, young lady?" the boy asked quietly. Then, as if he had read Chaeson's thoughts, he smiled brightly, putting the young girl at her ease. The boy seemed so kind and gentle that Chaeson forgot her fear.

"I am a fairy called Chaeson living on a star in the sky. I have come for the Milky Way beads," Chaeson told him, blushing. Her face was full of anxiety.

"Young lady, don't worry. I'll get the beads for you."

The boy placed his A-frame carrier at the side of the pool and told her to wait a short time behind the rock.

"What a kind man!" Chaeson thought to herself. She had received sympathy from another person for the first time in her life, and so a lump rose in her throat. Thinking of his kindness, she was so grateful that she was moved to tears. Having calmed her beating heart, Chaeson was thinking of how she could express her gratitude to the boy, when the boy walked up to where she was sitting behind the rock.

"Here you are!" the boy said and put the beads in her hands.

"Oh, how kind you are!" Chaeson exclaimed, beside herself with joy.

Looking her in the face, the boy beamed with joy.

Suddenly a loud drumbeat could be heard from the sky "Boom, boom!"

At this sound the smile disappeared from the face of the girl. "How can I repay his kindness?" Chaeson thought and felt her throat tighten.

She was very sad to part with the kind boy without having time even for a friendly talk.

Chaeson walked reluctantly towards where she had left her flying cart by a tree. But she was unable to get the flying cart ready. She remained standing, gazing at the boy.

Meanwhile, the drumbeat grew louder in the sky. Surprised, Chaeson got into the cart, her shoulders shaking.

"Good luck to you!" Chaeson called out sadly from the flying cart, which was

floating upwards.

"Miss Fairy!" the boy called back, waving his hand to Chaeson for a long time as she flew up into the sky.

Chaeson, back on her star, was unable to forget the boy from the Kumgang mountains even for a moment.

Her longing for the boy grew greater as the days went by. She could not restrain her affection for the young man. She felt a strong desire to return to the Kumgang mountains to talk to him.

However Chaeson, fearing grandfather Palmanong, did not dare to speak of her wish. One day the old man made the long journey to the moon to attend the birthday banquet of grandfather Kesu of the moon.

Chaeson did not miss this opportunity and went down to the Kumgang mountains in the flying cart. The boy was returning home with a full load of firewood on his back, and he was delighted to see Chaeson by the pool.

Chaeson was so happy to see the boy again that her heart beat wildly in excitement. She told the young man of her desire to live in the Kumgang mountains. His face lit up with joy when he heard the words of Chaeson. However, Chaeson spent several anxious days because the old man Palmanong tried hard to blow Chaeson back up to the star on a violent wind.

But Chaeson hid among the rocks at the edge of the pool where she had dropped the Milky Way beads. The sky mirror could not discover her in the recess and the strong wind blown by the old man could not reach her.

The young man built a cosy little cottage for the girl behind the rock to escape the eyes of the old man Palmanong. In this cottage Chaeson cooked, wove cloth and farmed with the boy.

Later people called the rock behind which Chaeson lived "Unson Rock", meaning Fairy Hiding Rock.



## The Wise Otter

Once upon a time there lived an otter in a small pool at the foot of Mt. Halla on Jeju Island.

One year there was a severe drought and the pool dried up.

Unable to live there any longer, the otter left his beloved pool and crossed the sea to the mainland.

The otter was wise but timid, so he always lived in hiding in the mountains, fearing that people would find and flay him. Therefore, he was unable to eat the fish he liked so much.

The otter moved northward in search of a place where there was plenty of fish. Eventually he came to the Kungang mountains and settled there. He spent a very happy time there. All the streams flowing down the ravines and valleys were teeming with fish. So the otter was able to eat all the fish he wanted.

He was quite satisfied with life, happy to be eating enough and seeing the superb scenery of the Kungang mountains.

One day the otter went to a stream where he caught and ate his fill of fish. But then, while washing his mouth sitting on a rock, he heard the terrible roar of a tiger. He looked round and saw a tiger as big as an ox coming out of the bushes.

The otter was terrified and hid behind the rock. The tiger approached the rock.

"Oh, what a fix!" the otter thought to himself, unable even to breathe properly because of his fear. The tiger was looking around, sniffing as if he could smell

something.

The otter turned pale with fright and was quite at a loss what to do. Should he be found by the tiger, it would be all up with him.

"What shall I do?" the scared animal thought. "I must use some trick."

Blinking his eyes, the wise otter racked his brains. Suddenly an idea came to his mind.

Barely able to calm his beating heart, the otter shouted from his hiding place behind the rock.

"Is that a tiger coming?"

The tiger stopped suddenly when he heard the shout from behind the rock.

"Who on earth can it be that dare shout at me, the king of the mountains? If I find him I'll eat him at once!" the tiger muttered to himself, glaring about him.

Then he heard another piercing shout.

"You rascal, what are you looking around for? Can't you see me standing in front of you?"

The tiger looked in front. He saw nothing but a large rock. The tiger's eyes were open wide in wonder.

"I am a man from the Sky. I have come to capture a tiger on the orders of the King of the Sky. Just now I happened to meet you, you rascal. Right now I must grab you by your neck and take you back up to the Sky. So come quickly up to the rock!" The otter shouted, hidden behind the rock.

The tiger went cold with fear and thought, "I can hear him, but I can't see him at all, so he must be an envoy from the King of the Sky."

The tiger felt his back go cold and his legs tremble.

"Why should you take me?" the tiger asked in a tearful voice.

"You rascal, no arguing!" the otter shouted angrily, striking the rock full force with a dry stick.

"Bang!"

The broken piece of wood sprang high into the sky and struck the tiger on the nose.

"Ouch!"



The tiger began to run away to the upper recess of the valley, crying in pain. The tiger ran for dear life, oblivious of the thorny bushes that tore at his skin.

A hare came running after the tiger and shouted, gasping for breath, "Hullo, Mister Tiger! Why are you so frightened?"

"Oh, you're a hare! I was really frightened. Well, the fact is . . .," the tiger began to tell the hare of what had happened just before.

Strangely, when he heard the tiger's story, the hare could not stop laughing. The hare had been watching from a distance when the otter played the trick on the tiger.

"Ha, ha, ha, it's a lie that he's an envoy from the King of the Sky. It was clever trick invented by the otter to avoid being eaten by you, Mister Tiger. It's a shame that you, Mister Tiger, the king of the mountains, should run away in fear, fooled by an otter."

The hare taunted the tiger, wagging his tongue. However, the tiger did not believe what the hare had said.

"If you won't believe me, then let's go and prove it. If such a tricky fellow is left on his own, he may do something serious!" the hare, jealous of the otter's wiles, said with a flushed face.

"You seem even now to doubt what I have said. Let's tie our tails together and go and see. Then, if he really is an envoy from the King of the Sky, I won't be able to run away, will I?" the hare urged, tying his tail to that of the tiger.

"You're the cleverest animal in the Kumgang mountains, so what you say sounds reasonable," the tiger said and went down to the stream in a huff, annoyed by the otter's trick.

In the meantime, although the otter had managed to deceive the tiger, he had been so frightened that he was half out of his mind and was lingering on the shore of the stream. Then he saw the hare coming down to the stream in company with the tiger. The otter's heart missed a beat.

"That hateful hare must have persuaded the tiger to come back!" the otter thought and hastily hid himself behind a rock.

"This time I'll teach that cunning hare a lesson."

With this thought the otter shouted loudly, "Isn't that a hare coming this way? Your grandfather and father were supposed to present 30 tiger skins to the King of the Sky. But after giving him 29, they were never heard of again, and we never knew why. So now you've come in place of your grandfather and father to present the other tiger skin, I suppose."

The hare was amazed to find the otter so wily and resourceful.

"Mister Tiger, don't believe him. He's trying to play another trick," the hare whispered into the tiger's ear.

"You splendid hare!" said the otter.

"Seeing that you've brought the tiger alive, it's clear you're very considerate. I'm very hungry, so I'm going to slaughter the tiger right away so that I may roast it and eat it here and take its skin to the sky."

This frightened the tiger out of his wits and he shrieked. Then he glared at the hare menacingly.

"You sly animal! You lured me here deliberately!" shouted the tiger at the hare.

Thinking that he had again been trapped by the man from the sky, the tiger ducked his head and took flight.

"Oh, Mister Tiger! It's not true. Wait a minute, please! The otter is playing another nasty trick," shouted the hare in consternation.

But ignoring the hare's appeal, the tiger leaped away into the woods like the wind. With his tail tied to that of the tiger, the hare was dragged along as the big animal dashed off in leaps and bounds and was bumped against the rugged rocks on all sides until his lips were torn.

"Please stop! Listen to me," cried the hare plaintively, fastened to the tiger's tail. But because his lips were torn, the hare could not speak properly. Only the sounds "ar...er..." escaped his lips.

Paying no heed at all to the hare's pitiful cries, the tiger carried on at full speed. Then, when they reached a ravine, the tail of the hare was torn off.

Holding his torn lips and rear, the hare cried from the terrible pain.

"Oh, the otter's wits have beaten me!" the hare muttered, covering his mouth

with his hands.

The otter that used its wits to give the tiger and hare such a hard time lived long in the Kumgang mountains without any worries.



## **The Bear That Failed to Eat Acorns**

Bear Rock stands halfway up to Junggwanum Peak in the Kumgang mountains. It looks like a bear that is craning its neck with its big mouth wide open.

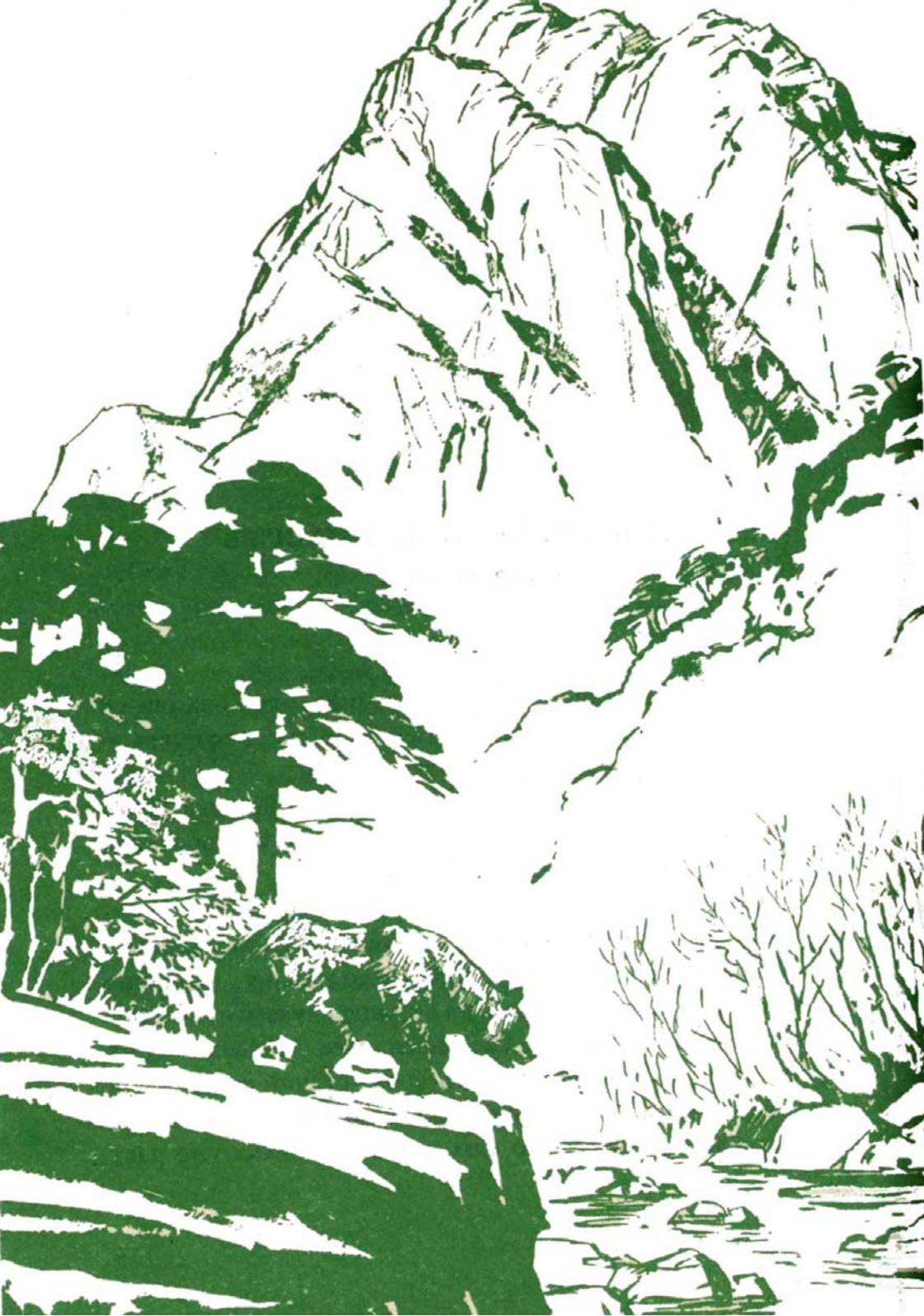
Why was the bear, larger than a hut, changed into a rock with his mouth wide open, looking down over the valley wistfully?

Once upon a time an old bear lived in a deep cave in the recess of the ravine under Piro Peak. One day in early spring, the bear awoke from its long winter sleep in its cave and went outside.

"Well, I do feel hungry," the bear muttered to himself, rubbing his hollow belly, and set off in search of food.

Passing round the foot of Ongnyo Peak, he came to Kanun Valley, searching under every rock for food. But he could find nothing to eat.

The bear's empty stomach continued to make the pitiful sounds "kor-ruk,



kur-ruk." The bear climbed up onto the mound at the foot of Junggwanum Peak and, sitting there looked wistfully over sun-drenched Sujong Peak, licking the soles of his feet. He thought there must be fresh grass on the sunny slope of the peak bathed in the warm sun.

The animal rose heavily and climbed down the mound under Junggwanum Peak to go to Sujong Peak. While walking, he suddenly heard the sound of flowing water. The bear stared down the valley from where the sound was coming.

"Why, that's good food," the bear thought to himself, wide-eyed. There were many acorns lying in the clear water of Munju Pool down the valley. At first glance the bear reckoned there were well over ten *mal* of them.

"Good. That'll be enough for several meals," the bear muttered to himself, swallowing hard.

Then he made a mighty leap towards Munju Pool. But he fell short of the pool, and landed with a heavy thud halfway down the slope. The bear was in a real fix. His hind leg was caught deep in a crack in the rock. He tried hard to free the leg, but his ankle was so deep in the crevice that he could not budge even an inch.

In the clear water of Munju Pool the appetizing acorns were rolling around, beckoning to the animal to come and eat them. Craning his thick neck, the bear looked down longingly on the acorns in the water.

"Oh, I'm so hungry that now I have a pain in my stomach. What can I do to eat them?" the bear said to himself, craning his neck still more and opening his watering mouth wide.

But the things the bear so eagerly wanted to eat were not acorns. After a long winter which he had spent only licking the soles of his feet, the animal took the tiny pebbles lying in the limpid water of Munju Pool for acorns.

Finding it impossible to release his foot, the bear shouted loudly, looking down at the "acorns" in Munju Pool:

"Acorns, acorns! Please fly up into my mouth!"

At that moment the bear heard laughter overhead.

He raised his head and saw a wagtail perched on a tree branch laughing

heartily.

"Oh, how funny! Mister Bear, they aren't acorns." The wagtail kept laughing, her tail bobbing.

"If they aren't acorns, what are they?" asked the bear, blinking his eyes dubiously.

"Mister Bear, they aren't acorns, they're pebbles. Pebbles, I tell you!"

"What! Pebbles?"

The bear opened his eyes wide and looked down at Munju Pool. Then he sniffed and glanced at the bird scornfully.

"Mrs. Wagtail, you've grown old and your eyesight is failing! How silly you are to mistake those appetizing acorns for pebbles!"

The bear clicked his tongue reproachfully. And then, with his mouth wide open, he strained himself again and again to free his foot.

Many years have passed since then. The bear, unable to free his leg from the crevice in the rock and to eat even a single acorn, turned into a rock.