

A World Biosphere Reserve: Mt Myohyang Area

Mt Myohyang in Korea has long been widely known for its peculiar and beautiful geographical features and dense forests of various species of trees. The mountain encompasses a vast area in Huichon City and Hyangsan and several other counties.

Its landform is featured by oddly-shaped steep cliffs and sharp slopes caused by powerful fault structural movements. Water constantly flows along its valleys as there are granogneiss cliffs, Kumgang, Chonhae, Isonnam and other waterfalls and natural streams.

Mt Myohyang was registered as a world biosphere reserve in May 2009, as the third of its kind in the DPRK.

No strong wind blows as the reserve is surrounded by high peaks like Hyangbiro (1 909m), the highest peak of the mountain. But, instead, winter lasts longer than flatland and ice is found in many parts of the high-altitude area until May for the mountain's high location. The climate belongs to the northern temperate zone and the annual mean temperature is around 8°C.

As it is of typical temperate mountain ecosystem, the mountain constitutes the central area of genetic, species and ecosystem diversity in the DPRK.

Adjoining the country's western inland region, it is a good habitat for animals and plants because of its diverse topographical conditions, thick forests, deep valleys and natural rock caves.

The reserve is home to various species ranging from lowland to highland plants, and hundreds of kinds of vertebrates, including dozens of species of mammals and more than a hundred species of birds.

The mountain presents a wide diversity of scenery such as high peaks, deep gorges, dense forests, Myohyang Stream, a tributary of the Chongchon, nature parks and watersides.

In addition, the reserve is home to dozens of species of endangered and indigenous plants, including *Pinus pumila*, *Thuja koraiensis*, *Sabina sargentii*, *Sasamorpha purpurascens var* and *Saussurea myokoensis* and dozens of kinds of endangered animals such as bears, otters, musk deer and *Pteromys volans*.

For its rich biodiversity and many historical cultural relics and beautiful scenery the reserve is an ideal tourist destination for foreigners.



Mt Myohyang in the morning



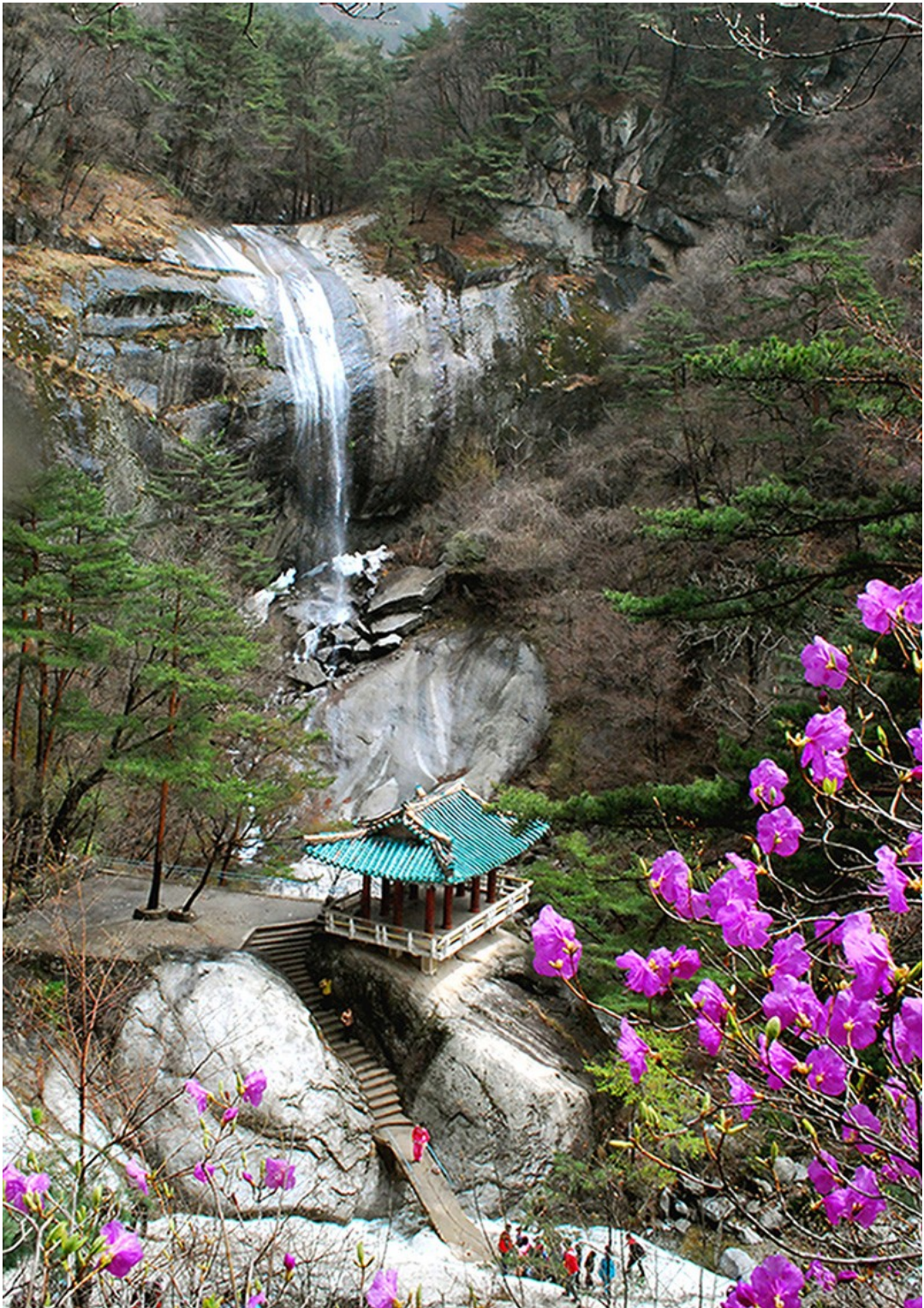
Manphok Valley in summer



Ryongyon Falls (left) and Sanju Falls



Paegun Rock of Mt Myohyang in summer



Mt Myohyang in spring



Isonnam Falls



Taeung Hall and octagonal 13-storeyed pagoda in the Pohyon Temple in Mt Myohyang



Myohyang Stream