

Ulleungdo and Dokdo



Ulleungdo and Dokdo

Byung Ryull Kim





동북아역사재단
NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY FOUNDATION



Prologue

I hope this book will be helpful for visitors to
Ulleungdo and Dokdo.

PhD. Byung Ryull Kim

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Part 1

Overview





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NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY FOUNDATION

1. General Information



Ulleungdo as seen from the sky.

Source: www.kbmaeil.com

Ulleung-gun (County) is located in Gyeongsangbuk-do (Province) of Korea, and is made up of Ulleungdo (‘do’ means island), Jukdo, Gwaneumdo, and their subsidiary islands. Both Ulleungdo and Dokdo were formed by volcanic activity—Ulleungdo about 2.5 million years ago and Dokdo about 4.6 million years ago. Jukdo and Gwaneumdo are located very close to Ulleungdo, whereas Dokdo sits 87.4 km away. The total area of Ulleungdo is about 73.1 km², making it the smallest Korean county by area and the eighth-largest island. Dokdo, including Dongdo (East Island) and Seodo (West Island) and 89 other rocky outcrops, is a very small rocky island with a total area of only 187.554 m².

Ulleungdo’s topography is that of an irregularly pentagonal volcanic island. Its bell-shaped volcanic terrain has been affected by

seawater erosion, resulting in most of its coastline consisting of sheer cliffs. It is primarily composed of basalt and tuff formed by volcanic activity from the late Tertiary to the early Quaternary periods of the Cenozoic Era. The basalt is presumed to be the main rock mass forming the submarine volcano body extending more than 2,000 m below sea level, with trachyte and tuff generally covering the basalt that formed in the final stages of volcanic activity. Tuff appears regardless of altitude, while trachyte is mainly distributed in high-altitude areas.

In the center of the island stands Seonginbong Peak (984 m), Ulleungdo's highest peak, which slopes toward the southeast. From Seonginbong Peak, ridges extend in three directions. Also located in the center is the Naribunji Basin, a caldera formed when a crater was filled in.

Ulleungdo's mountainous terrain makes it less suitable for cultivation than other islands, but agriculture has nevertheless been the most important means of sustenance for the local populace since ancient times.

Farming was practiced in the Naribunji Basin and nearby hilly areas, but due to insufficient arable land, slash-and-burn agriculture was employed. Since volcanic soil cannot retain water, crops such as corn and potatoes were cultivated instead of rice to address food shortages.

Due to the effects of industrialization since the 1970s, the agricultural population of Ulleung-gun (County) has continuously

decreased. In particular, a sharp decline in the young and middle-aged population has led to an aging agricultural workforce.

As an island region, fishing has been practiced here since ancient times, and the intersection of cold and warm currents has provided a variety of seafood as a primary food source for the local population.

Following the severe famine caused by Typhoon Sarah in 1959, many people switched to fishing as their primary livelihood. Starting in 1963, regular ferry services began operating between Pohang and Ulleungdo, enabling the sale of seafood to the mainland. Since the 1990s, however, a decline in fish catches has led to a sharp decrease in the number of fishermen.

In terms of produce, Ulleung-gun (County) is most noted for its squid, but production has recently decreased significantly due to changes in water temperature and overfishing by Chinese fishing boats.

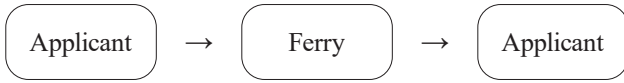
Dokdo was originally an uninhabited island, but since a volunteer garrison composed of discharged soldiers was stationed there in the early 1950s, one or two families also settled there to fish. Currently, approximately 20 Coast Guard personnel, lighthouse keepers, and a few staff members from the Dokdo Management Office are stationed on the island. Originally, access was restricted except in special cases for reasons of natural conservation, but since 2005, the system has been

changed from a permit system to a registration system. As of 2024, approximately 400,000 to 500,000 domestic and international tourists visit Dokdo annually.

- June 1999: Pursuant to the “Guidelines for the Management of Dokdo, Natural Monument No. 336” (Notice of the Cultural Heritage Administration), the entire area of Dokdo was designated as a restricted-access zone, and a landing permit system was implemented.
- * With the establishment of these guidelines, the management of access to Dokdo, which had previously been carried out by the Dokdo Volunteer Garrison, the National Police Agency, and the Coast Guard, was integrated and unified under the Cultural Heritage Administration.
- March 2005: Following the relaxation of entry restrictions on Dokdo, Dongdo (East Island) was removed from the restricted-access area and the permit system was converted to a notification system (entry management was delegated to Ulleung-gun).
- * Entry to the Seodo (West Island) requires permission from the Cultural Heritage Administration.

[Arrival Registration Procedure]

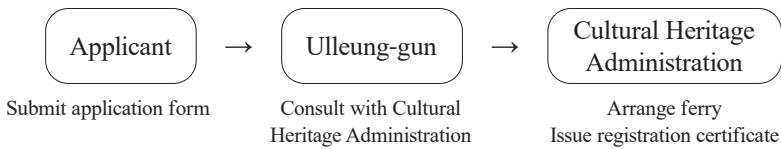
• General Visitors



* Area of visit is restricted to Dongdo Pier

• Special purpose entry

* Events, assemblies, reporting, filming, academic research, lodging, stays, etc.



* Applications must be submitted at least 7 days prior to entry to allow time for consultation between the Cultural Heritage Administration and relevant government agencies.



Dokdo
photographed on
October 3, 2023

2. Transportation



Ulleung Airport, A Bird's-eye View.

Source: www.kbmaeil.com

The bird's-eye illustration above is how Ulleung Airport is expected to look upon its completion in 2028. At the time of writing, Gadubong (Peak) was being leveled for land reclamation. Upon completion of the airport, flights are planned to operate from Seoul, Busan, Gangneung, and Gwangju, among other cities. This will make the island accessible in less than an hour from many mainland airports.

Ferries

Pohang ↔ Ulleung

Ferry Type	Travel Time	One-way Fare	Arrival Port in Ulleungdo	Reservation Inquiries
Cruise	6 hours 30 min.	Approx. ₩70,000	Sadong	1533-3370
High-speed Ferry	3 hours 20-30 min.	Approx. ₩70,000	Sadong Dodong Jeodong (by company)	1688-9565 1899-8114 1577-8665

Mukho ↔ Ulleung

Ferry Type	Travel Time	One-way Fare	Arrival Port in Ulleungdo	Reservation Inquiries
High-speed Ferry	2 hours 50 min.	Approx. ₩70,000	Dodong	1577-8665

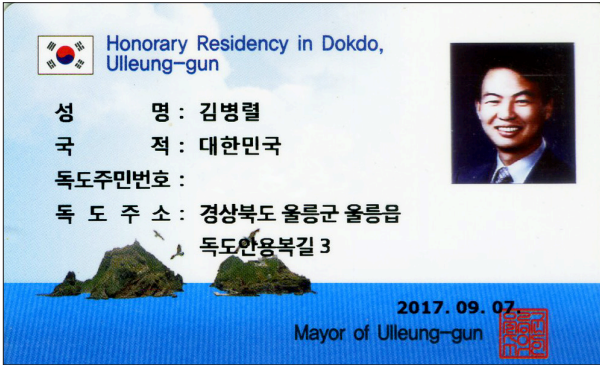
Gangneung ↔ Ulleung

Ferry Type	Travel Time	One-way Fare	Arrival Port in Ulleungdo	Reservation Inquiries
High-speed Ferry	3 hours	Approx. ₩70,000	Jeodong	1577-8665

Ulleung ↔ Dokdo

Departures from Dodong, Jeodong, and Sadong (peak season only) by various ferry companies.

Ferry Type	Travel Time	One-way Fare	Arrival Port in Ulleungdo	Reservation Inquiries
High-speed Ferry	1 hour 30 min.	Approx. ₩70,000	Jeodong Sadong Dodong (by company)	1577-8665 1688-9565 1899-8114



Honorary Resident Card

After visiting Dokdo, submit your ticket and a photo for identification to the Dokdo Office in Sadong Port for individual card issuance and mailing. If you present this card, you can receive a discount on the entrance fees at certain sightseeing sites.

Natural Environment

Typical marine climate

	Annual Average	January (Winter)	August (Summer)
Climate	12.7℃	1.9℃	25.0℃
Wind Speed	4.3m/s	Northeast wind	Southwest wind
Precipitation	1,604mm	85% of days are cloudy or have snow/rain; 150 rainy days per year	
Surface Water Temp.	9~25℃		

Topography and Geology

Topography: A double volcano (Albong Peak) within Naribunji Basin (a central crater); steep slopes of over 30 degrees.

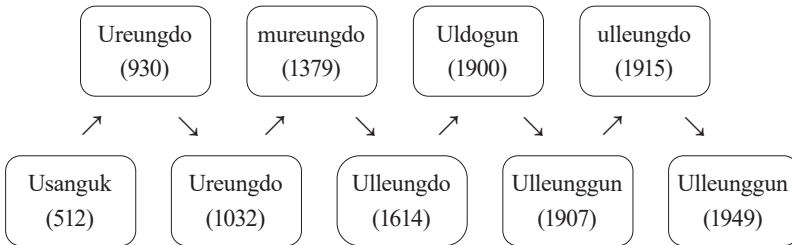
Geology: Alkaline volcanic rocks, such as basalt, trachyte, and tuff, erupted through volcanic activity.

Soil: Residual soil formed by weathering at the mountaintop; soil texture is dark brown or reddish-brown sandy loam.

3. History of Ulleungdo

Just as the ancient kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla were unified into Silla, then succeeded by Goryeo, Joseon, and finally the Republic of Korea, Ulleungdo has also seen its name change several times, with old and new names sometimes being used concurrently. It is not clear, however, exactly what prompted these changes or how long the previous names were used. The table below shows the first appearance of each name in historical records.

■ Ulleungdo's changing names



1) Prior to Usanguk (Kingdom)

When did people first begin to live on Ulleungdo? Based on the discovery of a large rock that resembles a stone chamber with patterns similar to human-carved star symbols found in the Namseo-ri burial mounds, as well as the discovery of pottery shards similar to those found in Hyeonpo-ri, it is estimated that people began to settle on



Namseo-ri burial mounds
photographed on October 1, 2014

Ulleungdo around the beginning of the Common Era.

In the written historical record, the East Island mentioned under “Okjeo” in the section “Dongijeon,” within the “Wee” chapter of the Chinese historical book *Samgukjee* (Record of the Three Kingdoms), is speculated to be Ulleungdo:

An old man in Okjeo said, “One day, some people from our country were fishing on a boat when they encountered a storm and drifted for several days before reaching an island to the east. There were people living on the island, but they could not communicate with us. Every year in July, they selected a young girl and threw her into the sea.”

Based on the above record and the pottery fragments found to date, it can be inferred that people began to settle in groups on Ulleungdo as early as the 3rd century. Although the exact date of the founding of Usanguk (Kingdom) is unknown, according to the Korean historical work *Samguksagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms), Usanguk was conquered by Silla in the 13th year of King Jijeung's reign (512 AD).

2) Usanguk

Usanguk, or the Kingdom of Usan, is briefly mentioned in the historical works the *Samguksagi* and *Samgukyusa*. While the two records differ in details such as personal names, the main content—that the king of Usan surrendered after being threatened with wooden lions—is largely consistent.

Both books were written approximately 600 to 700 years after the surrender of Usanguk to Silla in 512 AD, and it is likely that there were few available historical records to reference at the time. There are no extant records regarding the daily lives or maritime activities of the residents of Usanguk. We can therefore only speculate based on legends such as those of King Uhae and Princess Pungmi. (See the legend of the Guksubawi (Noodle Rock), in Namyang-ri.

The Usanguk (Kingdom) Museum in Namyang-ri exhibits historical records related to the ancient kingdom.

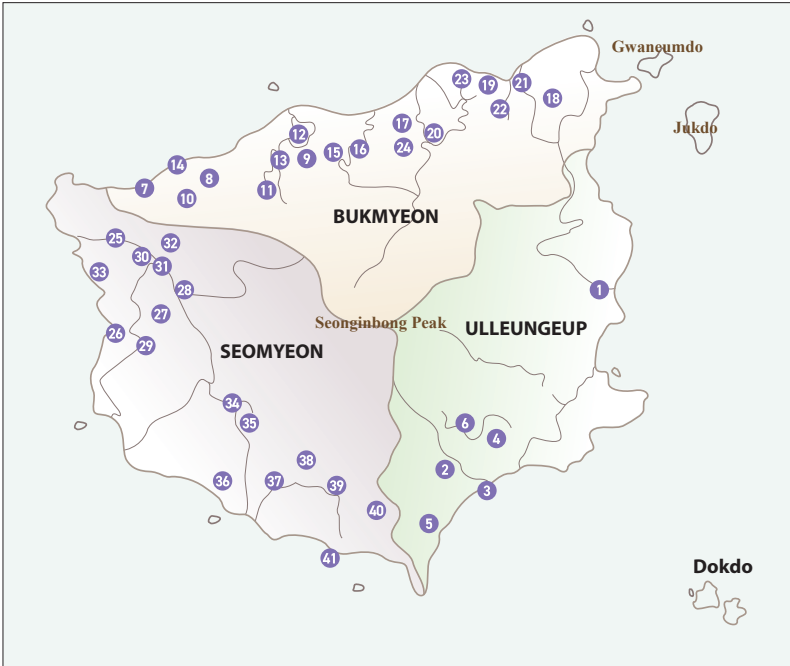


Usanguk Museum
photographed on October 1, 2023

3) Silla Period

In 512 AD, the Kingdom of Usan was subjugated by Silla through the conquest led by Isabu. Although it no longer used the name Usanguk after its subjugation by Silla, it continued to develop with human and material support from Silla, and its people lived a semi independent existence, offering local products (gongmul, or tribute goods) to the Silla government every year.

Currently, 87 ancient tumuli (gobun) remain on Ulleungdo. Their distribution is as follows: 38 in Hyeonpo, 3 in Cheonbu, 4 in Jugam, 37 in Namseo-ri, 5 in Namyang-ri, 2 in Taeha-ri, 1 in Sadong, and 1 in



Map of Tumuli Distribution on Ulleungdo

Naribunji Basin.

As the artifacts excavated from these tumuli are estimated to date from the mid-6th century, the tombs appear to have been constructed after Usanguk’s submission to Silla. Accordingly, while the construction style of the tumuli was influenced by Silla’s tomb system, it appears to have been modified to suit the local conditions of Ulleungdo.

ULLEUNGEUP

1. Jeodong-ri Tumuli Cluster
2. Sadong-ri Tumuli Cluster ①
3. Sadong-ri Tumuli Cluster ②
4. Sadong-ri Tumuli Cluster ③
5. Sadong-ri Tumuli Cluster ④
6. Sadong-ri Artifact Scatter Site

SEOMYEON

25. Taeha-ri Tumuli Cluster ①
26. Taeha-ri Tumuli Cluster ②
27. Taeha-ri Tumuli Cluster ③
28. Taeha-ri Tumuli Cluster ④
29. Taeha-ri Tumulus ①
30. Taeha-ri Tumulus ②
31. Taeha-ri Tumulus ③
32. Taeha-ri Tumulus ④
33. Taeha-ri Artifact Excavation Site
34. Namseo-ri Tumuli Cluster ①
35. Namseo-ri Tumuli Cluster ②
36. Namseo-ri Artifact Scatter Site
37. Namyang-ri Tumuli Cluster ①
38. Namyang-ri Tumuli Cluster ②
39. Namyang-ri Tumuli Cluster ③
40. Namyang-ri Artifact Scatter Site
41. Namyang-ri Artifact Excavation Site

BUKMYEON

7. Hyeonpo-dong Tumuli Cluster
8. Hyeonpo-ri Tumulus ①
9. Hyeonpo-ri Tumulus ②
10. Hyeonpo-ri Tumulus ③
11. Pyeongri, Presumed Salgangteo (raised storage rack) Site
12. Hyeonpo-ri Artifact Scatter Site ①
13. Hyeonpo-ri Artifact Scatter Site ②
14. Hyeonpo-ri, Presumed Building Site
15. Nari Tumulus ①
16. Chusan ri Artifact Scatter Site
17. Cheonbu-ri Tumuli Cluster ①
18. Cheonbu-ri Tumuli Cluster ②
19. Cheonbu-ri Tumulus ①
20. Cheonbu-ri Tumulus ②
21. Cheonbu-ri Artifact Scatter Site ①
22. Cheonbu-ri Artifact Scatter Site ②
23. Cheonbu-ri Artifact Scatter Site ③
24. Cheonbu-ri Artifact Scatter Site ④

4) Goryeo Period

After the record of Silla's Isabu conquering Usanguk in 512 AD, there are no other notable records for over 400 years. Then, in August 930, this kingdom (Usanguk) sent envoys named Baekgil and Todu to offer tribute (gongmul), and King Taejo Wang-Geon of Goryeo bestowed upon them the court ranks of Jeongwi and Jeongjo. This indicates that, at the time, Goryeo referred to the remote island as Ureungdo instead of Usanguk.

It appears that the residents of Ureungdo, upon hearing the news that King Taejo (Wang-Geon) of Goryeo had unified the Later Three Kingdoms, sent Baekgil and Todu to offer their congratulations. It seems they were granted these court ranks because they offered tribute and voluntarily declared themselves subjects of Goryeo.

However, in November 1018 AD, the foundation of Usanguk's existence was shattered by an invasion of the Northeast Jurchens. An account from this time reports that the Goryeo court sent Lee Won-gu to bestow agricultural tools upon the islanders. The following year, all those who had been captured by the Jurchens and had subsequently escaped were permitted to return to their homes. This account suggests that the name Usanguk was still used alongside Ureungdo at that time. The devastation caused by the Jurchens was widespread, affecting not only Ureungdo but also 19 townships along the eastern coast.

During this period, measures such as tax exemptions were granted to the residents of the affected mainland counties and prefectures, but there is no confirmed record of such tax relief for the residents of

Ureungdo. This suggests that, up to this point, Ureungdo had a semi-independent relationship with Goryeo, offering tribute from time to time rather than being fully integrated into Goryeo's administrative system and paying regular taxes. The agricultural tools appear to have been a gift from the Goryeo court intended to bring the island into a more subordinate relationship.

Furthermore, an account from 1032 states that the Lord of Ureung (Ureung Seongju) sent his son, Bueoingdarang, to offer local products as tribute. This indicates that Goryeo appointed the leader of the island's residents as the Lord of Ureung and administered Ureungdo as a border region.

In 1141, Lee Yang-sil, the Superintendent of the Granary (Gamchangsa) of Myeongju-do, sent men to Ulleungdo to bring back fruit seeds. They brought back leaves that were different from those on the mainland, and Lee Yang-sil presented them to the central court. This event shows that the island had become fully settled as a local administrative district of Goryeo.

Yet, more than 100 years after the Northeast Jurchen invasion, the population of Ulleungdo had still not significantly increased. In 1157, King Uijong dispatched Kim Yu-rip, the Granary Superintendent of Myeongju-do, to organize the relocation of more people to Ureungdo.

However, the plan was abandoned after it was reported that the island's environment was unsuitable for habitation. This indicates that the population had not yet recovered to its former levels; also, that the names Ureungdo and Ulleungdo were being used interchangeably at the time.

There is an account from 1346 records that people from Ureungdo, in

Donggye, came to reside on the mainland. This shows that, at the time, Ureungdo was administered as part of Donggye, that is, modern-day Gangwon Province.

In 1451, during the compilation of the “Geography” section of the *Goryeosajiriji* (History of Goryeo), Ulleungdo was assigned to Uljin-hyeon (Uljin Prefecture). The work distinguishes between Mureungdo (Ulleungdo) and Usando (Dokdo), stating that they are not far from each other and that the latter can be seen from the former on a clear day. This demonstrates that knowledge about Dokdo was gradually becoming more precise.

5) Joseon Period

After the founding of the Joseon Dynasty, King Taejong, in 1403, ordered the residents of Mureungdo (Ulleungdo) to move to the mainland out of concern for their safety from Japanese pirates (waegu). In 1407, Sō Sadashige of Tsushima requested permission to settle people from Tsushima on the now-empty island, but King Taejong refused. Had Taejong agreed, Ulleungdo might be Japanese territory today.

Despite the repatriation policy, not all inhabitants left. In 1412, a group of 12 people, including one Baekgamul, arrived in Goseong, claiming to be from Mureungdo. They reported that 11 households, totaling about 60 residents, remained on the island.

In response, King Taejong sent Kim In-u to Mureungdo in 1417, who brought 86 people from 15 households to the mainland. In 1425, Kim

In-u evacuated another 20 men and women, but a boat with 46 people went missing in a storm; 36 drowned, and 10 drifted to Japan, later to be repatriated. King Sejong, believing all 46 had died, questioned the policy, lamenting the loss of 40 lives to save 20.

Subsequently, Ulleungdo was known by various names such as Mureungdo, Ureungdo, Sambongdo, and Yodo. The government, having implemented the repatriation policy, occasionally sent officials to search for and remove any fugitives, though these efforts were not strictly enforced.

The *Sejong Sillokjiriji* (“Geography” section of the Annals of King Sejong), compiled in 1454, assigned Ulleungdo to Uljin-hyeon (Uljin Prefecture) and detailed its history and geography. The *SinjeungDonggukYeojiSeungnam* (Augmented Survey of the Geography of Joseon), from 1531, provided more detail but noted that, according to one theory, Usan and Ulleung were originally one island—indicating that knowledge of Dokdo was still incomplete.

Thus, following the devastation from Jurchen invasions and the early Joseon repatriation policy, the island became nearly uninhabited. This allowed the Ōya and Murakawa families from Hōki Province, Japan, to begin fishing there annually around 1625.

In 1693, Ahn Yong-bok from Dongnae, Busan, went to Ulleungdo with about 40 men and clashed with fishermen from the Ōya family. Ahn Yong-bok, who had learned some Japanese at the Waegwan (Japan House in Joseon), could communicate at a rudimentary level. As the conflict escalated, the Japanese fishermen proposed a peaceful discussion and requested that the Joseon side send representatives.

However, once Ahn Yong-bok and another man, Park Eo-dun, boarded their ship, the Japanese took them to the Oki Islands in Japan. There, Ahn Yong-bok confronted the governor of Oki, declaring, “Ulleungdo is Joseon land. Why have you seized us-Joseon people fishing in Joseon territory?”

The governor of Oki, recognized the seriousness of the matter. He reported this situation to the governor of Hōki Province, who confirmed through local elder fishermen that Ulleungdo was not Japanese territory. The governor of Hōki treated Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-dun well and reported the incident to the Edo shogunate. The shogunate viewed this as an opportunity to restore diplomatic relations with Joseon, which had been severed since the Imjin War (Japan’s invasion of Joseon). The shogunate gave Ahn Yong-bok a letter (seogye) stating, “Ulleungdo is not Japanese territory. Therefore, we will prohibit Japanese fishermen from going there,” and arranged for their return to Joseon.

On their way back, Ahn and Park traveled via Nagasaki before arriving at Tsushima. When they arrived at Tsushima, the lord of the island, Sō Yoshitsugu, had other plans. Hoping to claim Ulleungdo for Japan, he confiscated the letter from Ahn Yong-bok and imprisoned them for trespassing on “Japanese territory, Takeshima.” After being detained for 50 days in Tsushima and another 40 days at the Waegwan (Japan House) in Busan, they were handed over to Joseon authorities in Dongnae. The Tsushima lord sent a letter to the Joseon court via the Dongnae magistrate, claiming that Ahn Yong-bok had trespassed on Japanese land (Takeshima) and requested that Joseon fishermen be prevented from going there.

The Joseon court, unaware of the deception, feared another conflict with Japan over a small, uninhabited island. They sent a reply stating:

“Our country has strictly forbidden our fishermen from going out into the far seas. Therefore, even though it is our country’s Ulleungdo, we have prevented them from traveling there at will because it is so distant; this policy applied even more strictly to islands beyond it. That our fishing boats have now dared to enter your country’s territory of Jukdo (Takeshima) and fished in a disorderly manner is something that should be strictly warned against by law. Therefore, we will punish the offenders according to the law and will hereafter issue strict instructions to the coastal regions to ensure this is well observed.”

This reply was written as if Ulleungdo and Jukdo (Takeshima) were different islands, despite both sides being fully aware that the names referred to the same island. Knowing this, the Japanese envoy, Tachibana Masashige, insisted for fifteen days that the mention of Ulleungdo be removed, but the Joseon court refused, and he was forced to return with the reply unchanged.

Amidst the intensifying disputes with Japan over Ulleungdo, the Joseon court experienced the restoration of Queen Inhyeon, who had been deposed due to vice queen Jang Huibin’s political scheming. This led to the Gapsul Purge (1694), in which Jang Huibin was demoted and the Southerners (Namin) who supported her were ousted, enabling the Soron (Westners) faction, aligned with Queen Inhyeon, to come to

power.

The Soron government strongly insisted that the officials who wrote the previous diplomatic letter be punished and that the letter itself be retrieved, eventually securing King Sukjong's approval.

Unaware of these changes in Joseon's diplomatic stance, the lord of Tsushima Island dispatched Tachibana Masashige to Joseon again in August 1694 to request the removal of the reference to Ulleungdo. In response, Joseon annulled the previous letter and delivered a new one, confidently asserting that the so-called Jukdo (Takeshima) claimed by Japan was, in fact, Joseon's own Ulleungdo.

At that time, official Yu Jib-il met with Ahn Yong-bok, who was under imprisonment, in advance and confirmed that the actions of the Tsushima lord did not represent the Tokugawa shogunate's true intentions. Yu then rebuked Tachibana, saying, "If our court were to inform the Edo shogunate directly about this matter, do you think the shogunate would simply let you be?" Despite Yu's stern words, Tachibana did not leave the Japan House in Joseon for more than a year. During the period he persistently demanded the removal of the Ulleungdo reference, but was eventually forced to return to Tsushima upon news of Sō Yoshimichi's death.

After Sō Yoshimichi's death, his younger brother Sō Yoshikata, still a child, inherited the fiefdom of Tsushima. When he visited Edo for the associated formalities in January 1696, the shogun convened a meeting with the daimyos (regional lords), including the lord of Hōki Province. After debating the "Takeshima" issue, they decided to acknowledge Takeshima (i.e., Ulleungdo) as Joseon territory, on the grounds that

it was much closer to Joseon than to Hōki Province. The official instructions following the council were as follows:

- (1) Takeshima is about 160 ri (distance unit) from Hōki Province, but only 40 ri from Joseon. Therefore, it may be considered Joseon territory.
- (2) Prohibit Japanese people from crossing to Takeshima.
- (3) The lord of Tsushima shall, upon returning to his domain, dispatch an official envoy to Joseon to formally notify them of this decision and report the outcome to the shogunate.

Sō Yoshikata of Tsushima was dissatisfied with the shogunate's decision, however. Instead of sending an official envoy, he delayed and merely handed over a simple letter expressing the shogunate's intent to a Joseon interpreter in Japan, thereby stalling the process.

Meanwhile, after Ahn Yong-bok, who had been detained for over two years in Dongnae (the port next to Ulsan) upon his return from his journey to Japan, was released, he heard a false rumor that it had been agreed that "Ulleungdo would be Joseon territory, and Jukdo would be Japanese territory." Alarmed, he gathered 16 fishermen in May 1696 and set out from Ulsan for Ulleungdo.

As it happened, he discovered five Japanese fishing boats engaged in fishing near the island. Ahn Yong-bok steered his boat to approach them and shouted, "Ulleungdo has always been our country's land, so why have you invaded it?" They replied, "We are fishermen who live on Matsushima, and came here by chance while fishing. We will

return shortly.” Ahn Yong-bok shouted again, “The island you call Matsushima is none other than Jasando (another name for Dokdo), and that island is also our land. How dare you claim to live there?”

Startled by Ahn Yong-bok’s spirited demeanor, the Japanese fishermen turned their boats and fled. The next day, Ahn Yong-bok’s party went to Jasando (i.e., Dokdo) in search of them and expelled them, once again declaring that Jasando was also “our land”.

Ahn and his companions pursued the Japanese sailors all the way to Oki Island. Upon landing, he met the lord of the island (tōshu) and protested; “Several years ago when I came here, I received a diplomatic document (seogye) stating that Ulleungdo and Jasando are Joseon land, yet Japanese fishermen have again violated our territory. What kind of behavior is this?” In response, the Lord of Oki said he would report to the governor of Hoki Province and obtain an answer for him. Yet, even after many days, there was no news.

At this, Ahn decided to negotiate directly with the governor of Hoki Province, and set sail for Hoki, announcing himself as the ‘Tax Inspector-General for the Two Islands of Ulleung and Jasan of Joseon.’ He wore a navy-blue cheollik (a type of traditional robe), a black porip (a type of traditional hat), and leather shoes.

The governor of Hoki sent a palanquin(gyoja) and some horses for them. Ahn rode in a palanquin, while his companions all rode on horseback to the governor’s public offices.

Seated opposite the governor’s representative, Ahn Yong-bok emphasized the fact that three years earlier he had received a document from the Shogunate (bakufu) acknowledging that Ulleungdo and

Jasando belonged to Joseon, but that it had been taken from him by the lord of Tsushima on his way back to Joseon. He also warned that he would inform the Shogunate that the lord of Tsushima was deceiving both sides for unjust gain.

Ahn Yong-bok's assertive diplomacy proved effective. The lord of the Tsushima's elderly father, Sō Yoshizane, who had retired from active office, implored the governor of Hoki Province to prevent an appeal to the Shogunate at all costs. As someone who had been present a few months earlier when the Shogun confirmed Ulleungdo as Joseon territory, he feared that the Shogun might become angry if an appeal were to be submitted.

Having received Sō Yoshizane's plea, the governor of Hoki promised Ahn Yong-bok, "Since the two islands of Takeshima and Matsushima already belong to your country, if anyone again violates the border, or if the lord of Tsushima Island recklessly invades, they shall be punished severely." Here, Takeshima referred to Ulleungdo, and Matsushima to Dokdo.

Ahn Yong-bok, believing he had single-handedly rectified the misunderstanding that Ulleungdo was Joseon's and Takeshima was Japan's land, returned triumphantly to Yangyang in Gangwon Province in August 1696. He must have thought he would at least receive emancipation from his low-born status as a reward.

On the contrary, however, Sim Ching, the magistrate of Yangyang County, had him sent under guard to HanYang (Seoul) as a criminal who had illegally crossed the border, to be interrogated by the Border Defense Council (Bibyeonsa).



Memorial Stele for Ahn Yong-bok
photographed on October 3, 2023



Shrine for Ahn Yong-bok
photographed on October 3, 2023

The lord of Tsushima, Sō Yoshikata, had been procrastinating and had failed to send the formal diplomatic document (seogye) acknowledging Ulleungdo and Dokdo as Joseon territory. Upon learning that Ahn Yong-bok's party had negotiated with the governor of Hoki Province, He hurriedly dispatched a senior retainer to Joseon in January 1697 to report the Shogunate's decision.

The Joseon court, having received the formal diplomatic document from Japan, concluded the incident by commuting Ahn Yong-bok's death sentence for illegally crossing the border to exile. Thereafter, they changed the previously irregular practice of repatriating Ulleungdo residents to a regular inspection conducted once every three years.

There were subsequently various discussions in the Joseon court about the need to relocate mainland residents to Ulleungdo and to establish a garrison (jin) and station troops there, for example. Yet these measures were not implemented until 1882, when King Gojong dispatched Lee Gyu-won as a Royal Inspector (geomchalsa) to investigate the feasibility of resettlement.

Lee Gyu-won investigated Ulleungdo from April 30 to May 11, 1882, on King Gojong's orders. He found 140 Joseon people and 78 Japanese. After ordering the Japanese to return to their home country, Lee Gyu-won drew up a detailed map of Ulleungdo and submitted it with a report to King Gojong. Upon receiving Lee Gyu-won's report, King Gojong began recruiting settlers in 1883 and relocating them to Ulleungdo, appointing an island chief (dojang) to govern them.

The photograph below shows an inscription carved on a rock face at Hakpo, where Lee Gyu-won first arrived on Ulleungdo. The names of Inspector Lee Gyu-won and his attendant, Go Jong-pal, are faintly visible, but the other characters are almost illegible due to weathering.

In order to more effectively administer Ulleungdo and Dokdo, King Gojong of the Korean Empire enacted Imperial Decree No. 41 on October 25, 1900. This decree renamed Ulleungdo as Uldo, Jasando (or Usando) as Seokdo and elevated its administrative status to a county, appointing a county governor to oversee it (Article 1). According to Article 2, the county office was to be located in Taehadong, and the jurisdiction was set to include the entirety of Ulleungdo, Jukdo, and Seokdo (i.e., Dokdo). Thus, the decree organized Uldo County to include

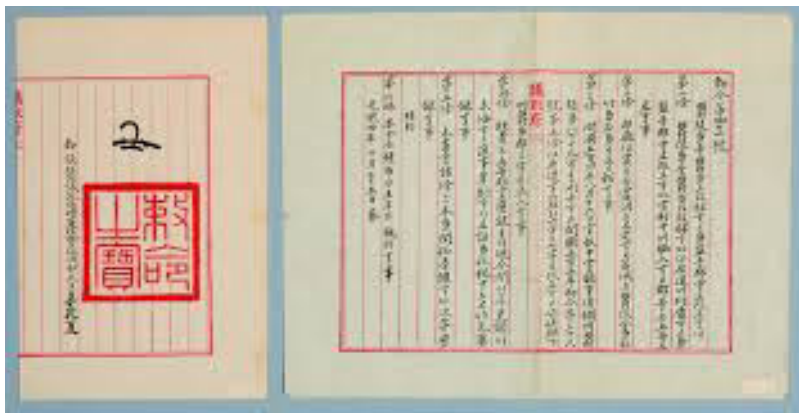


The Imo-year (1883) Rock Inscription at Hakpo
photographed on October 2, 2023

not only Ulleungdo but also the relatively distant islands of Jukdo and Seokdo (Dokdo).

Soon afterwards, in 1903, a Japanese fisherman named Nakai Yōzaburō began illegally hunting sea lions (gangchi) on Dokdo. Seeing potential profit, he sought to monopolize this business. Nakai believed that if the Japanese government incorporated Dokdo as Japanese territory and leased it to him, he could reap great profits, so he approached the relevant officials. Yet, Japanese Home Ministry authorities, suspecting that the island was Korean territory, initially refused his request.

Undeterred, Nakai met again with Yamaza Enjirō, Director of the Political Affairs Bureau of the Foreign Ministry. Listening to Nakai's plea, Yamaza said, "Considering the current state of affairs, the urgent annexation of this island is needed. Constructing a watchtower and installing wireless or submarine cables would be extremely



Imperial Decree no. 41.
Source: www.kyongbuk.co.kr

advantageous for monitoring enemy ships. Submit a petition for territorial incorporation to the Foreign Ministry immediately.” Thus, on September 29, 1904, petitions for annexation and lease were submitted to the Home, Foreign, and Agriculture and Commerce Ministries.

After starting the Russo-Japanese War and facing the challenge of Russian naval power, Japan determined that annexing Dokdo was the best way to strengthen its inadequate navy. Japan expedited the approval of Nakai’s petition, and on January 28, 1905, the Cabinet decided to incorporate the island. Without any consultation with Joseon (by then officially the Korean Empire), on February 22, 1905, Shimane Prefecture unilaterally announced the incorporation of the islands and began illegally constructing watchtowers on Ulleungdo and Dokdo.

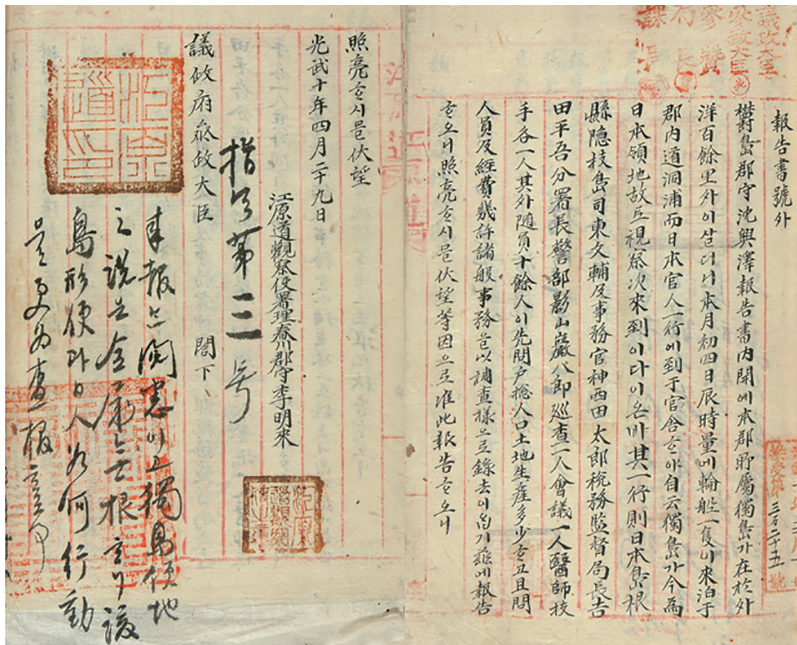
Meanwhile, Nakai, who had obtained permits for sea lion hunting, caught a total of 11,046 sea lions by 1911. Because of overhunting, the population sharply declined and profits diminished, leading Nakai to transfer his fishing rights to others. Subsequently, only about 100 sea lions were caught annually, and after 1933 the number dwindled to around 20, which were captured alive and sold for circus shows. The already severely reduced sea lion hunting on Dokdo ceased entirely in 1941, when Japan entered World War II.

At the time of Japan’s de facto acquisition of the island, the Korean Empire was not in a position either to protest Japan’s unauthorized requisition of Ulleungdo land for constructing watchtowers nor even to be aware that Dokdo had been incorporated by Japan.

A year later, in 1906, Shimane Prefecture officials, including Kanazai Yoshitarō, surveyed Dokdo and, after stopping at Ulleungdo, told

county governor Shim Heung-taek that they had come to investigate the newly incorporated Japanese territory of Takeshima (Dokdo). While Shim Heung-taek should have firmly protested, declaring Dokdo to be Korean territory under his jurisdiction, he failed to do so. Only after these officials left, did he send a report to the Gangwon Province governor Lee Myeong-nae, simply stating, “It is said that Dokdo under my jurisdiction has become Japanese territory.”

When Lee Myeong-nae passed the report up to the Korean court, they became aware of the situation but, due either to ignorance of international law or fear of Japanese military power, the court did not



Lee Myeong-nae (Shim Heung-taek) Report.

Source: www.kyongbuk.co.kr

lodge any meaningful protest against Japan.

Korean newspapers such as the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo* (The Great Korean Daily News) and *Hwangseong Sinmun* (Imperial Capital Newspaper), however, reported the alarming situation that the Japanese were claiming Dokdo as their own territory.

After the end of World War II in 1945, the United States, under Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers' Directive No. 677 (January 29, 1946), excluded Dokdo from Japanese territory and included it as part of Korean territory.

During the drafting process of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, Dokdo was consistently included as Korean territory in the first five drafts (March 20, 1947; August 5, 1947; January 2, 1948; October 13, 1949; November 2, 1949). After the fifth draft was reviewed, however, William J. Sebald, the U.S. Political Adviser in Japan, argued on November 14, 1949, that Japan's claim to Dokdo was longstanding and appeared valid, recommending it be considered Japanese territory. Later that day, U.S. State Department accepted this opinion and excluded Dokdo from Korean territory in the December 29, 1949 draft.

In the draft of August 7, 1950, the treaty was written more succinctly, and any mention of Dokdo was omitted. Meanwhile, Korea's protest, submitted on July 19, 1951, insisting that Dokdo and Parangdo (i.e. Socotra rock) be explicitly recognized as Korean territory, was rejected. Consequently, Dokdo was left out of the final San Francisco Peace Treaty text signed on September 8, 1951.

Before the Republic of Korea was established, the Provisional Government sent a local investigation team to survey Ulleungdo and

Dokdo from August 18 to 26, 1947. They landed on Dokdo on August 20 and observed numerous sea lions there. Korean fishing activities around Dokdo also continued throughout this period.

A tragic incident occurred on June 8, 1948, when a U.S. Air Force bombing exercise near Dokdo killed or caused the disappearance of 14 fishermen, severely injured six more, and destroyed four fishing vessels. Korea officially protested via the U.S. military government, which investigated and compensated the victims' families. The Korean government later erected a memorial on Dokdo to commemorate the victims.

Following the enforcement of the San Francisco Treaty, Japan interpreted it as recognizing Dokdo as Japanese territory and resumed fishing around Dokdo, leading to conflicts with Korean fishermen. In response, on January 18, 1952, South Korea made a "Declaration regarding Sovereignty over the Near Sea" (also known as the "Peace Line Declaration") and began arresting Japanese fishing vessels operating in the area around Dokdo.

Japanese fishing incursions decreased following the declaration of the Peace Line. But Japanese government vessels entered waters near Dokdo claiming jurisdiction, even landing on the island to place markers asserting it as Japanese territory. The Ulleung Police Station formed a patrol team to expel these intrusions, but their efforts mainly involved removing the markers left behind by Japanese personnel.

In response, Hong Sun-chil and other war veterans residing on Ulleungdo formed the Dokdo Volunteer Garrison to reside on and guard Dokdo. Initially self-financed through seaweed harvesting rights,

nine members were later officially recruited as police officers in 1954, becoming the formal Dokdo Guard. The volunteer group was thus naturally disbanded. Currently, about one police platoon guards Dokdo.

Today, Dokdo is state-owned land managed by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries and is designated as Natural Monument No. 336 under Article 7 of the Cultural Heritage Protection Act. It is also managed as a designated island under the “Special Act on Eco-system Conservation of Island Areas Including Dokdo.”

6) Folk Beliefs of Ulleungdo

Folk beliefs on Ulleungdo can broadly be divided into three categories: village communal beliefs, in which all members of a village participate collectively; household guardian-spirit beliefs, practiced within individual homes; and shamanism.

The earliest settlers on Ulleungdo were people engaged more in agriculture than in fishing. For that reason, *sanshin-dang* (mountain spirit shrines) were established first, and *haesin-dang* (sea spirit shrines) began to appear much later. In some villages, the mountain spirit shrine and the sea spirit shrine were built separately, while in others, a single shrine (*jedang*) enshrined the mountain spirit (*sanshin*), the sea spirit (*haesin*), and the village spirit (*dongshin*) together. Whether for mountain, sea, or village spirits, most of these shrines enshrine spirit tablets (*wipae*), rather than icons (*sinsang*).

In the case of village ritual offerings (*dongje*), rites to the mountain

spirit are generally held on the first full moon of the lunar year, while rites to the sea spirit are held on Sam-Jinnal (the 3rd day of the third lunar month). Taeha is the exception to this rule, where both the mountain and sea spirit rites are performed on March 1.

They also personally practice Protestantism, Catholicism, and Buddhism alongside these traditional beliefs.



Part 2

Tourism



Tourism



The tourist information below is based on the use of public buses. Those using a rental car or a private car may find the information even more convenient.

Public buses generally depart from Dodong Bus Terminal and circle the island either clockwise or counterclockwise. Buses bound for Naribunji Basin or Seokpo depart from the Cheonbu bus stop.

The explanation that follows assumes arrival at Sadong Port by cruise ship or airplane.

A cruise departing from Pohang arrives at Sadong Port at around 7 a.m. You can begin your journey after having a simple breakfast on the ship or the restaurant in the port.

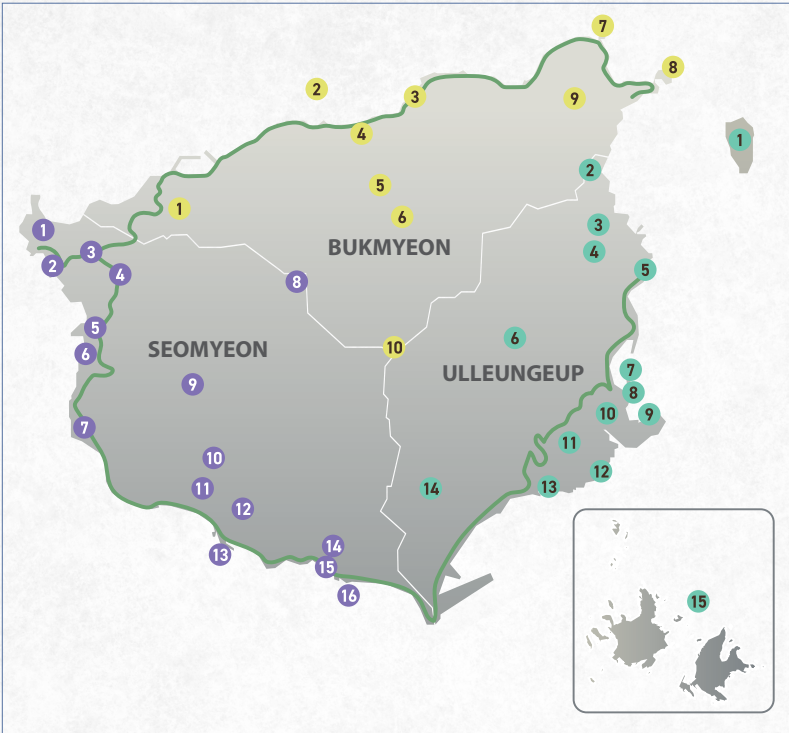
If you have large luggage such as a suitcase, you can ask a restaurant owner to store it for you. Alternatively, you can leave it at the travel center inside Sadong Port, or at a nearby hotel or guesthouse, on the understanding that you will check-in later in the afternoon.

If you are renting a car, you can arrange when booking to pick it up at the pier at the time of your ship's arrival, allowing you to load your luggage directly into the vehicle and travel more conveniently.

I considered renting a car but decided to start by using the public bus service, with the option of renting a car midway if the journey became tiring.



Dodong Bus Terminal
photographed on October 1, 2023



Major Tourist Attractions of Ulleungdo, Practical Guide to Ulleungdo Tourism

BUKMYEON

- 1 Ancient Tombs in Hyeonpo-dong
- 2 Elephant Rock
- 3 Cheonbu Pungbyeol
- 4 Songgotbong Peak
- 5 Yongchulso Spring
- 6 Naribunji Basin
- 7 Samseonam Hermitage
- 8 Gwaneum Island
- 9 Seokpo Observatory
- 10 Seonginbong Peak

ULLEUNGEUP

- 1 Jukdo Island
- 2 Jeongmaehwagok Rest Area
- 3 Naesujeon Sunrise Observatory
- 4 Naesujeon (Mineral Spring)
- 5 Naesujeon Pebble Beach
- 6 Bongnaepokpo Falls
- 7 Jeodong Port
- 8 Chotdaebawi Rock
- 9 Dodong Aids to Navigation Office on Ulleungdo(Haengnam Lighthouse)
- 10 The 2000-year-old juniper tree
- 11 Ulleungdo Dong Yaksu Park, Dokdo Museum, Dokdo observatory Cable Car, Ulleung History and Culture Experience
- 12 Dodong Port
- 13 Habitat of Black Wood Pigeon
- 14 Geumgangwon Temple
- 15 Dokdo

SEOMYEON

- 1 Taeha Lighthouse
- 2 Hwangtogumi
- 3 Seongha Shrine
- 4 Taeha-ri Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription
- 5 Manmulsang
- 6 Imomyeong Gakseokmun
- 7 Gombawi
- 8 Mireuksan (Mireuk Mountain)
- 9 Population of Siebold Hemlocks, Japanes White Pine and Engler's Beeches
- 10 Ancient Tombs in Namseo-dong
- 11 Namseo Sunset Obervatory
- 12 Bipasan (Bipa Mountain)
- 13 Sajabawi Rock, Tugubong
- 14 Chinese Juniper habitat
- 15 Tonggumi tunnel
- 16 Geobukbawi Rock

Day 1 of the Trip





Sadong Port
photographed on October 1, 2023

Sadong Port is the most recently developed international port on Ulleungdo. Ulleung Airport, scheduled for completion in 2028, will also be located here. Sadong Port is currently served by cruise ships operating the Ulleung–Pohang routes, and like Dodong and Jeodong, it also offers high-speed ferries bound for the mainland or Dokdo.

I departed for Ulleungdo aboard a cruise ship leaving Pohang Yeongilman Port at 11:30 p.m. on September 30, 2023. Although this cruise ship takes roughly twice as long as a high-speed ferry, all cabins are dormitory-style bedrooms (six-person, four-person, or two-person rooms) and the ship is equipped with a convenience store, café, restaurant, karaoke room, and a bow-facing observation lounge. The restaurant also hosts free two-hour performances by singers outside

of mealtimes, making the journey far from boring. Nevertheless, tired from my travels from Seoul, I watched the performance for about 30 minutes before returning to my cabin to rest.

At about 5:30 a.m. on October 1, an announcement was made inviting those who wished to watch the sunrise to go up to the ship's rooftop deck or to the restaurant. I quickly got up and headed to the rooftop deck. The air was wonderfully fresh and invigorating. The sun had not yet appeared, but the eastern sky was tinged with a reddish hue, and in the distance Ulleungdo was beginning to reveal its silhouette.

After about five minutes, the sun finally began to peek above the horizon and soon broke fully from the water, rising into the sky. People all around me expressed their admiration and busied themselves taking photographs. I immediately returned to my cabin, splashed some water on my face, and prepared to disembark while watching the morning news on TV.

At around 7 a.m., an announcement informed us that we had arrived at Sadong Port, and following the instructions, I disembarked slowly. Sadong Port is a quiet island harbor, but when the cruise ship arrived, it turned into a bustling scene with nearly 1,000 disembarking passengers, the vehicles they brought on board, and tour bus drivers and rental car company staff holding signs for various tour companies waiting for groups.

After disembarking, I had a simple breakfast at the buffet restaurant (Midang) on the second floor of the distribution center building located right next to the waiting room. For the price, I was given a good range of side dishes, and the food was generally to my liking.

After the meal, I asked the owner where to catch the bus, and she told me to wait at the bus stop while pointing out the circular road.

Following her guidance, I walked across the parking lot about 100 meters to the circular road bus stop and waited for the bus.

Checking the bus timetable, I saw that buses departed at intervals of roughly one to one and a half hours. It would be more convenient if they ran at least every 30 minutes, but 1 hour and 30 minutes was a bit long. I nevertheless remained determined to use the bus first and rent a car only if it became too tiring. As it happened, a bus towards Namyang arrived almost immediately, so I boarded it.

The bus passing through Sadong Port runs clockwise (towards Namyang and Taeha) and counterclockwise (towards Dodong).



Airport Tunnel
photographed on October 1, 2023

Thinking that, in the morning, taking the clockwise bus would be convenient for the entire trip because it helps avoid backlighting when taking photos, I took the clockwise bus.

The bus carrying passengers from Sadong Port immediately passed through the airport tunnel.

Because Ulleung Airport was being built on the left side of the airport tunnel entrance, construction work could be seen behind the barriers even in the early morning.

Right in front of the airport tunnel, there is a roundabout where the road from the airport meets the island's circular road. When the airport opens in 2028, this will likely become the busiest traffic spot on Ulleungdo, but at the time, apart from tourist vehicles, it was relatively quiet.

After exiting the Airport Tunnel, I immediately arrived at Tonggumi Village.

From the Tonggumi bus stop, you can see Geobukbawi (Turtle Rock) along the left-hand side of the seaside road. The village name, Tonggumi, comes from the idea that the turtle-shaped rock looks as if it is crawling into the tong (village).

Unfortunately, on October 2, 2023, the head portion of the turtle collapsed, so any photo taken afterward no longer shows the head. The above photo, fortunately, was taken before the collapse, so the head is still intact.

For comparison, the photo below was taken after my trip (by an acquaintance at my request) and you can clearly see that the head portion is missing. Fortunately, the small turtle shape on the turtle's



Geobukbawi (Turtle Rock) at Tonggumi
photographed on October 1, 2023



Geobukbawi (Turtle Rock)
photographed on October 5, 2023

back remains unchanged, avoiding the need to change its name. Travelers may enjoy comparing the first and second photos to see which part is missing.

The seaside area behind Geobukbawi (Turtle Rock) is a mecca for scuba diving, and, in summer, many scuba enthusiasts visit. It is said that during the season, it can be difficult to find a room in nearby hotels.

This location, surrounded by land on all sides except for one opening to the sea, has calm waves, making it an ideal place to learn scuba



Scuba Training Site
photographed on October
1, 2023



Tonggumi Tunnel
photographed on October 1, 2023

diving. One day, if I have the chance, I would like to try this hobby.

Above the Tonggumi Tunnel rises a steep mountain, with many naturally growing juniper trees near its summit. After taking photos at Geobukbawi (Turtle Rock), I got back on the bus and entered the Tonggumi Tunnel. Inside, I could feel the road suddenly rise sharply and then drop again, like a roller coaster. This design was intentional because the disused old tunnel passes beneath it, so the new road was built to rise and then descend over it.

The old tunnel was a one-way tunnel with a traffic light at its entrance. When the light was red, vehicles had to wait on one side of the road to allow cars from the opposite direction to pass. Only

when the light turned green could they enter. Some people recall this arrangement fondly, saying it had its own charm, which they now miss.

Personally, I wonder if it might have been easier to widen the old tunnel for two-way traffic instead of building a new one over it. Since Ulleungdo is a volcanic island with relatively weak ground, I cannot help but think there might be a risk of future collapse—but perhaps this is my needless worry.

As it stands today, the entrances to the old tunnel are blocked off. I think it could someday be repurposed, for example, as a mushroom cultivation site.

After passing through the Tonggumi Tunnel, you immediately encounter Namyang Tunnel, and after passing two rockfall-protection tunnels, you arrive at Namyang Village.

Because Ulleungdo is a volcanic island with very steep slopes, many rockfalls occur along its roads. This is why one sees many rockfall-protection tunnels on the roads around the island.

Immediately after passing the Namyang No. 2 Rockfall Protection Tunnel, you come to the Namyang No. 1 Rockfall Protection Tunnel. You can see that this tunnel's sign is very faded because it was built a long time ago. Also, because this was the first tunnel built, you can see that it was not named the "No. 1 Tunnel" but was simply named the "Namyang Rockfall Protection Tunnel."

From a long-term perspective, I think it would have been much better for the island's aesthetic appearance when viewed from a boat if, rather than building a coastal road and then constructing numerous



Namyang No. 2 Rockfall Protection Tunnel
photographed on October 1, 2023



Namyang Rockfall Protection Tunnel
photographed on October 1, 2023

rockfall protection tunnels over it, the road had been built in the form of a tunnel from the very beginning.

When you get off at the Namyang-ri Bus Stop and look toward the village, you can see a stream (Namyang Stream) on the right and another stream (Namseo Stream) on the left. Because there are so many valleys like this, the place was called Golgye (valley world) Village in the old days. The road built alongside the stream on the right is Namyang Road.

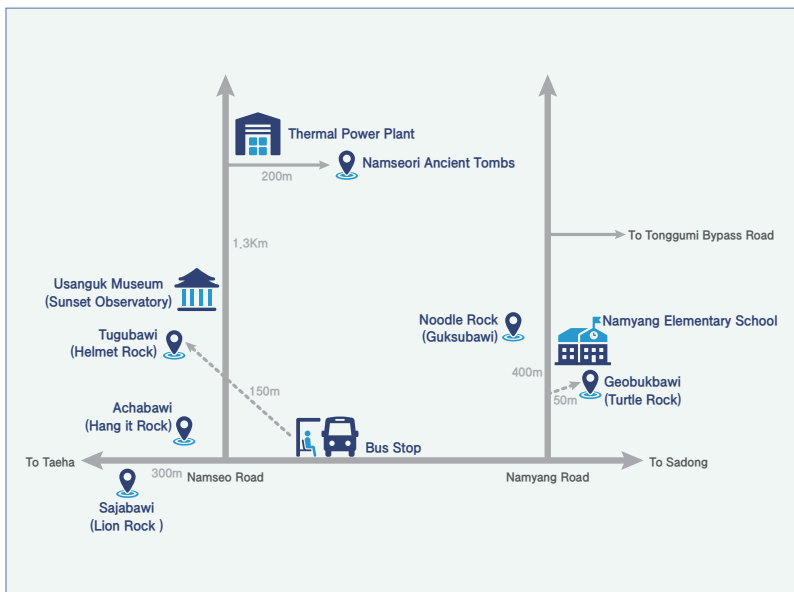
If you go about 400 meters up Namyang Road, you will see columnar joints (jusangeolli) on the left, which are also known as Bipasan (Bipa Mountain) or Guksubawi (Noodle Rock). To get a more impressive



Guksubawi
photographed on October 1, 2023

view of the columnar joints, go up about 300 more meters, and you will find a bypass road on the right leading to Tonggumi. Photos taken from on top of this bridge with Guksubawi in the background turn out wonderfully. The previous image is Guksubawi, taken from the bridge on the bypass road. is Guksubawi, taken from the bridge on the bypass road.

The simple map below indicates the tourist sites distributed throughout Namyang-ri.



A Map of Tourist Attractions Distributed in Namyang-ri

The Legend of Guksubawi (Noodle Rock)

It is said that the period when Usanguk (the Kingdom of Usan) was at its most powerful was when King Uhae was ruling the country. King Uhae was said to have the “strength of a general, a robust physique, and the power to command the seas as if they were land.”

At that time, Japanese pirates (waegu) based on the island of Tsushima frequently invaded Usanguk and plundered its shore. Unable to stand by and watch any longer, King Uhae led his troops to Tsushima. King Uhae successfully obtained from the king of Tsushima not only a letter of surrender promising not to invade Usanguk again but also lavish hospitality. Having received a magnificent reception, King Uhae expressed his gratitude to the king of Tsushima and bid him farewell. The king of Tsushima’s third daughter, Princess Pungmi, who had fallen in love with King Uhae at first sight, wanted to follow him. Noticing this, the king of Tsushima implored King Uhae to marry his daughter Princess Pungmi. King Uhae, who had secretly been captivated by the princess’s exceptional beauty, pretended to be reluctant but agreed to the marriage.

When Princess Pungmi came to Usanguk, she brought with her a crane and twelve handmaidens. Impressed with Princess Pungmi’s fine appearance and disposition, King Uhae made her his queen, and the people of Usanguk did their utmost to serve King Uhae

and Queen Pungmi.

Yet, after Princess Pungmi became the Queen of Usanguk, the once-frugal King Uhae developed a taste for luxury and tried to grant whatever Queen Pungmi wanted. He even sent troops as far as Silla to plunder treasures that Queen Pungmi desired. Officials who remonstrated were immediately executed, causing the people to fear King Uhae, while Queen Pungmi became ever more besotted with luxury.

When his beloved Queen Pungmi died, leaving behind a princess named Byeollim, the grieving King Uhae is said to have set up a folding screen on the mountain and performed mourning rites for a hundred days. He had the twelve handmaidens who had come with the queen from Tsushima play the lute (bipa) every day, while the crane that had always stayed by the queen's side sat silently before the screen. The place where the bipa was played and the rites were held every day came to be called Bipsan (Bipa Mountain), and on the day the hundred-day rite ended, the crane cried out sorrowfully, flew away, and landed at a certain spot, which came to be called Hakpo (Crane Bay).

As I walked back down toward the bus stop and passed Namyang Elementary School, I looked up at the mountain peak to the left and saw a turtle crawling at the summit.



Namyang-ri Geobukbawi (Turtle Rock)
photographed on October 1, 2023

As I was walking along the road again, a mottled cat crossed my path. Ancient records mention that all cats on Ulleungdo have short, stubby tails, and this one's tail was indeed short and stubby.

The Feline Maiden

(Gonaei Gaksi)

“Let me rest here for the night,” said the maiden as she entered the yard. She was pretty. She wore a yellow jeogori (traditional upper garment) and a blue chima (traditional skirt). She looked to be about twenty years old. In such a remote mountain place, at a solitary house, they could not possibly turn away a visitor who



Short-tailed Cat
photographed on October 1, 2023

arrived after sunset.

“How is it that a young maiden like you is traveling alone so late?” the master of the house asked, inviting her in.

The maiden, who had seemed so demure, stepped over the threshold and then glared viciously. “What are you looking at?” she snapped, giving them a dirty look.

The mistress of the house found this odd. This was a young and pretty maiden she had never seen before, asking for a night’s lodging, yet she was being nasty and angry toward her host.

When it came time to sleep, the mistress told her to take off her fine clothes so they would not get wrinkled, but she just said, “It’s

fine,” and slipped under the covers fully dressed. Just as the mistress was thinking how peculiar this was, the young child sleeping under the covers woke with a start and began to cry as if having a fit.

Thinking this strange, the mistress picked up the baby and looked him over, but there were no marks, nor did the child have a fever. Yet, each time she laid the child back under the covers, he would cry again. Feeling that something was very wrong, she threw back the covers and saw, to her surprise, a cat’s tail sticking out from under the maiden’s skirt.

At that, the maiden cried “Eek!” and ran out the door. On impulse, the mistress grabbed a pair of scissors from the floor and threw them at the fleeing figure. The maiden let out a “Meow!” and ran off. As she disappeared, she is said to have shouted, “I’ll see you again in three years!”

When the master and mistress of the house went out into the yard, they found a cat’s tail lying on the ground, severed by the scissors that had been thrown.

The child must have sensed, by some sixth sense, that the maiden was a cat. This “maiden” was, in fact, a hundred-year-old cat said to live on a nearby mountain. Having lived for over a hundred years, it had taken human form and come to this house to steal their child.

Ever since this incident, the cats living on Ulleungdo have all had short, stubby tails. This is mentioned in old records, and even today, almost all cats found on Ulleungdo have stubby tails.

Occasionally, long-tailed cats are seen, but they are all said to be the descendants of cats recently brought over from the mainland.

Coming back down to the bus stop and looking up to the left, I could see Tugubong (Helmet Peak) on the mountainside, about 150 meters away. From one angle, it looks like a helmet, and from another, it looks like a skull. Then again, a helmet is something you wear to protect your head (skull), so I suppose they are one and the same.



Tugubong (Helmet Peak)
photographed on October 1, 2023

Recalling the legend of King Uhae, who is said to have surrendered to Silla, I took a picture of Tugubong and went over to the banks of Namseo Stream (the stream on the left), where there were signs for the Usanguk Museum and the Namseo-ri Tumuli Complex. I started walking, following the sign for the Usanguk Museum.

After walking about 100 meters along Namseo Road, the Usanguk Museum came into view. Perhaps because historical records about the Kingdom of Usan are scarce, the museum's exhibits seemed rather sparse. I have heard that many of the burial goods excavated from the Ulleungdo tumuli are in the storage of the National Museum of Korea, and I felt they should be transferred here and put on display as soon as possible.



Sign for the Usanguk Museum
photographed on October 1, 2023



Usanguk Museum
photographed on October 1, 2023

After looking around the Usanguk Museum, you can buy a ticket for the Namseo Sunset Observatory on the first floor and take the monorail up. From the observatory, you can enjoy a magnificent view of Ulleungdo's southwestern coast. You can also walk up to the observatory, but as I was tired and short on time, I decided to take the monorail instead.

Directly in front of the observatory, two towering rocks are visible. The one on the left is Namgeunbawi (Phallus Rock), and the one on the right, which seems to be shyly turning its back, is Saeksibawi (Bride Rock). There is a legend that since ancient times many children have been born in Namyang Village below, thanks to the influence of Namgeunbawi.

The Legend of Namgeunbawi and Saeksibawi

A long time ago, in the uninhabited Sataegumi Valley, there lived a farmer whose wife had died young. He and his young daughter eked out a living by fishing and farming.

As she grew up, the daughter was deeply devoted to her father. The years passed, and she reached the age for marriage, but with no neighbors, there were also no bachelors. She spent her days and nights lamenting her fate until one day, in a dream, she gazed south and then a mysterious mountain peak seemed to embrace her.

Afterward, following a feverish and dreamlike state, the daughter began to notice a change in her body. Having no choice, she told her father, but he flew into a rage, demanding to know how she



Namgeunbawi (Phallus Rock) and Saeksibawi (Bride Rock)
photographed on October 1, 2023

could have done such a shameful thing. In the end, he drove his daughter out of their home.

The daughter, heavy with baby, climbed a peak on the mountain behind her home. Looking down at the southern peak she had seen in her dream, she saw a rock that looked just as it had appeared in the dream. She stands there facing west, hoping that her farther would forgive her, and was turned into an upright rock.

Today, this rock is called ‘Saeksibawi’ (Bride Rock).

The photo below was taken as I looked up at the observatory while walking toward Taeha, after coming down from the observatory and looking around the tumuli complex. The view from the top was dizzying, but looking up from below was also quite breathtaking.



Namseo Sunset Observatory
photographed on October 1, 2023

After coming down from the observatory, I agonized over whether to go see the tumuli complex. The sign at the entrance said it was 1.6 kilometers away, meaning I would have to go up at least another kilometer. It seemed too close to call a taxi but a bit far to walk. After considering my budget, I decided to walk.

I walked along the paved road beside the stream, and the scenery on both sides was spectacular. Thinking I had made the right choice not to take a taxi, I walked a little farther. To my right, a concrete road appeared between a large factory-like residence and a thermal power plant. Following this road up for about 150 meters, the tumuli complex, hidden for 1,500 years, came into view.



Sign for the Namseo-ri Tumuli Complex
photographed on October 1, 2023

There are tumuli in several places on Ulleungdo, but this grouping in Namseo-ri is relatively well-preserved in its original form. The tombs were built by constructing a stone platform, making a rectangular stone chamber in the center for the body, and then piling stones on top to form a mound. This is a unique style of tomb found only on Ulleungdo. Since the stones that once blocked the entrances have been removed, you can go right inside a few of them; they were so high in the center that I could stand up without my head touching the ceiling.

Considering that it would have been impossible to construct tombs of this size without being a powerful figure capable of mobilizing a large labor force, I could get a sense of the scale of Usanguk.



Namseo-ri Tumuli Complex
photographed on October 1, 2023

Goryeo Burial

In the old days of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), when men or women reached the age of seventy, they were ritually abandoned in a practice that became known as a ‘Goryeo Burial.’

On Ulleungdo there lived a seventy-years-old mother who had a most dutiful son. Though he knew that he must carry out the Goryeo Burial, he could not bear the thought of carrying his living mother up a mountain only to abandon her. Nevertheless, after much hesitation, he decided he had no choice but to do what he must.

On the mountain, he found a high place with a wide, fine, flat rock. He decided this rock would be the place for his mother’s Goryeo Burial.

“Mother, today I’m going to carry you on my back, and we’ll go out to have some fun.”

“Where to?”

“There’s a nice flat rock on that mountain. We can go there and eat the lunch we’ve packed.”

“Oh, really?”

The son lied, saying they were just going out for fun. But his mother already understood his intentions, and she also knew that he had no choice but to lie.

“Mother, get on my back.”

“Yes, my son.”

Both the son’s and the mother’s hearts felt as if they were being torn apart, but without either speaking their true feelings, he car-

ried her on his back up the mountain.

The path was very long, and they rested several times. The mother worried that not only would her son be exhausted from carrying her such a long way, but he might also lose his way back home if he only looked at the ground as he walked. And so, every time they rested, she broke off a tree branch.

The son did not know why his mother was breaking the branches. He supposed she was doing it idly.

Eventually, they arrived at their destination, the flat rock.

“Mother, here we are.”

“What a fine spot this is.”

The mother was filled with sadness, but knowing her son’s own sorrow, she did not betray it in her words.

“Let’s have a good time today.”

“You should eat a lot, too.”

“Yes, I’ve eaten plenty, Mother.”

“You must be tired from carrying me.”

“I’m fine.”

“I hope the harvest is good this year.”

“It will be. The rains have been good.”

The son’s heart felt like it would burst. To think how much his mother’s heart must be aching–worrying for his future even as she knew he was about to abandon her–the thought tore his heart apart. The sun was slowly setting in the west. The son, seeing he had no choice, lied once more. “Mother, please stay here. I will go home and bring back dinner.”

As he was about to leave, his mother, who knew perfectly well that her son was abandoning her, said, “My child, will you be able to find your way back? If you lose the path, follow the broken branches. I broke them off from time to time on our way here.”

Hearing these words, the son even more felt as if his heart were being torn to pieces. His steps on the way home were frantic and aimless.

“Why must people undergo Goryeo Burial at seventy? What a cruel fate,” he lamented as he walked.

When he returned home, he told his wife everything—how his mother had worried about their livelihood and about him getting lost, and how she had broken the branches. His wife also began to cry.

“Darling, what does the law matter? Let’s go bring Mother back right away.”

“Really?”

“Of course.”

“But it’s the law...”

“Then we will just have to accept whatever punishment the law gives us.”

The son felt ashamed before his wife.

“You have such a kind heart.”

“Go quickly. Mother must be cold. Let’s go now, even though it’s night, and bring her back.”

“Yes, let’s.”

The son lit a lamp and went back to find the rock. As he drew

near, he heard a mumbling sound. By then his lamp had gone out.

“That’s strange.”

A shiver of fear went through him. He felt the hair on his head stand on end.

“I pray, I pray. To the Mountain spirit, I pray.

I pray, I pray. To the Dragon King, I pray.

May my son have a bountiful harvest, and build high the stacks of grain,

With more than enough to eat and more than enough to use for all his days,

May he enjoy wealth and glory, for ever and ever, I pray. I pray...”

It was his mother, praying for her son’s well-being.

“Mother!” he cried, kneeling before her. The son and his wife wept, and the mother wept, and the whole mountain seemed to become a sea of tears.

Word that a man was living with his mother, who was past seventy, without having performed the Goryeo Burial, spread throughout the land and it at last reached the king. The son was summoned to appear before him.

“I hear you have a mother of seventy years?”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“Did you perform the Goryeo Burial?”

“I could not, Your Majesty.”

“And for what reason did you break the law of the land?”

“Your Majesty, if I may be so bold as to speak, this is what hap-

pened.”

Kneeling before the king, the son told him the entire story. Listening, the king nodded his head again and again.

“So, you are saying that even though she knew you were carrying her to her Goryeo Burial, she broke the branches for fear that her son would lose his way?”

“Yes, Your Majesty. I was so moved to tears by her love that I carried my mother back home.”

“I understand. Your filial piety is truly profound.”

The king praised the son, rewarding him with a load of grain and another of cloth. And from that day on, he is said to have amended the law, issuing a royal decree:

“Henceforth, it is no longer necessary to perform Goryeo Burial when a person reaches the age of seventy.”

After contemplating the Goryeo Burial legend while examining fifteen ancient tombs one by one, I headed back down. Arriving at the point where the coastal road meets Namseo-ri Road, I looked up at Tugubong Peak and walked along the loop road, where Achabawi (Perilous Rock) appeared, looking as if it might break at any moment.

Lava once flowed to form a mountain, and over long periods of wind and rain, the weaker parts weathered away, leaving only the relatively stronger parts to maintain this shape that now seems on the verge of breaking.



Achabawi (Perilous Rock)
photographed on October 1, 2023

Passing Achabawi and walking about 300 meters farther, you will find Sajabawi(Lion Rock) standing where the harbor ends. It is said to be the rock that was transformed from the lion Isabu brought on his ships to receive the surrender of the King of Usan; it is also said to be a lion that originally lived on Ulleungdo and died during the eruption of Seonginbong Peak. However, no matter how much I tried to see it as a lion, at first I simply could not.

I moved slowly around the rock, changing my angle of observation was that a lion coming into view?

I thought that if I had come with my children, it would have been fun to search together for the angle from which it looked most like a real lion.



Sajabawi (Lion Rock)
photographed on October 1, 2023

The First Legend of Sajabawi

In the harbor of Namyang-ri, there is a rock known as Sajabawi (Lion Rock), and next to it is Sajagul (Lion Cave). There is Tugubawi (Helmet Rock), which looks down on Sajabawi, and Guksubawi (Noodle Rock), which looks like noodles laid out to dry; and on the way from Noodle Rock to Taeha, there is Napalbong (Trumpet Peak).

It is said that these features— Sajabawi, Tugubawi, Napalbong, and others—are place names and rocks that tell the story of the final days of the Kingdom of Usan.

King Uhae of Usan brought a woman named princess Pungmi from Tsushima and made her his queen. From then on, he neglect-

ed the affairs of state, focusing only on winning her favor.

When they had a daughter, whom he named Byeollim, he became a king devoted only to his wife and daughter.

To satisfy his queen's appetite for luxury, he disregarded the precious lives of his people and officials, and extended his raids as far as the Kingdom of Silla on the mainland.

The people of Silla, suffering from the Usan raids, repeatedly appealed to their king to subjugate Usan. The King of Silla eventually ordered Isabu, the Lord of Myeongju, to conquer Usan.

On their arrival, the Silla and Usan soldiers fought a fierce battle, but the Silla forces fared poorly at sea against the warships of Usan, whose people had lived their lives on the sea.

Having tasted the bitter cup of defeat, Isabu returned, retrained his soldiers, devised a new strategy, and set out again the following year on a campaign to conquer Usan.

This time, before fighting, Isabu sent an envoy to King Uhae demanding his surrender.

Yet, the Kingdom of Usan, having won the battle the previous year, looked down on the Silla forces. They beheaded the envoy on the spot, provoking another fight.

The Silla forces, for their part, went to battle according to their pre-planned strategy.

They advanced with wooden lions, specially built and placed on the prows of all their warships, which breathed fire all at once, as the sailors steered the ships forward while also shooting arrows.

The people and soldiers of Usan were terrified. An animal they

had never seen or heard of was breathing fire from its mouth! Then, from the prows of the ships, the Silla soldiers shouted loudly, threatening that if they did not immediately lay down their spears and swords and surrender, they would unleash these beasts to annihilate the islanders.

The Usan soldiers, already daunted by the strange beasts, lost their will to fight. Moreover, the rain of arrows made their situation still more desperate.

King Uhae also realized it was the end. He knew all too well that fighting with soldiers whose morale had collapsed meant defeat. Finally, he decided to surrender, took off his helmet, and capitulated to Isabu.

The terms of the surrender were that Uhae would step down as king, and Usan would become a vassal state of Silla, offering tribute annually.

The Kingdom of Usan is no more, but its legend remains. It is said that the wooden lions used in the battle fossilized and became today's 'Sajabawi'(Lion Rock), and the helmet that King Uhae cast off became 'Tugubong' (Helmet Peak).

The Second Legend of Sajabawi

A long time ago, various animals lived on Ulleungdo: lions, tigers, foxes, wolves, raccoon dogs, rabbits, badgers, martens, roe deer, and deer... The animals would gather in one place to play, and in their play, they would sometimes quarrel with one another. One day, as all the animals were gathered and playing, a

white-bearded old man appeared. “All you animals, listen carefully,” he said. “If you remain here as you are, you will meet a perilous fate in a matter of days. Flee to another place as quickly as you can.”

And with that, he vanished.

After the old man disappeared, the animals began to murmur amongst themselves.

“Hmph, what could an old man like that possibly know?”

“No, judging by his white beard, he was no ordinary person.”

“The way he vanished in the blink of an eye, he must be a mountain spirit (sansil-lyeong).”

“We must heed his prophecy.”

“He’s right.”

“No, he isn’t.”

“Let’s go.”

“Let’s not go.”

The animals’ opinions were divided, and they all spoke at once until the tiger roared loudly,

“You all saw what he looked like, didn’t you? That white beard, those eyes like the sun, the glow from his forehead-he is a mountain spirit. We must flee. That wise one does not lie. Even if none of you go, I will,” he declared.

“Me too.”

“Me too.”

“Me too.”

“Me as well.”

“Us too.”

Many animals followed the tiger, resolving to flee. All the others, except the lion, stepped forward and declared that they would seek refuge. But at that moment, the lion stood up and shouted.

“I will not go! Are you saying we should abandon the homeland where we have lived for tens of thousands of years? Let us protect our homeland! Protect our homeland! How can you speak of leaving this beautiful land? Do you think someone will welcome us if we go?”

“That’s true. The lion has a point.”

“His words may be right, but...?”

“If it’s right, then we should act on it.”

“But...”

“But what are you suggesting?”

Once again, their opinions were split into two camps.

Finally, even the tiger said,

“The lion’s words are right a hundred times over.”

“Then, instead of just standing here, let us resolve to defend this island to the death.”

“Yes, let us!”

“Agreed!”

And so, the animals decided not to leave the island. However, as

time passed, the more fainthearted animals began to worry.

“What if we all get wiped out staying here?”

“It’s better to heed the mountain spirit’s warning.”

“If we die, we die together.”

“It’s up to heaven to decide.”

Then one day, the white-bearded old man appeared again.

“Why are you all being so stubborn? You must flee at once. In five more days, this place will become a sea of fire.”

And with that, he vanished without a trace.

The animals began to argue again. And this time, all the animals except the lion decided to flee far away. But the lion continued to insist he would remain on the island.

“Lion, what will you do?”

The tiger asked.

“Even if I die, I will die here.”

“Let’s go together.”

“I’m not going.”

“You should accept this as a gesture of friendship.”

“I am grateful for your friendship, but I will do as I see fit. Do not worry about me; just make sure you make it to safety.”

“Grandfather Lion, please come with us,” said the fox.

“Thank you, but I will not go.”

“You can leave and come back when better times return.”

“Why leave if I am only to return?”

Even the fox could not persuade the stubborn lion.

After all the animals had fled, Seonginbong Peak felt truly desolate.

One day passed. Two days passed. On the third day, the lion felt as if its own hind-quarters were shaking. Still, the lion thought nothing of it.

On the fourth day, his body grew warm, but the lion was still filled only with the thought of steadfastly protecting its homeland. The lion even felt a sense of satisfaction at this. Pride in protecting his homeland, even if he was all alone, washed over him.

The fifth day arrived. The volcano erupted, and the entire island became a sea of fire. In his haste, the lion leaped into the sea, but the water was also scalding hot.

The lion that tried to protect the island, the lion that tried to defend its homeland to the very end, became rigid in the sea, its eyes wide open. The volcanic eruption was not a single event. Waves crashed against the hardened lion's body again and again.

Days passed, months passed, and years passed. The lion, gazing upon the homeland he could never forget, turned to stone.

The Sajabawi(Lion Rock) in the sea off Namyang today is the hero of this story.

Even if all the others go, I will protect it.

Even if all the others go, I will protect it.

How can you leave your homeland? Where would you go?

Even if I die, even if I become stone,

I cannot leave this place. I will not leave this place.

Let me watch over it forever, let me live forever.

The lion is immortal; the lion is alive.

From then on, not a single animal could be seen here on Ulleungdo. All that remained was a single lion, turned to stone.

Just before Sajabawi (Lion Rock), within Namyang Harbor, there is an artificial seawater swimming pool. Across the road from the pool stands Achabawi. It looks as if a strong person could push it over, but it is amazing how it stands firm against the harsh elements without breaking.

While Ulleungdo has many natural beaches along its coast, they are all large pebble beaches, not sandy ones, which makes them unsuitable for children to play on. For these children, artificial seawater pools have been constructed in Sadong, Cheonbu, and here in Namyang.

They are perfectly suitable for children and very convenient, as they have freshwater showers and restroom facilities. For travelers with children, the kids can play at the seawater pool here while the adults enjoy a tour on foot or by rental car.

If you feel tired after walking to the ancient tomb complex on your first day, you can unpack for the night at Ulleungdo's most beautiful ocher (yellow-earth) house, the Mushroom House (Seonnyeowa Namuggun, ☎ 0507-1328-8438). Of course, if you ask the owner of the Mushroom House to pick up your luggage from Sadong Port, they will gladly do so and also give you a ride to the starting point of your next day's itinerary.



Seonnyeo wa Namuggun (The Fairy and The Woodcutter)
photographed on May 5, 2023

If you want to continue traveling without stopping in Namyang, you can take a bus from in front of Sajabawi(Lion Rock). After passing through Namseo Tunnel 1, the Namseo Tunnels 2, 3, 4, and 5, built along the coast, offer spectacular views. These are all rock-fall protection tunnels.

I decided to make this area my base for the time being and to tour Jukdo Island in the afternoon.

I called Seonnyeo wa Namuggun, which I had booked in advance, and a car arrived in less than 10 minutes. After unpacking my bags at Seonnyeo wa Namuggun, I mentioned that I wanted to tour Jukdo Island in the afternoon, and they told me that if I left right away, I could probably catch the ferry.



Jukdo Tour Ticket Office
 photographed on October 1, 2023



Jukdo
 photographed on October 1, 2023



Panoramic View of Jukdo
Source: www.kbmaeil.com

After booking tickets by phone, I decided to have a quick lunch at Dodong Port and immediately headed there by car.

As soon as I arrived at Dodong Port, I bought bread, a drink, and a ferry ticket to Jukdo, then boarded the waiting ferry.

The fare was higher than I had expected, but as the ferry made its way across the sea, I realized Jukdo was also farther away than I had thought. Considering that it was a round-trip fare, I came to feel the ticket price was not expensive at all.

Because Jukdo is surrounded by sheer cliffs, the stairs leading up from the dock to the top were very steep. Perhaps spurred by curiosity about this new place, however, even elderly visitors clambered up without difficulty.

One family lived on Jukdo Island, and they were selling deodeok tea (a tea made from bonnet bellflower roots) to tourists.

After drinking a cup of deodeok tea, I took a walk around Jukdo. The view of Ulleungdo from the island, especially the sight of the Samseonam Rocks, stirred yet another set of emotions. After letting out a stream of admiring exclamations, I descended the stairs and boarded the return ferry when the scheduled departure time arrived.

Once I arrived back at Dodong Port and finished a simple dinner, I was going to contact my accommodation. However, seeing how inconvenient parking seemed at the port, I decided to take a taxi instead.

Day 2 of the Trip





Namseo Tunnels 2, 3, 4, and 5
photographed on October 2, 2023

After a quick breakfast of cereal, the owner of “Seonnyeo wa Namuggun” gave me a ride to the Namyang-ri bus stop. I took the bus past Namseo Tunnel 1, and a series of consecutive rockfall-protection tunnels created a magnificent spectacle. I quickly asked the bus driver to let me off, took a few pictures, and then started walking again.

Ulleungdo has steep slopes and weak bedrock, which causes frequent rockfalls that are extremely dangerous for vehicles and pedestrians. For this reason, rockfall-protection tunnels were built in every section at risk of collapse, and the series of consecutive tunnels was itself a magnificent sight not seen anywhere else.

After walking a little further, I reached Guam Village. From the entrance to this village, if you look at the mountain ridge to the left



Gombawi (Bear Rock)
photographed on October 2, 2023

(toward the sea), you can see Gombawi (Bear Rock), which looks exactly like the cartoon character Winnie the Pooh—a sight children especially love.

After taking a picture with Gombawi in the background, I walked about 300 meters farther along the coastal road, and Beoseotbawi (Mushroom Rock) came into view on the right. They say Beoseotbawi was formed by weathering, and it is simply amazing how it could have been eroded layer by layer like this.

After taking pictures at Beoseotbawi and Sucheung Bridge, if you climb up and look down at the bridge and the road, you can see a pattern like the taegeuk (yin-yang symbol) on the Republic of Korea



Beoseotbawi (Mushroom Rock)
photographed on October 2, 2023

flag. Sucheung Bridge was so named because this steep area, like Beoseotbawi, has been weathered in layers (cheung) ; when it rains, the water (su) appears to cascade down layer by layer.

If you look at the photoon the next page, the elevated road and the road beneath it look just like a taegeuk (yin-yang) symbol.

The design was likely a necessity due to the steep terrain, but it is a noteworthy tourist attraction in its own right, though most people just pass by in their vehicles.

After walking a little farther, I caught a bus. Before it went completely over the pass, a sign on the right for the road to Hakpo came into view.



Taegeuk Road
 photographed on October 2, 2023



The Road to Hakpo
 photographed on October 2, 2023



Manmulsang

photographed on October 2, 2023

As you go down this road, a rocky mountain comes into view ahead and to the right. It is called Manmulsang (Ten Thousand Images), as it is said to be a spectacular sight where one can see ten thousand different forms.

The village below Manmulsang is Hakpo Village. According to one legend, the place was named Hakpo because a crane (hak), brought from Tsushima by Princess Pungmi, the wife of King Uhae, flew up from beneath Guksubawi (Noodle Rock) in Namyang-ri which I had seen the day before, and landed here after queen Pungmi's 100-day mourning period ended. According to another legend, the name comes from a rock on the mountain behind the village that resembles a sitting



Hakpo campsite
photographed on October 2, 2023

crane. At that time, no one saw the crane land, nor did anyone see it turn into a rock, so it is impossible to know which story is correct.

Going down a little farther and taking the path to the left, a well-maintained campsite (☎ 054-791-3338) comes into view. Reservations must be made in advance as spots are limited. Camping is allowed here, if you make a reservation in advance.

I could have continued down to the coast, but the road was not good, so I came back up and decided to follow the leftmost path at the three-way intersection. A little farther down, I saw a container being used as an office by a civilian rescue team. Passing it and entering Hakpo Village, a traditional pavilion (jeongja) came into view on the left.

Continuing along the path from this pavilion, another one appeared

on the right (I wondered if this village had as many pavilions as it had households). About 50 meters past this second pavilion, the 1882 Stone Inscription can be seen on the rock face on the left.

In 1882, Royal Inspector Lee Gyu-won landed here with 102 attendants on three ships. After surveying Ulleungdo, he returned and had characters carved into the rock face. The names of Royal Inspector Lee Gyu-won and his attendants, such as Go Jong-pal, remain relatively clear, but the other characters are not easily visible due to weathering.



1882 Stone Inscription
photographed on October
2, 2023

1882 Stone Inscription (Imomyeong Gakseokmun)

- Designated as Cultural Heritage Item No. 412.
- Still-legible engravings include “Ulleungdo Royal Inspector Lee Gyu-won,” “Go Jong-pal,” “Yu Yeon-ho,” the date “May 1882,” “Jeon Seok-gyu,” and “Seo Sang-mok.”

According to Lee Gyu-won's Royal Inspector's Diary, his inspection itinerary was as follows.

March 23.1881

Appointed Royal Inspector of Ulleungdo by King Gojong but decided to depart the following year to allow for thorough preparation.

April 7. 1882

While bidding farewell to King Gojong, he was instructed on the purpose of the mission and ordered to conduct a detailed inspection not only of Ulleungdo but also of the adjacent islands of Songjukdo and Usando.

April 10. 1882

Departed from outside Heungin Gate (present-day Dongdaemun) in Hanyang (Seoul) and traveled overland via Wonju and Pyeonghae, arriving at Gusanpo in Uljin on April 27, to wait for a westerly wind.

April 29. 1882

A group of 107 set sail on three ships.

The group consisted of Royal Inspector Lee Gyu-won, Official of the Royal Secretariat (Jungchu dosa) Shim Ui-wan, former military official Seo Sang-hak, former gatekeeper Go Jong-pal, official painter Yu Yeon-ho, 82 other sailors, and 20 gunners.

April 30. 1882

Around evening, we arrived at Hakpo (Sohwangtogumi) on the west coast of Ulleungdo.

At the port, they found Kim Jae-geun from the Samdo islands of Heungyang, Jeolla Province, living with 23 people, building boats and harvesting seaweed.

May 1. 1882

Faced a crisis due to severe wind and waves and held a rite at a mountain spirit shrine (sansindang).

May 2. 1882

Crossed the mountains to Taeha (Daehwangtogumi) and confirmed the presence of ancient tombs.

At the port, Choi Seong-seo from Pyeonghae was living in a hut with 13 laborers.

That day, while walking about 30 ri (a traditional unit of distance) on a mountain path, they confirmed that seven people from Gyeongju were digging for medicinal herbs and two from Yeonil were living in a hut they had built.

May 3. 1882

Arrived at Hyeonpo (Heukjakji), took a small boat to view Noin-bong (Old Man Rock) and Chusan (Songgotbong), passed Cheonny-conpo, and arrived at Cheonbu (Waeseonchang).

At Cheonbu, they confirmed that a group of 20 people led by Lee Gyeong-chil from Nagan, Jeolla Province, and a group of 19 people led by Kim Geun-seo from Chodo Island were each building huts and making boats.

They crossed the Odaeryeong Pass and then the Hongmundong (Hongmunga) Pass, arriving at Naridong. As night was falling, they stayed at the cottage of Jeong I-ho, a medicinal herb merchant from Paju.

May 4. 1882

Climbed Seonginbong Peak, the highest peak on Ulleungdo; a vast ocean stretched out in all directions.

They descended about 10 ri to the east, passed the residence of Jeon Seok-gyu, a medicinal herb merchant from Hamyang, and continued down a mountain ridge to arrive at Jeodong (Jeopo), where they slept outdoors in a forest.

May 5. 1882

Discovered a Japanese ship anchored at Dodong (Dobangcheong).

Conversed with the Japanese, who were illegally logging trees on Ulleungdo, by exchanging written Chinese-character messages.

(conversation by writing)

“By what right are you logging here?”

“We have never heard that this place is foreign land; we know it to be Japanese territory.”

“This place is already marked as Matsushima of Japan.”

Lee Gyeong-hwa from the Samdo Island of Heungyang, Jeolla Province, was living in a hut he had built and was gathering seaweed with 13 laborers.

They took a boat and arrived at Sadong (Jangjakji) port, where Kim Nae-eon from Chodo Island, Heunghae, was building a boat with 12 laborers.

Stayed the night at Sadong port.

It was said that at the time, there were a total of 78 Japanese engaged in logging on Ulleungdo.

May 6. 1882

On the way from Sadong to Tonggumi, they discovered a wooden marker (length 6 cheok, width 1 cheok; a cheok is a traditional Korean unit of length) between the seaside rocks inscribed:

大日本國 松島槻谷 明治 2年 2月 13日 岩崎忠照 立

Tsukidani, Matsushima, Great Japan

Erected by Iwasaki Tadateru on February 13, the 2nd Year of the Meiji era

They confirmed that Kim Nae-yun from Chodo Island, Heungyang, Jeolla Province, was building a boat with 22 laborers.

May 7. 1882

The mountain path was deep and dark, so they could not proceed farther and slept outdoors at Namyang (Gokpo).

May 8. 1882

Followed a dangerous rocky path over a pass and arrived at Hakpo (Sohwangto-gumi).

Ordered a stonemason to carve the island's name into rock.

May 9.1882

Patrolled the western coast by boat.

They toured the coastline, passing Daehwangtogumi in Taeha, Hyangmokgumi, Daepunggumi (Daepunggam), Hyeonpo (Heukjakji), Cheonbu (Waeseonchang), and Seonchang (Seonpangumi).

They discovered two small islands: one called Jukdo (also known as Daeseom, Bamboo Island) and the other Dohang (i.e., Seommok, Gwaneumdo).

As night fell, they went ashore and stayed the night.

May 10. 1882

They continued the previous day's survey of the ports of Dodong (Dobangcheong), Sadong (Jangjakji), Tonggumi, Heukpo, Sataegumi, and Sanmakdong by boat, and stayed the night at Hakpo (Sohwangtogumi).

May 11. 1882

In the morning, they set sail for the mainland on their three ships.

May 12. 1882

They headed toward Uljin in the evening, but the waves rose high. They rowed hard and barely managed to arrive at Gusanpo, Uljin that evening.

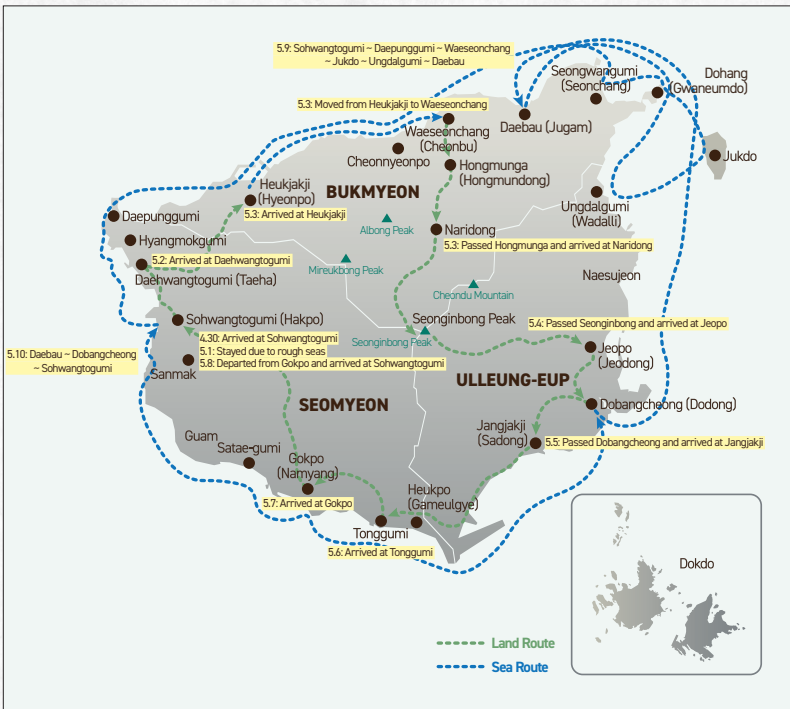
June 4. 1882

Had an audience with King Gojong and to report back on the completion of the mission.

June 5. 1882

King Gojong ordered that a protest be lodged with Japan concerning their illegal trespassing on Ulleungdo and other matters, and expressed strong enthusiasm for the resettlement of Ulleungdo.

The map below shows the mission's itinerary.



Ulleungdo Before the Resettlement Decree

Although mainlanders began to migrate to Ulleungdo in large numbers after King Gojong's Resettlement Order (Jaegaecheokryeong), which was issued following the report of Royal Inspector Lee Gyu-won, this does not mean that there were no mainlanders traveling to and from the island prior to the decree.

First, the Inspector reported that 141 people were residing there, of whom 114 were from Jeolla-do (Province), from places such as Goheung, Yeosu, and Suncheon.

Similarly, while in exile in Gangjin(i.e. Tamjin), Jeolla-do, in the early 1800s, the scholar Jeong Yak-yong (penname, Dasan) collected and recorded a 'Tamjin Eoga' (Song of the Tamjin Fishermen), which reads as follows:

In the fishing village, everyone enjoys octopus soup,
They don't bother with red shrimp or green crab meat.
Disliking that the mussels are as small as lotus seeds,
They raise their sails and head east to Ulleungdo.

This shows that even though the royal court had forbidden it, a considerable number of people were secretly voyaging to Ulleungdo at the time.

The Relationship between Geomundo and Ulleungdo

(Eiyara sulbiya)

Going, going, I am going, to Ulleungdo I am going /
Just wait for our return, after this trip we'll settle down, oh sulbiyeo.
Hoisting the sails, rowing the oars, as we head for Ulleungdo /
Longing for home is keen, after this trip we'll settle down, oh sul-
biyeo.

(Eheyeo sulbiya)

Heave-ho, let's row, heave-ho, let's row /
We go to Ulleungdo in tears /
We return to Arinnyeok with knowledge /
Heave-ho, let's row /
Hey, boatman at the bow, hey, boatman at the stern /
Hey, workers at the waist, hoist the sails and weigh the anchor.
[...] Let's go to a temple and become monks /
Having cleared this mountain and that of trees /
Let's not clear the nearby mountain.

This passage comes from Sulbitori (Rope-Twisting Song), a work song sung by the sailors of Geomundo, an island located off the southern coast of Jeollanam-do, as they performed their arduous labor.

From the lyrics “Heave-ho, let's row, heave-ho, let's row / We go to Ulleungdo in tears,” we can see that the people of Geomundo rowed their boats with Ulleungdo as their destination.

In the line “We return to Arinnyeok with knowledge,” “Arinnyeok”

refers to Geomundo. This means that, while they went to Ulleungdo in tears, when they returned to their hometown of Geomundo after completing their long period of fishing work on Ulleungdo, they would “return with knowledge.” Furthermore, “Having cleared this mountain and that of trees” signifies that they cut down trees on the mountains of Ulleungdo to build ships.

Geomundo Sulbitori is a work song sung while twisting ropes from kudzu vines or straw. ‘Sul’ is a local dialect word from the Yeosu region meaning “rope,” and ‘bi’ means “to twist.” It was a song sung by the people of Geomundo as they twisted kudzu ropes in preparation for setting out to sea.

If you check their locations on a map, Ulleungdo, located far out in the East Sea, and Geomundo, on Korea’s southern coast, are a considerable distance apart. Nevertheless, from the work song Sulbitori of the late Joseon period, we can tell that travel between Geomundo and Ulleungdo was frequent.

For the people of Geomundo, traveling to Ulleungdo was an unavoidable choice for their livelihood. Due to its topography, Geomundo had many hilly areas, a thin layer of topsoil, and strong winds, creating an environment where large trees could not easily grow. Since shipbuilding could bring great wealth at the time, the people of Geomundo sought out Ulleungdo to obtain timber for building ships.

Until King Gojong ordered Ulleungdo’s resettlement, the royal court had prohibited entry to the island. However, because of its dense forests and abundant marine resources, Japanese people were secretly landing on the island, cutting down trees, and engaging in fishing activities as

they pleased.

Every year, in the third lunar month of spring, the people of Geomundo would head for Ulleungdo, using the southeasterly winds and the East Korea Warm Current. It is said that for the long journey, which took from half a month to a full month, they would roast and bring three mal (a traditional unit of volume, about 18 liters) of beans before departing. This was to help the boatmen stay awake during the long voyage.

Immediately upon arrival, the people of Geomundo began cutting down trees to build new ships and harvested seaweed throughout the summer. When the northwesterly winds blew in the autumn, they loaded their ships full with timber, seaweed, and dried fish, and headed south, returning home after selling or bartering their goods at ports in Gyeongsang-do along the way.

Upon arriving back at Geomundo, they would immediately go out to the West Sea (Yellow Sea) to fish, and sell the dried fish and seaweed from Ulleungdo at various ports along the west coast. Their range of activity extended as far as Jinnampo, and they also stopped at Mapo Crossing and the Geumgang River estuary to procure daily necessities and rice.

The connection between Ulleungdo and Geomundo did not end there. It is recorded that Lee Gyu-won, who inspected Ulleungdo under the command of King Gojong, personally met as many as 84 people from Geomundo and Chodo in various locations during his survey, and that they were mainly engaged in building ships or harvesting seaweed.

Later, after the resettlement of Ulleungdo in 1882, an Island

Superintendent (dogam) was appointed to administer the island. In 1890, Oh Seong-il, a native of Seodori on Geomundo, received the royal edict appointing him as the first Superintendent. This serves as evidence that, during the Joseon period, many people from Geomundo traveled to or resided on Ulleungdo and maintained a close relationship with the island.

Until just a few years ago, many houses on Geomundo built from Ulleungdo timber (juniper tree, gymok, a type of zelkova tree) over 100 years old, remained standing, as did household tools such as mortars (jeolgutong), fulling blocks (dadeumi), and smoothing sticks (hongdukkae) made from Ulleungdo wood.

Furthermore, from Korea's Liberation in 1945 until the 1970s, people from Geomundo frequently engaged in squid jigging in the fishing grounds near Ulleungdo and Dokdo. It is said that, even today, if you visit Jangchon village in Seodori, Geomundo, you can still find many people who once worked on those boats.

The Settling Process of Migrants after the Resettlement Decree

On August 20 (lunar calendar), 1882, Chief State Councilor (Yeonguijeong) Hong Sun - mok proposed to the royal court a plan for recruiting people to migrate to Ulleungdo to cultivate fields, exempting them from taxes for five years. He also suggested that the court should permit tax transport ships (jounseon) from the southeast and southwest of the country to be sent to Ulleungdo to cut down trees and build ships.

Furthermore, he proposed that an Island Superintendent (Dogam) be appointed and dispatched to act as an administrator on behalf of the central government during the resettlement process. This is recorded as follows in the *Seungjeongwon Ilgi* (Diary of the Royal Secretariat) on August 20 of the 19th year of King Gojong's reign:

Hong Sun-mok addressed the king:

“[...] First, if we recruit people and set taxes after five years, they will gradually form settlements on their own. Furthermore, if we permit and command the tax transport ships from the Honam and Yeongnam regions to be sent to take timber and build ships, many will gather and with alacrity.

Yet, if there is no one to manage affairs, it will be difficult to prevent various abuses. Therefore, if Your Majesty inquires with the Inspector (geomchalsa) about a diligent and competent person, we can appoint him as Island Superintendent and dispatch him. [...] I venture to submit this to Your Majesty.”

The king replied, “Proceed as you have proposed.”

After the resettlement of Ulleungdo was decided, a record from April 1883 shows that the Governor of Gangwon Province reported to the central government on the preparation of necessary supplies for resettlement. For the settlers, 4 ships, 40 boatmen, and grain seeds consisting of 20 seok (a traditional unit of volume, about 180 liters) of rice, 5 seok of beans, 2 seok of millet, and 1 seok of red beans were prepared.

Also prepared were 2 cauldrons, 6 juk (a unit for a set of ten items) of earthenware, 3 juk of rush mats, 5 pil (a unit for textile) of cotton cloth, 5 pil of hemp cloth, 5 juk (a unit for ten pairs) of hemp shoes, and 5 large storage jars (hangari). Additionally, 2 carpenters and 2 blacksmiths were also brought along.

In terms of livestock, one cow and one bull were loaded onto the ships to be used as breeding stock.

To protect the migrants, weapons were also loaded: 3 guns, 4 spears and 4 swords, 300 rounds of ammunition, 3 geun (a traditional unit of weight, about 600 g) of gunpowder, and 50 matchlocks. Looking at this list of supplies for the resettlement, it is clear that most of the settlers at the time were engaged in agriculture for their livelihood.

After the preparations were completed, the royal court began recruiting migrants for the resettlement of Ulleungdo in earnest. In the lunar month of April, 16 households, totaling 54 people, were relocated to Ulleungdo.

The initial migrants were mostly residents from Gyeongsang (6 households) and Gangwon (7 households) Provinces, but also included some people from Chungcheong (2 households) and Gyeonggi (1 household) Provinces.

Their initial settlement sites included Taeha (Daehwangtogumi), Namyang (Gokpo), Chusan (Songotbong), and Hyeonpo (Heukjakji), which were areas with favorable natural conditions such as relatively wide plains and sources of fresh water.

There is no sign of any households settling in the Naribunji Basin, which had been suggested as the optimal site for resettlement in the

conversation between King Gojong and Lee Gyu-won. Although Naribunji Basin consists of a wide plain, it seems that the water supply was not suitable for various uses.

After the migration of the first settlers, the migration of mainlanders began in earnest, and by 1896, the population had increased to 277 households, with a total of 1,134 people (662 male, 472 female). And a total of 4,775 durak (approximately 160 hectares) of agricultural land had been cleared. [Source: The Independent (Dongnip Sinmun), April 6, 1897].

The increasing number of settlers began to establish themselves by clearing uninhabited mountainous areas through slash-and-burn agriculture (hwajeon).

Later, according to Wu Yong-jeong's Uldogi (Record of Ulleungdo) from 1900, the number of residents had grown to over 400 households and more than 1,700 people. They lived relatively prosperously, engaging in activities such as slash-and-burn cultivation in mountain valleys or harvesting seaweed along the coast, and they did not need to purchase items such as cotton, hemp cloth, or paper from outside.

It was recorded that even in years of poor harvest, they could avoid starvation eating birds known as hakjo or seumsae (streaked shearwater) and a wild vegetable called myeongi (Siberian onion); that although mountains rose one after another, there were no tigers, leopards, dholes, or foxes; that despite the lush forests, there were no thorny plants; and that although there were many places worthy of

being called scenic spots, there were no rice paddies because the slopes were too steep to hold water.

By the early 20th century, a 1907 report for Ulleungdo, which listed the island as part of Southern Gyeongsang Province, recorded 781 households with 4,119 people. The Statistical Yearbooks of the Japanese Government - General of Korea between 1911 and 1945 further provide the following population data:

Year	Korean Households	Korean Population	Japanese Households	Japanese Population	Chinese Households	Chinese Population	Total Households	Total Population
1911	1,082	6,880	332	1,192			1,414	8,073
1912	1,104	6,961	388	1,261			1,492	8,222
1914	1,471	8,597	428	1,404			1,899	10,361
1915	1,403	8,391	371	1,231			1,774	9,623
1920	1,422	8,141	227	800	1	4	1,650	8,945
1925	1,485	7,040	163	560	3	9	1,651	7,609
1930	1,259	7,528	135	473	2	7	1,396	8,008
1945	2,276	13,944	3	5			2,279	13,949

Kim Ok-gyun's Development of Ulleungdo and Dokdo

On March 16 (lunar calendar), 1883, King Gojong appointed Kim Ok-gyun, a Councilor (Chamui) of the Office for the Management of State Affairs (Tongrigimuanun), as the Commissioner for the Development of the Southeastern Islands (Dongnamjedo Gaecheoksa) and Superintendent of Whaling (Gwanpogyongsas). He was exempted from the formal procedures of reporting to superiors when traveling to and from his post, allowing him to travel freely and report his findings

directly to the king.

The reason King Gojong appointed Kim Ok-gyun as the Commissioner for the Development of the Southeastern Islands, rather than only for Ulleungdo, was that after confirming the existence of Jukseodo, Gwaneumdo, and Usando (Dokdo) next to Ulleungdo, he intended for Kim to oversee the resettlement of all these islands and manage the whaling activities in the surrounding areas.

Kim Ok-gyun recruited the first applicants for migration, and initially, 16 households with 54 people applied. Consequently, in April of 1883, the first migrants arrived on Ulleungdo, which had been uninhabited for several hundred years, and began to establish villages and clear land for farming.

Under government leadership, applicants for migration were recruited primarily from Gangwon, Gyeongsang, and Jeolla Provinces, relocated to Ulleungdo, and actively supported. As a result, the number of migrants increased rapidly.

The government and the Commissioner for Development made firm representations to Japan regarding the illegal incursions of Japanese people onto Ulleungdo and demanded their withdrawal. They succeeded in having all the Japanese who had entered Ulleungdo expelled.

In September 1883, the Japanese Ministry of Home Affairs dispatched a ship named the Echigomaru, carrying 31 officials and policemen, to Ulleungdo. They evacuated all 254 Japanese individuals who had been illegally residing on Ulleungdo. As a result, not a single Japanese person remained on the island. This was a major achievement

of Commissioner Kim Ok-gyun's Ulleungdo and Dokdo development project.

Commissioner Kim Ok-gyun dismissed and punished Jeon Seok-gyu, the Ulleungdo Island Chief (Dojang), who, without government permission, had accepted rice and issued a permit for logging Ulleungdo's forests to the captain of the Japanese ship Tenjumaru.

Kim Ok-gyun regarded Ulleungdo's forestry as a very important resource through which the state could earn foreign currency. He adopted a policy for the Joseon government to log the forests of Ulleungdo and export the timber to Japan. To this end, he dispatched Baek Chun-bae of the Enlightenment Party (Gaehwadang) to Japan in August 1884 to sign a sales contract with the captain of the Japanese ship Manrimaru. Kim Ok-gyun also negotiated for a loan using Ulleungdo's forests as collateral to raise the necessary funds needed for logging and the development of the island's forestry and fishing industries.

However, the Gapsin Coup (Gapsin jeongbyeon) of December 1884 failed, and Kim Ok-gyun and others fled to Japan in exile. As a result, the Enlightenment Party's project to resettle Ulleungdo and Dokdo temporarily lost momentum.

Although the resettlement policy was not officially discontinued after the failed coup, the conservative government of Empress Myeongseong showed little interest in pursuing it. For instance, the Empress's government did not appoint a full-time Superintendent (Dojang) for Ulleungdo. Instead, it assigned the Naval Commander (Sugunmanho) of Wolsongpo in Pyeonghae County, who had been responsible for the

island under the former “Search and Subjugate” (suto) policy before the opening of the ports, to manage Ulleungdo concurrently.

Although the government's enthusiasm for the Ulleungdo resettlement project had waned, migration from the archipelago region of the southern coast continued steadily among the common people.

When the moderate faction of the Enlightenment Party (Ongeon Gaehwapa) came to power in 1894, they abolished the Ulleungdo “Search and Subjugate” (suto) policy in December and once again appointed a full-time Island Chief (Dojang). Then, in August 1895, the title of Dojang was changed to Dogam (Island Superintendent), elevating the position to the rank of Panningwan (a low-ranking government-appointed official), and Bae Gye-ju was appointed as the first Dogam.

After Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), incidents of Japanese people once again illegally entering Ulleungdo to openly log timber and ship it to Japan increased rapidly from the second half of 1895.

After taking a picture in front of the 1882 Stone Inscription, I turned back, retraced my steps back up, and took a bus. As we came almost completely over the pass, Albawi (Egg Rock) came into view directly ahead. When the volcano erupted, it is presumed that the composition of the Albawi rock was so strong that only it remained while the surrounding area all weathered away. Passing by Albawi, I imagined that if this rock had been on the mainland, it would have become an object of prayer for shamans seeking to receive gi (chi, spiritual energy).

In front of Albawi, if you do not go toward the public stadium but go to the right instead, you will come to Seodalli. There is currently a ready-mix concrete plant at the entrance.



Albawi (Egg Rock)
photographed on October 2, 2023

The Legend of Mireuk Mountain

A small mountain behind the factory is Chobong, and behind it is called Mireuk Mountain.

One day, an old man who lived at the foot of this Mireuk Mountain was weeding a field. That particular day, it was so cloudy he could hardly see a step in front of him. The old man felt a strange sense of dread. From somewhere, he heard the sound of traditional music (pung'ak): “Kkung-jjajajak, kkung-jjajajak.”

Thinking, “How strange,” he lifted his head, and what should be standing right in front of him but a beast several times larger than a bull, which resembled a bull but was not one, with feet as large as cauldron lids.

The old man dropped his hoe (homi) and ran for his life down to his house. As he ran, the old man muttered to himself:

Oh, Lord Mireuk, oh, Lord Mireuk, please, I beg you, save me
If you, Lord Mireuk, watch over this pitiful life
I shall be safe this day. I pray to you, Lord Mireuk,
I pray to you, Lord Mireuk.

From that moment, the old man fell ill and was bedridden for several days. When he finally recovered enough to go up to the field, the beast was nowhere to be seen, and only his hoe lay in a furrow.

Because the old man had prayed to ‘Lord Mireuk’ and remained unharmed, the mountain came to be called ‘Mireuk Mountain’.

After taking a picture of Albawi (Egg Rock) and passing the Public Stadium, the Taeha Three-way Intersection appears a short distance ahead.



Public Stadium
photographed on October 2, 2023



Taeha Three-way Intersection
photographed on October 2, 2023

About 100 meters from the Taeha Three-way Intersection in the direction of Taeha, an information sign for the Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription becomes visible.



Information Board for the Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription in Taeha-ri, Ulleungdo photographed on October 2, 2023



Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription photographed on October 2, 2023

If you follow the path indicated by the sign, you will come to a pavilion roof; beneath it, on a slanted rock, Chinese characters are densely engraved.

This rock inscription was carved by Jo Jong-seong, the Magistrate of Pyeonghae County, when he came to Ulleungdo as a Search and Subjugation Commissioner (Sutogwan). It is called the Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription because it was carved in the 19th year of the reign of the Qing dynasty Emperor Guangxu, i.e., 1893. It is the best-preserved of all the Sutosa rock inscriptions on Ulleungdo.

If you continue walking toward the village after taking pictures here, you will pass a wall densely lined with pine trees. This is the location of the Seongha Shrine.

Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription

Designated as Cultural Heritage Item No. 411.

This inscription records the relief efforts of individuals such as Jo Jong-seong, who served as the Ulleungdo Sutogwan (Search and Subjugation Official) in 1893; the former Inspector (Geomchalsa) Lee Gyu-won; and the Chief State Councilor (Yeonguijeong) Shim Sun-taek. They provided aid to the residents who had migrated to Ulleungdo and were suffering from starvation and disease.

Currently, the rock inscriptions remaining on Ulleungdo include the Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription, the Imo-year (1883) Rock Inscription, and the Sinmyo-year (1891) Rock Inscription. All of these were created following visits by a Sutogwan or an In-

spector (Geomchalsa).

The Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription is particularly important as a record that offers a glimpse into the shift away from the Joseon government's suto (Search and Subjugation) policy, which had sought to maintain the island depopulated, and had remained its basic stance since 1417 (the 17th year of King Taejong's reign). These inscriptions are crucial resources for understanding the transition toward an active settlement policy.

Furthermore, unlike the other two inscriptions, the Gwangseomyeong Rock Inscription is distinguished by the fact that it was not carved directly by the Sutogwan. Instead, it was carved by the residents of Ulleungdo to express their gratitude for the relief provided by the central government when they fell into dire circumstances due to famine and other hardships during the migration process.

No precise historical records have been passed down regarding the specific measures Chief State Councilor Shim Sun-taek implemented for the residents of Ulleungdo. However, a report submitted to King Gojong in the following year (1894) on the results of relief efforts for the people of the southeast of the country (Yeongnam) suggests that relief for Ulleungdo and the wider southeast region was carried out under Shim Sun-taek's leadership.

The record of Seo Gyeong-su and Son Ju-hyeong, which appears to have been written in 1890, is mentioned only in this inscription and does not appear elsewhere.



Seongha Shrine
photographed on October 2, 2023

The Legend of Seongha Shrine

During the reign of King Taejong of Joseon, Kim In-u of Samcheok was appointed Pacification Commissioner (Anmusa) for Ulleungdo and ordered to enforce the withdrawal (swaehwan) policy, which involved repatriating the island's residents to the mainland. Leading two military vessels, he broke through the rough seas and arrived here in Taeha, which he established as his base. After completing a patrol of the entire island, he drew a map of its terrain. As he slept that night, intending to set sail and return to his post the next day, he had a strange dream.

A sea god appeared to him in the dream and said that he must

leave two people from his party, a young boy and a young girl (dongnam dongnyeo), on the island. The Anmusa found this puzzling but did not give it much importance. While waiting for dawn, an unexpected storm arose, making it impossible to depart. He halted the departure and waited for the storm to subside, but the wind showed no sign of stopping and only grew more intense. After waiting for several days, the Anmusa suddenly remembered his dream. On the off chance that it was significant, he gathered his retinue and ordered the young boy and girl to return to where the party had stayed and retrieve the writing materials he claimed to have forgotten.

Without any suspicion, the two hurried off and disappeared into the dense forest. As they did, the fierce storm vanished as if by magic, and a wind suitable for sailing began to blow. The Anmusa hurriedly ordered his party to depart, and the boats, catching the favorable wind, left the harbor at once.

Meanwhile, the two, unaware they had been deceived, searched for the writing materials. Unable to find them, they returned to the shore, only to see that the boats were already sailing far out at sea. Who can imagine the feelings of the young boy and girl, who could not understand what had happened? They stamped their feet and shouted, but the boats soon disappeared beyond the horizon. Weeping in sorrow as they realized they had been abandoned, the two had no choice but to return to their original lodging place. As the days passed, they suffered from fear, cold, and hunger, and eventually died.

Meanwhile, the Anmusa returned safely to the royal court and reported on the situation in Ulleungdo. Yet, a sense of pity and guilt towards the two whom he had left behind remained in a corner of his heart. Several years later, he was once again ordered to serve as the Anmusa for Ulleungdo. Upon arriving on the island, he searched all over Taeha with a glimmer of hope.

There, in the very spot where they had stayed before, he finally discovered their whitened skeletons, locked in an embrace.

Seeing this, the Anmusa was filled with remorse, but there was nothing to be done. To appease and mourn their lonely spirits, he built a small shrine (sadang) on that spot, performed a memorial rite for them, and then returned.

Since then, a regular service has been held at this shrine every year on February 28 (lunar calendar). People pray for abundant harvests and bountiful fishing as well as for safety during dangerous work at sea. Whenever a new boat is built, a ritual is invariably held at the Seongha Shrine in Taeha to pray for safe passage at sea and prosperity in fishing.

Leaving Seongha Shrine and entering the harbor, the monorail station is visible on the right. Taking the monorail up leads to the Taeha Observatory, where one can enjoy scenery considered among the finest in the world.

Along the way is a pair of legendary yeonriji (conjoined trees). According to a sad legend, two trees that grieved for the young boy and girl who died in an embrace merged into one.



Monorail Station
 photographed on October 2, 2023



Taeha Observatory and Lighthouse
 Source: www.kbmaeil.com

The Legend of the Taeha Pass Beech Tree

Even today, on the way up Taeha Pass (Taeharyeong), there is a grove of Ulleungdo beech trees, a type of beech known colloquially as Neodobamnamu. The grove has been designated Natural Monument No. 50 and this is a story about it.

One day, a mountain spirit (sansillyeong) came and said to the local villagers, “Plant one hundred chestnut trees (bamnamu) on this mountain.”

The villagers did as the mountain spirit commanded and planted all one hundred chestnut trees in a single day. As soon as they were planted, the trees sprouted, and their leaves grew well.

One day, the mountain spirit visited again.

“Did you plant the one hundred chestnut trees?”

“Yes, we planted one hundred trees.”

“Are you certain?”

“Yes, we are certain.”

“Then let’s count them together.”

“One, two, three, four...”

One tree was missing.

“One, two, three, four...”

They counted again, and still, one tree was missing.

The mountain spirit became angry.

“You rascals, how dare you deceive me?”

“No, sir. We truly planted one hundred trees. This is very strange.”

“Did you really plant one hundred?”

“Yes.”

“Then let's count once more. Be warned, if one tree is still missing this time, I will punish you.”

“Yes, we will accept our punishment.”

“One, two, three, four, five...”

The villagers trembled like aspen leaves.

No matter how many times they counted, there were only 99 trees.

As the villagers grew frightened, the pine trees, Korean white pines, chestnut trees, and camellia trees all became worried with them.

“Ninety-six, ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine....”

Indeed, there were only ninety-nine chestnut trees.

They had planted one hundred, but it seemed one had withered and died in the meantime.

Then, unexpectedly, a tiny tree nearby shouted, “Me too, I am a chestnut tree!”

The mountain spirit asked, “You too are a chestnut tree?” (Neodo bamnamu, which means, “You-too-are-a-chestnut-tree?” in Korean), and the tree answered, “Yes.”

From that day on, the tree became known as ‘Neodobamnamu’.

After riding the monorail up and walking a short distance, I found the legendary conjoined trees (yeonriji) on the right side of the path. Normally, conjoined trees form when trees of the same species become entangled, but these were of two different species (a painted maple



Conjoined Trees (Yeonriji)
photographed on October 2, 2023



Entangled Roots
photographed on October 2, 2023

and a camellia tree). The trunk of the camellia tree even penetrates through the trunk of the painted maple. Am I the only one whose heart aches at the love of the painted maple, which embraces the camellia tree despite the pain of piercing its flesh and bone? The legend of the abandoned boy and girl must have been attached by later generations, but I thought it was a very fitting one.

As I continued along the path, the countless trees with their exposed, intertwined roots reminded me of the Korean people, firmly united in overcoming harsh tribulations.



Coastline Viewed From Taeha Observatory
photographed on October 2, 2023

From the Taeha Observatory, you can see the spectacular coastal scenery of northwestern Ulleungdo in a single view. I could not take my eyes off Chu Mountain (Chusan) in distance; the elephant-shaped rock before it dipping its trunk into the sea to drink; the rock behind that resembling the elephant's droppings; Noinbawi (Old Man Rock) and more.

Turning my gaze to the left, I saw Daepunggam, where sheer cliffs create a natural shelter from the wind. This is where the Search and Subjugation Officials (Sutogwan) of the Joseon Dynasty would moor their ships while waiting for the easterly wind that would carry them back to the mainland after completing their duties on Ulleungdo. It is said that an iron stake used for mooring ships was recently discovered at the base of the cliff, confirming the historical records of that time.

When I turned from the Observatory railing to head back, a white lighthouse came into view. This lighthouse was rebuilt by Korea after liberation from Japanese occupation, on the site of one originally built by the Japanese military in 1904 during the Russo-Japanese War, to spot Russia's Vladivostok Fleet. At the time, the Japanese built watchtowers in three locations—here in Taeha, at Seokpo in Bukmyeon (North District), and on Manghyangbong (peak) in Dodong. They also planned to build one on Dokdo, but construction was delayed due to harsh winter weather. It was only hastily completed in 1905, after the decisive naval battle with Russia's Baltic Fleet. Looking at the lighthouse, am I the only one who feels not just its beauty, but also the pain of Japanese colonial aggression?

The name of the pass below the lighthouse is Daepungnyeong (Pass

Daepunggam
photographed on October 2, 2023



for Waiting Wind). It is a pass one must cross to reach Daepunggam to take a boat to the mainland. This pass contains not only small holes but also a large cave. It is said that this cave was once connected to the mainland, and great thieves used it to steal many treasures. The story goes that a sage (dojin, or Daoist hermit), unable to stand by and watch, used magic to block up the cave.

After taking the monorail back down, a 30 meter walk along the coast behind the ticket office leads to Hwangtogumi (Ocher Cave). It was so named because ocher (hwangto), a rare commodity on the volcanic island of Ulleungdo, is found here.

During the Joseon Dynasty, the Search and Subjugation Officials (Sutogwan) were required to bring ocher, yellow bamboo (hwangjuk), and fragrant juniper from here to present to the royal court as proof that they had visited Ulleungdo.



Hwangtogumi (Ocher Cave)
photographed on October 2, 2023

The Legend of Hwangtogumi

A magistrate (Satto) of Samcheok once went out for a boating party with his official female entertainers (gwangi) when they were caught in a sudden squall and drifted ashore on Ulleungdo. At that time, no one lived on the island.

With no food provisions, they all began to suffer from starvation. They wandered here and there in search of something to eat, but there was nothing.

While everyone was weak with hunger, one of them discovered the ocher. Thinking, “Even this earth will have to do,” he put a little in his mouth to chew and found it was perfectly edible.

And so, everyone survived by eating this earth. The story goes that because the taste was different for each person who tried it, the place came to be called Hwangtogumi which can be interpreted as “Ocher of Nine Tastes”.

Climbing the deck stairs in front of Hwangtogumi allows for a close-up view of the coastal cliffs, where one can see rare formations, such as pits that look as if they were gouged by raindrops as the lava hardened. Around the corner lies Gajaegul (Sea Lion Cave), where investigations have reportedly found traces of a past sea lion (gangchi) colony.

The Legend of the Stone Book on the Stone Desk in the Stone Cave

On the Taeha coast, there is a stone cave. It is also called Gajae-gul, because traces have been found of the sea lions (in the local

dialect, gajae) that once lived there. The entrance is wide, but inside, the passage reportedly narrows so that only one person can pass through. The cave is said to be about 10 ri (approximately 4km) long, and its end opens into a wide chamber.

Long ago in Taeha village, there lived an exceptionally talented young man. He was so brilliant that it was said if he heard one point explained, he immediately understood ten. Many people praised him, calling him a genius, a child prodigy, or supernatural. Yet because he studied so much, he also seemed a bit eccentric.

Whether awake or asleep, sitting or standing, the young man only ever looked at books. Consequently, he was completely ignorant of worldly affairs. He did not know how to catch a single squid or tie a bundle of seaweed, let alone row a boat or raise a sail.

One day, the young man, exhausted from his studies, fell into a nap. As he slept soundly, a dignified old man with a pure white beard appeared and woke him.

“Young man.”

“Yes.”

“This is not a time for sleeping.”

“Sir?”

“Get up and do as I say.”

“Yes, I will do as you say.”

“You know of the cave by the seashore, do you not?”

“The stone cave?”

“Yes.”

“Go inside it.”

“Sir?”

“You will understand once you go in.”

“Is it not dangerous?”

“There is nothing to be afraid of.”

“What should I do once I am inside?”

“If you go in about 10 ri, there will be a large room.”

“Yes.”

“In that room is a stone desk, and on that desk is a stone chest.”

“Yes.”

“If you open that stone chest, you will find a stone book inside.”

“In that stone book, it is written in detail what will happen in this world-where and how-for the next tens of thousands of years.”

“Yes.”

“I am telling you where this stone book is because you love books so much. Go there now and read it.”

“Yes.”

“However, you must finish reading the book before you can come out. If you do not finish reading it, you cannot leave.”

“Yes, I understand.”

“Go and do not tarry.”

The old man who had been standing before him vanished without a trace. He disappeared into thin air. It was a strange and wondrous experience and the young man felt certain that the visitor had been a divine spirit (sillyeongnim).

The young man was filled with a new energy. Having read every

book on the island, he was growing bored for lack of anything new to study. Nothing could be more welcome than the news of such a precious book. Thinking that if he could just understand this book—a rare book, the only one of its kind in the world, one that foretold all the great and small events of the world for the next tens of thousands of years—he would truly become a person of extraordinary ability (iin), the young man entered the cave.

Just as the old man had said, the cave was barely wide enough for one person to pass through. As he went further, the path became less treacherous, and he was able to proceed inward. After what seemed like two or three hours of walking, he found a wide room where, just as the old man had said, stood a stone desk, and on it, a stone chest.

The young man’s hands trembled. His heart pounded. He took several deep breaths, gathered his resolve, and placed his hands on the stone chest. The stone chest emitted a mystical ‘jjiing’ sound. To the young man, that sound was like a divine revelation, and his heart swelled with the joy, knowing that he alone could hear this sound.

Sure enough, inside was a thick book with characters carved in stone.

“A mysterious book that only I in this world can see! Now I can foretell the future. Now I reap the rewards of my studies!”

Lost in such thoughts, he was beside himself with excitement. He began to read, treasuring each and every character.

Even the most beautiful flower finds it hard to stay in bloom for

ten days, and power is like a water bubble, so in the future...

It was written in detail how a succession of truly unpredictable events would occur. The young man was completely captivated. He turned the page, and the contents only became even more fascinating. The young man was spell-bound. He turned the page again, only to find still more intriguing revelations. Like a book of magic, no matter how many pages he turned, the number of pages left seemed to remain the same.

As much as the young man loved books, he had been in the cave for a very long time. Deciding that he could not read the entire book, he tried to take it with him and leave, but his feet would not move. Exhausted, he finally fell asleep.

“You can only leave once you have read the entire book.”

The white-bearded old man appeared again in a dream. The young man awoke and resumed reading the book.

The young man is likely still reading that book. People know that he went in to read the stone book, but no one knows whether he has come out, or when he might. To this day, no one has dared even to think of entering that cave.

If he ever emerges after reading the entire book, he will certainly be a person of extraordinary ability (iin), but the task of finishing it must be as difficult as plucking a star from the sky. Furthermore, he cannot bring the book out with him.

What on earth could be written in the stone book, inside the stone chest, on the stone desk, in the stone cave? And what will become of the world? We can only wait for the young man to emerge.



Seaside Rocks at Taeha
photographed on October 2, 2023

Coming back from Gajaegul and crossing Taeha Stream again, one can see a large wooden warship on the left, with the Suto Commemorative Hall behind it. Upon entering the ship, said to be the type used by the Search and Subjugation Officials (Sutogwan), one can see figures of sailors rowing.

I went down one level to look at the armory and cabins on the lower deck, and it occurred to me how arduous the journey must have been back then, lasting three to four days by sea on a ship like this, when I had suffered from seasickness during the mere three-hour trip on a high-speed ferry. And three or four days was the best-case scenario. There were even instances where crews were presumed by the royal court and their families to have all died after drifting to Japan in



Suto (Search and Subjugation) Ship, Suto Commemorative Hall
 photographed on October 2, 2023



Lee Gyu-won Memorial Stone
 (photographed on October 2, 2023)

storms, only to be repatriated later via Tsushima.

After leaving the ship and entering the commemorative hall, a guide kindly directed me. “Please take the elevator to the third floor and view the exhibits while walking down.” The exhibits are displayed along a ramp, making for comfortable viewing even for tired visitors.

The recreated Imo-year (1883) and Gwangseo-era Stone Inscriptions exhibited at the entrance serve as excellent resources for students of history, accessible even to those who cannot visit the artifacts at their original sites.

At first, I did not notice the two stone monuments in front of the displayed Suto ship, but I had a chance to look at them after touring the hall, while waiting for the bus.

One is the gravestone of Royal Inspector Lee Gyu-won, moved from his tomb and installed here in 2023 to honor his memory. The other is a memorial monument (wiryeongbi) to console the spirits of those who lost their lives in storms while performing Search and Subjugation (suto) patrols to Ulleungdo after his time.

Aside from the Naribunji Basin, Pyeongri is the only other flat area on Ulleungdo, but Pyeongri was not suitable as an administrative center because it lacked a flowing source of fresh water. During his inspection, Lee Gyu-won judged Taeha to be more suitable than Pyeongri. He recommended to King Gojong that if an administrative center were to be established, Taeha would be the most suitable site. As a result, Imperial Ordinance No. 41 in 1900 designated Taeha as the seat of the county office.

Taking the bus bound for Hyeonpo and Cheonbu again, you pass

through the Sammak Tunnel and cross a pass to arrive at Hyeonpo. Sammak Tunnel gets its name from the fact that there were once ginseng (sam) huts (mak)—lodgings used by wild ginseng foragers.

Since ancient times, Ulleungdo was famous for its wild ginseng, so it seems that for hundreds of years before the Resettlement Decree was issued, many people illegally entered the island to gather it. There are also records of wild ginseng being gathered and presented to the royal court as tribute (jinsang). It is likely that for generations, the Royal Inspectors (Geomchalsa) of Ulleungdo, during their inspections, would purchase wild ginseng from the gatherers at low prices or forcibly confiscate it to present as tribute and to use for their own personal advancement. For this, they were sometimes promoted and sometimes dismissed.

In October 1769 (the 45th year of King Yeongjo's reign), ginseng merchants were said to have secretly entered Ulleungdo. As a result of this incident, Samcheok Magistrate Seo No-su was imprisoned, and Governor Hong Myeong-han was dismissed from his post in December of that year.

In recent years, perhaps because the number of plants has dwindled, wild ginseng has become difficult to find. There have been cases where people secretly plant cultivated ginseng seeds in the mountains over several years and sell them as wild ginseng at a high price, and other cases where such deceptions were exposed. It is true that wild ginseng was once abundant, however.

Midway between present-day Hakpo and Hyeonpo is a valley called Sammak-gok, and the area is still called Sammak. In those days, the

illegal ginseng gatherers would set up a hut (mak) in this Sammak valley, purify themselves through bathing, offer pollack and other items in a ritual to the mountain spirit (sansinje), and then begin their search. They would spend a night in this hut, and it is said that if they had a prophetic dream about finding ginseng, they would invariably find some.

Although their main purpose was to gather ginseng, Ulleungdo had an abundance of various native medicinal herbs (such as siho, useul, maekmundong, jeonho, and dokwhal), which they gathered at the same time. It is said that upon finding wild ginseng, one must shout “Sim bwatda!” (“I’ve found ginseng!”) three times loudly to ensure the ginseng’s potency and to prevent it from running away.

There are numerous stories related to wild ginseng; here are a few examples.

During the reign of King Sukjong, a man named Jeong, from Gyeongju, secretly entered Ulleungdo to search for wild ginseng. At a forager’s hut (sammak), he set out the ritual offerings he had brought and prayed with all his heart before heading into the mountains. He wandered the mountain valleys for days on end but could not find even a single trace of a ginseng plant. His food ran out, and, exhausted, he had no choice but to return.

After returning to Gyeongju, Mr. Jeong again secretly entered the island the following year to search for ginseng, but his efforts were in vain. He did this for several years until he had squandered his family’s fortune, and his family was reduced to begging and wandering, facing extreme hardship. With what little he had left,

he gathered his resources and entered Ulleungdo for one last attempt. As it was a matter of life and death, he prayed with even greater devotion than before and set out to find ginseng, but again, to no avail. He contemplated taking his own life several times.

Just then, Jang Han-sang, the Military Commander (cheomsa) of Samcheok, arrived on Ulleungdo under orders to serve as the island's Inspector (geomchalsa). Hearing of this, Jeong thought, 'Aha, I have an idea,' and went before the inspector to plead his case.

"My lord Inspector, please grant me just one wild ginseng plant."

Surprised by these words, the inspector asked,

"What are you talking about?"

"Sir, please listen to my story and help me," Jeong said, and proceeded to recount his tale from beginning to end.

To this, the inspector replied,

"You have asked me to grant you a wild ginseng plant, but how can I possibly do that?"

Jeong then implored him,

"Even a mountain spirit would not dare to defy the order of a Royal Inspector, would they? Please, just write me a single order commanding the spirit to give me one root of wild ginseng."

Although the Inspector thought it was absurd, he also considered the man's desperation and wrote out a command half in jest.

"I, Jang Han-sang, Commander of Samcheok and Inspector of Ulleungdo, hereby command the mountain spirit of Ulleungdo: If you do not give one root of wild ginseng to this man, Jeong from Gyeongju, you must quickly leave this mountain and go to another."

As soon as the Inspector gave him the letter ordering the Ulleungdo mountain spirit, Jeong bowed profusely in gratitude. Returning to his hut, he carefully hung the inspector's order on the wall and then prayed with the utmost sincerity.

That night, a female spirit (the mountain spirit of Seonginbong Peak is said to be female) appeared in his dream with a flustered look.

“Mr. Jeong. I am truly sorry that I was unable to give you even one root of wild ginseng. I will now give you one. If you go to a certain mountain, a certain valley, and look under a certain tree, you will find one ginseng plant. Dig it up and sell it to a certain man who lives near the South Gate (Namdaemun) in Hanyang (Seoul). It will sell for a high price, enough for you to live on for the rest of your life. And after you have gathered the ginseng, you must immediately go to the Inspector and ask him to withdraw his order. Every mountain has its guardian spirit, and if I am forced to leave this mountain, what other mountain could I possibly take refuge in?”

When Jeong awoke, he realized it was a dream. Thinking it was a wondrous thing, he went to the place the mountain spirit had directed him and there dug up a thick root of wild ginseng. After having the inspector withdraw the order, he sold the ginseng and became a wealthy man.

The second story is about a man named Im, from Namyang-ri, Ulleung County.

One day, as Im was taking a nap, an old man with white hair appeared and told him that a wild ginseng plant was located in a certain valley under an old tree, and that he should go and gather it.

Not quite sure whether to believe it, Im went to the place the old man in his dream had described, and sure enough, there was a wild ginseng plant that looked to be at least several hundred years old. Overjoyed, Im carefully dug it up and returned home, but he was suddenly overcome with greed. He thought that if he presented it to someone in a high position, he could receive a government post. He packaged it carefully and went to Seoul.

In Seoul, Mr. Im visited the home of Lee Gi-bung, who was then the vice President, the second most powerful man in the country. Explaining that he had dug up a wild ginseng plant several hundred years old on Ulleungdo and come to present it to the Vice President, Im was allowed into the house.

After Im showed the Vice President the ginseng, he was told to wait at a hotel until further notice. While Im waited at the hotel for a month, a group of experts was assembled to determine whether the ginseng was real or fake.

Once it was judged to be genuine, Im was asked what it was that he wished for. He said his wish was to become the governor of Ulleungdo County, and he was told to go back and wait.

However, the year was 1960, and less than a month after Im returned to Ulleungdo, the April 19 Revolution erupted, and the Liberal Party fell from power. In the end, Im's wish came to nothing.

Based on artifacts and historical sites, Hyeonpo is presumed to have been the capital of the Kingdom of Usan. According to one story, when early settlers arrived by boat, they saw the coastline stretching from Daepunggam to Noinbong (Peak) appearing dark and distant, calling it “Geomunjakji” (roughly, “black bay”). This name was later rendered in Sino-Korean as Hyeonpo. Another story holds that the name may have come from the seawater, which looked so deeply blue that it appeared black.

According to the *Haedong jido* (Map of East of the Sea), produced in the 18th century, it is recorded that the Hyeonpo area had a temple site with a pagoda and over 20 stone-chambered tombs (seokjang gobun). *The Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* (Augmented Survey of the Geography of the Eastern Country) states that Hyeonpo had seven village sites, stone artifacts, and stone pagodas. Due to the abundance of artifacts and historical sites such as fortress sites (seongji), shell mounds (naseonjang), and menhirs (seondol), it is presumed to have been the capital of the ancient state of Usan.

It is regrettable that the Hyeonpo Tumuli Cluster is so poorly managed and signposted that one might easily miss it.

Hyeonpo Port was recently developed into a marine recreation park.

When you get out of your car at the Hyeonpo Observatory, the view of Noinbong (Peak) and Hyeonpo Port across the way, along with the wide-open horizon, is as beautiful as a painting. The Hyeonpo-dong Tumuli Cluster is located on the slope below this observatory. Noinbong (literally “Old Man Peak”) was so named because its forward-stooping shape resembles an old man with a hunched back.



Hyeonpo Waterpark
photographed on October 2, 2023

There were once about 40 ancient tombs (gobun) in Hyeonpo, believed to have been built during the Three Kingdoms period (5th-7th centuries), but they have been severely damaged due to long-term neglect. The tomb style is similar to that of the Namseo Tumuli Cluster.

If you become hungry while sightseeing in Hyeonpo, you can eat jjajangmyeon (noodle in black bean sauce) at Hyeonpo Gyodong Banjeom (☎ 054-791-2978). It is a well-known restaurant on Ulleungdo, so popular that people will even drive from Dodong just to eat there. It has few tables and no service staff, however, so everything is self-service—from collecting your food to returning your empty dishes. You can see several trays for carrying food stacked on the wall.

After lunch, when you come outside, you can see an elephant in the sea, drinking water. It is unmistakably Elephant Rock, not only because



Elephant Rock

Source: Shutterstock

it appears to be dipping its trunk into the water, but also because its clearly defined ears and skin textured like columnar joints. Another name for the rock is Gonggam (Hole Rock) because there is a hole (10 meters wide) under its ‘trunk’ large enough for a boat to pass through. You can take a great picture of Elephant Rock from the direction of Hyeonpo Waterpark.

After taking a picture of Elephant Rock and walking a short distance along the road, a wonderful hanok (traditional Korean house) with a sign reading “Chusan Sunset Glow Pension” (추산 노을 빛 펜션, ☎ 010-6283-6109) comes into view on the right. If you want to see the sunset on Ulleungdo, I highly recommend staying here. One somewhat inconvenient point to note, however, is that the cooking facilities are communal.



Chusan Sunset Glow Pension
photographed on October 2, 2023

After passing below Noinbong Peak and walking a short distance, a sign for Yerimwon comes into view. Yerimwon is a botanical garden created by transplanting Ulleungdo's native plants. Its founder, Park Gyeong-won, dedicated his entire life to cultivating the place, mobilizing all his skills in sculpture, calligraphy, and landscape architecture. The calligraphy on the sign in the photo is also said to have been Park's own work.

The entrance to Yerimwon has been made into a cave, as shown in the photo. Passing through this cave, the otherworldly landscape of Yerimwon unfolds before you. I wonder when that fisherman will ever catch a fish. It seemed one could spend the entire day exploring every nook and cranny without getting bored, but due to lack of time, I



Sign for Yerimwon
photographed on October 3, 2023



Entrance to Yerimwon
photographed on October 2, 2023



Statue of A Woman Made From Unusual Wood
photographed on October 2, 2023



Fisherman Sculpture
photographed on October 2, 2023

reluctantly left Yerimwon. After a short walk, an information sign for Ulleung Paradise came into view.

Following the arrow and walking in from the coast for about 300 meters brings you to Ulleung Paradise. Ulleung Paradise is a building constructed by Ulleung County. Originally, the singer Lee Jang-hui had purchased the land to develop it himself, but when this proved difficult due to various circumstances, the building was constructed by the county on the condition that he donate the land.

There is a performance stage on the first floor, while the second and third floors exhibit photos and albums from Lee Jang-hui's career. You can also have coffee or tea on the third floor. In the garden outside



Information Sign For Ulleung Paradise and Stay Neowa
photographed on October 2, 2023

the building, there is an outdoor performance venue, as well as stone engravings with the signatures of singers such as Yun Hyeong-ju, Jo Yeong-nam, Song Chang-sik, and Jeon Yeong-rok, who made their careers around the same time as Lee Jang-hui.

As an aside, the name Ulleung Paradise (Ulleung Cheon'guk) is said to have been chosen playfully, in reference to a church situated immediately below. I smiled to myself at the idea, thinking it was indeed characteristic of Lee Jang-hui. On the charming rocks next to the Ulleung Paradise marker stone, the signatures of various singers who were active at the same time are engraved.

Leaving Ulleung Paradise, instead of heading toward the ring road, turn left and walk a short distance to find a guesthouse called 'Stay



Ulleung Paradise
photographed on October 2, 2023



Ulleung Paradise Marker Stone
photographed on October 2, 2023



Statue of Lee Jang-hui
photographed on October 2, 2023

Neowa (☎ 0507-1383-8448). It is a wonderful place for newlyweds to plan their future while looking out at the sea.

After enjoying a coffee at Ulleung Paradise, I left and continued along the road. On the hill to the right, a building resembling an opera house came into view (Healing Stay KOSMOS ☎ 054-791-7788). It is a resort that the Kolon Group promoted as a key project to place it on a global list of bucket-list accommodations. It gives one a sense of pride that Ulleungdo has such luxurious lodgings. As of 2023, a two-night stay for four people cost 30 million won (more than US \$20,000), but reportedly, those who have stayed there once never feel that it is expensive. It offers top-tier services-helicopter transfer, limousine rides, luxury cruise suites, and private chef experiences-all corresponding to the price. Even though today I only had tea at the coffee shop and left after taking pictures with the magnificent building in the background, I could not help but think that I must spend a night in this house before I die –a thought I was probably not the only visitor to have.



Stay Neowa

Source: Stay Neowa website



KOSMOS Resort

Source: www.kbmaeil.com

The rear view of Chusan, which looked so impressive from the Taeha Observatory, can be seen in great detail from here at Kosmos. Chu Mountain (Chusan) is a peak extending from Seonginbong Peak; its name is the Sino-Korean version of Songgotbong (Awl Peak), so called because of its sharp, awl-like shape. The 430-meter-high peak is less than 100 meters from the seaside, making it look even more magnificent and sharp.

On the rear ridge of Chu Mountain, several rocks are perched like the japsang (decorative bronze figures) found on the roofs of Gyeongbokgung Palace or Namdaemun Gate in Seoul. One of these is said to be the motif for Ulla, the Ulleungdo Gorilla mascot, and it is quite fun to try and find it using the mounted telescope.

Below these japsang rocks, several natural holes are clearly visible. I



Rear View of Chu Mountain
photographed on October 2, 2023

imagine that, like Tianmen Cave in Zhangjiajie of China, an otherworldly landscape might lie beyond these holes. But then I think to myself, ‘No, the entirety of Ulleungdo is an otherworldly landscape—why would it only be behind a hole?’ and tear myself away.

According to legend, the Creator made these holes to save the residents of Ulleungdo when, at the End of Days, it will rain endlessly for many days, destroying humanity and flood the Earth. A hook will be lowered from the heavens and catch on the natural holes along Chu Mountain’s rear ridge, preventing the island from being submerged. I can’t help but wonder whether I will live long enough to witness it.

Coming back down from KOSMOS to the coastal road and walking



Hydroelectric Power Plant
photographed on October 2, 2023

for a while, a detached, slab-style building comes into view on the right. This is where hydroelectric power is generated using water flowing down from the spring on Chu Mountain. From the outside, it doesn't look like a power plant at all.

The amount of water gushing from the spring is said to be about 220 liters per second, with a water temperature of around 7 °C year-round. Ulleung County uses some of this water to generate 1,400 kwh of electricity, while the remaining water is used for the island's entire water supply and is also sold as bottled natural mineral water under the trademark "Ullimsu." According to water quality tests, its composition is said to be even better than that of Evian from France.

Passing the hydroelectric plant and going a little further, you reach the Cheonbu Underwater Observatory. The underwater observatory allows you to see the underwater world from a point 5 meters below



Underwater Observatory
photographed on October 2, 2023

the surface. The sight of various fish swimming and darting about makes you feel as if you are inside an aquarium.

Next to the underwater observatory, there is a modern artificial seawater swimming pool. Like the Namyang Seawater Pool, it is suitable for children to play in. In particular, there is a café with a good view of the pool, so adults can watch the swimming children while enjoying a cup of tea.

I thought that with a little more effort, I could go up to Naribunji Basin and come back down, but feeling tired, I decided to visit there the next day and took a bus back toward Namyang-ri.

Day 3 of the Trip



Perhaps it was because the water was so pure, or because the air was so fresh, or maybe because I had slept in a hwangtobang (a traditional yellow-clay room), I woke up refreshed. After grabbing a simple breakfast of cereal at my lodging, I took a bus from Namyang straight to Cheonbu.

Stepping off the bus, I saw a seawater swimming pool was right in front of me. Since the swimming season had already passed, the pool had been drained of water. I thought to myself that next time it would be nice to bring my grandchildren here for a day to play in the seawater pool. For now, I decided to catch the bus bound for Naribunji Basin.

There is actually a way to hike up to Naribunji Basin as well. One can climb Seonginbong Peak (984 m) from either the Dodong KBS relay station or in front of the Ulleung Medical Center and then



Cheonbu Seawater Pool
photographed on October 3, 2023

descend toward Naribunji Basin before heading back down again. But since either route requires a full day for the round trip, I chose the bus instead.

Of course, one can also walk up the road from Cheonbu itself, but because of the heavy traffic of large vehicles and the fact that it's an endless uphill climb, it is a tiring, tedious, and rather unsafe route; taking the bus is much more convenient.

On the way up by bus, one passes through a village called Boncheonbu. Cheonbu, the seaside area where the bus stop is located, was home to many Japanese settlers during the Japanese colonial period, and at that time the place was called Waeseonchang (“Japanese Boat Wharf”). Meanwhile, Korean farmers lived in the mountainside village above, which was traditionally called “Cheonbu.” Later, however, the Japanese living in Waeseonchang began using the name “Cheonbu” themselves. To distinguish their own community, the Koreans began calling their village Boncheonbu (“the original Cheonbu”). Beyond Boncheonbu stands a traditional red gate arch (hongsalmun), and after passing through this, one soon comes to an observation deck with a panoramic view of the entire Naribunji Basin.

Naribunji Basin is a caldera formed when the crater area of Ulleungdo's volcano collapsed after its eruption. It is the island's only flatland, measuring about 1.5 km east to west, 2 km north to south, and covering an area of 1.83 km² (approximately 605,000 pyeong). Inside the basin rises Albong (Egg Peak, 538 m), which was created by a secondary eruption, dividing the area into Nari Village in the northeast and Albong Village in the southwest. In the early years of



Naribunji Basin
photographed on October 3, 2023

settlement, it was the largest community on Ulleungdo, with around 100 households totaling about 500 residents.

Today, Nari Village has several restaurants and teahouses, a church, and a military unit that manages the Seonginbong Peak radar station. For tourism, two types of traditional tumakjip (rustic log cabins) with distinctive roofs are preserved as provincially designated cultural properties: one with shingle roofing (neowa) and another with thatching made of silvergrass (eoksae). The neowajip (shingle house) was considered a wealthy home, as only the well-to-do on Ulleungdo could afford to build one, while the thatched silvergrass cabins were homes of the common folk. Albong Village, by contrast, now has no

residents, with only a single tumakjip preserved for heritage purposes.

In the name neosae-neowa tumakjip, neosae refers to the plank tiles covering the roof ridge (sut-giwa), while neowa refers to the planks layered below them (am-giwa). Both shingle-roofed and thatched-roofed houses were surrounded by an exterior structure called udegi. Perhaps the name came from the fact that it was an additional layer (u, from ui, “on top”) placed around the exterior.

The udegi was an ingenious adaptation by previous generations, providing insulation against the cold in winter, shade in summer, and protection against heavy snowfalls of over one meter, which otherwise might block the doors and trap residents inside.



Neosae-Neowa Tumakjip
photographed on October 3, 2023

Udegi

The udegi is a type of outer wall structure unique to Ulleungdo Island. In addition to providing protection from snow, wind, and rain, and acting as an awning, the Udegi, installed in the traditional homes of Ulleungdo, creates a self-sufficient space that allows inhabitants to live comfortably even when isolated from the outside by heavy snowfall in winter.

It typically surrounds the entire house, following the line of the eaves, though in some cases it was installed only on three sides (excluding the rear) or just at the front.

The materials used included eulalia grass, corn stalks, wooden planks, and galvanized iron sheets. Initially, they were mainly constructed by weaving eulalia grass or corn stalks into thatch (ieong), but around the time of liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, they were replaced with materials such as vinyl clapboard and galvanized iron sheets.

An entrance door was installed in the udegi, aligned with the door of the room inside. Many of the early entrance doors were straw mat doors (geojeongmun) made by weaving eulalia grass into thatch, which could be rolled up and down.

Later, as these were replaced with materials like wooden panel doors, galvanized iron sheets, glass, and sashes, the opening mechanism also changed—in most cases to misegi or midaji doors (types of sliding doors).

These changes in materials and opening mechanisms were intended to address shortcomings related to indoor lighting, ventilation,

and access. Additionally, a noteworthy feature was that a barn was attached to the main building to facilitate feeding livestock fodder in winter, and this barn was also enclosed by the udegi, while the toilet, by contrast, was kept separate.

The name Naribunji Basin is said to be derived from Narigol (Nari Valley), so named because the pioneers who settled there survived by digging up and eating the roots of the Ulleungdo lily (*Lilium hansonii*), known locally as Seommal nari, which grows in the area.

On the road from Naribunji Basin toward Albong Village, and following the wall of a military base, lies Sillyeongsu Spring. On a hot summer day, drinking water from this spring will completely banish the heat, and if you dip your feet in the outdoor foot-washing area (sejokjang), the chill will send shivers up your spine.

Sillyeongsu or The Sacred Spring

“They say when a man’s wife dies, he remarries within three years, don’t they?”

“My dear, don’t say such things. You’ll be well soon.”

“I don’t think I will get well. I don’t have long left.”

“Don’t talk like that. Be strong.”

“I feel I am going to die soon. I worry for you, but I pity poor Buni (daughter’s name) even more.”

“That’s why you must live.”

“Even if you remarry, please take good care of our poor Buni.”

Buni, who was sitting beside her, sniffled and wept, and the hus-

band and wife wept as well.

Having lived in poverty, she had now contracted a grave illness on this lonely island. Helpless, she could find neither medicine nor even learn what disease she had. In truth, she could do no more than wait for death.

“Please ... our poor Buni...”

“Buni...”

With these words, the wife departed for the land from which there is no return.

The husband spent his days overcome with grief, but as a young man, he could not live alone while raising a small daughter.

He remarried. As is often the case between a stepmother and daughter, their relationship was not very good. This only deepened the father’s pity and affection for his daughter.

The months and years passed, and as Buni came of age, she blossomed into a beautiful young maiden.

“We must find a match for Buni.”

“Time to get a son-in-law.”

“Time to marry off your daughter.”

“Let’s settle her with a husband.”

Such words were often on the villagers’ lips.

At last, a suitable match was found, and after the engagement was settled, only a few days remained until the wedding.

But misfortune often comes without warning. The maiden’s father came down with a dreadful disease. The rumor was that it was leprosy. Rumors spread quickly, and it was not long until there

was no person on the whole island who had not heard of it.

When Buni's fiancé's family heard the rumor, they sent word that they would break off the engagement. Though such a thing was understandable, when Buni's father thought of how his daughter could not marry because of him, he felt that living was worse than death.

Buni, for her part, knew her father was heartbroken because of her. Wishing to do anything she could to cure his illness, she gathered good medicinal herbs and decocted them for him to drink.

Then, she built an altar to the Big Dipper stars (Chilseongdan) under a large magnolia tree behind her house and, offering up pure water each day, prayed. She prayed until the stars began to set. She prayed and prayed for her father's swift recovery, stringing together every good and pleading word she knew.

Oh the Big Dipper, Oh the Big Dipper, I pray, I pray,
Let my poor father be swiftly cured of his disease.
I pray, I pray, to the Dragon King, I pray,
Let my poor father be swiftly cured of his disease.
Look down upon us, look down upon us
I pray, I pray, to God in Heaven, I pray,
Let my poor father be swiftly cured of his disease.
Look down upon us, look down upon us.
Mother, oh Mother, if your spirit can hear,
Let my poor father be swiftly cured of his disease.
Look back and watch over us, look back and watch over us.

Oh, people of the village, if you have any compassion,
Go to every corner of the land and find a good medicine for
my father.

Please find it and give it to him.

Thus, she repeated the same lament countless times each day. At night, her clothes would be soaked with dew, and the wax from the burning candle melted into a mound like a steamed rice cake. The villagers steered well away from what they considered a leper's house and no longer came by.

The lonely maiden prayed day and night to the Big Dipper stars, and so it went until the hundredth day—three months and ten days. In truth, however, she had lost track of time and just kept praying and praying.

A fearful feeling came over her. A fog rolled in and the wind rose, extinguishing the candle flame. Something shimmered in the darkness, and an old man appeared.

“How commendable.”

“...”

“Your filial piety is so profound that I will cure your father's illness. Follow me.”

As if possessed by a spirit, the maiden followed the old man. He pushed his way through thorny thickets to the Naribunji Basin, stopping before a spring that gushed from beneath a rock near its center.

“This is a medicinal spring. Have no doubt: If your father washes

his body here for several days, his illness will be cured.” And with that, he vanished.

Buni found this so wondrous that the next day she followed the path the old man had shown her, and indeed, there was a spring gushing from beneath a rock. She gathered nearby branches and built a hut. Then she brought her father to live in the hut and had him wash his body with the spring water.

One day, two days, three... As the days went by, her father’s body recovered. All the while, Buni begged for food, cooked porridge for her father, and had him wash himself. After a couple of months, her father’s body was healed as if newly reborn.

“Her filial piety was so great that Heaven helped her.”

“She is a maiden acknowledged by Heaven and the spirits.”

“The man who marries her will be blessed.”

In the end, Buni’s profound filial piety cured her father’s illness, and the wedding that had been on the verge of being called off took place after all.

It is said that Buni built a fine house on the spot where the hut by the spring had stood, and lived happily, bearing sons and daughters and tending her farm.

After passing Sillyeongsu Spring and going a little further, there is a staircase that leads up to Seonginbong Peak. This staircase is the shortest path to ascend Seonginbong Peak, but its steepness makes it a relatively strenuous course. Therefore, a wide wooden-decked rest area has been created midway.

The Legend of Seonginbong Peak

On Ulleungdo, an island famous for its heavy rainfall, it had not rained for three months. The people were growing anxious, as water had become scarce.

“How strange.”

“This is a place where we used to worry about too much rain...”

“It seems some great calamity is about to happen.”

“We can’t live on Ulleungdo anymore.”

Public sentiment on the island grew increasingly uneasy.

All the elders were greatly worried.

They decided to perform divination to find out why the drought continued.

“Dig at the summit of Seonginbong Peak.”

These were the words of a fortune-teller.

People gathered from all over-bringing hoes, shovels, pickaxes, and the like.

“What could this mean?”

“They say that fortune-teller’s words are remarkably accurate...”

“We’ll know when we see.”

“Maybe a giant serpent will come out.”

“No, maybe some writing will appear.”

They gathered, saying such things, yet no one wanted to be the first to start digging.

“I’ve injured my arm...”

“I have diarrhea and no energy...”

“An older person should dig first...”

“No, the Daoist (dosa) should dig first...”

In the end, the Daoist was the first to dig.

After digging down about the height of a man, steam billowed up.

“Strange.”

“How very strange.”

“Strange, indeed!”

Driven by curiosity, they kept digging deeper.

“Good heavens!”

It was a corpse that had not been buried long.

“So this is why it hasn’t rained.”

They rolled the corpse into a stream.

Just then, rain began to fall, first as a shower, then pouring down in torrents. The people of the island came to believe the fortune-teller was remarkably accurate, and they sought him out for every small concern thereafter.

Not only that, but whenever anything slightly unusual happened on Ulleungdo or when a drought continued, the islanders would dig at the summit of Seonginbong Peak. It is said that usually a coffin or a corpse would be found.

Such incidents are said to have occurred because of the islanders’ belief in pungsu (fengshui, or geomancy)—the idea that Seonginbong Peak is a sacred mountain (myeongsan). They believed that burying their forebears at its summit would bring prosperity to their descendants.

Many of those who begin the climb from the KBS relay station and pass the octagonal pavilion, or who start from Daewonsa Temple behind the Ulleung Medical Center and pass the pavilion to reach Seonginbong Peak, prefer to descend via these stairs rather than going back the way they came, ending the hike with a meal and local traditional liquor at a restaurant in Nari-dong.

The Seonginbong Peak Primeval Forest is protected as Natural Monument No. 189. It is home to rare trees such as the island linden (Seompinamu), Ulleungdo beech (Neodobamnamu), and Ulleungdo maple (Seomgorosoenamu). Shrouded in fog for more than 300 days a year on average, it preserves a primordial and mysterious atmosphere.

The Legend of Seonginbong (Peak of the Divine)

One tradition holds that Seonginbong Peak was so named because its appearance was thought to embody the sacred (seong), while another suggests it was named Seonginbong Peak because a person who once climbed the mountain returned alive with the help of a Divine Being (seongin).

Before Ulleungdo was settled, there was a poor family living in Boncheonbu Village. As the long, tedious winter passed and spring arrived, one elderly mother took her young granddaughter and joined the other villagers in climbing the mountain to forage for the spring greens that were just beginning to push through the earth.

Although they had started out together, it is natural for people

to spread out in search of greens once they are on the mountain. The granddaughter tried her best not to leave her grandmother's side for fear of getting lost, but she became so absorbed in picking greens that she found herself separated from her. Dusk was starting to fall, but no matter how many times the granddaughter called for her grandmother, no reply came.

Meanwhile, the grandmother also began searching for her granddaughter as it grew dark, but she could not find her by nightfall. When the darkness deepened and she could no longer search, the grandmother had no choice but to come down the mountain and alert the villagers. The young and middle-aged men of the village held torches and scoured the slopes, calling the child's name, but they could not find her. Having no other option, the villagers set out again the next day to continue the search, combing every valley and shouting her name.

Then, from one valley, a shout of "We found her!" was heard, and the villagers rushed to the spot. It was halfway down a cliff, difficult for anyone to approach. The young men of the village lowered themselves down on a straw rope, passed the rope to the girl, and the people above pulled her up safely. Yet, she fainted as soon as she was rescued.

After she was carried down to the village, she finally regained consciousness only after the villagers applied acupuncture to her hands and feet and massaged them. When she awoke, the villagers asked her how she had ended up in such a dangerous place. She replied,



Seonginbong Peak
Source: Yeongnam Ilbo

“I was picking greens and felt sleepy, so I lay down for a moment. A white-bearded old man appeared and told me a young girl should not sleep in a place like that, and to follow him. When I did, I saw a large tile-roofed house, and inside was soft bedding. The old man sang me a lullaby, and I fell asleep. Then I awoke to the sound of someone calling me.”

The people believed that the white-bearded old man in the dream to have been a divine being (seongin), and it is said that from that time on, they named the mountain Seonginbong (Peak of the Divine), in his honor.

Ulleungdo has long had an abundance of wild ginseng, so much so that even during the Joseon Dynasty, when the ‘Empty Island (haegeum, literally ‘prohibition of the sea’) Policy’ was strictly enforced, there were people who secretly slipped onto Ulleungdo to forage for ginseng.

All of Ulleungdo is part of the mountain range emanating from Seonginbong Peak, but it is said that wild ginseng was especially plentiful around the peak itself.

Wild Ginseng

Once upon a time, a mother and her son lived alone in a remote hamlet in the Kingdom of Seorabeol (the predecessor of Silla). The mother barely made ends meet by doing sewing and kitchen work for others, yet she still sent her only son to the village school (seodang) to study. The son was talented, diligent, and extremely filial. After finishing his studies and returning home, he would carry an A-frame carrier (jige) up the mountain on his back to gather firewood and sell it to help make a living.

Then, for some reason, the single mother began to languish and was finally confined to her bed. With his mother bedridden, the son’s worries were immense. He cared for her with all his devotion, but her illness showed no improvement. The neighbors, sympathizing with how dutiful the son was to his mother and his difficult circumstances, helped in various ways. The medicine from the apothecary had no effect, however, and she only grew thinner. Exhausted from nursing his mother through many sleepless nights, the son dozed off at her side. In his dream, an old man

with a white beard appeared and said,

“My boy, I find your commendable filial piety praiseworthy, so I will tell you of a medicine. Follow my instructions so that you may save your mother. If you go to a certain place on the east coast, a boat will be departing. Take that boat, and when you arrive, climb the highest mountain, find wild ginseng, and decoct it for your mother. Her illness will be cured.”

With that, the old man suddenly vanished.

Reflecting on the dream after he awoke, the boy felt it must be divine guidance. At daybreak, he told his mother what he had seen and heard, and said he would go to find the medicine. “My boy,” she said, trying her utmost to dissuade him,

“No matter how serious my illness is, it is heartbreaking enough just to see you nursing me. For a young child like you to set out for a place you don’t even know... I would rather die than let you go.”

The son’s devotion to his mother was such that he did not bend his resolve, however, even in the face of his mother’s earnest pleas. He entrusted his mother’s care to the neighbors, packed a simple travel bag, and went to the seacoast just as the old man in his dream had instructed. He was just in time to board a boat that was raising its anchor and preparing to depart.

After battling rough waves for several days, the boat reached an island. After landing, the boy first rested his body, still aching from days of seasickness, and then began to climb the high mountain without hesitation. Not even knowing what wild ginseng

looked like, he pushed his way through the forest, searching. He tripped over tree roots and was pricked by thorns until he bled, yet he crossed one mountain and fumbled his way up the next. Sleeping in the shade of trees and eating berries, he wandered with the single-minded purpose of finding the wild ginseng.

One day, at a place where he could see the summit of what seemed to be the highest mountain on the island, he sat down to briefly rest his exhausted body and dozed off. Then, in his dream, the old man appeared again and said,

“My boy, what are you doing? The wild ginseng is right beside you. It has red berries, so hurry up and dig it up.”

He awoke with a start to find it was a dream. Looking around, he saw that there was indeed a single plant with red berries at the base of a large, old tree next to him. His senses returning, the boy dug up the plant and found its root was as thick as a Korean radish. He carefully wrapped it up in a cloth, tied it to his waist, and then prostrated himself on the spot, bowing deeply several times in no particular direction before hastily starting down the mountain.

When he came down to the village, he was told that he would have to wait several more days for a boat to the mainland. After a few days of anxious waiting, the boat finally departed and, after sailing for several days, reached the mainland. As soon as he disembarked, he walked for several days without sleeping. Upon reaching the front of his house, he shouted, “Mother!” and ran into her room.

The mother and son embraced and wept for a long while. Then, he carefully decocted the wild ginseng which he had brought and gave it to his mother. After taking it, she—who had been so gravely ill—was completely cured in just a few days, as if cleansed of her illness.

This story spread throughout the capital of Seorabeol, and it is said that the king, upon hearing the news, praised the boy’s filial piety and rewarded him generously.

There is the option of climbing Seonginbong Peak from Naribunji Basin via the stairs and then descending toward the KBS station or Daewonsa Temple. Alternatively, one can go back down to Naribunji Basin and take a bus toward Cheonbu, then transfer there to another bus heading to Dodong.

To save time, I decided to go down to Naribunji Basin and take the bus. While taking the bus from Cheonbu toward Dodong, you can see a rock in the sea in front of Jugam Village. A little farther on, Samseonam (Three Fairies Rocks) appear, but because this single rock stands alone, it is called Ddanbangu (local dialect for ddanbawi, meaning “separated rock”).

In the valley across from Ddanbangu is Jugam Village. It is called Daebau (Bamboo Rock) because it is a village with many types of bamboo, such as black bamboo (Ojuk), long-jointed bamboo (Jangjuk), and giant bamboo (Wangjuk); Bamboo Rock was rendered in Sino-Korean as Jugam.

Passing Ddanbangu and rounding a corner, Samseonam (Three



Samseonam Rocks
photographed on October 3, 2023

Fairies Rocks)-considered the foremost of Ulleungdo's scenic wonders-come into view. From a distance, they look like two rocks, but up close they are three, making them even more marvelous. Two legends are passed down about Samseonam Rocks.

First Legend of Samseonam (Three Fairies Rocks)

The first legend says that three celestial fairies (seonnyeo), captivated by the magnificent scenery here, would often bathe before returning to the heavens. One time, however, engrossed in their play, they missed their time to return. It incurred the wrath of the Jade Emperor (Okhwangsangje), who turned them into rocks. On

Ilseonam (the first rock) and Iseonam(the second rock), which stand side-by-side, grass and trees grow, but on Samseonam(the third rock), which stands slightly apart and has a top split like a pair of scissors, not a single blade of grass grows. It is said that the youngest of the three fairies was the one who pestered the others to play a little longer, causing them to miss their time to return to the heavens, and so she incurred the greatest wrath of the Jade Emperor-hence, no grass grows on her rock.

These days, the Samseonam Rocks serve as a popular spot for rock-climbing enthusiasts.

Second Legend of Samseonam (Three Fairies Rocks)

Another legend is set during the reign of King Jijeung of Silla.

After conquering the state of Usan, King Jijeung sent one of his princes to correct the island's customs and prevent the plundering of Japanese pirates.

“Although that island is far from the mainland, they are our people. Civilize them well, and if there should be an invasion by Japanese pirates, immediately inform the mainland so we can repel them.”

“I will obey your command.”

The prince sailed for several days and arrived on Ulleungdo. He established a government office in Hyeonpo, prevented the tyranny of the local chieftains, and took care of the people. The people,

who had been worried at first, soon came to obey him willingly, and the entire island enjoyed peace.

To see how the people lived, the prince inspected various parts of the island, and one day he came to Seokpo to spend the night. That night, the moon was bright and the sea calm, yet as he lay unable to sleep, he kept hearing a strange sound from somewhere. The prince quietly got out of bed and went toward the source of the sound. As he drew closer, he realized it was the sound of a woman's sad weeping.

“Who goes there?”

The weeping stopped, but there was no answer. The prince felt a sense of fear.

After holding his breath and standing still for a moment, he heard a sad song mingled with the weeping:

Alas, my parents, alas, my parents,

To abandon your daughter on the remote island of Ulleungdo Like a worn-out shoe.

You correct a wrong, you teach a habit, but would you abandon me so?

Oh, my exasperated parents, the moon may be bright,

But who can know me? The sea is calm,

But my heart is in turmoil, and my body has nowhere to rest.

The song went something like this. The prince, guessing there must be a story behind it, moved closer and said,

“Who is it? If you are human, please answer me.”

“I am human.”

The prince moved closer still. “Why are you in such a remote place?”

“I have a story that cannot be told.”

“Let me hear your story.”

“I cannot do that.”

When the prince drew nearer, he saw a tall maiden with long, flowing hair, more beautiful than the full moon, standing alone, shedding tears as she looked at the moon.

“Please let me hear your story.”

“No, I cannot.”

“Perhaps I could help resolve your troubles.”

“Do not try to know my secret, and do not come near me. If you try to save me, Your Highness, your own life could be in danger.”

The prince was startled. He had given no sign that he was a prince, so how could she have known? He thought to himself that she was no ordinary maiden.

He returned without another word that night, but when he went to the same spot the next day, the maiden was standing there again, gazing listlessly only at the sea.

“I have come again.”

“Why have you come again?”

“I feel there must be some deep story here, and I cannot leave without understanding it.”

“Do not come close.”

The prince visited the place like this for many days, and each time, the maiden was standing there in the same spot. After meet-

ing for several days, the maiden finally began to talk.

“I will tell you my tale... I am the daughter of the Dragon King of the East Sea. I was exiled for breaking the laws of the Dragon Palace by meeting with a mortal man. If I cultivate myself diligently in the human world, my exile will be lifted and I can return to the Dragon Palace. But if I fail, I will never see the Dragon Palace again. I beg you, do not come near me. It will bring harm to you, Your Highness, and it will be disadvantageous for me as well. Please. Do not come here anymore.”

Hearing her story only made him more curious, and the more they met, the more he was drawn to her moon-like beauty.

“I am happiest when I am by your side. Please. While you are staying in the human world, I hope you will meet with me often.”

The maiden could not refuse the prince, who treated her with such earnestness and affection, and she too was drawn to his fine character. After that, she found herself secretly waiting for the prince to appear, and the prince appeared on the shore of Seokpo every night, rain or snow.

When the time came for the prince to return to Seorabeol, he made one excuse after another and did not leave the island. The more they met, the deeper their affection grew, and soon, dream like days passed as their love blossomed and the spring of their affection welled up.

One day, the prince went to see her and found the maiden with a gloomy expression.

“My lady, are you unwell today?”

“No.”

“Do you have some worry?”

“No.”

“Then why are you not pleased to see me?”

“Today marks one year.”

“What do you mean?”

“Today is the one-year anniversary of my arrival in the human world.”

“You must miss your parents.”

“I am worried about you, Your Highness.”

“Something has happened, hasn’t it?”

“A messenger from the Dragon Palace just came and went. It seems I am to return to the Dragon Palace tomorrow.”

“That cannot be.”

“I cannot disobey my father’s command again. Your Highness! The truth is, after spending a year in the human world, I must take a mortal man back with me in order to return. If I cannot go tomorrow, I must wait another year...”

And the maiden began to cry.

“Do not worry.”

“How can I not worry?”

“I cannot forget you, my lady, and you said you cannot forget me, did you not?”

“I would gladly wait another year on this land. Your Highness, please carry out your father’s command and return safely to Seorabeol.”

“My lady, rather than return to Seorabeol, I would rather follow you to the Dragon Palace.”

“You must not say such a thing.”

“If you prepare to leave tomorrow, I will follow.”

“You must not.”

In her heart, the maiden wanted to be with the prince, and the prince also wanted to remain with her.

The next day came. It was the night of the one-year anniversary of the maiden’s arrival on this land from the Dragon Palace.

“You must wish to see your father and mother, my lady, so please, hurry and go to the Dragon Palace.”

“I cannot forget you and leave, and I cannot go to the Dragon Palace alone, nor can I remain in this world or the next.”

Torn between two impossible choices, the maiden was at a loss for what to do, seized by anguish. The prince took the maiden’s arm and leaped into the sea with a splash. As the two fell into the water, there was a flash from beneath the waves, and in that instant something appeared and carried them away.

Where the prince and maiden had fallen, large rocks rose up. The rock to the south is said to be Abibawi (Father Rock), into which the prince was transformed. The rock in the middle, covered with much grass on its peak, is Eomibawi (Mother Rock), into which the maiden was transformed; and the rock to the north, a little distance away and shaped like a horse’s head, is said to be Malbawi (Horse Rock), into which the prince’s horse was transformed. These rocks—Father Rock, Mother Rock, and Horse Rock—are col-

lectively called Samseonam, or Three Immortal Rocks, signifying that the couple became divine immortals (sinseon and seonnyeo). It is said that this area has long been called ‘Sinseonchon’ (Village of the Immortals) because the surrounding rocks look as if people are sitting, standing, bending, or being carried on someone’s back. The names Father Rock, Mother Rock, and Horse Rock were supposedly given by a poet who once passed through here.

When passing the Samseonam Rocks, a sign for the Dokdo Volunteer Garrison Memorial Hall comes into view on the right. Follow this road straight uphill to find the Volunteer Garrison Memorial Hall, and if you continue farther, you will reach the ‘Ahn Yong-bok Memorial Hall.’

Ahn Yong-bok worked to protect Ulleungdo and Dokdo, and the members of the Volunteer Garrison toiled to defend Dokdo after the Korean War. It seems that because the government sought to establish the memorials on state-owned land, they were ultimately built in this rather difficult-to-access location. Thanks to this site’s elevation, it is said that one can see Dokdo on a clear day, but this is impossible unless the mountain spirit of Ulleungdo grants permission. During the chaotic period after liberation from Japanese rule in 1945, Korea asserted its sovereignty over Dokdo, while Japan also claimed sovereignty over the island, calling it ‘Takeshima.’

Amid this, on June 8, 1948, a tragedy occurred when a bombing exercise by the US Air Force in Japan struck Korean fishermen who were working at Dokdo, killing fourteen and seriously injuring six. Although the US military government provided compensation



Signpost for the Dokdo Volunteer Garrison Memorial Hall
photographed on October 3, 2023

following protests from the interim Korean government, minor disputes continued to arise afterward.

Particularly during the Korean War (1950-1953), Japanese fishing boats took advantage of our country's loosened security patrols to repeatedly conduct illegal fishing in the waters near Dokdo. To prevent this, the Peace-Line Declaration was proclaimed in 1952. By strictly cracking down on Japanese fishing boats crossing this line, their numbers were reduced. Yet, the fishing boats were soon replaced by Japanese government vessels, which continued to patrol Dokdo. In response, discharged soldiers living on Ulleungdo formed the 'Dokdo Volunteer Garrison,' based on Dokdo itself, and repelled them. The



Dokdo Volunteer Garrison Memorial Hall
photographed on October 3, 2023

activities of the garrison from that time are vividly displayed in the Dokdo Volunteer Garrison Memorial Hall.

Continuing uphill past the Dokdo Volunteer Garrison Memorial Hall, another building appears—the ‘Ahn Yong-bok Memorial Hall’. At the entrance, a replica of the boat Ahn Yong-bok sailed on is displayed, and inside the building, detailed Korean and Japanese records concerning his activities and investigations from that period are exhibited.

As Japan’s provocations regarding Dokdo grow ever more intense these days, is it merely my own fanciful dream to hope for the appearance of a modern-day Ahn Yong-bok?

Turning back and heading down behind the Volunteer Garrison



Ahn Yong-bok Memorial Hall
photographed on October 3, 2023



Ahn Yong-bok Shrine
photographed on October 3, 2023

Memorial Hall, then taking the path to the left, one arrives at Seokpo Observatory. Seokpo Observatory is a two-story, octagonal wooden observation deck built on the site where the Ulleungdo Northern Lookout Post once stood. The watchtower, built by the Japanese military government during the Russo-Japanese War, was later dismantled. The panoramic view from here is spectacular, so expansive that it makes you feel as if you might see all the way to the coast of Hamgyeong Province, on the northern Korean peninsula.

While gazing at the coast of Bukmyeon (North District), as well as the islands of Jukdo and Gwaneumdo—recognized as among Ulleungdo’s most scenic spots—I imagined the Japanese soldiers who must have stood guard day and night watching for the approach of Russia’s Vladivostok Fleet. On the reverse slope, I was able to find the remains of the soldiers’ barracks. It is a pity to see them neglected, as they could serve as an excellent site for historical education if properly preserved.

Descending back to the coastal road and walking to the right (in the direction of Jeodong), you come to a simple roadside parking lot. If you look up at the cliffs, you will see a “seagull apartment block.” In spring, the vast flocks of seagulls nesting on their eggs are a magnificent sight. Past this spot is the ticket booth for Gwaneumdo Island.

It seems that people in the old days thought of Ulleungdo as the body and Gwaneumdo as the head. The place where the ticket office is located is called Seommok (neck of the island). Now that a bridge has been installed here, should we see it as the detached head being reconnected to the body? At any rate, after buying a ticket, going inside



Seokpo Observatory
photographed on October 3, 2023



Gwaneumdo
photographed on October 3, 2023

the building, taking the elevator, and walking a short distance, one can reach the bridge without much effort.

Crossing the bridge and circling Gwaneumdo while taking pictures with the Samseonam Rocks, the Seokpo coast, or Jukdo in the background, one feels no envy for the beauty of Naples or Sorrento.

From here, if you take a bus and go through the Wadal-ri Tunnel, you will arrive at Wadal-ri.

A Legend of Wadal-ri

There was a man named Kim, who lived in Wadal-ri and spent years trying to find wild ginseng for his mother's illness. However, he failed to find. Despite exhausting his family's savings, his mother's illness only grew worse.

Kim thought to himself, "I've offered dozens of pigs' heads for rites to the mountain spirit (sansinje), yet I haven't been able to find a single root of wild ginseng. The mountain spirit is truly detestable. He must be sick of eating so much pork. This time, let's try holding a rite with dog meat, which they say the mountain spirit detests the most." And so, he caught a dog and held the rite.

That night, a white-haired old man appeared in his dream (it is said that the mountain spirit of Wadal-ri is male), and said:

"What kind of meat did you offer yesterday that tasted so good? It was the first time in my life I've tasted such meat, and I enjoyed it very much. As you wished, I will give you two roots of wild ginseng. Go to a certain mountain, and you will find them under an old tree. Dig them up, use one root to cure your elderly mother's

illness, and sell the other to restore your family's fortune.”

It is said that Kim did as the dream instructed, cured his mother's illness, and lived comfortably for the rest of his days.

Although inaccessible by foot, if you take the Ulleungdo sightseeing ferry, you can see two caves about 14 meters high at the base of the island (Gwaneum Ssanggul, or Gwaneum Twin Caves). There is a legend that pirates of old would hide their ships in these caves and plunder passing vessels, but I doubt whether even one ship a year ever sailed past the caves. There is also a tale that drinking water dripping from the cave ceiling, caught in a boat, grants long life, but it seems to me that anyone trying to enter to collect the water would hardly have lived long enough to enjoy that blessing.



Gwaneum Twin Caves

Source: www.kbmaeil.com

I then took a bus again, passed through Jeodong, and went to Dodong. Bongnae Waterfall is accessed from Jeodong, but since I planned to go there after visiting Dokdo the next day, I went straight to Dodong instead.

Walking down Dodong Road, I saw the former county governor's residence (Jeon-gunsu-gwansa), which had been renovated into the Park Chung-hee Visit Memorial Hall. Inside, I saw figures of President Park Chung-hee and several officials sitting around a rectangular table in a tatami room. President Park must have sat here, outlining his vision for developing Ulleungdo.

Leaving the Park Chung-hee Visit Memorial Hall and continuing down toward the wharf, I came to the terminal where ferry tickets are sold.



Former County Governor's Residence
photographed on October 3, 2023

Walking up the footbridge from the waiting hall, I came to the coastal walkway. As I followed it, the stunning coastal scenery—where natural caves and bridges connecting valleys unfolded before me—was so spectacular that I was left speechless. I heard there is also a path that follows Haengnam hillside road behind the County Office, and I decided to check it out later.

I could have continued toward Jeodong from the Dodong Aids to Navigation Office (Haengnam Lighthouse), but since I planned to go to Jeodong after visiting Dokdo the next day, I reluctantly decided to turn back.

Following the coastal walkway on the opposite side of Dodong Port, I found it was built right at the water's edge, offering a different atmosphere from the Haengnam walkway. However, a section of



Footbridge and Ferry Terminal
photographed on October 3, 2023

the path damaged by a typhoon had not yet been repaired, so I unfortunately had to turn back midway.

Since I had walked down Covered Stream Road to get to Dodong Port, I took an alley to the left to go up by a different route. After walking about 30 meters, I saw on my left an old Japanese-style house that had been remodeled and turned into the History and Culture Exhibition Hall. Sitting in the tatami room and enjoying a cup of coffee, I had the pleasant illusion that I was sitting in a Japanese ryokan (traditional guesthouse).

History and Culture Exhibition Hall

The History and Culture Exhibition Hall is a two-story building. It is known to have been built in the 1910s by an immigrant Japanese lumberman, named Sakamoto Raijirō, using materials that were rare at the time, such as parasol pine, gokomatsu pine, and cedar.

The floors and walls are well-preserved and are considered excellent examples of the architectural features characteristics of a Japanese-style house. The second-floor room with tatami mats and a tokonoma (a small, recessed space in the room) has been preserved in its original state, and the building was designated Registered Cultural Heritage No. 235 on March 2, 2006.

The house's L-shaped main building faces the front alley without a fence. Behind it is a cozy garden with a separate annex. The main building is a two-story structure built on a concrete foundation, with main and intermediate pillars, weatherboard walls, and

eaves extending on all four sides.

The second floor is smaller than the first, and all entrances and windows are glass sliding doors. Opening the front sliding doors leads to a central corridor, with rooms arranged on both sides. The second floor has glass windows on the front and part of the sides, with outer shutters made of wooden boards. The sides of the main building have been reinforced with sheet metal, and the small, projecting structure at the rear serves as the toilet and bathroom.

After the end of Japanese rule in 1945, the building was briefly used as a lodging facility, but it has since been transformed into a space where visitors can experience the modern history and culture of Ulleungdo and Dokdo. The Culture Experience Center



History and Culture Exhibition Hall
photographed on October 3, 2023

displays materials related to the modern history and cultural heritage of Ulleungdo and Dokdo, traditional housing culture, and the *Zalophus japonicus* (Japanese sea lion)—which became extinct due to overfishing—in a permanent exhibition hall. It also screens cultural films about Ulleungdo and Dokdo from the 1950s and 1960s.

This house was formerly called the “Lee Yeong-gwan House in Dodong, Ulleungdo,” but its name was changed to the “Japanese-style House” on August 20, 2010.

I asked a staff member to book me a spot on the ferry to Dokdo for the next morning, and after leaving the History and Culture Exhibition Hall, I rode the Manghyangbong Dokdo Observatory Cable Car (☎ 054-791-7160) located in Yaksu Park. After a five-minute cable car ride up and a climb up of 108 steps, the Manghyangbong Observatory appeared before me. Unfortunately, Dokdo was shrouded in sea fog. I had no choice but to take the cable car back down, holding on to the hope that I could set foot on Dokdo and see it for myself the next day.

Right by the cable car station stood the Dokdo Museum. Opened in 1997, it was reportedly built with funding from the Samsung Foundation of Culture. On display were numerous old documents, ancient maps, and other materials proving that Dokdo belongs to Korea. I wished I could show them to the Japanese people. In any case, I took comfort in the fact that we can take a boat and set foot on Dokdo, while the Japanese cannot. With that thought, I left the Dokdo Museum and went to the Video Promotion Hall across the way.



Dokdo Museum
photographed on October 3, 2023

The Video Promotion Hall shows a 4D film experience about Dokdo, but the chairs did not move and various other effects (like water sprays) were not working. It felt closer to 2D than 4D.

I left the Video Promotion Hall and entered the annex (Special Exhibition Hall) a little way below. This place was originally operated as a Local History Museum (hyangto saryogwan) and, for Island Day in particular, it was displaying old photographs of Ulleungdo. I thought it was a meaningful exhibition.

After leaving the annex, I could have taken the elevator straight down, but instead, I walked along the road below the Video Promotion Hall and up to the mineral spring. This spring water (yaksu) has a

fizzy taste as it contains carbonic acid, and because it is also rich in iron, the surrounding area is stained red. According to a water quality test, one liter of the spring water contains 0.05 mg of sugars, 3.6 mg of magnesium, 0.15 mg of iron, 80.0 mg of calcium, 53.3 mg of chlorine, and 2.88 mg of carbonate.

Long ago, after a general who had fought against the Japanese passed away, his battle armor was buried nearby. Legend says that as the iron armor corroded, the runoff became this mineral spring. When rice is cooked with this water, it takes on a bluish tint, and it is said to be effective for stomach ailments. Another legend tells that a leper was completely cured of leprosy after bathing in the spring for several months.

After taking a sip of the spring water, I continued walking down, and after cutting through the parking lot, I came to the Ulleung-gun Council building. At a bus stop about 10 meters to the left of the council building, I checked the information board and saw that the bus bound for Namyang would arrive in 10 minutes. After waiting on the bench for a moment, I boarded the bus to Namyang. I called the owner of my accommodation, and he agreed to come and pick me up at the bus stop in his car.

Although Emperor Gojong's imperial decree designated Taeha as the location for the county office, Dodong became the county seat in 1903. In the Ulleungdo section of the *Haedong Jido* (Map of East of the Sea), created in the mid-18th century, Dodong is marked as Dotogumi. In the *Ulleungdo Naedo* (Report on Visiting Ulleungdo), which Inspector Lee Gyu-won submitted to the royal court in 1882, it is recorded as Dobangcheong Port.

In 1900, Inspection Commissioner Yu Yong-jeong used the name Dodong while writing his survey report, *Dongnaebocheop*. Subsequently, the name Dodong also appears in the 1910 *Joseon Jiji* (Gazetteer of Joseon), the 1917 Singudaejo Joseon Jeondo bu-gun-myeon-ri-dong Myeongching Yeollam (A Comparative Table of Old and New Names of Prefectures, Counties, Districts, Villages, and Neighborhoods of the Entire Korean Peninsula), and the Joseon Jihyeongdo (Topographic Map of Joseon) published the same year. This shows that the name Dodong came into official use after 1900.

When settlers arrived following the announcement of the Ulleungdo Resettlement Decree of 1882, a considerable number of Japanese had reportedly already settled illegally in Dodong. Since Japanese people were already living in the main village (bondong), which had the appearance of a proper town, it was called "Dobangcheong," meaning a bustling place where many people live.

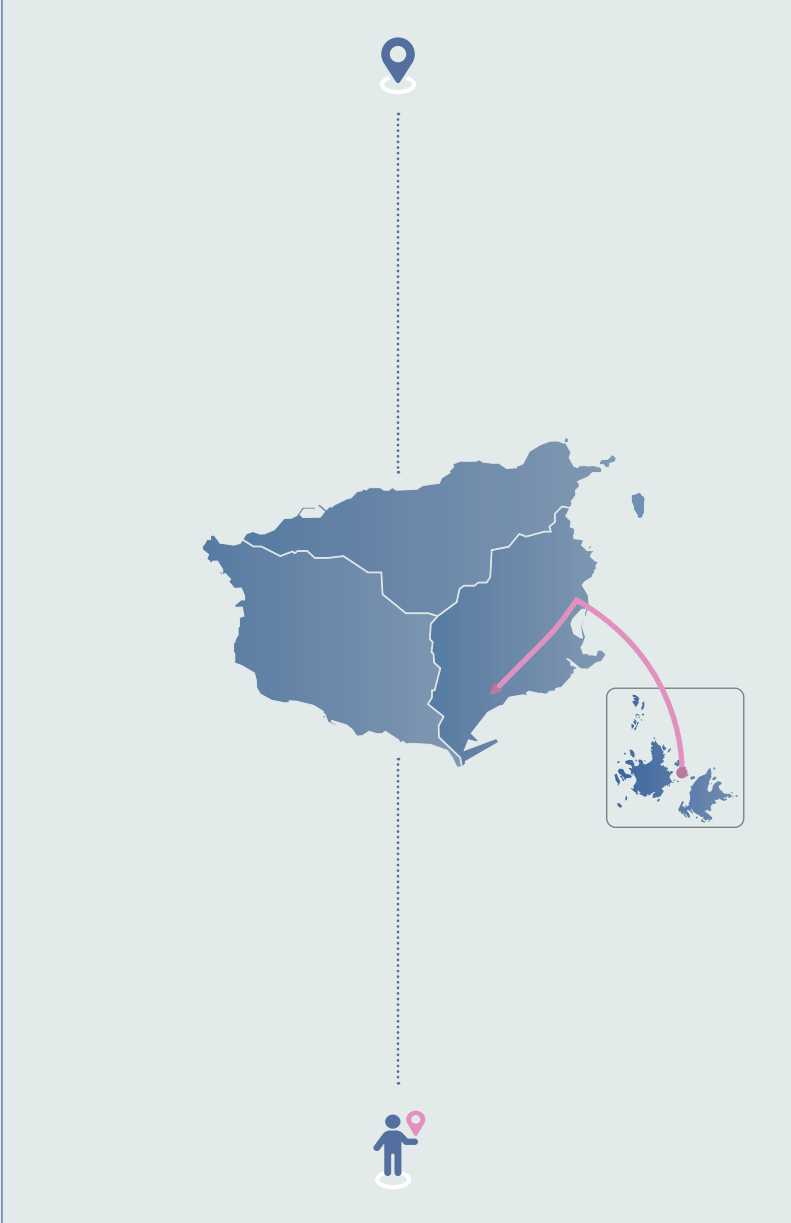
Around 1889, many Japanese came to Ulleungdo for fishing and harvesting marine products such as abalone and seaweed, and Dodong served as the main anchorage for their vessels. A record shows that in the summer of that year, 186 Japanese from 24 ships piled up goods

such as earthenware in Dobangdong and exchanged them for grain. A residential area where Japanese fishing groups could anchor, trade, and reside thus formed along the coast.

At that time, the settlement in Dodong developed into two distinct areas: a Japanese residential district centered on Dodong Port, and a Korean residential district in the upper part of the valley, where they sought to secure farmland through terraced rice paddies.

Another reason for the shift of the island's center from Taeha to Dodong is Ulleungdo's climate. As the island's population increased, residential space expanded along the coast, but Taeha was directly in the path of the winter's northwesterly winds. As fishing activities became increasingly important, the cold, dry, and strong winds in winter caused rough seas and high waves in Taeha. This made fishing difficult and prompted the center to shift to the southeastern coast of Ulleungdo, where the waves were relatively calmer.

Day 4 of the Trip



Perhaps because I slept in an ochre house (Hwangtojip) for three nights, my body felt very refreshed despite the previous day's strenuous journey. I hurried because I had to catch the boat to Dokdo early in the morning.

Chotdaebawi (Candlestick Rock)

An old man once lived in what is now Jeodong Village. His wife had died long ago, and he lived with his only daughter. His entire property consisted of a single small boat and a tiny patch of field. That particular year, the corn crop failed because of the wind. Since corn was their only winter provision and the harvest was poor, he had no choice but to go out to sea to catch fish. He could not rest, even on days when it snowed.

Going out to sea in a small boat on a windy day was a truly dangerous thing. But he could not rest just because it snowed, nor take a day off just because the wind blew. A look of anxiety appeared on the father's face as he prepared to go out fishing, even as snow fell and the wind howled.

One day, when the boat left shore the waves were calm, but by the time the sun began to set in the west, the waves had grown fierce and the snowfall heavier. The daughter, worried about her father at sea, lamented,

“He should have rested today, even if it meant we went hungry...”

“If only the corn harvest had been good...”

“The sea is my enemy.”

Night fell, but her father did not return.

Having lost her father to the sea, the daughter forgot even to eat and spent her days gazing at the sea in tears. The villagers came and offered her thin rice gruel (mieum), saying, “The living must go on living,” but she stubbornly refused.

After starving for several days, perhaps owing to her profound filial piety (hyoseong), the old man’s daughter had a sense that her father would return in a few days. Believing he was coming back, she went to the seashore to meet him. Between the waves, a boat with a white sail was approaching.

“A boat is coming in!” the old man’s daughter cried out with joy. “I can see it over there! It should reach shore soon,” she thought as she waited. But no matter how long she waited, the boat, while seeming to draw closer, never reached land.

As she kept watching and calling out, she heard a voice from the boat say, “I’ll be there soon.”

The daughter could not just wait.

“I must go out to meet him.”

She started toward the boat, wading into the waves.

It was winter, with snow drifting down, yet she pushed through the icy water toward the boat. But even her filial piety could not overcome the sea. She could go no further. Utterly exhausted, she stood there waiting and turned to stone.

The rock known as ‘Chotdaebawi’ (Candlestick Rock) or ‘Hyo-nyeobawi’ (Filial Daughter Rock) is said to be the petrified form of this old man’s devoted daughter. The father she believed was returning was, in fact, only a vision.

This Chotdaebawi stands tall as part of the breakwater of the Jeodong Forward Fishing Base.

After taking a bus to Jeodong, I boarded the express ferry for Dokdo at Jeodong Port. After about an hour of watching Ulleungdo recede behind us, Dokdo began to appear up ahead.

The Mystery of Usan Island

Three fishermen once went out to sea in a tiny boat to fish. Strangely, not a single fish was caught that day. Then, suddenly, clouds began to spread from the western sky, a fierce wind started to blow, and waves began to swell—startling them into hastily preparing to return.

The wind grew ever stronger, however, and the waves crashed against the sides of the boat, making it impossible to row. The three men had no choice but to put down their oars and entrust their fate to the heavens.

As darkness fell, the white-crested waves surged as if to swallow the boat whole, then passed by. The boat rose as if atop a mountain, then plunged as if about to touch the bottom of the sea. The three men, thinking they were doomed for sure, pressed flat against the bottom of the boat, no longer conscious of their surroundings or which way the boat were drifting.

This went on for three days, until the wind finally subsided and the waves calmed. Struggling to regain their senses, the three men lifted their heads and looked around. Yet all they could see

was the deep blue sea and the clouds in the sky. Having starved for three days, they were so exhausted that they no longer had the strength to row.

A sense of despair overwhelmed them. There was nothing to do but let the boat be carried by the wind and the waves. The fishermen did not even have the energy to speak to one another.

“Oy, look at that!”

Startled by the shout, the other two men got up and looked where the first had pointed. In the distance, it was unclear whether it was a cloud or fog, but a dark shape at its base looked like an island. They rubbed their eyes and looked closely; it was unmistakably an island. The three men shouted with joy in unison.

“We’re saved!”

“We’re saved now!”

The three men were as happy as little children. Their courage surged, and all three of them rowed together. Fortunately, the current also seemed to be flowing in that direction. When they finally reached the place, they were dumbfounded. It was a sheer rock cliff, and it did not look like a place where people could live. Looking up, it was still shrouded in fog. They felt all their energy drain from them again.

Yet, they could not just stay where they were either. The men started rowing again to find a place where they could dock the boat. After much effort, they at last reached a spot where they could barely set foot. They moored the boat and got off, but there was no path, only rocks. The three men wandered here and there

and finally managed to climb to the top. But the fog was still thick. Looking around in the dense fog, they saw that it was a rather wide, flat land.

The three men could not afford to just stand there, marveling at this new-found place. First, they had to satisfy their hunger with something. After wandering for some time without any sense of direction, they saw something ahead. Looking closely, it seemed to be a house.

Thinking they were saved, they approached it and found a small, thatched hut (chomakjip). Inside the house, an old man with a white beard sat with the door open, looking in their direction. The three men went straight to him and bowed deeply.

“Who might you be?”

The old man’s voice was gentle yet powerful. His eyes shone, his features were graceful, he possessed an unapproachable dignity, and he even seemed to have the air of a sage who had left the secular world. The oldest of the three men explained the whole story. “Oh my, you have been through quite the ordeal,” he said, simply gazing at the three men.

Growing desperate, the three men asked again, “For four days, we have not had a single sip of water and are so exhausted from hunger and thirst that we can barely see. Could you please give us some water and something to eat?” The old man replied, “There is no water, and there is nothing for people to eat. What to do...”

The three men stared at each other, dumbfounded. What did he mean that there was nothing for people to eat? Did that mean that

he himself was not a person? If not a person, then what was he? As they were each thinking this, the old man stood abruptly and brought them something out from the room.

“Well then, try eating this,” he said.

What the old man held out looked like an apple, but it didn’t seem to be an apple. The three men, in no position to be picky, wolfed it down. They didn’t even know what it tasted like. It seemed to quench their thirst a little, but as they were so hungry, they shamelessly pleaded for one more each.

“No, my good men. One of those is enough to live on for a year.” Upon hearing this, their hunger seemed to vanish completely. After sleeping one night at his house, the three men completely regained their vitality. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that they felt positively brimming with strength.

The old man came out and said, “Now, you must go home. Your families must be waiting anxiously.”

“But we can’t go because we don’t know which way is which.”

“Is that so? Then I shall guide you.”

And so, the four men boarded the boat. They hoisted the sail in a favorable wind and steered the boat in the direction the old man pointed. Looking back, the island was still shrouded in fog. After sailing for several hours, mountain peaks finally began to appear on the horizon.

“We are saved now.”

“Then you can find your way from here?”

“Thank you, elder.”

“What is there to thank me for? I only helped because you were in such a pitiful state.”

Then, from his sleeve, he took out three of the fruits they had eaten the day before, gave one to each man, and said, “You must keep this fruit where no sunlight reaches. And starting from today, be sure to eat it exactly three months and ten days from now. Fare you well.” And without giving them a chance to say goodbye, the old man vanished. The three men could only stare at each other blankly.

At last, they arrived back on Ulleungdo. That these men, who had been thought dead, had returned alive and full of energy, caused a great stir, not only among their families but throughout the entire village. Stories blossomed about the mysterious, fog-shrouded island, the strange old man, the magical fruit, and the wide, flat land on the summit—all enough to fill the listeners with a sense of mystery and fuel their curiosity.

Afterward, a few curious people persuaded the three fishermen to go again in search of the island. Loading a large boat with food and water, they set out once more to find the mysterious island. All they were able to spot were some out-of-season peach blossoms floating by before the rough seas ultimately forced them to return without ever finding the island.

As I pondered whether the legendary Usan Island could be Dokdo, the ferry continued for another 30 minutes before we finally arrived. Perhaps because of the legend, or because it is the youngest child of



Dokdo
photographed on October 4, 2023

Korea's national territorial family, Dokdo felt particularly precious.

When the boat arrived at the Dokdo dock, members of the Dokdo Guard were lined up in a single file to welcome us. The ferry captain's folksy joke that you must have accumulated virtue for three generations to land on Dokdo made my heart swell with pride.

Ignoring the announcement that the boat would return to Ulleungdo in 30 minutes, I hurried off and first took a picture with Sutdolbawi (Whetstone Rock) on Dongdo (East Island) in the background. After that, I mingled with the crowd and took pictures of Dongdo and Seodo (West island), Tanggeonbong (a kind of old hat) Peak, and Gongam (Holed Rock). After I photographed the marker stone at the end of the



Finger Rock, Dokdo
photographed on October 4, 2023



Face Rock, Dokdo
photographed on October 4, 2023

dock designating the easternmost point of Korea's national territory, another announcement called us to board.

When disembarking, everyone had scrambled to get off before anyone else, but now they were all holding back, trying to linger even a little longer before boarding. Can even the feeling of returning to one's hometown for holidays compare with this? The people who boarded the boat waved to the guards, who were once again lined up, reluctant to say goodbye.

Most people, who hadn't even noticed they were seasick on the way to Dokdo because they were so focused on seeing the islands, seemed to struggle with seasickness on the way back; perhaps because that hope was gone, or perhaps out of a sense of relief. The seasickness was short-lived, however: Ulleungdo's reappearance out of the window seemed to calm the cabin and its occupants.

After arriving at Jeodong Port, I went up above the terminal and saw a sign for a "Squid Hoe Town" on the right ("hoe" meaning raw fish served as a delicacy). Jeodong is the Sino-Korean version of the name "Mosigae," so called in the past because a lot of wild ramie (mosi, *Boehmeria nivea*) grew there. Because it is a port that has been developed as a forward base for East Sea fisheries since 1967, there is an abundance of food.

I stopped by the Squid Hoe Town, ordered a few spear squid (hanchi) on the first floor, and asked for them to be brought to a restaurant of my choice on the second floor. I don't particularly like hoe (raw fish), so I had never in my life ordered it myself, but since I was on Ulleungdo, I took the plunge and decided to try some. When the hoe arrived and



Sign for the Path to Bongnae Waterfall
photographed on October 4, 2023

I tasted it, however, it was remarkably different from the hoe you find on the mainland. I added a little more sweet and sour red chili paste (cho-gochujang) and some water to make raw fish soup (mulhoe) and devoured it in an instant. Or should I say I drank it all down...

I asked the restaurant owner about Bongnae Waterfall, and he told me it was about 2 km away. Ignoring the owner's advice to take a taxi, I took a walk around the coastal footbridge below the Squid Hoe Town and felt confident that I could walk there. Walking a little along the coastal road toward the center of the village, I soon found the path to Bongnae Waterfall.

After walking up a short way, I came to the former site of Usan Middle School, and as I continued up, Jeodong Elementary School

appeared. Up to Ulleung Middle School, I walked over a covered stream, but from Ulleung Middle School onward, the stream was uncovered and walking alongside it while admiring it made the going more pleasant.

After passing the elementary school and a cluster of villa-style buildings that resembled dovecotes built like holiday homes, a gateball court came into view. I passed this and climbed for quite a while longer before the Bongnae Waterfall Management Office appeared.

After buying a ticket at the management office and heading up, I immediately came across a restaurant serving food and alcohol, which made me frown. On the mainland, starting with Namyangju City, restaurants have been removed or banned from most recreation areas, but perhaps because Ulleungdo is a remote island, a restaurant was still thriving within the scenic area.

Climbing a little further, I received a welcome greeting from a natural air conditioner; a punghyeol (a cave from which a cold wind blows). In less than a minute, my sweating stopped. Coming out of the punghyeol, I could see the magnificent sight of a lush forest of cedar trees, said to have been planted by a Japanese county magistrate during the Japanese colonial period to develop the area as a tourist destination.

Then, finally, Bongnae Waterfall came into view. I could not help but marvel at how so much water could possibly be pouring down from such a small island, and at such a high altitude. They say that over 3,000 tons of water cascade down each day. As I stood there for a moment, mesmerized, a shiver ran through me. While I wanted to stay until evening, I was also tired from my trip to Dokdo, so decided to turn back.



When I walked back down to the management office, there happened to be a bus in the parking lot that had brought a group of tourists. I explained my situation to the driver, and he readily agreed to take me back down with them. Disembarking at the Dodong Bus Terminal, I took a bus bound for Namyang.

Bongnae Waterfall
photographed on October 4, 2023

Day 5 of the Trip



This was the last day of my five-day, four-night journey to Ulleungdo and Dokdo. I had a simple breakfast of cereal and asked the owner of my lodging for a ride to Sadong Port in time for my ferry.

Having some time to spare before the ferry departed, I visited the botanical garden at the Agricultural Technology Center, located a little way up from the coastal road. It was said to be a botanical garden centered on plants native to Ulleungdo, but perhaps because I am a layman, they did not seem very different from those on the mainland. Furthermore, compared to Yerimwon, which I had visited in Bukmyeon, there was no contest.

It made me think that socialism is bound to fail. At Yerimwon, the admission fees go directly to its owner, so it is diligently maintained. In contrast, this place felt so neglected that I wondered if it was because that was not the case here.

After taking a few pictures and coming back down, I was feeling peckish. I bought my ferry ticket for Pohang at the terminal ticket office and went into the distribution center building next door. There was a buffet restaurant called Midang on the second floor. After I grabbed a quick bite there and came downstairs, as other travelers were already boarding the ferry. I got in line behind the others to have my ticket checked.

Ulleungdo and Dokdo

Published on December 30, 2025

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publisher Jihang Park

published by Northeast Asian History Foundation

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Tel 02-2012-6065

Website www.nahf.or.kr

Printed in Chunga Publishing Co.

ISBN 979-11-7161-276-5 03910

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