

Heaven Lake

Heaven Lake is a volcanic crater lake atop Baekdusan. It lies on the border between China and North Korea, and is roughly evenly divided between the two countries. It was recognized as the highest volcanic lake in the world by the Shanghai Office of the Guinness World Records.

The North Korean part is in Ryanggang Province while the Chinese part is in Jilin Province.

Geology and limnology

The caldera which contains Heaven Lake was created by the 946 eruption of Paektu Mountain. The lake has a surface elevation of 2,189.1 m (7,182 ft). The lake covers an area of 9.82 km² (3.79 sq mi), with a south–north length of 4.85 km (3.01 mi) and an east–west length of 3.35 km (2.08 mi). The average depth of the lake is 213 m (699 ft) and a maximum depth of 384 m (1,260 ft). From mid-October to mid-June, it is typically covered with ice.

History

Names and legends

In ancient Chinese literature, Tianchi also refers to Nanming (南冥 sometimes translated as "southern sea"). North Korean propaganda claims that Kim Jong-il was born near the lake on the mountain. In accordance with this, North Korean state news agencies reported that on his death, the ice on the lake cracked "so loud, it seemed to shake the heavens and the Earth".

Heaven Lake



Location	North Korea and China
Coordinates	42.006°N 128.057°E
Type	crater lake
Primary inflows	precipitation
Basin countries	North Korea and China
Surface area	9.82 km² (3.79 sq mi)
Average depth	213 m (699 ft)
Max. depth	384 m (1,260 ft)
Water volume	2.09 km³ (0.50 cu mi)
Surface elevation	2,189.1 m (7,182 ft)

Heaven Lake	
Chinese name	
Chinese	天池



Map including Heaven Lake (labeled as T'ien Ch'ih 天池) and surrounding region (1954)



Overhead panorama of Heaven Lake.

Lake Tianchi Monster

Heaven Lake is also alleged to be home to the Lake Tianchi Monster.^[5]

On September 6, 2007, Zhuo Yongsheng (director of a TV station's news center run by the administration office of the nature reserve at Mount Changbaishan, Jilin) shot a 20-minute video of six seal-like, finned "Lake Tianchi Monsters", near the North Korean border. He sent pictures of the Loch Ness Monster-type creatures to Xinhua's Jilin provincial bureau. One of them showed the creatures swimming in three pairs, in parallel. Another showed them together, leaving ripples on the volcanic lake.^[6]

Notable visits

On September 20, 2018, as part of an Inter-Korean summit, heads of state Kim Jong-un and Moon Jae-in visited Mount Paektu and Heaven Lake. Moon filled a bottle with water from the lake to take back to South Korea. The visit to the lake was a symbolic gesture, as both the lake and the mountain hold considerable cultural significance to the Korean people.^{[7][8]} Mount Paektu is mentioned in the anthems of both North and South Korea, and is considered to be the spiritual home of the Koreans.^[9]

In popular culture

Transcriptions [[show](#)]

Standard Mandarin

Hanyu Pinyin Tiānchí

Wade–Giles T'ien¹ -ch'ih²

Korean name

Hangul 천지

Hanja 天池

Transcriptions [[show](#)]

Revised Romanization Cheonji

McCune–Reischauer Ch'ŏnji

Manchu name

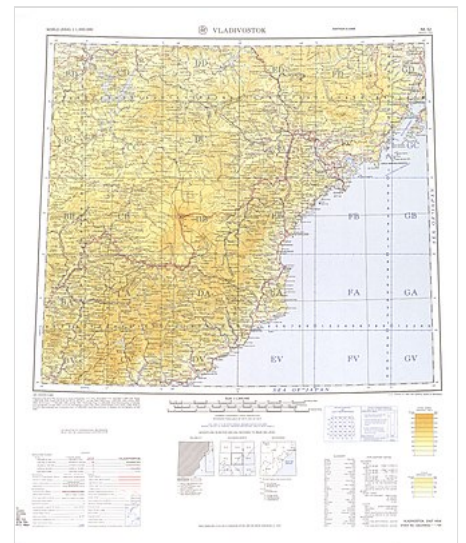
Manchu script ᡩᠠᡵᡳᠨᠴᡳ

Romanization Tamun omo

Manchu name

Manchu script ᡩᠠᡵᡳᠨᠴᡳ

Romanization Tamun juce



Map including Heaven Lake (labeled as T'ien Ch'ih) and surrounding region (1967)^[a]

The lake is the subject of the song "Tianchi Lake" on The Mountain Goats' 2008 album Heretic Pride.

See also

- Korean Peninsula
- Baekdudaegan
- Tourism in North Korea

References

1. "Heaven Lake on the active volcano Paektu Mountain - NASA" (<https://www.nasa.gov/image-article/heaven-lake-active-volcano-paektu-mountain/>). Retrieved March 23, 2024.
2. "HOLY, BUT STILL DIVISIVE" (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1997/08/03/holy-but-still-divisive/40148024-c115-4043-8eb0-b32e5056de7a/>). *Washington Post*. January 8, 2024. ISSN 0190-8286 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0190-8286>). Retrieved March 23, 2024.
3. "Mount Changbai Sets Two Guinness Records" (http://english.people.com.cn/english/200008/11/eng20000811_47994.html). *People's Daily*. August 11, 2000.
4. Kim Jong-il death: 'Nature mourns' N Korea leader (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16297811>)
5. "Chinese monster rivals Nessie" (http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/animals/newsid_3114000/3114507.stm). BBC News Newsround. July 31, 2003.
6. "'Tianchi monster' caught on film" (<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90781/90879/6258937.html>). *people.com.cn*
7. Shin, Hyonhee. "Fulfilling a dream, South Korea's Moon visits sacred North Korean..." (<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-northkorea-southkorea-summit-mountain/fulfilling-a-dream-south-korea-s-moon-visits-sacred-north-korean-mountain-with-kim-idUKKCN1M006K>) *U.K.* Retrieved September 22, 2018.
8. Haas, Benjamin (September 20, 2018). "'Dream come true' for Moon as Korean leaders make mountain pilgrimage" (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/20/dream-come-true-moon-jae-in-korean-leaders-mountain-pilgrimage>). *the Guardian*. Retrieved September 22, 2018.
9. Sang-Hun, Choe (September 26, 2016). "For South Koreans, a Long Detour to Their Holy Mountain" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/27/world/asia/korea-china-baekdu-changbaishan.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved June 6, 2019.

Notes

- a. (from map: "DELINEATION OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES MUST NOT BE CONSIDERED AUTHORITATIVE")

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Heaven_Lake&oldid=1216428298"

▪