

The Baekdu Daegan in Korea: A Book Project by Roger Shepherd of HIKE KOREA

A quest for the homogenous identity of Korea through Mountain



Discovering the identity of Korea through Mountain



Profile: Roger Shepherd is a 46 year old New Zealander currently residing in South Korea with his own company HIKE KOREA. Prior to South Korea he had a background in Diplomatic Protection with the NZ Police, and as a Wildlife Ranger in Central Africa. Roger has an MA in Strategic Studies. His love for Korean mountain began in 2006 when he hiked the 백두대간 and returned to hike it again in 2007 to write an English Guide Book on the subject. In 2009 he returned to Korea and hiked six 정맥, where he decided to leave his life in NZ and begin a business in South Korea specializing in the promotion of Korean Mountain through photography and writing. HIKE KOREA was registered as a

business in December 2010. More information on its accomplishments can be seen at www.hikekorea.com. Updates are posted at www.facebook.com/hikekorea

Introduction: Roger Shepherd through HIKE KOREA plans to publish a high quality photographic essay book on the Baekdu Daegan Mountain System. The book will cover images and essays from both North and South Korea connecting the 백두대간 from 백두산 to 지리산 or possibly 할라산. The essays will cover the background and history of the 백두대간 and what it represents to the Korea people through history and culture. Its main theme is to try and identify the unique historical relationship that the Korean people (North and South) have with mountains.

Current project status: Roger Shepherd went to Pyongyang in May 2011 to seek permission to access mountains of the Baekdu Daegan through an NGO called the Korea-New Zealand Friendship Society. They are an extension of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The North Koreans loved the idea of the project and recognized what positive impacts it might have on their country and the peninsula in general. They agreed to assist with the logistics of permissions and travel.

In October 2011, Roger went to North Korea and drove 2300km with three other members of the friendship society where they successfully visited ten different mountain regions of the 백두대간 in the provinces of Gangwondo, Hamgyeongnamdo, and Pyeongannamdo. Thousands of photographic images were taken including 40GB of video footage.

Remaining project tasks: Roger plans to return to North Korea this year to spend six weeks in the Gaema-gowon and Baekdu-gowon regions of Ryangyangdo where he will take the rest of the imagery for the project.

Marketing: Roger is marketing his efforts through three photographic exhibitions to be held in Seoul, New Zealand and Daejeon. He is also writing monthly stories about his exploits in North Korea or Man & Mountain magazine, and is also generating TV publicity from MBC. Roger also receives a lot of publicity through local and sometimes overseas newspaper media. A full list of his coverage can be seen on the Literature page of his website.

The Project Book: All things going well the photo-essay book plans to be published in late 2013 in the Korean language, followed by an English, Japanese, and possibly Chinese version later. The book is intended to make profit on the back of warmer relations between the two Koreas. International appraisal is expected. Roger is targeting for the sale of at least 100,000 copies.

Photography: In 2012, Roger plans to exhibit more of his work for sale to the general public. Three exhibitions of 70 images from the 백두대간 in both North and South Korea are to be held in February 2012. These works are to be sponsored by Korea Forest Service. However, Roger plans to hold private exhibitions throughout 2012 and 2013 in an effort to capture Korea's identity through mountain.

Future Books: Roger will be writing other books over the coming years.

- a) Currently he has just finished touring 35 remote islands of South Korea for Korea Tourism. He will be planning to visit another 20 remote islands to produce an English Guide Book on remote islands of Korea.
- b) A book of short stories translated into Korean about my travel exploits around Korea.

Future projects in Korea: Roger's work in North and South Korea won't stop with the release of the 백두대간 photo-essay book. He plans to make many future visits to North Korea and research many other projects in the mountains there. Such ideas are the rediscovery of ancient Buddhist Temple sites, Mountain Fortress relics and sites, and ancient fire signal towers [봉수대]. He would combine these projects with his efforts in South Korea.

