

JOURNEY INTO CHINA



Liu Ying

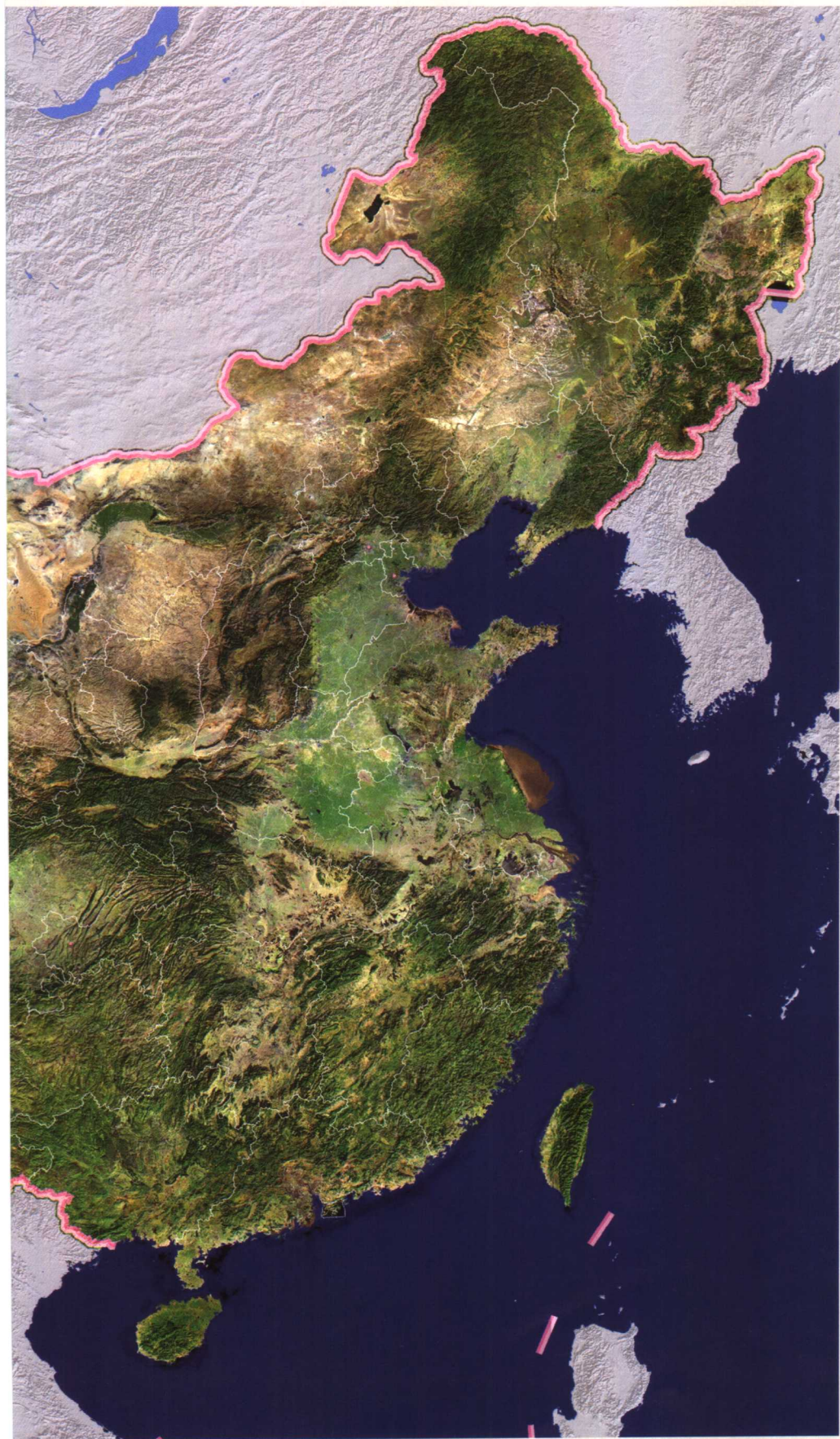
Natural Wonders *in* **China**

translation by Zhou Xiaozheng

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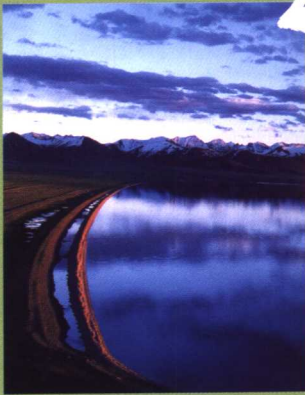
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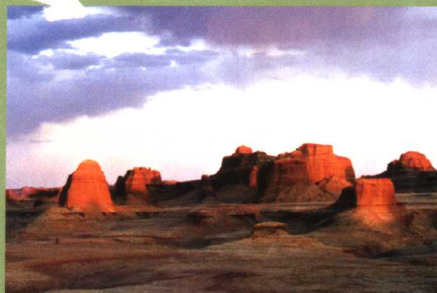
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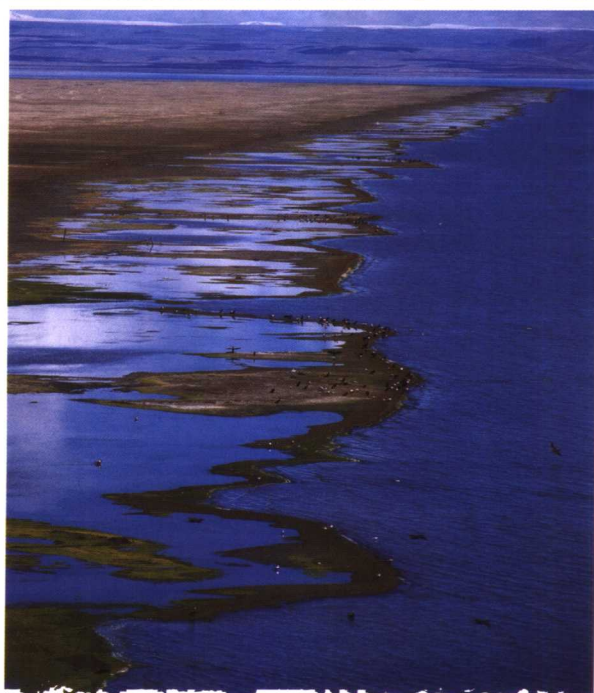
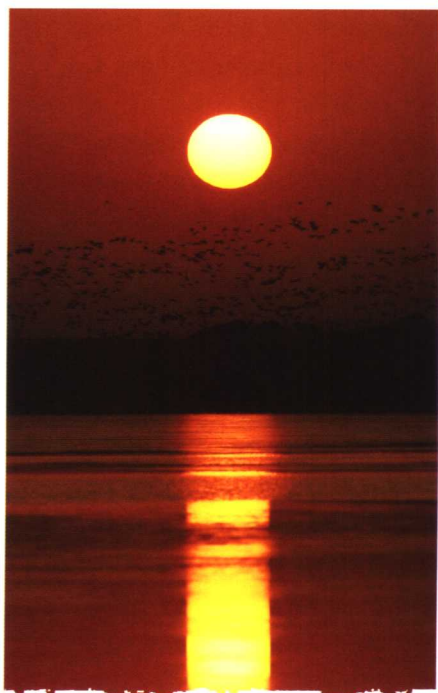
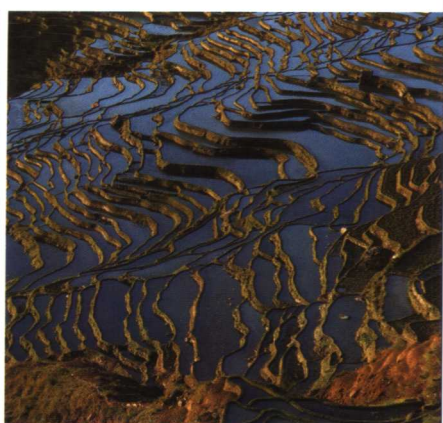
The Splendor of China's Natural Beauty

China is located in east Eurasia and on the Pacific west coast, covering 9.6 million sq. km of land and 3 million sq. km of sea. It stretches across four time zones east to west and covers 5,500 km north to south, while the elevation gap between its highest peak and lowest point reaches nearly 9,000 meters. The great geographical differences and contrasts have made this land both dynamic and magnificent. There are snow-capped mountains, glaciers, evergreen rain forests, desolate gobis and deserts, vibrant lakes and coasts, spectacular valleys and waterfalls, and boundless grasslands and wetlands... In China, almost all types of natural scenery that exist in the world can be found, and this book intends to help you learn something about its beauty.

You will find masculine beauty here—in the world's highest peak, Mount Qomolangma, in the world's tallest mountains, the Himalayas, and in the Hailuoguo Glacier, which has a fall of more than 1,000 meters.

You will find wild beauty here—in the ferocious winds and sweeping sandstorms in the Taklimakan Desert, that can eclipse the sun in seconds and that has mercilessly buried numerous ancient civilizations, and in the no man's land on the Hoh Xil Plateau, where Tibetan antelopes, wild yaks and Tibetan wild donkeys gallop freely and elegantly, although the air they breathe contains less than half the oxygen in the air at sea level.

You will find feminine beauty here—in the picturesque mountains and serene rivers of Guilin in Guangxi, in the Bayanbulak grasslands in the hinterland of Xinjiang's Tianshan Mountains, which is the world's largest swan habitat, and in Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan's mountainous area, which has an



abundance of lakes in a multitude of colors.

You will also find mysterious beauty here—in the “lake monster” of Kanas and the legendary “Big Foot” in the virgin forest of Shennongjia, in the unusually shaped natural stone sculptures on Taiwan’s Yeliu Coast, as well as in the karst caves that exist in many regions of the country, which are unexplored underground labyrinths housing unknown treasures.



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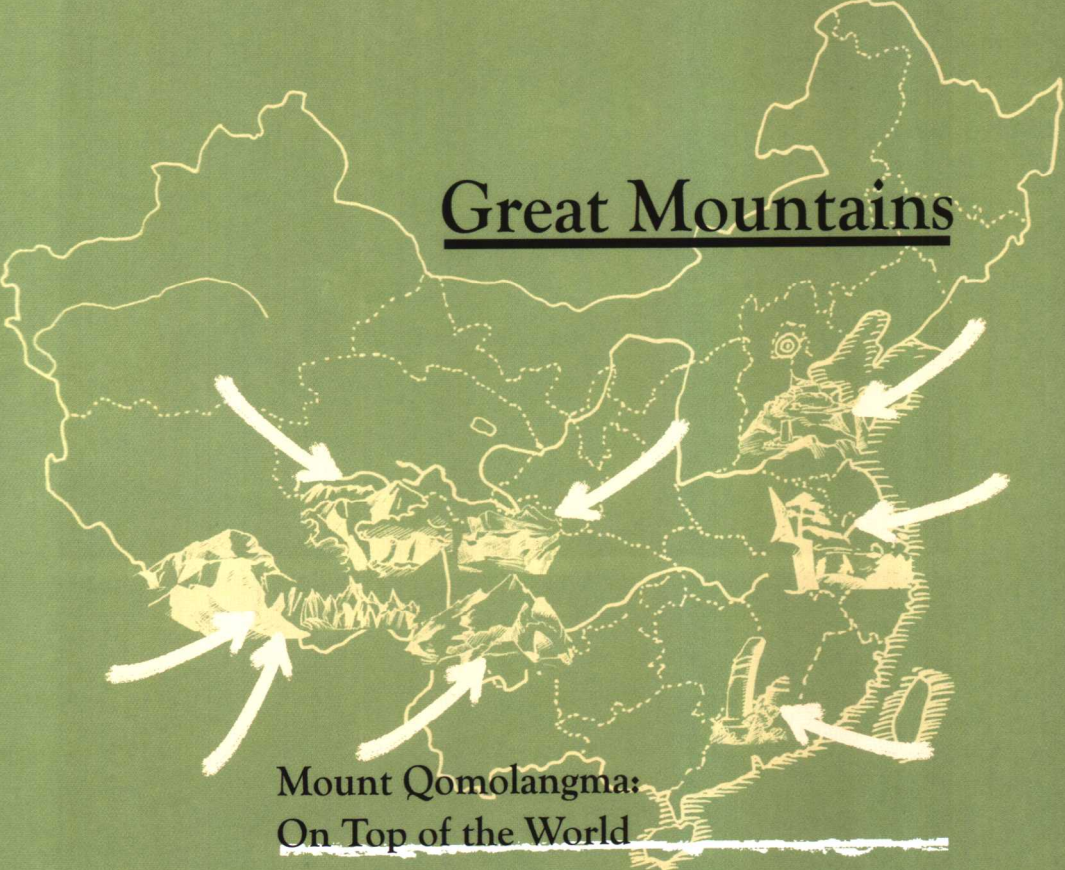
- 1.The Shuzheng Waterfall
- 2.The terrace paddy field
in Yunnan
- 3.The Poyang Lake
- 4.The coastline
- 5.The Huoshao Mountain
in Xinjiang
- 6.Sunflower in Xinjiang

With its long history, huge population and vast territory, China has nurtured a splendid culture. For thousands of years, human activities have had a far-reaching impact on the natural environment and added a profoundly human touch to the mountains, rivers, lakes and seas. For example, stone inscription on the cliffs and crags of Mount Taishan has never ceased over the past 2,000 years, leaving a vivid legacy of China's development. The Three Gorges on the Yangtze River have attracted so much attention from Chinese poets and artists of all times that they could be called a "gallery of poetry and painting." And the Yellow Mountain, famed as the "miniature garden of God" for its fascinating landscape, has inspired the emergence of new schools of poetry and painting, thus leaving an indelible mark on traditional Chinese culture.

It is impossible to make a full presentation of China's natural beauty in the limited space of this book. While this book could only name a few of the most beautiful places in China, all natural wonders in the country are open to friends from all over the world.



Great Mountains

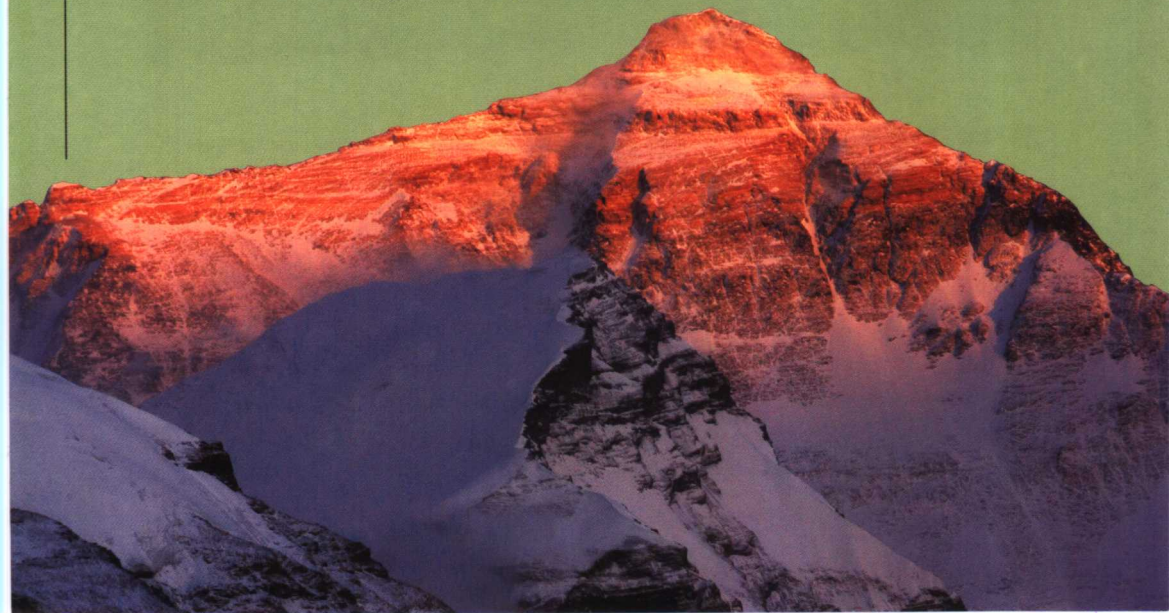


Mount Qomolangma: On Top of the World

Of the many snowy mountains in the Himalayas, the pyramid-shaped Mount Qomolangma, with an elevation of 8,844.43 meters, represents the earth's highest point.

The majestic, pyramid-shaped Mount Qomolangma

The blue sky, white snow and green mountain compose the purest scenery in the world. This may explain why the local Tibetans have always revered





Mount Qomolangma as a “sacred goddess.”

Mount Qomolangma is located on China’s southwest borders, with its southern slope in Nepal and northern slope in China’s Tibet Autonomous Region. The supreme height of Mount Qomolangma is a result of the collision of two major continental plates: the Indian landmass collided with Asia, which resulted in the world’s highest and largest plateau, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The Himalayas, which happened to be on the boundary

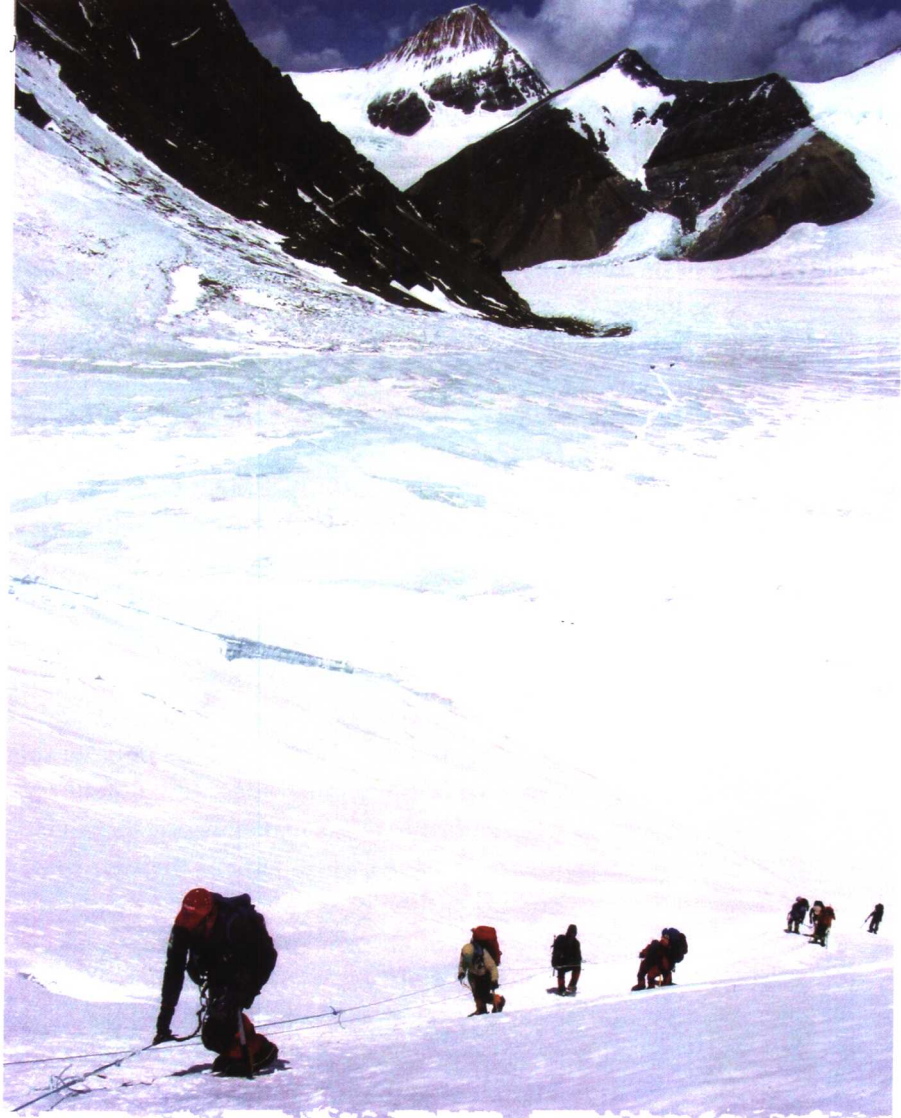
The beautiful Mount Qomolangma has an everlasting charm, because it is the closest point to heaven on earth.

of the two continental plates, was the aftermath of the enormous colliding force, with Mount Qomolangma being its highest peak. Within an area of 20 sq. km around Mount Qomolangma, a wide array of tall, snowy mountains can be found; more than 40 have an elevation exceeding 7,000 meters.

Mount Qomolangma looks most beautiful at daybreak when the sky is clear. Upon sunrise, Mount Qomolangma receives the first ray of light because of its height, while neighboring snowy mountains are still enveloped in darkness. With the white snow and black rocks all bathed in golden sunlight, Mount Qomolangma appears like a god in golden attire, radiating beams atop a vast snowy land. In the Tibetan language, qomo means "goddess" while langma means "third." The locals believe that Mount Qomolangma is the third eldest among four high peaks, or four goddesses in the region; hence, its name.

It is not easy to have a close look at the true face of this mountain. On the north side, the place closest to the peak and still suitable for human activity is located in Tingri County of Tibet, which is more than 6,000 meters above sea level and which now serves as the base camp for mountain climbers. The weather here is extremely inhospitable to humans, and the oxygen level in the air is less than half that at sea level. Even in summer, the region could be struck by hurricane-level snowstorms, the sunlight eclipsed in seconds. As similar sights could only be found in the North and South Poles, Mount Qomolangma is also called "the third pole of the world." Nonetheless, such harsh natural conditions have never kept people from Mount Qomolangma, which, as the world's highest peak, has always been a mecca for climbers across the world. Since the 18th century, numerous teams of climbers have come to its base in an attempt to conquer it. From the 1920s to 1930s, British explorers tried seven times to climb from the north slope, but all failed. Some even lost their lives.

It was not until May 1953 that mankind first left its footprints on the top of the world. New Zealand



mountaineer Edmund Hillary and his sherpa assistant Tenzing Norgay made history as they overcame all kinds of hardship in climbing to the top of Mount Qomolangma from the south slope. In 1960, a Chinese climbing team ascended the peak from the north slope, opening a new climbing route for mountaineers worldwide.

Mount Qomolangma has an everlasting charm, because it is the closest point to heaven on earth.

It is very difficult to climb the steep Mount Qomolangma.

Mount Namjagbarwa: A Myth in the Clouds

A lofty snow peak, Mount Namjagbarwa got its name from a Tibetan word used to describe it in the Tibetan epic King Gesar, which literally means “a spear piercing the sky.”

With clouds and mist surrounding its peak, river valleys at its base and dense forest all around, Mount Namjagbarwa has been selected as “the prettiest peak in China” by scientists, explorers and climbers in the country.

Located in Nyingchi Prefecture southeast to the Tibet Autonomous Region, Mount Namjagbarwa has an elevation of 7,782 meters and is the 15th highest peak in the world. The distance between the top and the foot of Mount Namjagbarwa is just 2 km, but drastic seasonal contrasts—from a freezing winter to a sweltering summer—can be experienced, and a colorful world featuring both white snow and evergreen plants can be seen.

Mount Namjagbarwa is snow-capped year-round, and

Mount Namjagbarwa seems too shy to show its face, as it always hides itself in thick clouds. Only those with utmost sincerity can look at its true face.

