The Land around Mount Paekdu was prosperous and a good place to live. However, it was turned into barren land in a single day because a malicious black dragon swept away the farmers’ fields. The black dragon messed up the irrigation ducts and water with its fiery sword. As a result, all grain in the fields was dried up and died. The fertile land became useless sterile land with cracks all over the place due to the dryness. It became an inhabitable land for humans.

There was a small country nearby Mount Paekdu ruled by the King Ch’ingp’ung. He had a beautiful daughter with many talents. She received many marriage proposals, of course, from princes around the area. However, she rejected all of them. She declared that she would marry a hero who could defeat the black dragon so that the people in her country could be saved from famine.

A general, whose last name was Paek, lived near Mount Paekdu. Although General Paek worked hard to find a stream for his people, it was a useless effort because the black dragon hampered his effort. The black dragon turned a fountain site into a stone every time when the general found a new one. The general was outraged but he had to swallow his anger with a deep sigh. At that moment, a princess appeared in front of his face and told him that he would be strong enough to defeat the black dragon if he would drink the magic water for hundred days. Then, she guided him to the place where the magic water was, and left him. General Paek faithfully drank the magic water for three months and ten days. Just as she told him, he had incredible strength at the end of hundred days.

The princess reappeared and recommended that General Paek climb up to the summit of Mount Paekdu. General Paek shovelled the ground and threw away the dirt. He made a new summit each time when he threw away the dirt. He shovelled sixteen times and threw away the dirt all around him and it became summits around Mount Paekdu. This is the story of the sixteen summits around Mount Paekdu.

At the bottom of the dug ground, spring water underground gushed out like a river. While General Paek and the princess were enjoying their success, the black dragon appeared out of nowhere. In the blink of an eye, the black dragon pierced General Paek’s chest with its fiery sword. With the unex-
pected blow to a vital spot, General Paek collapsed with bleeding heavily. The princess quickly carried him to the place where the magic water was, where he drank the magic water for a hundred days to regain his strength.

The black dragon reappeared when General Paek and the princess had

![Fig. 99 Warriors in a mural painting of Koguryo. Fourth to fifth century.](image1)

![Fig. 100 The appearance of a hero (Lee Chiyŏn. 45.5 x 37.9 cm. Mixed materials on paper. 2004.](image2)