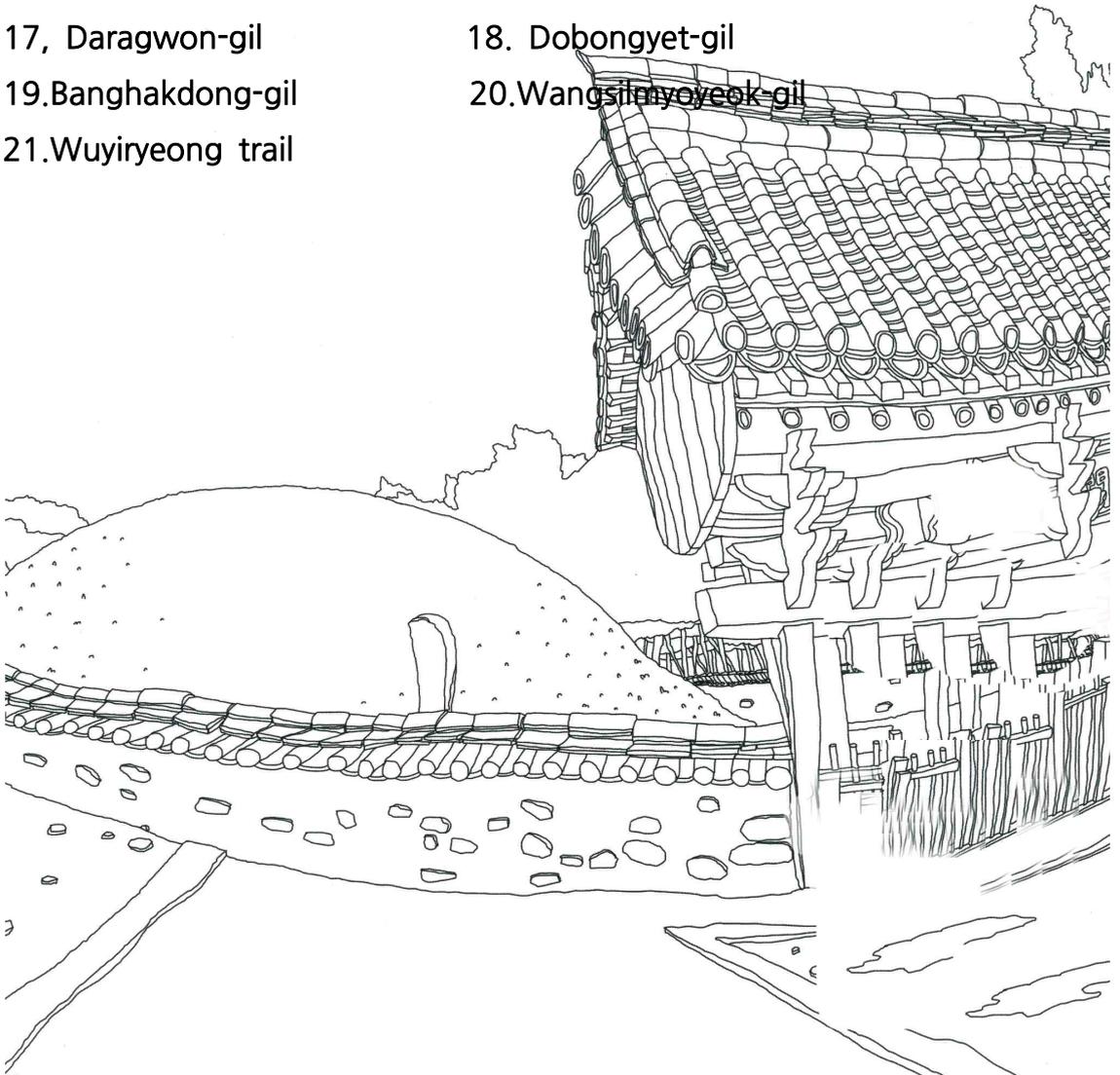


Bukhansan Walking Trails

1. Pine tree forest trail
2. The pilgrimage trail
3. The White Cloud trail
4. Solsaem trail
5. Myeongsang-gil
6. Pyeongchangmaeul-gil
7. Yetseong-gil
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16. Boru-gil
17. Daragwon-gil
18. Dobongyet-gil
19. Banghaktong-gil
20. Wangsimyoyeok-gil
21. Wuyiryong trail



Pine tree forest trail

Pine tree forest trail	1. Pine tree forest trail, the scent of pine
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From now on, we will walk through the fresh pine tree forest.

Pine trees have grown in Korea for a long time. Traditionally, they symbolize longevity and fidelity. Phytoncide, a chemical substance released by pine trees, helps to relieve stress and strengthens the digestive and respiratory systems of the body. The forest road is wide and gentle, allowing everybody to enjoy walking comfortably. This is the only part of Dullegil where you can walk along the valley.

The cheerful sounds of water can be heard from nearby Wuyi Valley, located in between Bukhansan and Dobongsan Mountains, and popular for its beautiful scenery.

The forest trail is about 3.1 kilometers long and it takes around 90 minutes on foot. Shall we start our stroll in the forest?

Pine tree forest trail	2. Bonghwanggak, the home of the independence movement in Korea
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As you walk along the pine tree forest trail, you will see a sign post indicating the way to Bonghwanggak. The building is three minutes' walk from the sign post.

Bonghwanggak was built by a prominent religious leader, Sohn Byeonghee, in 1912. This monastery was built not only to encourage religious piety, but also to educate those who worked for the nation and the people of Korea. Out of the 33 patriots of the 3.1 Independence movement, 15 were educated here. Relics from those days still remain at the building.

Bonghwanggak is now regarded as one of the holy places in the history of Korean independence. We recommend that you visit and have a look around on your way along Dulle-gil.

Shall we stop here for a moment? At the beginning of the trail is the graveyard of Sohn Byeonghee, who was an important leader of Cheondogyo and the 3.1 Movement for the independence of Korea from Japan in 1919.

[Sohn Byeonghee]“God resides in each of us!”

Donghak, the 19th century religion, held the basic principle that everyone has equal rights and deserves respect. Its name was changed to ‘Cheondogyo’, which means ‘Religion of the heavenly way’, and the religion experienced a revival under the leadership of Sohn Byeonghee.

[Sohn Byeonghee]If we continue like this, Donghak will disappear and be forgotten. We have to modify Donghak to keep pace with the changing world.

Sohn was especially interested in the enlightenment movement and attempted to find a way to Korean independence through education by founding tens of schools including Boseong Middle School and Dongdeok Women's School. And he actively worked in the press, founding a publishing company named Boseongsa.

Mr. Sohn was a pioneer in public education and media press. He carefully monitored the changes in international politics and judged that it was the right time to begin an independence movement in Korea. Mr. Sohn led the 3.1 Movement in 1919 and signed the declaration of independence. As a result of the 3.1 Movement, he suffered under Japanese occupation and was imprisoned for three years.

While Mr. Sohn was serving his term in prison, he became so ill that he was eventually released on bail. However, Mr. Sohn died soon after whilst receiving medical treatment. The government decorated him with a posthumous National Foundation Medal in 1962, and his grave was transferred here to Bonghwanggak. Throughout his entire life, Mr. Sohn pursued equal rights for all and the independence of the country.

As the name indicates, the pine tree forest trail has many pine trees. Why don't you take a deep breath in?

Student:Wow! Look at this! So many pine trees!

Teacher:Let's breathe the forest air deeply. How does it make you feel? Isn't it refreshing?

Student:Teacher! I feel really good! But why do I feel so good when I breathe the pine-scented air?

Teacher:Do you want to know?

Student:Yes! Please tell me!

Teacher:It is because the tree releases Phytoncide.

Student:Phytoncide? What is that?

Teacher: Phytoncide is a compound word, with 'phyton' meaning 'plant' and 'cide' meaning 'to kill' in Latin. When Phytoncide enters the body, it has antiseptic properties and helps you to feel relaxed. The pine tree has been growing on the Korean Peninsula for a long time. Have you ever seen pine trees represented on folding screens, ceramics, or in Korean paintings?

Student:Yes!

Teacher:The pine tree lives for over a hundred years and it traditionally symbolizes longevity. The pine trees also keep their needles during the winter so they are evergreen. This is why the pine tree also symbolizes fidelity and faith when it is represented in literature and arts.

Student:I see.

Teacher:Pine trees were also used in practical ways. Koreans used pine tree branches to protect themselves from bad spirits and cooked rice and cakes with pine tree needles. During the cold winters, pine wood was burnt as firewood to heat their houses. The value of the pine tree is immeasurable.

Student:I think the pine tree is a really good tree! It is so useful!

Teacher:Great! Now, we can feel the Phytoncide spreading throughout our bodies. Let's take a deep, deep breath together.

Pine tree forest trail	5. The world of hand-embroidered art
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Park Eulbok Embroidery Museum is located on a quiet street between the Pine Tree forest trail and the Pilgrimage trail.

The museum opened in 2002 to commemorate the artist, Park Eulbok. Ms. Park is the master of traditional Korean hand-embroidery. She was especially good at combining traditional techniques with the style of modern art.

The museum exhibits 40 of her artworks for the public to appreciate. The hand-embroidery displayed here is rare and was unavailable to the public until quite recently.

Furthermore, you can see here the history of Korean traditional hand-embroidery. Visitors are required to pay an admission fee of about \$4 to enter the museum. For more information, please check the museum's official website.

The street from the museum to the Pine Forest is a residential area.

Pine tree forest trail	6. Pine Forest park
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We have now arrived at the Pine Forest park. Large pine tree forests are rare in cities. In this park, there are lots of resting places and facilities including an ecological pond, a walking path alongside a stream and a playground for children.

Along the walking path, you will see monuments to famous poets. We hope you enjoy the time you spend in the Pine Forest Park.

The pilgrimage trail

From now on, we will travel the Pilgrimage trail, commemorating meritorious patriots who fought for the independence of Korea. Along this trail, we can see 11 graves of patriots and 17 graves in the graveyard of the Independence Army.

The trail overlooks the National 4.19 Revolution Democracy Cemetery. By the time we get to the end of the Pilgrimage trail, you will have learnt much information about the modern and contemporary history of Korea.

The Pilgrimage trail offers not only the remains of deceased patriots, but also traditional cultural sightseeing. Especially at Seob Bridge, a temporary style of bridge made with tree branches, adults and children alike will learn about Korean culture.

The trail has only a gentle gradient so anybody can enjoy walking this path.

Why don't we tell you some stories about the commitment of our deceased patriots? Let's go!

Whilst we are walking along the trail, you will suddenly see a broad view of the city. The place over down there is the National 4.19 Revolution Democracy Cemetery.

The 4.19 Revolution Democracy Cemetery is where patriots of the 4.19 Revolution in 1960 rest in peace. The seven-pillar sculpture is the 4.19 Memorial Monument, and the graveyard is at the back.

The graves are of locals, students and even a ten year old child. The democratization of Korea succeeded only by their holy sacrifices. The 4.19 Revolution was the first revolution against the dictatorship in the history of Korea.

This graveyard was simply known as a cemetery park for a long time, but was honored with the title of National Cemetery in 1995. It deserves to be recognized as a genuine holy place of democracy. Now, how did the 4.19 Revolution begin?

Man 1

Be gone! Be gone! We don't need this government with its rigged election and dictators! Be gone!

Man 2

We want true democracy in Korea!

The 19th of April 1960. We call this date Bloody Tuesday. On the morning of the 19th, students declaimed a government declaration and ran out into the streets to denounce the rigged election of the Liberal Party government. However, the police violently suppressed the students and furious locals joined in the demonstration. Seoul city was full of demonstrators claiming democracy for Korea.

Member of the Liberal Party

Riots have broken out! Proclaim martial law right now and arrest those leading the riot!

As the revolution spread quickly over the city, the government proclaimed martial law and opened fire on protestors.

Local 1

The government is killing young students and innocent people!

Local 2

Is this a democratic country, Korea?

Local 1

Yes, you're right! The Liberal Party government should be ousted! Be gone! Be gone!

As the situation worsened President Lee Seungman finally announced his resignation, and democracy started to take root on the peninsula.

This is the grave of Sin Suk. Sin Suk was a Korean independence movement activist. Let's travel back in time to understand his role.

Sin Suk

The Korean Independence Party has worked for the independence of Korea. We have gathered together several independence organizations and our own Independence Army in Manchuria, however, our brothers cannot match the strength of the Japanese and Manchurian defense. As a new strategy, the Independence Party will forge an alliance with the Chinese Nationalist Party and other Korean communities.

Reporter

But there are not many independence activists left in Manchuria. You said that the best strategy is to form an alliance with other Korean communities. But, do you really think you can defeat the dominant Japanese Army in Manchuria?

Sin Suk

If we pray for the victory and don't give up, the day of independence will come.. The heavens will not crush our fervent desires.

Sin Suk devoted himself not only to the independence of Korea, but also to the education and enlightenment movement. He founded schools and worked as the principal in charge. He gave a speech at the 3.1 Movement commemoration ceremony.

After the independence of Korea, he founded the Dongbuk Federation to help displaced Koreans in Manchuria return home. Sin Suk worked in various fields for the independence of his country.

This is where the independent activist, Kim Doyeon, rests in peace. He mostly worked in Tokyo, Japan. Let's see what he says.

Kim Doyeon: We shouldn't just watch this situation unfold! Let's join the fight and work together for the independence of our country!

Brother 1: I agree! Isn't there anyone else interested?

Brother 2: Sure! I will join you!

Kim Doyeon: Great! Let's work together and show the enemy the power and resolve of our students!

This was how it all began. Mr. Kim rallied students studying in Japan and started the independence movement. 224 students joined Mr Kim and they formed a secret organization. They eluded the vigilance of the Japanese police for some time and carefully extended the organization.

Kim Doyeon: Now the Japanese police have become aware of us. I have heard of an English Newspaper which is published here by a British person. Why don't we write an article declaring the independence of Korea? Let's proclaim Korea's independence! Here, in Tokyo, the heart of the enemy!

This was the famous 2.8 Independence Declaration. After the declaration, independence movements silently continued under the leadership of Kim Doyeon. After the independence of Korea, Mr. Kim helped found the New People's Party and worked for the democracy of Korea. He died at the age of 73.

If you follow the road signs, you will see graves of Kim Changsuk, Yang Ildong and Seo Sangil. Let's meet Mr. Kim Changsuk first.

The devoted patriot, Kim Changsuk was born in 1887 and spent his lifetime working for the education movement. As a scholar, he led the independence movement and was crippled from severe torture by the Japanese and long-term imprisonment.

Mr. Kim wrote a petition appealing for a better education system and the independence of Korea, and raised funds to support the independence movement.

Policeman: Tell me who. Who else is in your group?

Kim Changsuk: No matter how much you torture me, I will never tell you even if it means that I will die here!

Policeman: Then you won't be allowed access to legal representation.

Kim Changsuk: As a Korean, I deny Japanese law. I will not contradict my denial of Japanese law therefore I will not rely on a Japanese lawyer. I will never do that!

Kim Changsuk was not daunted and represented himself in court.

The Chief Judge: Where is your hometown?

Kim Changsuk: I have no hometown.

The Chief Judge: Don't defile the sacred court! Where were you born?

Kim Changsuk: I don't have a country now, so how can I say where I was born!

After the trial, Kim Changsuk was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment. Due to long-term imprisonment and torture, his legs were permanently damaged. After the independence of Korea, Kim Changsuk devoted himself to public education and died at the age of 84.

We have arrived at the grave of Yang Ildong. The independence activist, Yang Ildong, was born in 1912.

When he was 16 he was involved in the Gwangju Student Independence Movement in 1929 and was expelled from middle school. He studied abroad in Beijing, and graduated high school there.

He was an activist in the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai and a member of other parties opposing Japanese occupation.

Due to his support of the Korean Provisional Government, Mr. Yang was arrested by the Japanese and imprisoned. After the independence of Korea, Yang Ildong devoted himself to peasant movements and anti-dictatorship activities. Up until his death from a heart attack, he worked for opposition parties for the political democracy of Korea.

A hundred meters above the grave of Yang Ildong is the grave of Seo Sangil. Born in 1887, Mr. Seo Sangil founded the secret organization named Daedong Youth Association to restore the sovereignty of Korea.

In 1910 when Japan annexed Korea with the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty, Seo Sangil organized an extremist group of 9 men and appealed to the ministers of other countries in Seoul against the treaty. He and the eight men planned to commit suicide by disemboweling themselves after the revolt. He was aged only 23.

After their appeal, Mr. Seo built Joyang Hall in Daegu for the use of independence movements and continued his anti-Japanese activities.

The name of Joyang Hall reveals his desire for independence, meaning 'where the morning sun shines' or 'be the light of the Joseon Dynasty'. As he wished, Korea finally became independent of Japan, and he worked as a politician until he died.

Where the morning sun shines... Korea today has benefited by these devoted patriots' desires and sacrifices. We pray for their noble souls for a moment.

On the Pilgrimage trail, you can see Seob Bridge, made with tree branches. Seob Bridge was built for the winter time when it was difficult to cross the river on ferryboats. Because the bridge was only for temporary use, every year during the monsoon season, it was easily washed away.

Building the bridge was the result of traditional community collaboration of our ancestors. When the bridge construction was completed, residents of both villages greeted each other on the bridge.

Senior 1: To celebrate the new Seob Bridge, we should have a party, shouldn't we?

Senior 2: Sure, our village already prepared potatoes and noodles.

Senior 1: Then we will prepare the Kimchi and corn, and how about drinking some rice wine?

Senior 2: That sounds perfect.

I only oppose the compelling power, not the government itself! True anarchy is to deny irresponsible power. I only oppose Japan who violates the sovereignty of Korea by force!”

Can you hear a patriot’s outcry? Here is the grave of Yu Rim who was a true anarchist.

Mr. Yu Rim strongly resisted the Japanese who took anarchism amiss at will. There was a Korean anarchist movement during the Japanese Invasion Period.

Yu Rim joined the independence movement while he was attending a school teaching western culture. After that, Yu Rim exiled himself to Manchuria and fought for the independence of Korea.

Yu Rim:

I will go back to Joseon with anarchism. This will become the ideology with which we will fight against Japanese colonial power.

Yu Rim founded several Korean anarchism organizations from 1925. While preparing for a socialist rally, he was arrested by Japanese police and banished from the city.

Later he was sentenced to five years imprisonment and sent into a second exile. He continued to work for the independence of Korea.

The Independence Army soldier :

Mr. Yu Rim, have you heard the news? Japan finally surrendered itself!

Yu Rim:

What did you say? Finally… finally Joseon liberates from Japan… Oh, oh…

The Independence Army soldier:

Don't waste your time here. Let's return to our country with the provisional government.

After returning to Korea, Yu Rim made efforts to found the independent unified democratic government. He died at the age of 68.

The government decorated him with a posthumous National Foundation Medal in 1962.

The Independence Army soldier 1:

The Japanese just invaded China! I'm afraid that even Manchuria will be under the Japanese control! We should stop them!

The Independence Army soldier 2:

Many Koreans are fighting in Manchuria for the independence of Korea. We should support them. I heard that young men have escaped from the Japanese Army and come to join the Independence Army!

The Independence Army 1:

Let's cooperate with the Chinese Army and fight against the Japanese together! For the independence of Korea!

We are in the joint graveyard of the Independence Army. 17 soldiers who died on the battlefield rest in peace here.

Japan invaded China in 1937 and continued the war until 1945 when World War II ended. At that time, the Independence Army cooperated with the Chinese Army and they fought together against the Japanese forces.

Some young Korean men who had been conscripted to the Japanese Army escaped and walked for thousands of kilometers in order to find and join the Independence Army. Because the identities of these 17 soldiers are unknown, the grave is communal.

The bodies of fallen Korean soldiers couldn't all be returned from China, but we should remember their courage and devotion here. Let us have a moment's silence for our fallen patriots.

This is the grave of the first vice-President of Korea, Yi Siyoung.

When Japan forcefully annexed Korea in 1910, he refused all Japan's proposals and moved to Manchuria to lead the independence movement. He suffered severe torture at the hands of the Japanese and endured long periods of hardship.

Let's listen to the brothers Yi Siyoung and Yi Hoeyoung talking about exile.

Yi Siyoung:

Now we have lost our country. What is the use of all these assets and reputations? Isn't it better to move to Manchuria and join the independence movement there? I will never be a slave to Japanese imperialism!

Yi Hoeyoung (a slightly older man):

Siyoung is right. We can raise funds by disposing of our land and houses.

Yi Siyoung:

Yes, my brother! Let's free all the servants of the house and let them go back to their hometowns.

The family of Yi Siyoung was one of the respectful noble families of the Joseon Dynasty and was preeminently wealthy in those days. However, when Japan colonized Korea in 1910, 6 brothers and 60 family members left their hometown to fight for the independence of Korea.

Yi Siyoung:

Though all my brothers lived difficult lives here and died, it was for the independence of our country. Not to make their deaths in vain, I will fight until I die.

He supported the founding of the Korean Provisional Government and worked as the Chief of Justice and the Chief of Finance. Because all of his brothers died in prison or on the battlefields, he returned to Korea alone when Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945.

Later he was elected as the first vice-President of Korea, however, he was angered by the undemocratic conduct of the government and refused to take part in their politics. Yi Siyoung devoted himself to national unification up until his death. His noble sentiments are still valued today.

The pilgrimage trail	12. Leaders of the public, Shin Ikhee and Shin Hagyun
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Mr. Shin Ikhee entered the department of politics and economics at Waseda University. He organized a secret group for independence. He also published a magazine for the Korean independence movement.

Shin Ikhee:

Today, members of the Sina Alliance swear to heaven. We swear to fight for Korea's independence until we die.

He worked as an independent activist not only in Japan, but also in Korea. He led the traditional education revival for Koreans of all ages using his background of education in Japan.

Shin Ikhee:

If we Koreans accept and learn modern sciences earlier than the Japanese, and are inspired with national pride, we can forge ahead of the Japanese in everything!

In the meantime, Shin Ikhee started a new movement inspiring patriotism and nationalism to rebel against Japanese Imperialism. In addition, he planned an independent militia and supported the 3.1 Movement in 1919.

Unfortunately, the joy of independence in 1945 was short lived. Soon, the Korean War broke out in 1950. Shin Ikhee couldn't accept the war between the divided Korea for any reason.

Shin Ikhee:

If we endure these hardships and fight until the end, the victory is ours. Fifty countries of the world support us, and the justice of human history is on our side.

Mr. Shin Ikhee insisted that justice triumphed over other trials. He declared the statement in Seoul to encourage the national spirit of

self-reliance.

Mr. Shin emphasized that democracy applies to and equalizes all people and that the country should belong to the people. Many people gathered to listen to his excellent speech and finally, he was nominated for the Korean presidency.

His son, Shin Hagyun, was also a passionate patriot who devoted himself to the independence movement. When Shin Ikhee worked in Shanghai for the Korean Provisional Government, Shin Hagyun moved there to join in his father's work. He was in charge of translation in the General Staff Office.

After his father's death, Shin Hagyun stood as an independent candidate for the by-election of Gwangju City. After that, he successively held the third, fifth and sixth Member of the National Assembly. Just like his father, Mr. Shin Hagyun also devoted himself to the country until his death.

The White Cloud trail

The White Cloud trail	1. Hwagyesa Temple, where peaceful sutra chanting resonates
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Along the White Cloud trail, you will come across Hwagyesa Temple where peaceful sutra chanting resonates. Hwagyesa Temple is located in dense forests near downtown Seoul.

With the support of the Joseon Dynasty, Hwagyesa Temple was continuously developed. It is especially related to Heungseon Daewongun. There is a story about him and his second son, King Gojong's succession to the throne. One summer day, Daewongun visited Hwagyesa Temple while thinking about the next king. He was thirsty and tried to find a pond. As he looked, a young monk under the zelkova tree gave him a cup of water, as if he had waited there for Daewongun.

Heungseon Daewongun: Who are you? How did you know that I was thirsty?

The young monk: I just followed an order from the priest, Manin.

Heungseon Daewongun: Manin? Oh, that is interesting. Do you know where he is?

Daewongun was curious about the coincidence and visited Manin. Manin already knew what Daewongun was considering and advised him how to find the next king.

Manin: The next king will be born nearby the golden pagoda of Gaya Temple in Deoksan, Chungcheong Province. If you remove your father, Namyonggun's, grave to that temple, soon you will have a son and he will be king.

Daewongun took the priest's advice and moved his father's tomb to Gaya Temple in Deoksan. Seven years later, he had a second son who later became the 26th king of the Joseon Dynasty, King Gojong. Because of this, Daewongun donated funds to Hwagyesa Temple and left lots of handwritten documents inside the temple buildings.

In 1933, nine masters of Korean literature including Yi Hwiseung and Choi Hyunbae stayed here together and wrote the draft for a standardised spelling system for written Korean language.

The White Cloud trail	2. The cloud observatory, seeing the great view
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While walking along the White Cloud trail, you will come to the cloud observatory. The 12 meter long observatory is one of the best observatories of the Dulle-gil course along with the Skywalk Observatory on the Cloud Garden trail.

From the observatory, you can see a beautiful view of Seoul and the ridges of Bukhansan Mountain. On the left you can see Gangbuk, Dobong and Nowon-gu. At the far right are the Seongbuk and Jungrang-gu districts of Seoul.

Behind them are Dobongsan, Suraksan and Bulamsan Mountains at the far left and more mountains in front.

Under the observatory is Suyu Village, meaning ‘the place where the water from Bukhansan Mountain flows’.

On the handrail of the observatory, there are photo details and information about the areas you can see. We hope you enjoy your time at the observatory.

When you arrive in the valley, you will see flat stones under the bridge. Do you know what the stones were used for? And why this place is called the 'washing valley'?

Palace maid 1:I told you. To receive favors from the king, we need to endure the cold water and wash the laundry. Brrr, it's so cold!

Palace maid 2:Why do we have so much laundry today? It is quite unusual.

Palace maid 1:Haven't you heard the news? Next month is the Queen Mother's 60th birthday! Before returning to the palace, we need to finish all of this laundry in preparation for her birthday celebrations.

Palace maid 2:Aha, I see. I guess the palace kitchen will also be very busy from tomorrow.

Palace maid 1:Brrr it's so cold! Let's finish quickly and go back!

Palace maid 2:Yes, we should. Hurry up!

Did you enjoy the story? For a long time, this place was famous for having a great volume of clean water. As such, the palace maids used the area as a place for doing laundry and resting. That is how the name 'washing valley' came about.

Up until the 1960s and 1970s, this area was used to do laundry. The flat stones were used as washboards in those days. Palace maids gossiped here about their difficult lives in the palace, just like normal women of the villages. Can you imagine the scene here as it was years ago?

Solsaem trail

Solsaem trail	1. Solsaem trail, pine trees and a spring
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From now on, we will look around the Solsaem, meaning ‘pine spring’, trail. Of all of the Dulle-gil, this course has especially good views over the city.

The Solsaem trail links with the Bukhansan Mountain Ecological Forest. The Bukhansan Mountain Ecological Forest has a Wild Flower Garden and an Ecology Center which provides forest tour guides to visitors.

Visitors can easily enjoy the scenery and rest in places. The Solsaem trail is at an altitude of 200 meters so you can enjoy the view over the city. The road of the forest park continues to the street behind Jeongreung Elementary School.

There, you can see old traditional-style houses and temples in Jeongreung Village.

The Solsaem trail is 2.1 kilometers and has only a gentle gradient. It takes approximately an hour to walk and is suitable for both children and seniors.

We hope you will feel relaxed and refreshed here. Shall we start walking?

Solsaem trail	2. Solsaem Spring, the headspring
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In the corner of the Wild Flower Garden, which is on the way from the ecological park to White Cloud trail, is the source of Solsaem Spring.

There used to be a pure spring here called Solsaem, but now we can only see the information signpost. The board provides information about the origin of Solsaem spring and explains that it flows from Mt. Bukhan and is surrounded by pine trees.

Although the pine-scented spring is no longer visible, just thinking of the clean water makes us feel refreshed.

Solsaem trail	3. The Nut Pine Tree and the treasure Phytoncide
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Nut Pine Trees grow in the Bukhansan Mountain Ecological Forest. Shall we go to the forest together?

Can you feel how fresh the air is in the ecological park? The reason is because there are so many trees. People feel good amongst trees and this is known as the therapeutic effect of the forest.

The nut pine trees release Phytoncide which strengthens immunity and makes people feel relaxed. Phytoncide is the chemical that the trees release into the air to protect themselves from insects and harmful microorganisms. The word 'Phytoncide' is a combination of 'phyton' meaning 'plant' and 'cide' meaning 'to kill' in Latin.

Trees with needles rather than broad leaves, release the highest concentrations of Phytoncide. This is why we feel so good in this dense Nut Pine Tree forest. Let's listen to what the Nut Pine Tree over there is talking about.

Solsaem trail	4. The origin of Jeongneung
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Tour Guide :

We have now arrived at Jeongneung -dong where the royal tomb of Queen Sindeok is located. The name of the area is derived from the name of the tomb, Jeong-neung. Queen Sindeok was the second wife of the founder of the Joseon Dynasty, King Taejo Yi Seonggye. When the queen passed away, King Taejo sought out an auspicious location for her tomb, and built it near to the palace. Furthermore, the King ordered a temple be built to pray for the queen's soul. It was reputed that King Taejo ate breakfast only after listening to the sound of the temple bells, indicating that the Buddhist service for the queen had taken place.

Tourist:

Wow, it is a touching story. King Taejo must have ardently loved Queen Sindeok. By the way, I heard there's also a sad story about Jeongneung . What is it?

Tour Guide:

It took place after the queen had died.

Tour Guide:

When King Taejo was considering potential successors to the throne, the son of his first wife, Yi Bang-Won, was a strong candidate. His first wife had played an important role when they founded the dynasty together. However, the king deemed the son of Queen Sindeok heir to the throne, not Yi Bang-Won. Yi was both jealous and furious, and when Queen Sindeok passed away, he killed his half brother, the crown prince.

Tourist:

What a tragedy.

Tour Guide:

So at last Yi Bang-Won came to the throne by force and he removed the tomb of Queen Sindeok from Seoul. The stones of the tomb were used to build a bridge over Cheonggye Stream and thus people trampled over them.

Tourist:

Ah! It really hurts.

Tour Guide:

Fortunately, the status of Queen Sindeok was restored 260 years later, and the tomb was also reconstructed and remains until today.

Her ancestral tablet was installed in Jongmyo which is the royal shrine of the Joseon Dynasty. When the grand sacrificial rite was held, it rained heavily as if to console the sorrow of the queen.

Tourist:

Ah, now I know the story of the tomb of Queen Sindeok. It makes me sad to hear it. I can only hope the tomb will be well-preserved and not suffer again in the future.

Myeongsang-gil

Myeongsang-gil	1. Feel the Essence of Korean Mountain on the Myeongsang-gil
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The Myeongsang-gil is the fifth section in the Bukhansan National Park, and it penetrates the deep valley of Bukhansan Mountain.

It should be a very special experience to walk in a typical forest of Korea so close to the busy urban city of Seoul.

This section is recommended for those who enjoy both walking and mountain climbing.

The name of this section, Myeongsang-gil, literally means the Meditation Path. In Asia, meditation is valued as a peaceful form of training one's inner self, so it suggests that that you can look into your inner self inside the peaceful forest.

If you do not walk or exercise regularly, it is recommended that you start out from Jeongneung and visit the Bukhansan National Park Hiking Information Center. The center provides detailed information on Bukhansan, as well as maps and information on the Bukhansan Dulegil, so you will get invaluable help for your trip.

When you start out from Jeongneung, the path is quite steep at the beginning, but only for a short distance.

The Myeongsang-gil is connected to many forks in the road that take you to renowned places in Seoul such as Cheonggyecheon Stream and Gwanghwamun Gate.

If you're looking for a unique trip, you can head in whichever direction takes your fancy at one of the forked sections.

Now, let's begin our trip!

If you begin your Myeongsang-gil trip from Jeongneung, there's one place you must visit. Even if you start out from the opposite direction, be sure not to miss this place.

It is the Bukhansan National Park Hiking Information Center.

This building looks very different from traditional Korean buildings.

If you've seen a traditional Korean house, you'll feel that this two-story building is completely different from what you'd imagine. And your intuition would be right.

This building is built in the Ryokan-style of traditional inns of our close neighbor, Japan.

It was constructed by the Japanese in the 1910s, when Korea was under Japanese colonial rule. In other words, this building is one of the few vestiges from that part of our history.

It was first used as a mansion for Japanese people. After Korea's liberation from Japan, it was used as a civilian house. But when the Korean War began, it was used as a barracks for the Korean Army's Special Forces. After the war, it was also used as a classy bar, and served as the background to a Korean novel which describes Korea's chaotic society in the period immediately after the Korean War.

Currently, this building is used as a modern information center, which provides lots of useful information on Bukhansan and the Dulegil. At this center, you can get information on the animal and plant species living in the Bukhansan area, the various hiking paths, as well as maps of the Dulegil.

You can also obtain simple first-aid information for dealing with emergency situations on the mountain.

This information center is the ideal place to learn about Bukhansan, the representative mountain of Seoul.

Did you start out from the Bukhansan National Park Hiking Information Center?

I imagine it was a bit difficult walking up through the valley. Stop for a while and take a deep breath.

Now, you are at the Myeongsang-gil Observatory, where you can enjoy the magnificent view of Bukhansan.

If you haven't taken a photo yet, it'd be a good idea to take one here.

Take a look around at the trees. There are many traditional Korean pine trees here. Pine trees have needle-like leaves that are green throughout four seasons, and are regarded as a symbol of hope and fidelity by the Korean people.

The Korean name of the pine tree is "sonamu" or "sol". "Sol" has the hidden meaning of "leader." Perhaps people were trying to say that the pine tree is the leader of all trees, the best tree in the world.

The traditional pine tree of Korea has a red trunk. It grows slow, but develops fine wood. With its tenacious life force, Korean pine trees even grow on unstable land including cliff tops.

Since ancient times the pine tree has been very useful in Korea.

When people built palaces around 300 years ago during the Joseon Dynasty, only traditional red pine trees were used. The red pine tree is straighter and sturdier than other trees, making it an ideal construction material.

Even today, people who want to build the best wooden buildings want to use Korean pine trees.

You've arrived at a quiet Bugak Rest Area. If you've brought some food with you, this is a good place to eat it. There's also a restroom nearby. If you have enough time, how about straying off the beaten path for a bit?

If you walk about 300 meters from the rest area up the road towards the mountain in the opposite direction of the Dulegil, you'll see a small Buddhist hermitage named 'Simgogam,' which means 'a hermitage in a deep valley.'

If you go up a little bit more, passing this hermitage, you will see a rock that resembles a seal. It's called Mulgaebawi, or Seal Rock. There's a legend about this place that has been passed down for several generations.

Narration: During the late Joseon Dynasty, a man called Kim and his wife couldn't have a son. During that time, people thought that without a son, the family legacy would die. It was a truly desperate time for Kim. Kim's wife prayed to Buddha every day.

Kim's wife: Dear Buddha, please give me a son.

Narration: One night, Kim's wife saw an old man with white hair in her dream.

Old man: I'll grant you your wish. On that high and deep mountain, there's a big tree. Find the nearby rock that looks like a seal and pray there.

Narration: Kim's wife wandered around the rough mountain. Finally, she found the rock that looks like a seal, and prayed with the utmost devotion. Neither rain nor thunder could make her leave the spot.

One rainy day, when she was praying, a white bird flew up to the sky right in front of her. A few days later, Kim's wife was pregnant with a son.

Since then, the Seal Rock of this hermitage has been known as the rock that grants you a son.

Bukhansan Mountain is home to many legends concerning rocks. Can you see the big rock with letters carved on it next to the road? These rocks also have their own legends.

This rock is carved with Chinese characters, and was named ‘Turtle Rock’ because of its shape. There are also other Chinese characters next to it. The letter says Nakgu, which is a land that only exists in Chinese legend. The letters try to tell people that this is a special place.

If you walk further up the road next to the two rocks, you’ll see Gubogam Hermitage. Its name literally means ‘a fortunate turtle,’ and it was named after Turtle Rock. This hermitage was built by a monk in 1960. The monk prayed for a long time and wandered around the country trying to find a good place to build a Buddhist temple. Then, one night, he was told in his dream to find a rock that resembled a turtle. But no matter how long he walked around the mountain searching for the rock, he couldn’t find it. As he was walking down the mountain in dismay, the skies suddenly opened and it poured with rain. So he took shelter below a rock to avoid the rain, and eventually realized the very rock looked like a turtle. That’s why he built Gubogam in this location.

There is a small shrine called Chilseonggak inside this hermitage. This shrine houses the traditional gods of Korea’s folk religion. The gods here help you increase wealth, improve your skills, prolong your life, and enjoy abundant harvest..

Chilseonggak means “a shrine that houses seven stars” in Chinese characters. Following its name, Chilseonggak has the carving of Big Dipper on the cliff. The Big Dipper is a constellation of seven stars originally from the west, and east meets west in this hermitage.

Pyeongchangmaeul-gil

Pyeongchangmaeul-gil	1. Pyeongchangmaeul-gil, Home to Many Artists
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The Pyeongchangmaeul-gil section is relatively longer than the other sections, but it's also relatively flat. When you walk on the path along the mountain ridge, you'll see countless houses to your south. Also, the mountain to the north will appear so close to you that you'll feel like you can touch it. This section truly presents a unique experience.

Since ancient times, Koreans have believed in feng shui theory, which is a system of geomancy. According to feng shui theory, the good fortune of a piece of land could be determined by its topography, and this particular place in the Pyeongchangmaeul-gil should bring wealth. Around 600 years ago, during the early days of the Joseon Dynasty, this location fulfilled the predictions of feng shui. There was once a large storage facility, and rice paid as a form of taxation by Joseon people was stored here.

Also, currently, there are many artistic places around the Pyeongchangmaeul-gil, because many artists used to live in this area. If you have time, it would be nice to visit some of the many cultural spaces around here.

However, there's one thing we must ask of you. The Pyeongchangmaeul-gil is very close to a residential area, so please keep noise to a minimum so as not to disturb the residents.

Now, let's start our trip to the Pyeongchangmaeul-gil.

If you walk slowly along the path between the residential area and Bukhansan Mountain, you'll see an elegant wooden gate. This is the entrance to a Buddhist temple called Yeonhwajeongsa.

Once inside the temple, you'll enjoy very different views from those you saw outside. You can see the whole Pyeongchang-dong area at a glance. Actually, this temple is famous for its view of Seoul. On a clear day, you can even see Hangang River to the south as it winds its way through Seoul.

If you open your eyes wide, you will see the glistening waters of the Hangang.

This area in which Yeonhwajeongsa is located satisfies all the conditions for an excellent spot according to feng shui theory, a form of oriental study that predicts the energy of a landscape by its shape. Although high mountains surround this area, they do not block out the sunlight.

People who study feng shui say that the energy of the "white tiger and blue dragon" reside here. In times past, the white tiger and the dragon were thought to be mysterious creatures with magical powers in Asia. The high peak to the right, called Bohyeonbong, radiates with the energy of the white tiger, while Hyeongjebong, to the left, radiates the energy of the dragon.

There are many different denominations within Buddhism. Yeonhwajeongsa belongs to the denomination that praises Amitabha Buddha, who resides in the heavens to the west and delivers his wisdom and mercy to the people.

If you walk down the stairway, you'll see a white Buddha statue in the temple yard. It's a statue of Amitabha Buddha.

Buddhism was brought to Korea and became widespread a long time ago. Even if you don't know much about Buddhism, the scenery and the serene face of the Buddha statue will give you a peace of mind.

Keep the peace and warmth within you, and let's continue on our trip.

Pyeongchangmaeul-gil	4. Large Storage Facility Once Located in This Village
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You're walking in Pyeongchang-dong right now. The name of the town, "Pyeongchang" originally referred to a grain storage that was situated here about 300 years ago.

Back then, Korea was a feudal nation called Joseon, and its capital, Hanseong, was much smaller than today's Seoul. We are now standing in the western area outside the ancient capital of Hanseong.

The kings of Joseon stored large amounts of grain to feed the people in the event of famine or war. Although there were four storage facilities inside the palace, another one was built here to store military food supplies after the construction of Bukhansanseong Fortress. There was so much rice stored in this region that the capital's residents could be fed for months with it.

Today, many wealthy people and artists reside in this area. Scholars who believe in the energy of the land say that the special geographical energy here contributes to it. They say the energy of the white tiger resides here, and the white tiger is associated with art and wealth in Asia.

Another place which can be compared to this region is the nearby Seongbuk-dong. It is believed that the energy of the blue dragon resides there. The blue dragon symbolizes men, and is associated with honor and public office. Maybe that's the reason why many politicians and embassies are actually located in Seongbuk-dong.

What do you think? This place is special in terms of Korean history and Asian feng shui geomancy.

An immense grain storage facility used to be situated here, and artistic energy flows all around the area!

Immerse yourself in the waves of energy of the white tiger.

If you look northwest from the Pyeongchangmaeul-gil, you'll always see one particular mountain peak. It is called Bohyeonbong, and it rises to a height of 714m.

On clear days, you can even see it from northern Seoul, Namsan Mountain, Gwanghwamun Gate, and Euljiro in the city.

This mountaintop looks down on the whole of Seoul.

The mountaintop can tell you how Seoul was selected as the capital of Korea. About 600 years ago, a Buddhist monk named Muhak was charged with selecting the capital of the Joseon Dynasty. He travelled around Korea to find the best location for the nation's capital.

First, he climbed up the mountain called Bibong, which is located north of here. He thought that the area below Bibong would be an excellent location for the capital. However, he unexpectedly found a memorial stone at the summit of the mountain.

The stone bore the following words: 'A monk named Muhak will come here one day. This is the wrong place.'

The person who carved the words on the stone lived during the Silla Period, many centuries before the Joseon Dynasty. That person was a Buddhist monk named Doseon. He had a special ability to predict the future, and left the stone there to prevent a crucial mistake.

After reading the stone, Muhak decided to obey the prediction.

He realized that he had made a wrong choice, and continued his search for the capital location.

Finally, he came to Bohyeongbong and selected the capital of Joseon.

A monk who predicted far into the future, and another monk who followed his advice - it's all too amazing to believe. An old legend hides behind the story of how Seoul came to be the capital of Korea today.

Shall we take a little detour from the Dulegil section?

If you walk down the stairs to the left at the end of the hill, you'll see a two-story building. It is a shrine that houses a mountain god. The mountain behind you is Bohyeonbong, and this shrine houses the mountain god of Bohyeon.

There are so many people living around here today that they almost cover the mountain ridge, but it used to be just a high, lonely mountain in the past. People who lived below the mountain believed that the mountain god protected their village. So they built a shrine to honor their god, and held rituals twice a year, in spring and fall, and boiled an entire pig for the god. The ritual is still performed to this day.

You will see a painting of the mountain god inside the building. This impressive painting of an old man standing next to a tiger welcomes you to the shrine.

In the distant past people believed that the mountain god had a wife, and built a shrine to house the lady mountain god as well. If you walk down about 50m from here, you will also see the shrine built to honor the mountain god's wife. Sadly, the original building was destroyed in a fire during the Korean War and it was only rebuilt in 1970. Fortunately, the painting of the lady mountain god, which dates back to 1923, was preserved.

It's a traditional custom in Korea to honor the mountain god of a mountain village and the sea god in a coastal village. People feared nature and humbled themselves before it. It seems to be true everywhere we go in the world. 😊

Yetseong-gil

Yetseong-gil	1. Imagine Old Seoul As You Walk Along the Yetseong-gil
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The Yetseong-gil passes by the fortress wall dating back to the old Seoul of the 1700s. The fortress was built to protect the capital following invasions by Japan and China.

As you walk alongside the wall, you'll pass a secret gateway of the fortress originally built only for soldiers. When you reach the fortress site, you will be able to imagine the size of Seoul some 300 years ago. You'll quickly see that it was then much smaller than it is now.

Another special feature of this section is its outstanding scenery. During your walk, you'll notice a number of peaks along the southern ridge of Bukhansan Mountain, which bring to mind one the major themes of Oriental painting. This section has the best scenery of the many sections of the Dulegil.

You'll also be able see the vast urban expanse of western Seoul very well from this section. You'll feel the energy of a busy and dynamic, densely crowded Seoul. Residents from nearby towns frequently visit this road for exercise. It is always busy with people, so learn a few Korean phrases before you try to make a Korean friend.

When starting your walk from Gugi-dong, the path is flat apart from a short incline. However, the path down to Rose Park is slippery, so take care not to fall.

You should also be careful when walking up the section from Hongji-dong.

Shall we set out on a trip to old Seoul?

The fortress in front of you is the highlight of this section. It's one of the most valuable historic sites and is protected by the laws of Seoul.

The fortress was built in 1718, after an invasion by Japan and a war with China. After these crises, feudal Korea needed to provide better protection for the capital, which was the king's seat and main residence. Although some fortresses had already been built, this one was built in the western region. This location was particularly important in military terms because the wartime food supply was stored here.

Although the fortress was built in preparation for war, its name "Tangchundaeseong" is very peaceful - meaning "to enjoy the spring". There used to be a banquet hall for the king near here, and the fortress was named after it.

The gate that you're passing through right now was a secret gate intended only for soldiers. During war or crisis, military supplies were transported through this gate.

Are you enjoying your walk? Hold on a minute. Why not sit down and take a rest on the wooden chair in front of the huge rock? From here, you can clearly see the ridge of Bukhansan Mountain.

Among the many rocky peaks, can you see one that looks like a circular cone?

Its name is Bibong, and it looks like many small and big rocks are stacked up together.

An ancient kingdom called “Silla” once prospered in the southern region of the Korean Peninsula about 1300 years ago. When Silla expanded her territory as far as here, the people of Silla built a memorial stone at Bibong. For many years, the memorial stone stood there without anyone deciphering its meaning. Finally, in 1817, a scholar of the Joseon Dynasty discovered what it meant. After standing there for another 150 years, the stone was moved to a museum in 1972. Now, only a replica of the stone stands at Bibong.

If you look eastwards from Bibong, you will see a quadrangular rock on top of a gigantic rock. This rock conceals the sad love story of a young man.

The Qing Dynasty of China invaded the Korean Peninsula in 1636.

The young man went to the battlefield to protect his country. The man had a fiancé he was preparing to marry, but the soldiers of Qing Dynasty took her away.

After the war, the young man returned to his home, but his fiancé had disappeared. Although he found her later, he couldn't see her again. Every day, he stared towards China from that mountaintop, and eventually he turned into a rock.

Because the rock looks like the young man wearing an old-style hat called a samo, the rock is called Samobawi.

After passing Turtle Mineral Spring in the Rose Garden and a crosswalk, you'll arrive at Bukhansan Ecological Park, the starting point or end point of the Yetseong-gil. Here, you'll find a small pond, a gazebo to rest in, and a wooden bridge. If you look at the floor, you'll see blue lines indicating the Dulegil. Follow the line to continue to the eighth section, the Gureumjeongwon-gil, which starts at Bulgwangsa Temple.

At the Ecological Park, which is located below Bukhansan Mountain, don't forget to take a close look at the small pond in it. In addition to reeds, Russian irises, and lotus flowers, you will also see a host of small insects that can't be found in the city.

This pond is kept continually clean with an eco-friendly system.

Now let me tell you a bit about sansuyu, one of the many species of tree found in the park.

Sansuyu has powerful survival skills and can even grow in infertile soil. The tree blooms yellow flowers during spring and gives birth to red fruits that look like cherries in autumn. Sansuyu is commonly seen on the mountains of Korea.

In particular, the fruit of sansuyu are used for medicinal purposes in Korea, as it lowers body heat and maintains health. These days many people today drink a health beverage made from this fruit.

Seoul is the biggest and most densely populated city in the world. However, the city is now building many parks in a bid to maintain a green and healthy Seoul.

Gureumjeongwon-gil

This section takes you from downtown Seoul to the outside, or from Gyeonggi-do to downtown Seoul if you walk the other way.

This path starts with a granite rocky path, and then continues through sky walk on the air and a dense pine forest. At the end, you can also visit a historic site and a quiet temple on this walk, and a number of other interesting attractions.

The most enjoyable places on this section are the Sky Observatory and the Sky Walk. With the glorious scenery of Bukhansan Mountain behind you, you can look down on the western part of Seoul.

Seoul is globally known for its high population density, and you'll be able to see its spectacle here.

This section is a little longer than the others, so make sure to prepare some snacks and something to drink so that you can sit down and fill yourself up at the rest station midway along the section. Now, shall we start?

You are at Bulgwangsa Temple now. This temple is located in a sunny valley. Although it only takes short walk up from the village, this temple feels like it's in the middle of a quiet forest.

The name of this temple "Bulgwang" means "Buddha's light" in Korean and it was named after the name of nearby village. Back in the olden days, there were many temples here, so it was called Bulgwang-dong to indicate that "Buddha's light dwells here."

Along with the temple, there are many big rocks which offer good cover. That's why rebels once hid up here and planned a coup d'état during the Joseon Period. The coup was planned about 400 years ago. At that time, Joseon was a feudal nation, and there were many subjects who were discontented with the king. As it happens, there was a prince who could replace the king, so some subjects began to discuss the possibility of staging a coup. In order to meet in secret, they first pretended to be suffering from an infectious disease and hung around this area. Naturally, people wanted to avoid being infected by them, so they stopped coming around here. After establishing a safe secret meeting place in this way, they finally completed their plan to overthrow the king.

Later, the coup succeeded, and the new king praised their courage.

He named this place Deokbawigol, which means "the village with rocks of fortune."

This is the Sky Observatory, the highlight of the Gureumjeongwon-gil.

You can see all of western Seoul to your southwest, including Eunpyeong-gu, an area in the western part of Seoul, that houses around 500,000 people. Indeed, Seoul is home to one of the largest populations in the world.

On a bright, clear day, you can see the World Cup Stadium and Mok-dong New Town from here as well.

If you've brought a camera with you, this is a good place to take a photo.

If you look north from the Sky Observatory, you'll see a pedestrian overpass. The name of this bridge is Sky Walk. Pillars were installed on top of the bedrock, and a wooden path was built on top of that. This path is built 60m above the land in the air.

At the end of the Sky Walk, you will see some large stacks of granites to your right. The topographical term "Tor" is used to name rocks that are stacked up like a tower. The word originates from an English dialect word for "a stone tower that stands straight."

On this Dulegil, you can clearly observe the changing topographical features.

If you look carefully, you'll see trees whose roots have penetrated into the cracks in rocks. Nature is truly amazing.

Seollimsa Temple was built in 1966 with donations from a refugee who came down to South Korea after the Korean War.

As you walk through the entrance into Seollimsa, you'll see a two-story building. There is a painting on the outer wall of this building depicting a young monk finding a cow.

According to Buddhist doctrine, 'finding one's mind is like finding a cow'. Variations on this theme can be seen in many temple paintings.

In the painting, the young monk first locates the footprints left by a cow. After looking at the cow, he finally approaches it and starts a quarrel to tame it while holding onto the reins. Finally, he rides on the cow's back and returns while playing the pipe. In Buddhism this describes the procedure of finding the solution to a difficult mind.

Do you understand it? Try to look into this mysterious painting of Asian religion, and answer the question inside your mind.

This is an 'ecological bridge'. Unfortunately, animals are frequently killed by cars. In order to prevent these accidents, Korea now builds many of these 'ecological bridges' to enable animals to cross the path safely.

If you look east from below this bridge, you'll see a well-organized tomb. Let's go there.

This tomb belongs to Prince Hwau, the ninth son of King Sejong of the Joseon Dynasty.

King Sejong is one of the most respected figures for Koreans, as he created Hangeul, Korea's scientifically-conceived alphabet. Prince Hwau was also very bright, and actively helped his father create Hangeul.

Unfortunately, the prince didn't live an easy life. After his father passed away, he was caught up in political struggles and was eventually banished. Though he was young, he held on to his principles to the end.

In the topmost section, the prince and his wife lie together in a tomb. And below that are the tombs of his son and great-grandson. If you look closely at the pattern carved on the tombstone, you'll see that it depicts a cloud that surrounds the sun. On the rear side of the tombstone, you can see a dark moon hidden behind a cloud.

The painting depicts the faith of the young prince, who died before he could fulfill his dream.

Masil-gil

Masil-gil	1. Rustic Charm As If You're Walking to Meet a Neighbor, Masil-gil
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The Masil-gil is the ninth section of Dulegil. 'Masil' is a word from regional dialect meaning 'village' or 'hang out'. A friendly village culture has existed in Korea since ancient times, as neighbors freely shared their food and grew close to one another. However, this unique culture is quickly dying out due to Korea's rapid industrialization, and Koreans are now more nostalgic about these community cultures than ever before.

Nostalgia for the small community culture gave birth to this section. You can comfortably walk along this road as if you're visiting a neighbor. It's a short course that takes about an hour, as well as the flattest road of the eighteen Bukhansan Dulegil sections.

At the Jingwan Wildlife Sanctuary, you can see various swamp organisms. And very near here, there's also a Korean royal tomb. You'll also encounter a forked road that leads to a temple of great historic importance. Why not pay a visit the temple and experience the Buddhist culture of Korea? It'll leave you wonderful memories.

We recommend that you take your time on this section.

You'll see large zelkova trees that are about 250 years old. They create shade all year round. Under the zelkova trees, you'll see a swamp filled with innumerable reeds. This area was selected as a "wildlife sanctuary" in 2010.

This area protects vulnerable species that are found only in Northeast Asia, including Korea. One of them is Dybowski's frog. It's about 4 to 7cm in length. It has an irregular pattern on its back, and a grey patch on its belly. These frogs inhabit Korea, Japan, and the Sakhalin region.

Salamanders are an endemic species of Korea. Salamanders resemble small lizards, and feed on earthworms or insects. From mid March to May, they lay their eggs in this swamp.

People are forbidden to enter the sanctuary from February 20th to June 30th every year, although it can be seen from the observatory road.

Can you see pine trees right above the corner? The tombs of a 16th-century prince and his family are located there. Shall we go up? When you walk up the narrow incline towards the valley, you'll see a number of tombs and tombstones.

The ridge on which these tombs are located runs from south to north. The tomb in the northernmost location is that of Prince Yeongsan. In front of his tomb are the tombs of his two wives. In the 16th century, male members of the royal family and nobility were permitted to practice polygamy. Below their tombs are the tombs of his descendants.

This tomb is a good example of a Korean royal tomb of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Look at the tombstone first. You will see that the name of the deceased and details of his life and achievements are inscribed on it. Also, there is a small square stone right in front of the tomb prepared for the spirits. They believed that the spirits of the dead emerge from the tomb to rest on this stone. Ritual foods were laid on a wide area in front of this stone, and incense was burned on the small square rock next to it.

There's also a stone lantern. In those days, Koreans lighted lamps around the tomb to repel evil spirits. These stone lanterns were only erected around the tombs of high class people. Next to it, you will see a statue with his hands held together. This indicates that the tomb belongs to a man of high status.

Masil-gil	4. Temple of One Thousand Years, Jingwansa Temple
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Let's stray away from the Dulegil a little.

This temple, located at the western foot of Bukhansan Mountain, is called Jingwansa. It was originally built here in 1011, but was burnt down in 1463, and then rebuilt in 1470.

The temple was burned to the ground again in 1950, during the Korean War, but was restored in 1964.

Jingwansa is a renowned temple that has witnessed a thousand years of Korean history from a single location.

A thousand years ago, Korea was a kingdom called Goryeo. King Hyeonjong, the 8th ruler of the Goryeo Dynasty, was in constant danger of death when he was young, amid political turbulence. However, a Buddhist monk named Jingwan took care of the prince when he was expelled to a temple. Realizing the young prince was in danger of being assassinated, Jingwan protected the prince by hiding him in a hole under the Buddha statue.

After many years, when the prince finally became the eighth king of Goryeo, he built this temple to repay his debt to the monk Jingwan, hence the temple's name of Jingwansa.

Afterwards, this temple became the royal temple of Korea for about one thousand years.

It is still possible to see old Buddha statues and their fragments here.

If you follow the east road towards the mountain from here, you'll see Samcheonsa Temple.

It's located about 1.5km away, but the road isn't too difficult to walk on, so it only takes about 30 minutes to get there. Although it's off the Dulegil section, we highly recommend that you pay a visit to Samcheonsa.

Samcheonsa was built in 661AD.

According to the remaining records, about 3000 monks used to train at this temple. Considering the population back then, it was a very large temple. Since many young monks resided here, they often fought as soldiers when Korea was invaded by other countries.

There's something you must not miss here. It's a fragment of a relief that has been designated as a National Treasure of Korea. It's engraved on a rock located in the valley about 30 meters up from Samcheonsa. Shall we go up?

It is estimated that this was engraved around 1,350 years ago.

The Buddha engraved on the stone is a representative image of Buddha as he was perceived in Korean Buddhism.

If you look carefully, you can observe the detailed method of engraving. His face and upper body appear to come out of the stone, while his lower body and halo appear to go in. This beautiful Buddha engraving presents a natural overall ratio and gentle appearance.

Naesimyoyeok-gi

Naesimyoyeok-gi	1. A Road Filled with Untold Stories
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The 10th section of Dulegil is the Naesimyoyeok-gil, which means the Eunuch Cemetery Path.

This path runs for about 3.5km through a series of small forests and country villages. Compared to other sections, the Naesimyoyeok-gil is relatively short and easy. As it connects the western ridges of Bukhansan Mountain, visitors can appreciate the appearance of the mountain from various angles.

As the name “Naesimyoyeok,” or eunuch cemetery, suggests, there are many stories about nameless people from the past here. During ancient times in Korea, "naesi" or eunuchs used to perform many tasks for the royal family, but their lives were not really documented in Korean history. On this section, visitors can see the graves of eunuchs, and about midway along, they will get to hear a sad story of forbidden love.

While walking along this path, imagine the untold lives of ancient Koreans.

Naesimyoyeok-gi	2.The Eunuch Cemetery - Unknown Servants of the Royal Family
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As you walk along this path, you will come across a Buddhist temple on your right.

Behind the temple, there is Korea's oldest and largest grave site for eunuchs.

The land is privately owned, so access to the site is restricted.

Since the discovery of this site, a lot of research has been conducted on the life style of the royal court's eunuchs.

Eunuchs in Korea were selected when very young. They were sent to the royal family after receiving several types of training, and played an important role in palace life. They performed such tasks as delivering the king and queen's orders, managing cooking and foods, and supervising all royal events.

The most important quality required of eunuchs was endurance. This was because they had to keep all the secrets of the royal family and even sacrifice their lives in emergency situations to protect the king.

Even though they were castrated, they were allowed to marry and adopt children. Until now, little has been known about Korean eunuchs and their life and work at the royal palaces.

Naesimyoyeok-gi	3. A Message on a Monument: Do Not Cut Down Pine Trees
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Walking through thick forests is always enjoyable. Only 100 years ago, most of the roads in Korea were nothing more than dirt roads.

After walking along this dirt road for a while, you will come to a small old granite monument inscribed with the following words: "This plot of land has been awarded to an official named Gyeongcheon, so no pine trees should be cut down here". The rear face of the monument is inscribed with the date it was erected, some 400 years ago.

The official in the story of this monument was an interpreter, who made significant contributions to the nation during a war-torn period when Japan and China invaded Korea often. "Gyeongcheon" was his official title, conferred upon him in recognition of his great services to the nation, along with the land.

A thickly-forested mountain may be considered scant reward compared to a farming plain according to today's standards, but about 400 years ago in old Korean society it was not. A thick forest of pine trees had great value at that time, because pine trees had many uses. They ranked among the best architectural materials, and were used in the making of furniture, making them a valuable property.

As a result, some people would steal pine trees, and this monument was erected in the hope of preventing such theft. Protecting pine tree forests was an important government policy at that time.

Even now, pine trees are a source of good quality wood, so there are many farmers growing pine trees in this neighborhood.

While standing on the mid-section of the wooden overpass, you will see a round-shaped peak.

The name of this peak is Nojeokbong, meaning "a stacked grain peak". There is an interesting story about how the peak was named during the time when Japan invaded Korea in April 1592.

At that time, Japanese soldiers were advancing on Seoul from the south very rapidly. They reached the northern part of Seoul in a flash. The number of Korean troops was so small that it became very obvious that they would lose the imminent battle.

Then, an old woman came up with a brilliant idea. She suggested making the peak look like a big mass of rice bags. To make the peak look like a big stack of rice, she mobilized the people, instructing them to cover the peak with straw mats. When they finished the work, it really looked like a stacked mass of rice.

Wonderfully, her imaginative plan worked.

Japanese soldiers saw the mound and were shocked to see a big stack of rice bags, believing them to be military supplies and thus that the Korean troops were great in number. They started to retreat.

Owing to her wisdom, the Koreans were able to attack the Japanese soldiers and defend Seoul from invasion.

This wise old woman was named "Rice Grandmother" after that, and became very famous.

After the war's end, the King erected a memorial stone to remember her for a long time.

Hyoja-gil

Hyoja-gil	1. Road of the Son Who Never Forgot His Parents
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This is the eleventh Dulegil section. The path is about 3.3km long, and usually takes no more than a couple of hours. There's a short section that follows the prefectural road of outer Seoul. After passing this section, you'll soon come to a quiet forest road. The forest section runs around the northwest outskirts of Seoul, where you'll be able to enjoy great scenic views of Seoul's highest mountains.

The name of this section is Hyoja-gil. Hyoja means "a son who deeply loves his parents" in Korean. The tomb of a renowned filial son from the days of the Joseon Dynasty is located on this section, hence the name.

His name was Park Tae-seong, and he visited the tomb of his dead father every day out of love and a profound sense of devotion. The road from his house to his father's tomb wasn't short, making it difficult to visit the tomb every day. But legend has it that as he was starting out one day, a tiger appeared before him and gave him a ride that day and every day thereafter. That's why a tomb commemorating the tiger is also situated next to the Tomb of Park Tae-seong.

The spirit of hyo, which consists of remembering and loving one's parents, is one of the most important values in Eastern countries, including Korea.

Now, shall we start?

The biggest reward of this section is the detailed view of the various peaks of Bukhansan Mountain that enclose Seoul on its northern side.

The name Bukhansan means ‘a large mountain located to the north of Seoul’. The mountain actually has another name, Buaak. ‘Buaak’ in Chinese characters means “a mountain that looks like a mother carrying a child on her back.” If you look carefully at the mountaintop over there, you will really see an Asian mother carrying her baby on her back. Can you see it?

Bukhansan extends from Korea’s capital Seoul to Goyang in Gyeonggi-do. Korea designated this mountain as a national park for its protection. Bukhansan is famous for attracting countless mountain climbers. In fact, it has been included in the Guinness Book of Records for attracting the record figure of 8 million visitors per year.

Geologically, Bukhansan is a granitic mountain. It shares similar geological features to Stone Mountain in Atlanta, USA. Granitic mountaintops are entirely smooth on the surface. Most of the other mountains surrounding Seoul are also granitic mountains created around the same time.

Now that you’ve had a proper look at the mountain, shall we speed up the pace a little?

Hyoja-gil	3. Park Tae-seong, Who Was Praised during the Feudal Era of Korea
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Did you find the black tombstone? The stone was erected in 1893. The letters inscribed on the stone are Chinese characters. Back then, Chinese characters were mainly used in Korea. On the stone, it says “To commemorate Park Tae-seong, who was deeply filial to his parents.”

Who was Park Tae-seong? According to the tombstone, his father passed away when he was three years old. In Asia, it's very important to hold a full and thorough funeral ceremony when one's parents pass away. But as he was a baby at the time of his father's death, he couldn't do anything. As he grew, Park deeply regretted that he hadn't been able to properly fulfill his duty as a son, and announced that he would hold a funeral again immediately upon becoming an adult. But his mother wouldn't permit it. However, when his mother passed away, he finally held the funeral properly, and began performing an Oriental ritual from that day onwards.

In Korea, there was a custom that when a parent died, the children would build a cabin next to the tomb and pray to their parents morning and night for three years. But Park never finished his ritual, not even after three years. Instead, he spent the rest of his life near the tombs of his parents.

When he began living near the tombs deep in the mountain, people gathered from miles around to praise him. So many people went to see him that a village sprang up here. When the king later heard of his story, he built this tombstone to praise the special love and respect he showed for his parents.

This is the Tomb of “Park Tae-seong,” who lived during the 1800s.

Four tombs are located here: one belongs to Park Tae Sung, two belong to his two wives, and the last one belongs to a tiger. The tiger’s tomb is also accompanied by a stone statue of the dead tiger.

Park loved his father very much, even though he passed away when Park was very young. He felt the absence of his deceased father very sharply and visited his tomb every day. Although the tomb was far away, he never stopped visiting it. One day, a large tiger emerged from the forest. The boy thought that the tiger would kill him, but it didn’t. Instead, the tiger gave him a ride on its back all the way to his father’s tomb.

So a deep friendship between the boy and the tiger began to flower. Years later, when Park died, a tiger came to his tomb and pined away there. People knew that the tiger was Park’s friend and buried it next to him.

This is the tomb of that tiger. However, it doesn’t actually contain the remains of a tiger. People made a mock tomb based on the ancient story. But the descendants of Park still hold rituals for the tiger there every year, to commemorate the deep friendship between their ancestor and the tiger.

There are many spots at which shamanistic rituals were once performed on Bukhansan, and which were thought to hold mysterious powers. We're about to introduce you to one of those places right now. In Korean, these places are known as "gutdang."

Can you see the large tree in the yard? Strings of many colors are hanging from this tree.

The tree is used to summon the gods. Often, a "gut" is performed in this yard. A "gut" is a shamanistic ritual of Korea.

There are various rooms, each of which houses a different god. On the wall, you will see paintings of the gods, as well as various foods placed on the table before it. Sometimes, small rituals are held inside these rooms.

In traditional Korean shamanism, a "gut" is usually performed to ask for health and good fortune. When there was illness or misfortune in a family, people performed a gut to drive away evil spirits. The psychic who connects people with a god is called a "mudang" in Korea, and these shamans perform extravagant rituals for a certain price.

Rituals that involve music and dance can be very extravagant. Mudang also know a number of astonishing shamanistic techniques that ordinary people cannot comprehend. Simply observing a ritual composed of traditional Korean music and dance will plunge you into a mysterious world on the other side of reality.

Chungui-gil

Chungui-gil	1. A Path Commemorating Korea's Young Soldiers
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The name of this Dulegil is Chungui-gil. “Chungui” in Korean means “noble consideration for one’s nation.” Opposite this path, there are various camps and training grounds of the Korean army, who are there to protect the nation’s capital, Seoul. As this location is close to the Military Demarcation Line, it has been regarded as a key strategic point in the protection of Seoul. Sometimes you may hear loud military songs and see military vehicles pass by, but don’t panic. It’s safe here.

Not many people pass through this area, so you can enjoy a quiet walk here. The air here’s also nicer and cleaner than in downtown Seoul. You’ll see some small valleys and even rural villages of Korea. Koreans are usually shy, but they’re fundamentally nice people, so approach them and say “Hi!” first. If you have a lover, you can enjoy a quiet date on this section.

You can see many native trees of Korea here. It’s always nice to see large, well-grown, and beautiful trees. Korean trees look different from those of Europe or America, so take a careful look at them. Enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the forest and leave your stress behind.

Now, let’s march ahead to the Chungui-gil like those soldiers, shall we?

Chungui-gil	2. Village with a Clear View of Bukhansan Mountain
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The area you're passing through right now was off-limits for a while, so you can experience a relatively unpolluted natural environment here.

The name of this village is Sagimak, which in old Korean means 'a mud hut used to bake ceramics,' particularly white porcelain. In 1999, a team of experts revealed that this area was once a village where ceramic wares were produced.

In order to bake pottery, you need good soil, clear water, and firewood, and this area has all three of these ingredients in abundance. It is thought that the village's proximity to Seoul made it easy for local people to sell their products.

Here, you can see Bukhansan Mountain very clearly. Among the many peaks of Bukhansan, you can clearly spot Insubong and Baegundae, which are the highest and smoothest of all its summits. Baegundae in particular is the highest peak at 836.5m above sea level. When you climb up Baegundae on a clear day, you can even see the sea at Incheon, the harbor city to the west of Seoul.

Baegundae is the highest peak in Seoul, and you can always see the Korean flag, or Taegeukgi, flying from it. If you're looking for Baegundae of Bukhansan, all you have to do is to look for the Taegeukgi. There's a reason why the flag is up there. A rock under that flag is carved with the phrase "Envy the sky and love the people." This phrase was engraved there in the early 1900s during the Japanese Colonial Period by a Korean independence activist named Jeong Jae-yong. He left his wish for Korea's liberation at the highest point of Seoul. When you go to Baegundae, you'll surely feel his steely resolve for Korean liberation.

There are many traditional Korean wild cherry trees along the Bukhansan Dulegil.

The traditional cherry tree blooms from late April to early May, and has flowers of a simple pink color.

Many cherry trees on the streets of Korea are actually Japanese, and they can be spectacular.

But Korean traditional cherry trees have a smaller number of flowers and present a more tranquil beauty.

Traditional cherry trees cannot be separated from the history of Korea.

Buddhism used to be the official religion of Korea, and wood from wild cherry trees was used in the 13th century to make the woodblocks of the Buddhist scripture known as the Tripitaka Koreana.

The Tripitaka Koreana is a UNESCO World Heritage, and consists of the words of Buddha engraved on 81,258 wooden plates. It is the oldest extant wood-printed Buddhist scripture in the world.

And the material used to make those plates was from this wild cherry tree.

Wild cherry trees were cut down and strengthened using various processing techniques.

They are still in excellent condition after more than 700 years. You can see the Tripitaka Koreana in Haeinsa Temple, which is located in Hapcheon, Gyeongsangnam-do, in the southwestern part of Korea.

You'll see a small gallery on a street corner.

This gallery, made by remodeling a residential house, was named Dasom in pure Korean. "Dasom" means "service and love". A sculptor husband and painter wife wanted to share their gifts with others through this space.

When you enter the gate, the various sculptures placed around the yard will grab your attention. They were created with diverse materials according to different themes, and are exhibited on the wide outdoor yard. There are no high buildings around here, so immerse yourself in the pleasant atmosphere of comfort and freedom.

When you enter the building, the high ceiling will greet you. The wall is decorated with sitting cushions the painter wife brought over from Vietnam. The interior exudes a strong aura of nature itself.

This gallery is also a teahouse, and you can enjoy exhibitions here anytime of the year. Even when there isn't a special exhibition, you'll be able to enjoy the landscape paintings of the gallery owner - the woman painter. She loves Bukhansan Mountain, and exhibits her paintings of the ever changing scenery of Bukhansan in this small gallery.

Songchumaeul-gil

The Songchumaeul-gil is a 5km-long path that connects the entrance to the Gyohyeon Uiryeong-gil with the entrance to Wongaksa Temple. It's the longest section of the Bukhansan Dulegil, but it's not too difficult to walk along this path.

When you walk here, you may feel like you're walking in a small Korean village. Some sections follow busy streets to avoid the nearby military camps, so it could be a little inconvenient. But all along the section's relatively long length there are diverse landscapes and atmospheres.

A dense forest will greet you in the low valley. Songchu Valley's cool stream is a great place to visit during summer.

The village of Gyohyeon-ri is both the start and end point of the Songchumaeul-gil. Back in the old days, firewood merchants laid a wooden footbridge in this village to go back and forth from Seoul. In ancient times Gyohyeon-ri was an important village due to its proximity to the capital.

Now, let's follow the Songchumaeul-gil and take a step back into the remote past of Korea.

When you walk near the entrance of the Gyohyeon Uiryeong-gil, you'll see a row of high mountaintops. The five summits are called Obong, and the two rocky peaks are called Yeoseongbong. Here is one of the stories about Obong.

Narration:A long time ago, there was a rich man with five sons who lived on Obongsan Mountain. A new magistrate was appointed to this village, and he had a very beautiful daughter.

1st son: How can someone be that beautiful... She will be mine!

2nd son: No, I've already set my eyes on her. She's not yours!

3rd son: What are you boys talking about? It is my heart she's stolen!

Narration:

All five sons wanted to marry the magistrate's beautiful daughter, and they fought every day amongst themselves. So the magistrate thought of a solution.

Magistrate: I'll give my daughter to the strongest man among you. The one who puts up the heaviest rock on top of the mountain shall take my daughter as his wife.

Narration:So the five brothers began a contest in which they had to throw a rock on the mountaintop you see over there on the ridge. That's how the five peaks were created. But have you noticed that the fourth top doesn't have a rock on it? This is because while the greedy fourth son was carrying the biggest and heaviest rock, he dropped it on the way.

In front of these five peaks, there's also Yeoseongbong. Yeoseong means "woman" in Korean, and it was given this name because it looks like a woman lying down with her legs open.

When you walk along the Dulegil, you will encounter many kinds of trees. Let me introduce you one of them here. It's saenggang namu, which means "ginger tree." Every year, the flowers of this tree bloom a bit earlier than other trees in early April. Therefore, it's also called the 'prophet of spring' as it lets the rest of the forest know that the season has started.

In the old days, the stylish men of Korea used to extract oil from camellia fruit and apply it to their hair. But camellia oil was a rare commodity found only in the south and was only used by the aristocracy. Normal men had to use the oil from this tree instead.

Actually, the English name of this tree is Japanese Spicebush, and this tree doesn't even bear ginger as its fruit. So why is it called "ginger tree"?

Try rubbing a leaf or twig from the tree on your wrist. Can you smell the scent? Because of the ginger-like scent given off by its leaves and twigs, this tree was called "ginger tree." In spring, these trees along the Dulegil bloom with yellow flowers.

While walking along the Dulegil, try to find the tree with a smooth trunk covered in bumps like a man's muscles. The name of this tree is the red-leaved hornbeam, and is also known as 'the king of trees.'

Because the tree's bumpy yet smooth surface resembles a person's skin and muscles, the red-leaved hornbeam is also called a "muscle tree". It's also sometimes called a seoeo namu, which means "the tree of the west." This tree grows well even in dark dense forests where there is little light. As the king of trees, it is very tenacious. You can even see these trees in very old forests.

So, let's listen to the story from a distant time when this forest was created along with the red-leaved hornbeam.

When moss and mold grow on land, plants begin to grow there. They help make the soil rich, and consequently, perennial plants, small trees, and tall trees grow next in the forest. When there are trees like pine trees in a forest, animals begin to live there and it begins to look livelier. Next, oak trees and red-leaved hornbeams spring up in the forest under the shade of the pine trees. Once all these conditions are met, a forest is called a 'climax forest'. And this red-leaved hornbeam can only be seen in climax forests. That's why it's also called 'the king of all trees'.

You can see a lot of red-leaved hornbeams here, which means this is a very old forest. Now, let's take a break and listen to the old stories of the trees.

Songchumaeul-gil	5.Songchu Valley
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This is Songchu Valley. Because of its proximity to the capital and its environment, the valley is crowded with visitors during summer. Every Korean will have come here at least once in their lifetime.

This 4km-long valley extends from the entrance to Songchu Valley to Obong Ridge. Its clean stream and three-tier waterfall have made it a popular tourist spot for many years. There's also a popular hiking course here that can be completed in three hours, so at weekends you'll see many hikers walking up to Yeoseongbong and Obong Peaks and Sapaesan Mountain.

While you were walking along the Songchumaeul-gil, did you see a big rocky mountain towards the entrance to Wongaksa Temple? It is called Sapaesan.

Let's learn about the origins of the name Sapaesan.

A sapae was a document used by Joseon kings to grant land or slaves to members of the royal family and vassals of great merit. The land granted with a sapae was called sapaejeon, while slaves were called sapae nobi.

The name Sapaesan originates from the Joseon Dynasty. When a king's daughter was married, he granted the entire mountain to the groom, hence the name Sapaesan.

Wongaksa, located below Sapaesan, is the biggest Buddhist temple in this area and has a simple yet elegant style. Within its precinct, there's a 3m-high stainless steel statue of a seated Buddha. It was the first stainless steel Buddha statue to be built in Korea. How about taking a break here?

Sanneomi-gil

The Sanneomi-gil connects entrance of Wongaksa Temple and Angol Valley. The name ‘Sanneomi’ means ‘to go over a mountain’ in Korean. As its name suggests, this section features one of the most difficult sections of any of the Dulegil. However, the Sanneomi-gil gives you a better view than any of the other paths, and is also well equipped with a rest station so you can truly enjoy the beauty of the Dulegil.

This path takes you to the highest point of all the Bukhansan Dulegil sections, and the valley will fill you with the joy of hiking. If you start from Angol Valley, you will have to climb more than 500 wooden stairs on a steep path until you reach the observatory. But if you start from the entrance of Wongaksa, it’ll be a gentler journey with little difficulty.

There are large colonies of oaks and azaleas on the Sanneomi-gil, giving you a great opportunity to see Korea’s beautiful forest. You’ll also cross various bridges in the valley, such as Ulttuigyo, where you can enjoy the refreshing sound of water and observe diverse aquatic organisms.

On this section, you can also visit the Pine Tree Observatory, the highest observatory on the Dulegil. You can see all of the city of Uijeongbuin Gyeonggi-do in one spectacular view from here.

Also, you can find a rock with a funny name, Gatbawi. A gat was a traditional hat worn by Korean scholars, and this rock looks as if it’s wearing a hat. Try to find this rock.

Sanneomi-gil	2.UlttuigyoBridge
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Now that we're in the valley, how about some rest? This bridge is called Ulttuigyo.

The name Ulttuigyo comes from the nearby village of Uldae-ri. There are many theories about the origin of this village's name. One says that the village was so named because it's located below Uldae Hill, and another says that it's called Uldae Village, meaning 'a fenced village' because it is surrounded by mountains. There's also a theory that says the name came from the thick forests around the village. In any case, we believe this name came into use some time before the mid-18th century.

Regardless of the origin, the mountains surrounding the village will give you a cozy feeling while the quietness of the dense forest makes for a pleasurable walk.

If you look up a little you will see the ridges of Bukhansan Mountain, while if you look down beyond your feet you'll see the flowing stream. Your eyes and ears will be busy taking in all the magnificent sights and sounds of nature as you cross Ulttuigyo. Maybe this is the right time to listen to what the forest has to tell us!

Let's talk about trees that benefit the forest. The main character of this story is an oak tree. Depending on the type, oak trees have different names and shapes. Let's first listen to the self-introduction of six species of oak tree.

Acorn Tree:Hi! I'm an acorn tree. Not all oak trees are the same. I'm a special kind of oak tree. I was even used to serve food on the dinner table of kings. My acorns were used to cook food for the king who was evacuated from Seoul during the war.

Konara Oak:

I'm a Konara oak tree, or jolchamin Korean. Actually, my Korean name was originally jolbyeong, which means "a private in the army" in English. I was called so because I have the smallest leaves among all acorn-bearing trees. That name has since been changed to jolcham.

Mongolian Oak:

I'm a Mongolian oak. Among all the species of oak trees, Koreans really needed me most in the past. They used my leaves when the soles of their straw shoes wore out.

Daimyo Oak:

I'm a daimyo oak. I have mysterious power. My leaves have chemical ingredients that can be used as a natural preservative. That's why people wrap their food with my leaves to preserve it.

Oriental Chestnut Oak:

I'm an oriental chestnut oak. My leaves last much longer than those of other oak trees. In Korean, I'm called galcham because it means my leaves last until late autumn. My wood is also frequently used to make high-end furniture.

Cork Oak:

I'm a cork oak. I have thicker bark than other trees, so people used to make rooves for their houses with my bark. My thick bark is also used to make corks for liquor bottles.

As you see, there are six different kinds of oak trees. Their acorns all look different as well. Acorns are an important source of food for many forest animals, especially squirrels. They can survive the hardships of winter thanks to acorns. Also, Koreans grind acorns and eat them in a jelly-like food called dotorimuk. Even today, oak trees stay close to Koreans and provide them with many benefits.

You've just arrived at the observatory with the highest view in Bukhansan Dulegil. It was named 'Pine Tree Observatory' because of the pine tree growing up through the middle of the deck. The first view you'll have when you reach the observatory is the downtown area of Uijeongbu in Gyeonggi-do.

The origin of the name Uijeongbu goes back 600 years to the early days of the Joseon Dynasty. According to one theory, this village was named after the highest government office of Joseon, which was called "Uijeongbu," or the State Council, because ministers met here to discuss national administration. Another theory says that the village was thus named because the State Council possessed land around this region. In any case, the city of Uijeongbu has a long history, and this Pine Tree Observatory is the best place to see it in its entirety.

When you reach the observatory, you may feel like you're at the top of the mountain. Enjoy the magnificent view of mountains and Uijeongbu. Interestingly, this observatory was built without damaging the natural environment, as the building's design incorporates the surrounding area with its large rocks and pine trees. Rocks and trees were left in the middle of the deck, showing the true meaning of harmony. Let's leave Uijeongbu behind at this point, and begin our search for the other treasures of this Dulegil.

This time, we'll try to find a rock with a funny name. Let's look up at the ridges of Sapaesan Mountain.

Can you see what looks like a pile of rocks stacked together? That's Gatbawi.

Gatbawi is a rock located just below the summit of Sapaesan. It's called Gatbawi because it looks like a gat, which was a hat worn by old Korean scholars. It looks like a fedora, only with a much wider brim. Hikers in Bukhansan National Park also give it many other funny nicknames. Gatbawi can look very different depending on the angle you see it from, so people also call it Penis Rock or Hamburger Rock. What do you think it looks like?

I'm sure you've seen many white and smooth mountaintops while you've been walking on the Bukhansan Dulegil. They are made from solidified granite. This type of granite doesn't absorb water when it rains, so it becomes very slippery on rainy days, making it extremely dangerous to walk on during wet weather.

Angol-gil

Angol-gil	1.Starting the Angol-gil
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The Angol-gil runs from Angol Valley to the Hoeryong Information Center. It's quite long, but since the section's slope is mostly gentle, visitors can enjoy a comfortable walk here.

The Angol-gil is in full bloom in spring, and the valley is a great place to hang out during summer. There's also Jikdong Park in the section. All year round, the citizens of Uijeongbu visit this tranquil path to take a break from their hectic lives.

Jikdong Park was established by the city of Uijeongbu. In addition to a well-furnished walkway, there is an artificial rockface, a badminton ground, a gateball ground, a water fountain, a wild flower complex, and a sculpture park for diverse outdoor fun. There's also the Jikdong soccer field which is prepared according to international standards. Even if you don't play soccer yourself, it's really fun to watch other people playing.

Including Angol Valley, there are various hiking paths that lead up to Sapaesan Mountain on the section, so if you're preparing for some serious hiking, this section is a good place to warm up. Now, let's go for a gentle stroll along the Angol-gil.

Angol-gil	2.Pitch Pine Tree
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The most commonly seen trees in Korean forests are pine trees. There are many species of pine. While native Korean pine trees have a reddish trunk, some species have dark bodies and many branches on it. These are foreign species of pitch pine trees. For some reason, the most frequently seen pine tree in Bukhansan National Park is the pitch pine species.

Do you wonder why the Korean national park is covered with these foreign trees? Here's the story.

After the Liberation of Korea in 1945, the country became totally devastated due to the outbreak of the Korean War. Korean people participated in many national movements to restore their beautiful environment, and they decided to plant pitch pine trees because this species grow well in poor soil and can quickly recover the natural environment of a mountain.

As a result, more years, and 65% of the country became forest again. This is widely regarded as a highly significant reforestation policy, the like of which has rarely been seen among developing nations. This is why you can see so many pitch pine trees on the mountains in Korea including here at Bukhansan National Park.

This pine tree forest gives us some insight into the tragic history of Korea and the effort its people have made for this wonderful scenery. Go ahead and try to find pitch pine trees on Dulegil from now.

Angol-gil	3.Hoamsa Temple
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If you walk up from the Beomgol Park protection area, you'll come to a Buddhist temple called Hoamsa.

The area around Hoamsa abounds with names related to tigers. The valley is called Beomgol, which means "Tiger Valley" in Korean, and the town was once called Hodong, which means "Tiger Town." The caves in which tigers were thought to dwell were called "Tiger Rocks" or "Hoam" in Chinese characters, while a stream that tigers drank from was called "Tiger Stream" or "Hocheon."

Since the ancient times, tigers were thought to be the messengers of mountain gods and symbols of bravery. The tiger is very closely connected with the Korean people. The birth myth of Korea also includes stories of tigers. As such, there are many tales and legends in which tigers are 'personified' in Korea.

When you walk up Sapaesan ridge next to Hoamsa, you'll see a huge rock cave behind the temple. This cave was a filming location of a famous Korean drama called Heo Jun, so it's also known as Heo Jun Cave.

If you walk away from the cave a little, you'll see the Neoreokbawi Observatory. Here, you'll be able to see the entire city of Uijeongbu at a glance and clearly observe Seonbawi Rock on Sapaesan. If you're visiting Hoamsa, don't forget to stop by the observatory.

Boru-gil

Boru-gil	1.Starting Boru-gil
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The Boru-gil connects entrance of Wondobong and the Hoeryong Information Center. A boru, or bastion, is a defensive structure built to hinder and repel enemy attacks, and this path is named after this structure as you can still see one here. Compared to other Dulegil sections, there are many steep sections on this path. It may be a little difficult, but you'll feel very refreshed and satisfied afterwards.

In particular, the impressive scenery of Sapaesan Mountain and Seokguram Grotto will welcome you at the top of the valley. Of course, the view of Sapaesan across from the Boru-gil is just as magnificent.

The Third Bastion of Sapaesan is the highlight of this section, and you'll see the entire Uijeongbu area at a glance from there. Although it is severely damaged, making it difficult to imagine its original state, enough of the wall in the west remains to be able to imagine this old military facility of Korea.

The name of the Buddhist temple that can be seen between the trees is Hoeryongsa. The temple boasts Hoeryong Valley as its own garden. This is a historic temple here which is the scene of a legend about King Taejo, the founder of Joseon, and a Buddhist monk called Muhak.

This temple was built before the Joseon Dynasty, and Muhak and King Taejo trained themselves here for three years before the latter founded Joseon.

A conversation between King Taejo and Muhak at Hoeryongsa is still remembered today for its amusing content.

King Taejo: Your face looks exactly like a pig's.

Muhak: Your majesty looks like Buddha to me.

King Taejo: Haha... I just wanted a little chuckle today. Why do you say I look like Buddha?

Muhak: Haha, pigs only see pigs, and Buddha only sees Buddha.

There are three artifacts here in Hoeryongsa that you shouldn't miss. One is the Five-story Stone Pagoda of Hoeryongsa Temple that contains sarira, which are the bead-looking crystals that are left after burning a deceased monk's body. The other two are a stone basin used to store water for the temple, and a painting that depicts Buddha and the deities who protect the way of Buddhism. Look for vestiges of the old Korea here at the historic site of Hoeryongsa.

Boru-gil	3.Key Military Position, the Third Bastion of Sapaesan Mountain
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Here, you can see the remains of an old bastion, which is a stone defensive structure built to repel enemy attacks. There are three bastions left on Sapaesan Mountain, of which the Third Bastion is the largest. It is 250m long in circumference, and its longest side is 100m in length.

Seoul has long been an important military and cultural city, and there have been frequent wars. In addition to this location, bastions were erected in other places with good views such as at Suraksan and Ahasan Mountains. We assume that bastions of Sapaesan and Suraksan were important strategic positions from which the transportation road connecting Seoul and Uijeongbu of Gyeonggi-do was monitored. There is now a large modern military bunker in front of the Third Bastion, which tells us that this location is still an important military position.

Let's talk about the jjokdongbaek trees on the Boru-gil.

Jjokdongbaek trees have wide leaves and bloom small white flowers from May to June. These trees are commonly found in the forests of Korea, and grow particularly well in rich soil.

The tree's name was derived from two ideas: one is that its leaf looks like the back of a woman wearing her hair in a jjok, which is a traditional Korean hair style for married women; another is that the tree's fruits are half the size of those of southern dongbaek (camellia), because jjok can also mean "a portion" in Korean. Traditionally, married Korean women have rolled up their hair into a round shape since before the Joseon Period, and this style is called jjok. You can see for yourself whether the leaves really look like this hairstyle.

Jjokdongbaek trees were very useful in the olden days because their fruit was used to produce oil for oil lamps or hair products for glossy styles .So to speak, this tree was closely related to the everyday life of Korean people.

Boru-gil	5.The Longest Double-width Tunnel in the World
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Did you hear any cars while you walked along the Boru-gil? Some points of the Boru-gil touch the expressway, so you'll hear loud car noises on some sections.

The long path at the side of the mountain above you is an expressway. The tunnel you can see here is Sapae Tunnel. Its length is 3,997m, which takes two and half minutes to cover even if you drive at 100km/hr. So it's actually a famous tunnel that is registered in the Guinness Book of Records as the longest one-way four-lane tunnel in the world.

The cars in the tunnel appear to be driving at the maximum allowed speed. But how about slowing down a bit on the Dulegil to enjoy your surroundings?

Daragwon-gil

Daragwon-gil	1.Starting Daragwon-gi
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This is Daragwon-gil, the 17th Dulegil section. The name ‘Daragwon’ derives from the word ‘darak’, which means ‘attic’ in Korean, and ‘won’, a place where people used to stay during official trips in the Joseon Dynasty. There was a thriving trade route to Seoul, from Hamgyeong-do now in North Korea and Gangwon-do in South Korea, and it served as a distribution center for dry fish and grain brokers. As such, the place was a booming market and an important trade route leading to Seoul where merchants would buy and sell goods. However, that was then, and only its name remains today. So this path we’re on right now is where the people of Joseon used to walk.

The Daragwon-gil runs for 3km between the entrance to Wondobong and Daragwon Village, and is flanked by houses and larger paths. You might be a little disappointed if you were expecting a quiet mountain trail, but you’ll still find large groups of pine trees and well-attended kitchen gardens just past the big street. In early summer, the place is filled with the scent of acacias.

Daragwon-gil	2. Standing Wooden Bodhisattva of Yaksuseonwon Temple
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Yaksuseonwon is a Buddhist temple located on a broad path between Shinheung College and Jackson Camp. The temple houses an impressive cultural heritage - the Standing Wooden Bodhisattva.

This Buddha statue was built in the 16th century, and it's a classic example of its kind made in the mid Joseon Dynasty. It's not open for public viewing except on special days and occasions such as Buddha's Birthday.

The statue is made of ginkgo tree, which is ideal for carving and resistant to harmful insects. That's probably why it's still well preserved. It has a round face, small facial features, tied hair, and earrings. It's a very important artifact in the study of ancient Buddha statues of Korea.

Another unique characteristic of this temple is that Jowang, the kitchen god, is worshiped here. In the kitchen, you'll see an altar to Jowang above the kitchen range and a painting of Jowang hanging on the wall to ward off evil spirits.

Can you see those two tombs just over the mountain ridge on the left-hand side of the Daragwon Campsite? They are the tombs of Princess Uihye, the daughter of King Jungjong of the Joseon Dynasty, and her husband Han Gyeong-rok, who was a charcoal merchant. Do you want to hear the story of how a princess ended up marrying a lowly charcoal merchant?

One day, King Jungjong asked all his daughters this simple question: “How is it that you are all able to live a life of luxury in the palace?” Every princess but one answered that it was due to the favor of the king, and that they owed their happiness to him. Princess Uihye, however, said, “Everyone has their own destiny reserved for them, so I don’t think we owe our life of luxury to you. I regret to say that I was told that glory and prosperity are but fleeting and vain.”

The king flew into a rage upon hearing these words, and ordered that Princess Uihye be made to marry whomsoever passed through the Dongdaemun Gate first early next morning. Well, the very next day, a charcoal merchant named Han Gyeong-rok happened to be the first person to pass through the gate. Indeed, he was so hard-working that he was always the first person to come through the gate to sell his charcoal at the market. So Princess Uihye married the charcoal merchant, and although they weren’t rich, they managed to earn a reasonable living within their means and live happily together ever after.

During the Joseon Dynasty, men generally had more rights than women, but Princess Uihye didn’t care what everyone else thought and led her own life as she saw fit. In recognition of her courage and fortitude, she was regarded as a role model and eventually the folk custom of worshipping her as a goddess originated.

Dobongyet-gil

Dobongyet-gil	1. Strolling along Dobongyet-gil
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The section you're on is called Dobongyet-gil. It extends for about 3 kilometers between Musugol and Banghak-dong, and is the perfect route to take if you want to get a glimpse of how ancient Koreans lived.

This section of the mountain trail is called "Mujangae", which roughly means 'No-Obstacle Path'. It was given this name because it's paved with wood for the convenience of old and disabled people. At the end of this 220m-long wooden trail there's a sightseeing area commanding a panoramic view of the various peaks of Dobongsan Mountain.

Since ancient times, this place has been known as a geographically perfect area, and that's why members of the royal family and the nobility built their family tombs around this trail. Koreans have long believed that burying their ancestors in an auspicious site will bring good fortune to their family. Here are still many commoners' graves as well as the royal and noble tombs scattered along this trail because it's one of the best locations, making it the perfect place to experience the burial customs of the Joseon Dynasty.

In addition to the graves, it also joins the main hiking trails of Dobongsan, on which you can enjoy the breathtaking views of the mountain valleys and peaks. It also connects to the Dobong Eco Trail, where you'll see how mountains change their colors throughout the seasons.

At the end of this trail, you'll come across the Dobongseowon Confucian Academy, where the ancestral tablets of some of the most renowned Korean Confucian scholars are enshrined, as well as inscriptions carved on the rocks by scholars during the Joseon Dynasty.

Dobongyet-gil	2. Learn to Live an Honest Life of Poverty at Gwangnyunsa Temple
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Gwangnyunsa Temple is located at the mouth of the trail leading to Dobongsan, so thousands of people pass through the area every day.

It was originally built with the name of Manjangsa, but most of the buildings were destroyed during war, and later, the queen of that time gave orders for the temple to be rebuilt. The temple is also well known as the queen's summer cottage, where she would stay to pray for the welfare of her kingdom and children. After her time had passed, other royal family members took vacations and even conducted state affairs here.

Shall we take a look around the temple?

Can you see the big zelkova tree at the entrance to the temple? That tree has been there for over 200 years.

It's even more beautiful inside the temple and behind the building called 'Geumgangseonwon'. Why don't we go there and take a look.

If you're interested in Buddhism, you're welcome to visit the little museum inside the temple. It contains portraits of some of the best-known Buddhist monks, as well as their personal notebooks, Buddhist rosaries, books, and records of their life.

One of the monks is well known for having lived in a cave for 40 years, without ever laying down to sleep and eating only once a day during all those years. It is said that his teacher also ate only once a day, and made his own shoes with straw. In short, they lived an exemplary life of honest poverty.

Can you see the big rock right next to the signboard at the entrance to Dobongsan? The letters on the rock read “Dobongdongmun,” and it informs people that it is the entrance to Dobongsan. It was handwritten by Song Si-yeol, a renowned scholar and master calligrapher of late Joseon.

Joseon wangjo sillok, or the Annals of the Joseon Dynasty, constitute a detailed record of the history of Joseon, and Song Si-yeol’s name appears more often than any other in its pages. Among Joseon’s kings, the most frequently mentioned is King Danjong, with 100 mentions. Still, Song Si-yeol is mentioned approximately 3,000 times, which tells us how influential he was in Joseon.

In addition to indicating the entrance of Dobongsan, this rock with inscription was used to guide junior colleagues who came here to study at the Dobongseowon, which was a center of Joseon academia. Along the hiking trail between this rock and Dobong Valley, there are 14 inscriptions carved on 11 rocks over a distance of 400m. Many scholars of Joseon including Song Si-yeol engraved these messages. Can you guess what they mean?

Actually, scholars who came to Dobongseowon inscribed a few words as proof of their visit. Many such carved inscriptions can be found around the beautiful scenery of Dobongsan. Also, if you look carefully at the characters, you will see that they all look different. So they serve as valuable samples for studying the writing style of Joseon scholars.

Did you find any inscriptions carved on the rocks in the valley? Searching for the inscriptions will enhance your enjoyment of the trail. Some are noticeable, but some are hidden deep in the valley so that they can’t be seen too well. Always remember that safety is more important than finding the letters.

Do you know how many Buddhist temples there are in Bukhansan National Park? There are around 80 of them. So why are there so many temples in the mountains of Korea?

Before the Joseon Period, many temples were built in flat, low-lying areas and in cities. But the anti-Buddhist policies and wars of Joseon led to the destruction of all the temples in flat areas. Now, only those built in mountains remain. Also, quiet mountains offer a great space for training and studying.

Dobongsa here is a traditional temple with many stories that was built around one thousand years ago.

Let's leave the hiking trail for a bit and enter Dobongsa.

First, can you see the painting on the outer wall of the entrance to Dobongsa Temple? This painting depicts the stages that lead to finding and realizing one's true self, and comprises ten scenes representing a young boy finding a cow. In Buddhism, cows signify enlightenment. The painting shows a young boy meeting a cow, taming it, and returning home on its back. It is an easy but detailed description of Buddhist teaching that says people should seek enlightenment, meditate, and save all creatures on earth.

Dobongsa was destroyed many times by war and fire. It wasn't until 1961 that the temple's sanctuary and sub-structures were restored. When you walk up the long stairway, you'll see Daeungjeon, the main hall of this temple. An iron statue of a seated Buddha used to be kept in this hall to preserve the prestige of Dobongsa. However, this registered cultural heritage has been moved to the Museum of Korean Art for exhibition. If you're interested in seeing this dark, iron statue, we recommend you visit the museum.

Dobongyet-gil	5.Tomb of Ryu Bu from Jinju Ryu Clan
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The tombs in Bukhansan National Park all have different names. Some were built for royalty, others for noblemen, and there are some tombs which do not have a name.

If you walk on the small forest path of the Dobongyet-gil, you'll likely run into someone's tomb again. It looks well-organized. This is a good example of a tomb of a member of Korea's nobility. This tomb complex belongs to the Jinju Ryu clan, which had many renowned people during the Joseon Period. When there was a coup against the king in 1506, members of the Ryu family acted with great merit. And here, their descendants are buried. This large and well-organized complex reveals a lot to us about the power of their family.

On both sides of the tombs of Ryu, there are standing statues of civil officials. Originally, only the royal tombs could feature statues like this, but government officers eventually began to build such statues by their own tombs. The statue's clothing, hat, and scepter give us some idea of what the civil officials of the Joseon Dynasty looked like.

Banghakdong-gil

Banghakdong-gil	1.Starting the Banghakdong-gil
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The entire 3km-long Banghakdong-gil runs through a densely forested area.

The scent of pine trees in the forest will enhance your enjoyment of this walk. It's also a good place to observe how forests in Korea change with every season.

Musugol is both the start and end point of Banghakdong-gil. Here you'll see an old country village which looks like most villages would have looked before Korea's industrialization. The houses have low walls, and you can see the peaks of Dobongsan and Bukhansan from here.

When you pass Musugol and enter the Banghakdong-gil, you'll start walking on the forest trail. If you walk up the valley to the Twin Observatory, you'll have an amazing view. Indeed, it's the highlight of this section.

Upon reaching this observatory, you'll be able to see much of Seoul and the Gyeonggi-do area in one sweeping panoramic view, including Dobongsan, Samgaksan, Suraksan, and Buramsan Mountains. You'll also see densely packed 'regiments' of apartment complexes and residential housing. If you look at the photo displayed at the observatory, it'll tell you the names of each mountain, mountaintop, and village of Seoul. Compare the photo with what you actually see here.

After walking up the valley path for about ten minutes from the starting point at Musugol, you will come to a royal tomb complex on the mountain slope behind the zelkova garden. The ninth son of King Sejong and his descendants slumber peacefully here.

Among the tombstones, the one that belongs to the grandson of King Sejong has been registered as a tangible cultural heritage. This stone tells the tragic story of a member of the royal family who lost his parents and lived out his life in exile because of persecution by King Yeonsangun. The inscription was carved by a master calligrapher of the period.

There's something unique about this tomb complex. It's the tomb of a slave that can be seen at the bottom, and there's a very special reason why a slave was buried alongside a member of the royal family.

Sejong's grandson Yi Gi lived a humble and exemplary life in a small house. One day, the king's concubine accused Yi's house of gross extravagance and attempted to take the house. As she unreasonably tried to harm Yi, his slave stood up to her and tried to protect Yi from harm. Feeling insulted by a mere slave, she told the king that Yi had made a threat against her. When the king summoned Yi and the slave for questioning, the slave told him that it was his fault alone. The king sentenced him to death, while Yi was able to avoid harm thanks to his slave's confession. After the slave's death, Yi had this loyal servant's grave placed next to his own tomb.

Still today, the master and slave rest here side by side. It seems as if the loyal slave still strives to protect his master even after death.

Are you walking on the narrow path in the forest from Musugol to the Twin Observatory?

Strangely, this path has subsided somewhat compared to other sections of the Dulegil.

The path sank because back in the days, cows pulled heavy carts along this path. You can imagine how many cows must have walked this path over a long period of time to make it sink like this.

Oxcarts were used to carry goods or people. You don't see oxcarts anymore, but they were the most convenient mode of transport in Korea for centuries. But as tractors and cars finally began to develop in Korea in the late 1970s, oxcarts became history.

In photos or movies of old Korea, cows are often seen pulling oxcarts. Four-wheeled carts were used on flat paths, while two-wheeled carts were used on rough paths.

You probably saw many kinds of trees while walking on the Bukhansan Dulegil. This is a colony of pine trees, the most commonly seen tree in Korea.

With its distinctively fresh scent and evergreen needles, the pine tree symbolizes the unchanging spirit. That's why Koreans love pine trees so much. They frequently appear in traditional Korean paintings.

To Koreans, a pine tree is more than just a tree. We live together with pine trees from birth to death. In the past, Koreans were born in houses made from pinewood, cooked rice with firewood taken from pine trees, made buttons with amber, which is created by the lithification of pine resin, made ink sticks with burnt pinewood, and were buried in pine coffins upon their death.

Now, let's take some gifts from these old friends of the Korean people. Can you smell the fresh scent of the tree? Trees give off a substance called pythocide to protect themselves from vermin and various bacteria. Although pythocide is fatal to bacteria and vermin, it is very beneficial for people. Forest bathing will relieve your stress, enhance your liver and cardio pulmonary functions, and kill bacteria. Take a deep breath here and fill yourself up with this gift from the pine trees.

And one more thing! It's better to forest bathe in spring or summer rather than fall, and at noon rather than in the morning. It's also better to do it where there is a valley or lake nearby. Try to remember that for your next trip.

Wangsilmyoyeok-gil

As the name suggests, the Wangsilmyoyeok-gil is a one-hour walkway through one of the Joseon's royal cemeteries. It will guide walkers to more old tales and historical episodes than other similar paths.

It may not appear significantly different from other paths in and around the outskirts of Seoul, but those interested in Korean history are easily attracted to it largely because of the tomb of King Yeonsangun, the 10th ruler of the Joseon Dynasty, and of Princess Jeongui, a daughter of King Sejong who created Hangeul.

History says that Princess Jeongui got all the affection from her father King Sejong and gave a lot of help to the king during the process of making Hangeul. As is well known, Hangeul was promulgated in 1443 by King Sejong who had been devoted to the creation of a new writing system to help ordinary people, most were illiterate then, to freely and easily express their feelings and intentions. You may wonder what kind of help the king needed from his affectionate daughter to accomplish the great historic task.

The Royal Tomb of King Yeonsangun was open to the public in 2006 after the mega hit of a Korean movie, *The King and the Clown*. It has now become a must-visit destination among history-minded people feeling compassion toward the king who is now generally remembered as one of the Joseon rulers who had to face a tragic end of their lives and failed to have a royal title after their death.

Other attractions in the cemetery include an 830-year ginkgo tree, the oldest tree in Seoul, standing beside the Royal Tomb of King Yeonsangun and a spring called Wondangsaem which is known to have been a major source of drinking water for the local community.

Come and walk the path that will guide you to the sites related with some of the most dramatic moments in the history of the Joseon Dynasty.

There are two tombs at the entrance to the Wangsilmyoyeok-gil on the south of a pass linking Banghak-dong and Ui-dong. One is for the King Sejong's second daughter Princess Jeongui and the other for her spouse.

Records say that Princess Jeongui was the smartest of all the King Sejong's daughters and hence the king's most favored of all his offspring. King Sejong was so fond of her that he gave names for her four sons. Let me tell you one of the famous episodes describing the close relationship between the father and his daughter.

King Sejong happened to suffer from a metal splinter in his ankle which even experienced court physicians didn't know how to handle. It was Princess Jeongui who removed the splinter by using a magnet and treated the affected part by covering it with wine lees. The king was pleased by his daughter's extraordinary intellect and talent and granted her land and slaves as a special gift.

Records also show that the princess played an important role in the process of developing Hangeul, helping find solutions for some difficult problems that troubled even the most eminent scholars. King Sejong was overjoyed by her achievement and, again, granted her ample prizes.

Whether it was the king's special favor, the graves of the princess and her husband are particularly well preserved. Feng shui experts believe that these royal tombs are located on the most auspicious site in the area with mountains standing at the back as if to protect the site and the front wide open to have ample sunlight throughout the year.

The royal tombs of Princess Jeongui and her husband create a calm and peaceful atmosphere as if to reflect the happy, peaceful life the princess led with her father's great attention and care.

Wangsilmyoyeok-gil	3.King Yeonsangun, a Ruler Born to Be Ruled by Tragedy
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A narrow walkway running through an ordinary residential area on the outskirts of Seoul guides you to the Royal Tomb of King Yeonsangun, the tenth ruler of the Joseon Dynasty.

The Joseon Dynasty maintained a tradition of honoring deceased kings and their queens by burying them in large, stately tombs built according to the royal protocols. However, the Royal Tomb of King Yeonsangun displays a plain, or even humble, appearance. Remarkably, it is only lately that the grave was found as one where the Joseon's tenth king was buried. It was designated as a Historic Site in 1991 and opened to the public in 2006.

According to history, King Yeonsangun had been a promising ruler who was fond of calligraphy and poetry writing. Disclosure of the secret about his mother's tragic death, however, turned him into a bloodthirsty, vengeful maniac.

His cruelty and unethical behaviors resulted in a coup and banishment which ended with his tragic death at the age of 31. His body was originally buried at the place of exile, but the repeated pleas from his consort Lady Sin moved the grave to the current location in 1513.

The precincts of the Royal Tomb of King Yeonsangun also contain the graves of his queen, daughter and son-in-law.

This age-old ginkgo tree in Banghak-dong has been admired by local people as a sacred tree. It is said that the tree has given warnings through fire whenever major bad luck struck the Korean society. The last time it caught fire was 1978, one year before the then president Park Chung-hee was murdered.

This large, sacred tree is standing just outside the precincts of the Royal Tomb of King Yeonsangun. The tree is 830 years old, and it reveals that it has stood there even before the foundation of the Joseon Dynasty. It is 25m tall and 10m in circumference at its base, making itself as the largest and oldest tree in Seoul

Traditionally, local people believe that the tree has some magical power that can foretell the future, and hold annual rite to honor it on the first full moon day of the lunar year.

Take a closer look at the tree and you can see yuju, or the "breast post", stretched from the middle of the trunk. The name came from that it looked like a woman's breast, but in fact it is a part of the root of an old ginkgo tree stretched to get "more air". In the past, the breast-shaped root was an object of worship among women who needed to feed their baby but suffered from a lack of breast milk.

Why don't you take a short rest under this tree that has provided shelter for local people for over 800 years?

There is a tiny flow of water in the park beside the ginkgo tree in Banghak-dong and the Royal Tomb of King Yeonsangun. It is an ordinary park, but the water flowing through a narrow trench-like passage is far from ordinary.

Wondangsaem Spring, from which this flow of water is originated, is a historic fountain used as a source of drinking water since the settlement of the Yun family in the area some 600 years ago. They say that the long, healthy life of the 830-year-old ginkgo tree standing beside it is indebted to the water running to and from the fountain.

The 600-year history of Wondangsaem as the source of drinking water for the local community abruptly ended in 2009 when it dried out by an unknown reason. The current spring was restored according to the efforts of local people who earnestly wished the history to continue. The water of the spring is now provided from the reservoir of underground water and, hence, expected to keep flowing.

Wondangsaem is now widely regarded as the gem of the small park containing it, attracting visitors seeking after water to quench thirst and a place to rest.

Wondangsaem with a streamlet that continues to murmur with water running through it, centuries-old ginkgo tree and the Royal Tombs of King Yeonsangun and Princess Jeongui have now become major attractions among those taking a leisurely walk around the area.

Wuyiryeong trail

Wuyiryeong trail	1.Sogwi Ridge, Uiryeong trail
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Man:Something terrible has happened! I heard that soldiers from North Korea have just invaded!

Woman:Do you mean that war has broken out?

Man:Yes! Everything is in chaos and people are escaping along Uiryeong trail!

For a long time, Uiryeong trail was the most direct route linking Seoul and Gyeonggi Province. The road borders Bukhansan Mountain and Dobongsan Mountain.

After the independence of Korea was declared, people selling firewood from the village came and went to Seoul over a wooden bridge they had built themselves, and the village became known as ‘Dari Village’ meaning ‘village by the bridge’. Later, the name changed to Gyohyeon Village.

For a long time in Korean history, people had used the Uiryeong trail to take farm products and other necessities to Seoul to sell at the markets. After the Korean War began in 1950, the Uiryeong Road became even more popular.

When war broke out, the Uiryeong trail was first used as a refugee path, and later as a route for the American military. As a North Korean spy infiltrated South Korea via the Uiryeong trail in 1968, the road had been closed to the public for more than 40 years. Because of its former military value, the road still has a military post nearby. To protect the environment, the Uiryeong trail area was registered as a Clean Area under government control.

However, the government reconsidered two different opinions of the

local autonomous entity and environment associations, and the result was to open the road to the public, subject to limitations. Currently, visitors can walk along Wuriyeong trail if they have made an advance booking.

Uiryong trail was formerly known on old maps as 'Sogwi Ridge'. How did the trail get its unique name? 'Sogwi' means 'cow's ear' and was so called as the ridge is shaped like the ear of a cow.

Let's start our tour of Uiryong trail. The road takes approximately three hours on foot and it is an easy slope which allows comfortable walking for everybody. We recommend that you warm up before setting off. Are you ready?

Shall we stop here and listen for a while? Can you hear the birds singing all around us?

On the Uiryeong trail, you can listen to lots of bird singing. If you're lucky, you may also see the great spotted woodpecker pecking at a tree. The woodpecker is one of two flagship species living on Bukhansan Mountain.

A flagship species is a species chosen to represent an environmental cause, such as an ecosystem in need of conservation. These species are chosen for their vulnerability, attractiveness or distinctiveness in order to engender support and acknowledgment from the public at large. The flagship species of Bukhansan Mountain are the great spotted woodpecker and the wild forsythia shrub.

Can you hear the sound of the wood-pecker? The symbol of Bukhansan Mountain, the great spotted woodpecker, makes a hole in the tree trunk or branches and eats insects by scooping them out with its long tongue. When woodpeckers are nervous, they make a noisy "Kiyot, kiyot" sound and shake their heads from side to side.

Woodpeckers usually build their nests in big trees at a height between 2 and 20 meters. They incubate their eggs for around 15 days, and lay 4 to 6 eggs between May and July. Young woodpeckers leave the nest 20 days after hatching.

Let's listen to the birdsong and enjoy nature.

Wuyiryeong trail	3. The Uiryeong trail Monument to the erosion control project
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In front of the Uiryeong trail observatory, there is a monument to the erosion control project undertaken on Bukhansan Mountain. The erosion control project restored the devastated region.

Uiryeong trail started the project in 1966 and finished after 17 months. The location of the project, period, budget, number of workers, construction outline and other information are described on the monument. The budget in those days was 161,962 won in cash and 107,507 kilograms worth of grain.

Today, the value is approximately \$148883 and 107,520 kilograms of grain which totals \$309335. The interesting thing is that the cost of the grain amounts to more than two-thirds of the total budget.

This is because grain was a valuable form of currency during those tough times. By the end of the erosion control project, Uiryeong trail had been planted with 2,400 trees including Alders, Trees of Heaven and black locust trees (false acacia).

The natural forest and artificial plantation stand in harmony on Uiryeong trail.

Near the top of Uiryeong trail, you can see concrete structures on both sides of the road.

This is a tank trap. Tank traps were used to delay or prevent the movement of enemy tanks during the Korean War. They are now rare in National Park Areas. The tank trap has two parts - the lower part supports the weight of the tank and the upper part is a big concrete structure.

In the bridge between the two parts, there is a small space for an explosive device. If the explosive compound is detonated, the upper concrete part breaks, falls down and obstructs the road. The tank trap represents the sorrow of the Korean War and our commitment to ensure that such a war does not occur again. Behind the tank trap there is a monument to the military operational use of the road.

The monument shows that the road had been used for military purposes since the Korean War broke out in 1950. The Uiryeong trail was closed to the public for the last 40 years due to its sorrowful history. Let's think about its poignant history as we walk.