

Samhwasil-Daechuk Section

■ Map



■ List of Spots

Category	Stories	Note
1	About Samhwasil-Daechuk Section	
2	The Village of Three Flowers	
3	Pear Tree Village	
4	Village where the Stone Tortoise is Buried	
5	Willow Tree Hill	
6	The Trees with Feather-like Flowers	
7	The Paddy Fields Cut from the Mountain	
8	The Valley where the General Lived	
9	The Village where Plums Ripen	
10	The Waterhole of the Forest Animals	
11	The Background of the Novel Toji	
12	The Tree that Lives with a Rock	
13	The Village where Persimmons Ripen	

1. About Samhwasil-Daechuk Section

Only ten years ago, this section was a classic, rural village where the roads were unpaved and buses navigated the narrow dirt paths.

As you walk along this section, you will be able to see a river flowing alongside the road. This river, known as Seomjingang, flows by the Dulle-gil Trail and through the Hadong region. For the local people, the river is essential. It is both the source of water necessary for agriculture and is also home to an abundance of fish that the locals catch.

This section is famous for its blooming peach, pear and plum blossoms. You will be able to hear a number of traditional folk stories as you walk along the trail, a place where you can still experience the vestiges of old Korean country life.

2. The Village of Three Flowers

At the entrance to the village is a stone tower which represents a desire for peace in the village. In commemoration of the opening of the Jirisan Dulle-gil, stones from all over the country and even abroad were collected and stacked here. With stones brought from as far away as the Philippines, each individual stone is inscribed with its place of origin. The name of this village is Samhwasil, which means the “village of three flowers”.

The three flowers the name refers to are the pear, plum and peach blossoms. When they all bloom in the spring, this entire area is filled with white and pink blooms. After the flowers fall and the summer passes, the coming autumn brings a harvest of pears and peaches.

There are actually many interpretations of the name Samhwasil. But regardless of the original meaning of the village name, the beauty that the peach, plum and pear trees give to this village in spring is undeniable.

3. Pear Tree Village

This village has always been filled with pear trees and as such is known as Pear Tree Village. In the spring, the hills behind the village turn white from the pear tree blossoms and are a wonderful sight. There are two large trees in the bare space in front of the village that have an old story told about them.

There was once an official who decided to take this public space and turn it into his own personal paddy field. He was of high rank in the village and so there was nothing that the people could do about it. One

young village boy, who found out about the official's plan, began to plant saplings here that he had dug out of the mountainside. At first he planted only a few small trees. As they were only small, the village people didn't take much notice, but as the number of trees increased they started to become curious about the boy's intentions.

The boy hoped to stop the official from turning the area into his own paddy field by planting a forest in its place. He thought if he just planted more and more trees then one day the area would become a forest that everyone in the village would be able to enjoy. The village people took courage from this and began to plant trees themselves, and in the end the official couldn't make the land into his own private field. As time passed, the village forest slowly gave way to fields and houses, and now only these two great trees remain.

4. Village where the Stone Tortoise is Buried

In front of this village you can see a large, round semi-circular hill. The hill is so round it looks like someone has cut an apple in half and placed one half on the ground.

This hill is famous not only for its shape, but also for the fact that fires frequently break out there. There are still not many trees because of frequent fires. The exact reason for the fires is unknown, but people were unable to live close to the hill due to the danger.

One day, a monk who came and heard that fires broke out frequently on the hilltop told the village people to make a pair of tortoises out of stone and bury them near the stream. Hearing this, the village people went to a skilled stonemason in the village, and he made a pair of stone tortoises the size of a watermelon. They say that after performing a ritual to the stone tortoises and burying them on the banks of the village stream there were no more fires on the hilltop. While this is only a legend, 40 years ago a stone tortoise was discovered during construction work along the edge of the stream, and today it is displayed at the village elementary school.

5. Willow Tree Hill

This section is the mountain path with the steepest incline. The name of this hill literally means 'a willow tree hill', and it was named as such because there were once many willow trees growing on this hill. However, during the Japanese Colonial Period, the Japanese cut the trees down to make matches and matchboxes. This area is now mostly just open space but there are a few young trees, less than ten years old.

This trail was once used as the main route for people in this valley village to reach larger villages, and they say that farmers would drive their cattle up the hill frequently as well. The pasture here was once so lush and abundant that they say every house in the village raised between 50 and 100 head of cattle each.

6. The Trees with Feather-like Flowers

In front of this village located in the small space between two steep hills, there is a Chinese fringe tree that is said to be around 300 years old. This species of tree, largely distributed throughout East Asia, is often grown to line streets and in the spring blooms with delicate flowers that resemble white feathers.

The fringe trees in this village are so beautiful that trees cultivated here were famously planted along the sides of the Cheonggyecheon Stream that flows through the middle of central Seoul. These great trees, which also act as the guardians of this village, are believed to have some mystical powers. They say that when many flowers bloom low on the tree, they prevent heavy rain from destroying crops and when flowers bloom high on the tree they let just the right amount of water through to help the crops to grow.

Around 200 years ago there was a severe drought and because the flowers did not bloom on the trees many people believed that they had died. But the next year the flowers bloomed again and from that time on the villagers have considered the trees sacred. Every year in May, the fringe trees in this village bloom with white feather-like flowers and are a wonderful sight, so if you're passing through here in early summer, be sure not to miss the spectacle.

7. The Paddy Fields Cut from the Mountain

In October each year, you will see golden paddy fields in the foothills of the mountain. These are terraced paddy fields that have been cut from the inclined hillside to seem almost like steps. You can find this kind of terracing in places throughout Asia and Europe.

As there was very little flat ground to farm in the area, people cut into the mountain itself to construct these terraced paddy fields for farming. Because of the way these fields have been constructed, it is impossible to use machinery here and therefore everyone has to grow and harvest the crops by hand. This means that paddy agriculture here is said to be five times more difficult than anywhere else.

At one time this place was famous for having the highest yield in the region. However, as many young people fit for agricultural work leave the area, more and more of these fields are being abandoned. We recommend visiting the village just before the harvest in late September and early October. The golden paddy fields which wrap around the slopes of the mountain create a vista that you cannot help but admire.

8. The Valley where the General Lived

There is an old story about this peak that relates to a general of the Goryeo kingdom that once existed on the Korean Peninsula. The general once lived on this peak, and on the hill south of the peak is the site of a Buddhist temple that he built.

The general's military skills were highly proficient, and he considered himself unmatched at horse-riding and archery. Perhaps because of that, he would always choose the most well-renowned horses when he went riding. His white horse was famed as being faster than an arrow, so the general made a bet with his friend. The horse was to reach a particular point faster than the arrow he would shoot from his bow. The general was so filled with self-confidence he said that if the horse was slower than the arrow he would cut his horse's throat.

After shooting the arrow, he raced the horse to where it seemed the arrow would fall, but he couldn't find it anywhere. Enraged, and thinking that the arrow had been faster than the horse, he slit the horse's throat. It was only then that the slower arrow fell by his side. He clutched the dead horse and cried in regret, and after that day, retired to this mountain to build a house and live a life of penitence for his foolishness.

9. The Village where Plums Ripen

The trail passes over the next hill without passing through this village, but if you have enough time, we hope that you take a detour to visit the village. Though long famous for its plums, the village isn't yet a tourist destination and has maintained its traditional appearance.

Every year in June when the green plums appear on the trees, the village people cease their farm work and busy themselves picking the plums. As the harvest period is shorter than that of other fruits, a lot of hands are needed to quickly harvest the delicious plums.

They are said to be good for relieving fatigue and helping digestion, and since old times have been used for medicinal purposes in the Far East. In this village they eat the plums with rice after preserving them in sugar for 100 days, or use them to make tea. They also steam and then dry or preserve them in salt, as well as smoke them after removing their skins. The diversity of preparation methods yields many different products, such as jam, soy sauce, vinegar and alcohol. In particular, the alcoholic beverage made from plums is said to be both delicious and an effective remedy after eating spoiled food.

10. The Waterhole of the Forest Animals

Buried beneath the pine tree forest where the asphalt road ends are a number of black rocks. While the mountain slope is not rough and the forest isn't deep, this is a secluded trail where people rarely walk, and so is a quiet place to go hiking.

There is a small ravine in the area. If you hear the sound of running water, you will soon be able to see the ravine as you make your way forward. At the bottom of the ravine is a water source used by both the local village people and the wild animals that inhabit the area. Take a rest by the clear, clean waters of the ravine to refresh yourself.

Although the forest isn't so big, you will notice the footprints and droppings of the wild animals that come to drink here. If you're lucky, you will be able to see squirrels scampering and jumping between the trees. Most wild animals are naturally quick and cautious, so they most often come to drink during the night, but you may be lucky enough to see some.

11. The Background of the Novel Toji

At the foot of the hill covered in pines there are endless, wide fields. A broad river meanders around the fields and the view will make you want to shout for joy. These fields, the largest and most famous in the area, are the setting for a famous Korean modern novel called '*Toji*', meaning 'The Land.'

'*Toji*' is the story of a young, aristocratic girl in the late 1800s, and set in the Hadong region, tells of her trials, successes and loves. An epic Korean saga, it was written over a period of 26 years, has over 700 characters, has been dramatized three times and translated into over 20 foreign languages from around the world. You can tell just from the numbers that this literary work is a source of pride for Korean people.

There are some who compare the work with the famous English-language piece of popular fiction 'Gone with the Wind.' This is because many people have fallen in love with the story of the heroine who grows up as the daughter of an aristocratic family but becomes a strong woman in a rapidly changing era.

12. The Tree that Lives with a Rock

A little away from the village is a pavilion. Many people stop and stay for a while at this pavilion because of the pine tree. First, you will see a large pine tree that is over ten meters tall. After marveling for a while at the size of the tree, if you look at the root area you will see something even more surprising. The roots of this tree are not buried in the ground like most pine trees, but rather the tree stands with its roots

wrapped around a large stone.

This tree grew from a seed which fell onto the small amount of soil that lay atop this stone. As the tree grew and the roots thickened, the rock began to split but the tree roots wrapped themselves around it. The tree and rock have become one body living in a state of symbiosis. You cannot help but admire the tree and rocks that exist by supporting each other.

The tree's appearance is special, but to the local village people the tree has an even deeper significance. They say that long ago when there were heavy rains and the hillside collapsed, the tree blocked falling rocks and protected the village people. Since that time, every year the village people prepare offerings and perform a ritual for the tree.

13. The Village where Persimmons Ripen

Along the road from this village, there is a dense orchard of persimmon trees. If you are passing through the area in the fall, you will be able to see the orange-skinned fruits hanging in clusters. You can find these fruits in East Asia, parts of South America and also Italy. In the fall season, Korean people dry or boil these fruits, filled with fiber and vitamins, before eating them. The flowers of the persimmon bloom between May and June, and from October the harvest begins.

While this region has always been famous for producing lots of persimmons, the fruits cultivated in this village are also famous for being larger and sweeter than those produced elsewhere. The persimmons are famous, but the area also has a reputation for a unique method of drying them. After early November, the persimmons are picked and left for a few days in the cold shade, becoming soft. In this state the fruit are so sweet that in olden times they were sent as a special local export to the king. The area's reputation has lived on and the persimmons produced here are recognized as the best in the entire country.

You can find farms producing persimmons located throughout the Jirisan Mountain area. If you happen to be visiting Jirisan Mountain in the fall, we recommend that you try the famous persimmons.