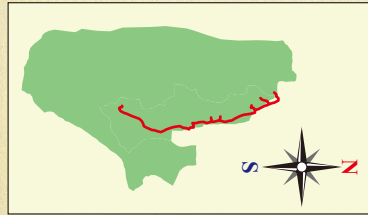
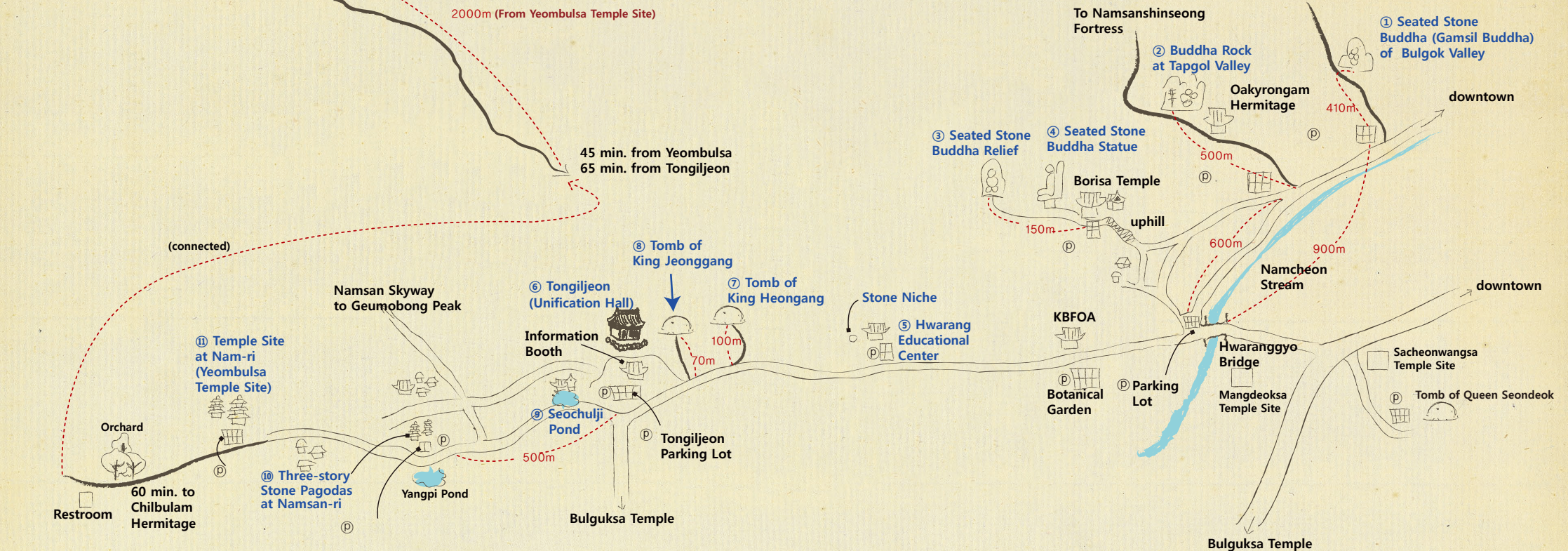




**How to Get Around  
East of Mt. Namsan  
(Dongnamsan Area)**



(사) 경주남산연구소  
www.kjnamsan.org • kjnamsan@hanmail.net • 경북 경주시 태종로 711번길 15 (노서동) T. (054) 777-7142 F. (054) 776-7142  
The Research Institute of Mt. Namsan in Gyeongju, Korea (RING) For contacts in English: [gjnamsan@gmail.com](mailto:gjnamsan@gmail.com)

## A Walk along the Eastern side of Mt. Namsan

### ① A Buddha Image Carved on a Rock Surface in Bulgok Valley (Treasure No. 198)

The Seated Stone Buddha (Gamsil Buddha) of Bulgok Valley is about a 7 minute hike from the mouth of the valley. You will pass a bamboo grove on your right and will see the Buddha carving seated inside a high-rising rock. A rainbow-shaped niche is cut into a 3.2m X 4.5m rock surface, and inside the niche is the seated Buddha carving. It is an atypical Buddha image compared to the other Buddha images that can be found on Mt. Namsan; whereas typical Buddhist sculptures have a solemn, inaccessible air, this particular Buddha image is a little different. With its round face, protruding eyes, new-moon-like eyebrows, faint smile, well-rounded knees, and comfortable posture hidden under its robe, it reminds us of a friendly old lady in the countryside; for this reason it is nicknamed the "Granny Buddha". The Buddha seems to be listening to us and giving us comfort when we are asking it for the help. When we look at this image and consider the humanity it displays, we can't help but smiling ourselves. It appears to be sitting in a stone house. The pedestal, both knees, and arms are in three tiers, making a triangular arrangement, which makes the image seem more stable and mysterious. It is the earliest work of Buddhist art on Mt. Namsan; dating from the early 7th century. Due to its proximity to the Wolseong Fortress, the ancient palace site of the Silla Kingdom, and because many roof tiles were found scattered throughout the bamboo forest, it is assumed to have been a temple with considerable human traffic. This Buddha image has recently been publicized as a representative of early Buddhist sculpture, and is now considered the iconic Buddhist carving of Mt. Namsan.

**How to get here:** The mouth of the Bulgok (Bucheogol) Valley lies at 900m along the river-bank to the right after crossing the Hwaranggyo Bridge toward the Unification Hall. It takes 7 minutes to the Buddha. **GPS Coordinates** 35° 49' 08"N 129° 13' 50"E **Elevation** 86m

### ② Buddhist Images Carved on Rock Surface at Tappok, Treasure No. 201

Tappok Valley is home to a small Buddhist temple called Okryong-am Hermitage. Small maple trees line the valley from its mouth, making it a popular destination for photographers, especially in Autumn.

Although the mysteriously carved rock is highly appreciated locally, it is relatively unknown outside of the region. The huge, cubic monolith, also frequently referred to as the Buddha Rock, located behind the hermitage, stands 10 meters high and has 40 meter circumference. Each side of the stone is decorated with Buddhist imagery. On the Southern surface stands a Buddhist statue along with a Buddha triad. A three-story stone pagoda stands South of the rock. It appears as if the southern side of the stone was covered by a roof at some point judging by marks found on the top of the stone. The Eastern facing side contains a principal Buddha, an attendant Bodhisattva, and seven deities descending from heaven. The Northern surface has a seven-story and a nine-story wooden pagoda; a preaching Buddha stands on a lotus pedestal between them. On the smaller Western surface are a Buddha and two heavenly deities. All of the Buddhas and pagodas on the monolith have a quality that makes them look as if they were drawn, rather than having a realistic feel. This site is also called Shininsa Temple as roof tiles were found inscribed with this name. This temple is believed to be where Monk Myeongrang of the Shininjong Sect carved a Buddhist World of Mandara in the hope of driving away the unwelcome forces of Tang China after praying in Sacheonwangsa Temple.

**How to get here:** Follow the sign located approximately halfway up the river-side road. It will take about 7 minutes to walk to the Buddha Rock from the sign.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 48' 52"N 129° 13' 58"E **Elevation** 96m

### ③ A Buddhist Image Carved on a Rock Surface at Borisa Temple (Gyeongsangbuk-do Tangible Cultural Asset No. 193)

This 9th century Buddha relief sits in the middle of a bamboo grove in front of Borisa Temple. A 150-m uphill trail leads to the relief from the entrance

of the temple. The short trail is steep and narrow making for a difficult hike. Few would expect a Buddha relief in such an isolated location. Just as hikers are ready to turn around and give up, the smiling Buddha's face greets the breathless hikers. Sitting with a full of smile on its face, it looks down at the mundane world away. The voluminous and soft body lines of this impressive relief are carved on a slightly forward-tilting rock, and it seems to be peering down on those below. As there is little space for any protective structure, the relief has probably been looking with unblocked view over people of the valley since its construction. The mental and physical burdens of the hike and your everyday life will instantly fade in front of this Buddha's broad smile.

**How to get here:** It takes approximately 5 minutes on the mountain trail that is found on the left side of the parking lot at Borisa Temple.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 48' 40"N 129° 14' 12"E **Elevation** 95m

### ④ Seated Stone Buddha Statue of Mireukgok Valley (Treasure No. 136)

Located on the former site of the Borisa Temple from the Silla Period, this 8th century seated stone Buddha statue is the most intact artifact on Mt. Namsan. The face has a stern, but merciful expression and its clothing has delicate folds. It sits on an octagonal lotus pedestal and its separate halo is decorated splendidly with a miniature Buddha relief, along with palmetto and flame patterns. This elaborate and splendid halo is second to none in beauty compared to others in Korea, unfortunately its broken top was replaced. It is a relatively large sculpture; the body measures 2.44m tall and the total sculpture is 4.36m tall in. Considering that it is elaborately and splendidly carved, the head is surprisingly in balance with the body. A medicine Buddha is incised in thin line on the back of the halo, an uncommon trait. The statue is in great harmony with the surrounding environs.

The Buddha has impressive view of the Bomun plain below. From the statue's vantage point you can see the tomb of King Jinpyeong and the tomb of Queen Seondeok on Mt. Namsan. To get a real feeling of the beauty of this panoramic vista, one should look down on the valley during each season to observe its ever changing splendor.

**How to get here:** Walk along the path on the right through the village to Borisa Temple across from the Hwaranggyo Bridge. It takes about 10 minutes to get there.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 48' 42"N 129° 14' 08"E **Elevation** 110m

### ⑤ The Hwarang Educational Institute

The Hwarang Educational Institute is an institute which trains Korean youth in patriotism, team work, and bravery. It was established from 1970 to 1973. The Cheonamgol Valley is approximately 800 meters and is very popular among hikers, although no major relics have been found in the area. The only relic that has been found in the valley is the Stone Tabernacle (a lotus-patterned foundation stone) which is housed at the institute.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 48' 18"N 129° 14' 26"E **Elevation** 68m

### ⑥ The Unification Hall

Mt. Namsan is a sanctuary for the members of the Hwarang Code. Hwarang members trained both mentally and physically on Mt. Namsan during the Silla Period. The Silla Kingdom conquered Baekje in 660 CE, Goguryeo in 668 CE, and finally drove out its former ally, Tang China, to form a unified nation for the first time in the Korean history. The apex of Silla culture began with the unification of the Korean peninsula. The Unification Hall was built at the behest of the Korean president in 1977. It was built to memorialize the accomplishments of King Muyeol, King Munmu, and General Kim Yushin during the unification of the three kingdoms. Another purpose of the Unification Hall is to commemorate the patriotic heroism of the Hwarang and to promote the Hwarang code as a spiritual backbone for Koreans. Portraits of these three heroes, along with dramatic paintings of the unification of the three kingdoms, are on display in the Unification Hall. There are also monuments that stand in memory of the unification of the three kingdoms and the achievements of the three unification heroes. The beautiful scenery of the east side of Mt. Namsan is viewable from this site.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 47' 53"N 129° 14' 32"E **Elevation** 73m

### ⑦ Historic Site No. 186 ⑧ Historic Site No. 187

King Heongang (875~886 CE) was the ruler of the Silla Kingdom during its most prosperous era; when all the houses had tiled roofs, people cooked with charcoal, the streets were filled with cheerful songs, and Japanese kings sent tributes of gold. This tomb is a round mound tomb with four courses of stone bars around its bottom. King Jeonggang (886 ~ 887 CE), the next king after King Heongang, died in his second year of rule without an heir. His sister, Queen Jinseong, inherited the throne. Both the royal tombs are approximately 100m into pine forests off the main road. The crooked pine trees are icons of Mt. Namsan in Gyeongju. Azaleas and golden bell flowers lie interspersed among the pines during the Spring. As you walk along the path through the thick pine forests, the tombs will reveal themselves gradually in bright sunshine.

**How to get here :** Walk approximately 100m between the Hwarang Educational Institute and the Unification Hall. If you drive, a parking lot is available to use in front of the Unification Hall and the tombs are just a short walk away.

**HS #186 GPS Coordinates** 35° 47' 58"N 129° 14' 26"E **Elevation** 83m

**HS #187 GPS Coordinates** 35° 48' 08"N 129° 14' 25"E **Elevation** 50m

### ⑨ Seochulji Pond (Historic Site No. 138)

Seochulji is the pond near the South end of the parking lot at the Unification Hall. This 86m-long oval pond is a great photo-opportunity with Mt. Namsan standing in the background. The old pavilion called lyodang sits in harmony with the environment on the shore. There is a famous legend related to the pond. The legend says that in 488 CE, the 10th year of King Soji, the 21st ruler of the Silla Kingdom, the royal palace was relocated to Wolseong Fortress from Myeonghalseong Fortress. On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, the king was having an outing with his subjects at the Cheonjeonjeong Pavilion when a crow and a rat spoke to him. The rat said, "Follow the crow." and the king told one of his royal subjects to chase the crow. Upon reaching the Pichon Village east of Mt. Namsan, the servant came across two pigs fighting and lost track of the crow. Shortly after, an old man appeared from the pond and gave an envelope to the king which read "Open it and two people will be killed; otherwise, one person will die. The King said, "it would be better to have one person dead than to have two people killed." One advisor insisted, "The two people would probably be commoners, but the one person would surely be his majesty." The King agreed, opened the letter, and found a note that read "Shoot the lute case." On returning to the palace, he shot the lute case. Inside the case he found a Buddhist monk and a princess planning to assassinate him. The two people were later executed. It has become customary to be cautious and not to start any new actions on the first pig day, rat day, and horse day of the first lunar month since then. The fifteenth day of the first lunar month, called "Ogiji-il", has since been celebrated in memory of crows by having a memorial service with boiled glutinous rice. This practice is commonly referred to as Daldo, which encourages us to approach anything suspicious with mournful and careful minds. This pond is named Seochulji, which translates the pond from which the letter came. The story is a metaphor for the conflict between the existing conservative, religion with their its primitive beliefs, symbolized by rats and crows, defeating the new religion of Buddhism, represented by a Buddhist monk. The lyodang Pavilion was built by Imjeok in 1664. The pond is surrounded by Indian lilac trees and highlighted by lotus flowers in summer. The flowers of apricot, magnolia, cherry trees, and golden-bell trees are in full bloom in Spring while yellow ginkgo and red maple leaves create magnificent foliage in Autumn. Between the end of June and mid-August, blooming lilacs and lotuses attract many photographers and sight-seers who enjoy walking and picnicking here day and night. At night, the pond is illuminated, which makes the scenery even more attractive.

**How to get here :** It's at the southern end of the parking lot in front of the Unification Hall.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 47' 49"N 129° 14' 31"E **Elevation** 69m

### ⑩ Three-story Stone Pagodas in Namsan-ri (Treasure No. 124)

The glorious old temple is no longer standing but the two pagodas are still left intact; one in the east side of the site and the other on the west side. The pagoda on the western side has a typical dual-platform pedestal and the reliefs of eight divine guardians are visible on the pedestal. Gandharva, on the left side of the Southern surface, is a guardian who entertains humans by playing an instrument and dancing. Asura, on the right of the Southern surface, is a monster-like guardian with three faces and holds a weapon in each hand. Asura is often called the king of hell. It is depicted to hold the sun and the moon in its raised hands. The Yaksa, on the right side of the Eastern surface, is the king of the demon world. Yaksa is counting the beads of the Buddhist rosary in its mouth. Naga, Kinnara, Mahoraga, Deva, and Garuda are also carved on the surfaces of the other directions. All the guardians representing both heaven and hell are carved on the western pagoda. The pagoda on the east side of the site is on a grand dual-platform base and is made of brick-shaped stones much like the one in Bunhwangsa Temple. The east pagoda is generally regarded as the masculine pagoda, with a stiff and piercing appearance, while the west pagoda has a feminine and tender and look. This is assumed to be the site of Yangpisa Temple from the history book of Samgukyusa.

**How to get here :** Walk along the road past the Seochulji Pond toward the South. It takes five minutes to walk here from the Seochulji Pond.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 47' 35"N 129° 14' 38"E **Elevation** 84m

### ⑪ A Temple Site at Nam-ri (Yeombulsa Temple Site)

There is a temple site with two stone pagodas 700m south of Treasure No. 124. The only remains of the temple were several stone pieces left in the middle of the field until the Sri Lankan Minister of Religion brought the Sarira of a historic Buddha here and put it inside the pagodas after the broken pagodas were repaired. The grey stone pagodas stand in stark contrast to the green landscape of Mt. Namsan. The pagodas stand impressively on a dual-platform pedestal. Gradual decreases between stories, roofs, and spacious bodies all provide an extensive view together. As there are two dividing pillars carved on each side of both platforms, they are assumed to date back to the mid-8th century, when the Seokgatap of Bulguksa Temple was built.

According to Samgukyusa, there was a village called Pirichon on the Eastern slope of Mt. Namsan. In the village was a Buddhist temple called Pirisa. A monk from the temple continuously chanted the name of Amitabha Buddha, which could be heard by the people of the town. The chanting was so tender and consistently resonant that when hearing it, any anger, nervousness, excitement, or anxiety would melt away. He was later called the Chanting Master. When he passed away, a clay statue was made in his image and kept in Minjangsa Temple. The temple was renamed Yeombulsa meaning "the temple of chanting".

**How to get here :** Walk toward the Chilburam Hermitage from Treasure No. 124. It takes 10 minutes to walk here from Treasure No. 124.

**GPS Coordinates** 35° 47' 16"N 129° 14' 36"E **Elevation** 81m

Translated by Dongmin Goh and proofread by Thomas Kermoschak

\* GPS coordinates and elevations may not be accurate and should be used for relative reference only since they have been measured with a personal smart phone.

## Free Guided Tour on Mt. Namsan

Every Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

**Course :** Sambulsa Temple and Samneung Valley

Book a tour at [www.kjnamnsan.org](http://www.kjnamnsan.org)

**The Research Institute of Mt. Namsan in Gyeongju, Korea (RING)**

For contacts for information in English [gjnamnsan@gmail.com](mailto:gjnamnsan@gmail.com)



Scan to book a tour.