The first impression of Illyang-ri—reputed for its gentle, generous people—is that it’s cozy. Perhaps it is because of the way that the Songcheon River runs in front of the village while the foot of the Chilgap Mountain embraces it from behind. The village weaves charmingly among the low mountains and wide fields without a single jutting corner. Even complete strangers to geomancy would acknowledge the tranquility of the location.

Historically, Illyang-ri began to develop its reputation in 1610. Twelve head families of eight clans live together in this noble village. Houses ranging from 200 to as many as 500-years-old align the streets, nine of which have been designated as cultural properties. The villagers affectionately call Illyang-ri by its traditional name, ‘Naragol’—the capital name of Ushi Kingdom during the early Goguryeo period. Because the village was said to resemble a flying crane, it later became known as ‘Naraegol,’ or ‘Wing Village.’

Past the lush zelkova tree at the entrance of the village, a rest stop for travelers, is the head residence of the Yongam household. Kim Ik Jung of the Yongam household built this home in 1728 after quelling the Rebellion of Lee In Jwa. The road from the Yongam House leads to Sambyeokdang, the head residence of Lee Jung Ryang, the fourth son of Lee Hyeon Bo of Nongam. The colorfully layered roof instantly catches the eye. Sambyeokdang, or ‘the house of three blue items,’ is the collective name for the Paulownia tree, bamboo, and pine trees growing densely behind the home.

Once you pass Sambyeokdang, the elegant hanok of the Obong head residence comes into view. From Byeoksanjung Ridge, you can see the roofs and vast landscape of the village.

Chunghyodang Traditional House is located in the innermost part of the village, past the Obong head residence. Located at the highest point of the village, you can take in the sweeping view of the entire village from here. In front of the shrine is a tree with branches split into two. This tree is known to bring abundance and fortune to the homes that the leafiest branches point toward.

The Galam head residence is at the end of the winding road from Chunghyodang Traditional House. This is the head residence of Lee Hyeon II, a government minister during the Joseon Dynasty. The house served as a base for the independence movement during the Japanese colonial period. It is graceful yet powerful, orderly yet warm.

The Narakkol Borimal School, located in front of the zelkova tree, also offers a variety of programs. There is something to do every season: you can pick peaches and corn during the summer, and sweet potatoes and apples during the fall. Visitors can also enjoy sled riding and kite flying during the winter. You can ride a tractor through the village, make rice cakes and release floating lanterns into the sky. Donkey rides are especially popular among children. Borimal, famous for its abundant barley harvest, also offers special barley-related activities, including barley treading.

Renovated from the Illyang-ri Elementary School after its closure in 1994, the Narakkol Borimal School offers a seminar room equipped with villa-style accommodation.

Source: Korea Tourism Organization
http://english.visitkorea.or.kr