

Research Paper

Cases of Buckwheat Tourism in Korea

Cheol Ho PARK^{1*} and Min Ook PARK²

¹ Korea Buckwheat Research Institute, Chuncheon, Korea, (e-mail: chpark@kangwon.ac.kr)

² Kangwon National University, Chuncheon, Korea, (e-mail: koonim67@gmail.com)

* Corresponding author: chpark@kangwon.ac.kr

DOI <https://doi.org/10.3986/fag0050>

Received: June 11, 2025; accepted June 27, 2025

Key words: buckwheat, sightseeing, fields, dishes, culture

ABSTRACT

Buckwheat tourism in Korea in two places, Bongpyoung town, Pyoungchang county, Gangwon province and Wahul village, Jeju city, Jeju province, is introduced in terms of background, current activities, and expected effectiveness from green tourism point of view.

INTRODCUTION

Green tourism is characterized by its respect for the environment and preservation of biodiversity. The main objective is to reduce the carbon footprint by avoiding activities that harm the environment or use too many resources. The purpose of green tourism, as a part of sustainable tourism is to achieve a balance between “healthy” environment, heritage integrity, social well-being and economic benefits. Green tourism philosophy is adopted by a wide range of tourism operators, e.g. small lodgings (B&B's), hotels, farms, retailers, etc. Green Tourism involve sustainable tourism practices, such as the use of renewable energy, good waste management, and reducing the carbon footprint. For example, eco-friendly hotels use solar or wind energy to meet their energy needs, reduce water and energy use, and recycle waste. Sustainable tourism focuses on sustainability in general, based on the pillars of sustainable development, whereas ecotourism focuses on protecting the environment and raising awareness of nature conservation.

The attractive ecological resouces are essential for the successful green tourism. The ornamental values of buckwheat flower blossom and human's activities in nature without energy use have a geat potential for green tourism. Ethnobotanical knowledges of buckwheat also extend peoples' interest to wide and practical use of buckwheat (Kreft et al., 2003). Buckwheat use for economic and cultural advances has been led by civilians (Park & Choi, 2004; Park, 2019). This article deals with some instances of buckwheat tourism as an approach of green tourism in Korea.

THE OLDEST BUCKWHEAT FLOWER FESTIVAL IN BONGPYOUNG TOWN, PYEONGCHANG COUNTY, KOREA

The buckwheat flower festival named officially Hyoseok Culture Fesitival was initiated in 1999 at Bongpyoung town where Mr. Hoyseok Lee was born in April 5, 1907. He was a novelist and essayist and won fame as a short-story writer representative in Korea. He was also a professor of English literature in Sungsil college and Dae-dong technical professional school. In 1936, he wrote a short story named “When the buckwheat blooms” with a buckwheat field in his hometown setting. The novel was criticized as a highlight short story in Asia by a number of literature critics. Bongpyoung has been a main producing district of buckwheat in Gangwon province until 1990s

after he died of illness in 1945. There are still a number of buckwheat processing manufactures and buckwheat restaurants in Bongpyoung town, calling ‘buckwheat town’. Bongpyoung inhabitants organized a commitee to



Figure 1. Poster inviting visitors to buckwheat festival in Bongpyoung in 2024.



Figure 2. Bongpyoung: a view on the city, famous for flowering buckwheat and a buckwheat festival.



Figure 3. A traditional buckwheat farm near Bongpyoung.



Figure 4. Visitors on buckwheat field in Bongpyoung.



Figure 5. Monument for the literature of Hoyseok Lee in Bongpyoung

praise his literary accomplishment and memory his life and have held every year Hyoseok culture festival since 1999. The festival open every fall in area of 200,000 m² of buckwheat field including period when the moon is full. The festival is continued for 10 days from middle of 1st week to end of 2nd week in September. The number of inhabitants is 5,828 people (3,061 households) in 2023, but visitors to Bongpyoung during the festival are about 300,000 (50 times of inhabitants). The main events of Hyoseok culture festival include buckwheat field tour, enjoying buckwheat food and folklore, contest in writing and drawing, literature concert including poem recitation, music and dance performances, sales of agricultural products etc. The features of Hyoseok culture festival are harmony with maintained natural landscape (ecological



Figure 6. Recording for TV on the field in Bongpyoung.



Figure 7. Performance on the buckwheat field in Bongpyoung



Figure 8. Children playing on buckwheat field



Figure 9. Local buckwheat dish (Maemilmuk)



Figure 10. Traditional buckwheat pancakes with vegetable filling.



Figure 11. Baking traditional buckwheat pancakes.



Figure 12. Traditional Korean buckwheat pasta.



Figure 13. Folk dance performance at buckwhwat festival in Bongpyoung.

resources such as buckwheat), all-generations programs for tour with family, deep understanding of Hyoseok Lee's literature, and government (The ministry of culture & tourism)-authorized festival of excellence. The inhabitants increase income through food sale, lodging, souvenir sale, and sale of buckwheat processing products and local agricultural products including buckwheat grains and flour. Pyoungchang local government provide subsidy to land owners of buckwheat field used for the festival.

From green tourism point of view, Hyoseok festival (in other words: Buckwheat flower festival) has been employed as a model by other local government or communities. Other several buckwheat festivals in Gochang, Hadong, Cheongju, Yeongwol, and Jeju across the nation were followed to Bongpyoung even though their scale and contents were little different among the regions.

WAHUL BUCKWHEAT VILLAGE IN JEJU ISLAND, KOREA

Jeju island is the warmest region in Korea but has also highland with cool weather. That is why buckwheat grow well in Jeju island. Since 2005, Jeju provincial government (JPG) had greatly interested and planned to develop buckwheat as a special crop in Jeju. Above all, pride of inhabitants in Jeju has attracted such provincial government's new policy for buckwheat promotion. There is a birth myth named 'Zacheongby' in Jeju island. Zacheongby was an agricultural goddess who brought buckwheat seeds with other four grains from heaven to

Jeju island when Jeju island was established. JPG enacted a local ordinance to develop buckwheat industry and to support it in 2015. JPG established by itself a number of projects to raise buckwheat industry based on the ordinance. Research and development for breeding cultivars adapted well to Jeju environment and for creating new buckwheat dishes with harmonizing traditional buckwheat food in Jeju are being contentously developed until a recent date. One of JPG's goals is to attract more tourists from other regions as well as from other countries. JPG nominated Wahul village as a buckwheat village and supported to build a guest house for tourists' lodging and to encourage village's buckwheat business with various programs.

Wahulri (ri' means village in Korean) is located at the northern slope of Halla mountain and is surrounded by Gugeneoreum and Semioreum (oreum' is local language of hill). Wahul is a hilly and mountainous area with a vast grassland. The mountains look like a liar and named as Wahul. Most of inhabitants are farmers of special crop or stock farm. 70 percent of farmers produce orange. Many tourists visit Wahul village with favorable conditions of B&B, nearby tourist resort, and traffic network compare to other villages. The inhabitants in Wahul village are 802 people (335 households). Wahul has nominated as a buckwheat digitization village in 2005, as an outstanding natural ecology village and a rural healthy longevity village in 2009, and as a festival village of small community with traditional arts in 2012. A comprehensive development for creative village was done at Wahul in 2014. A building was constructed in Wahul village for experience and healing using buckwheat in 2018. Wahul was nominated as a rural experience and rest village in 2019 and was followed by restoration project of amenity from 2020 to 2022. In 2020, Wahul was nominated as a ruling base for rural new revitalizing plus and concentrated for the establishment of Jeju rural infrastructure and development of specialized products from 2021 to 2024. Buckwheat is not only an ecological resource for green tourism but also a special crop for economic and cultural promotion of the village.

Buckwheat festival in Wahul village is holding twice a year, spring and fall for 16 to 19 days. The main programs of festivals are buckwheat field tour, making buckwheat flower wreath, music performance (saxophone, accordion, ocarina etc.), exhibition and enjoying of buckwheat food, sale of buckwheat products, making buckwheat pillows etc.

In conclusion, contemporary is consilience era between science and culture. The humanistic value with scientific pragmatism is very important for sustainable high-quality life. The wide range of buckwheat use opens the way of realizing integral value through green tour-

ism. Why should we understand and use well buckwheat? Buckwheat gives us health to both body and mind. This is an answer to know through buckwheat tourism anywhere whenever.

REFERENCES

- Kreft I., Chang K.W., Choi Y.S. and Park C.H. Ethnobotany of buckwheat. Jinsol Publishing Co, Seoul, 2003.
Park C.H. and Choi Y.S. Buckwheat. Kangwon National University Press, 2004.
Park C.H. Chuncheon Makgooksoo (buckwheat noodle). Jinsol Publishing Co. Seoul, 2019.

IZVLEČEK

Primeri vključitve ajde v turistične dejavnosti v Koreji

Na dveh korejskih lokacijah, v mestu Bongpyoung, okrožje Pyeongchang (Pjongčang), provinca Gangwon in v vasi Wahul, pri mestu Jeju, provinca Jeju, so ajda, ajdova polja in ajdove jedi na široko vključeni v turistične dejavnosti. V prispevku je predstavljeno ozadje, trenutne dejavnosti in pričakovani učinki vključevanja ajde z vidika zelenega turizma.