

Special Feature

Reading Charles Varat's "Voyage en Corée" with Daedong yeojido 大東輿地圖

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Introduction

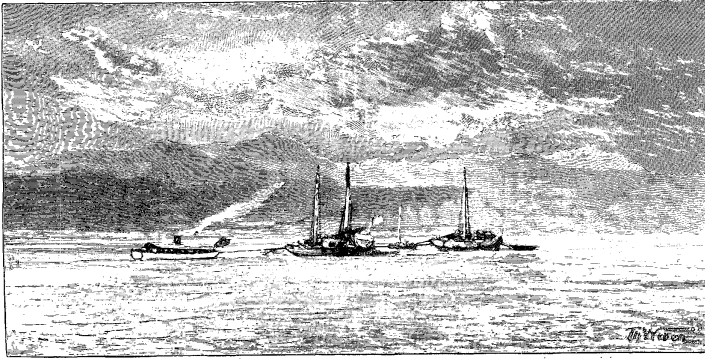
"Voyage en Corée" in the 19th Century

"Voyage en Corée" (Voyage in Korea) by Charles L. Varat (1842–1893), the French folkgeographer and collector, is a record of his travels in Korea in 1888. Varat was the first French civilian to travel across the Korean peninsula via Yeongnam Road, one of the main roads from Seoul to Busan. The imagery of Korea at the time was largely shaped by French soldiers's records who had fought during their expedition in 1866 and by *Histoire de l'Église de Corée (History of the Church of Korea)* published in 1874. This book was written by the French Catholic missionary Claude Dallet (1829–1878). Varat's travelogue was an opportunity to provide his French readers with more academic knowledge on Korean folk customs and geography.

Until the 19th century Korea was prohibited land to Westerners. In the 17th century Hendrick Hamel (1630–1692), Dutch sailor, provided the first account of Korean after being shipwrecked along the coast. And in the 18th century, Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743) introduced Korea in detail in *Description Geographique, Historique, Chronologique, Politique, et Physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise (A Geographical, Historical, Chronological, Political, and Physical Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary)*, published in 1735. In the late 18th century, contact between France and Korea took place mainly through Catholic missionaries.

In 1876, Busanpo was opened with the Korea-Japan Treaty. As in 1880 Wonsanpo and in 1883 Jemulpo was opened sequently, foreign concessions were formed in the ports and functioned as gateways for foreign culture and civilization. Korea went on to sign treaties with foreign countries such as the United States, Germany, Britain, and Italy. The treaty with France was signed late in 1886 after both countries agreed to insert words implying the freedom of proselytization. The Missions étrangères de Paris (MEP) and the French could now travel to Korea and conduct their activities freely to some extent.

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Côte de Corée. — Dessin de Th. Weber, d'après une photographie.

VOYAGE EN CORÉE,

PAR M. CHARLES VARAT¹,

EXPLORATEUR CHARGÉ DE MISSIONS ETHNOGRAPHIQUES PAR LE MINISTÈRE DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE.

1888-1889. — TEXTE ET DESSINS INÉDITS.

I

La Corée ouverte. — Tchéou. — Visite au consul. — Le départ. — Comment je rencontrai un prince coréen et ce qui en advint. — Tchémoulpo. — En route. — Arrivée à Séoul. — Un hôtel japonais. — A la légation de France. — Ma vie séouléenne. — Organisation administrative et sociale de la Corée. — Topographie de la capitale et de ses environs. — Ses monuments. — Télégraphie lumineuse, postes, etc. — Nos représentants.

La Corée était naguère si absolument fermée au reste du monde, qu'en dehors des ambassades chinoises annuelles, sévèrement contrôlées à la frontière du Canard-Vert, nul ne pouvait y pénétrer sous peine de mort: Les Pères missionnaires bravèrent les premiers cette interdiction barbare et parvinrent à franchir, durant la nuit, le fleuve qui forme la frontière, que de nombreux douaniers gardaient avec un soin féroce. On dut bientôt renoncer à ce passage; le gouvernement coréen, informé de la violation de son territoire, avait dressé des chiens à la poursuite des étrangers. Ce fut dès lors sur des jonques, montées par des chrétiens

chinois, que les Pères, abrités par les îles de la côte, purent accoster les barques de leurs futures ouailles, qui, au péril de leur vie, introduisaient les missionnaires dans le pays. On les dérobaît à tous les regards au moyen du costume d'orphelin coréen dont l'immense chapeau voile entièrement le visage, et dispense, vu les rites du grand deuil, de toute question indiscreète. Aujourd'hui, grâce aux traités conclus, un simple passeport nous suffit pour pénétrer en Corée: par terre, en franchissant à la frontière chinoise le Ya-lou-kiang, en coréen Ap-nok-hang, ou à la frontière russe, le Mikiang, en coréen le Touman-hang; par mer en se rendant de Nagasaki à Fousan, Gensan et Vladivostok, ou réciproquement; enfin du golfe de Pe-tchi-li en s'embarquant à Tchéou pour Tchémoulpo. Je choisissais cette dernière route; elle mène plus directement à la capitale, point de départ, mieux encore centre des études ethnographiques que je voulais faire.

Je quittai donc la grande ligne des Messageries maritimes allant de Marseille à Yokohama, pour prendre à Chang-hai un des steamers qui mènent à Pékin, par

1. Ce récit de voyage n'est qu'un fragment du volume que M. Charles Varat doit publier prochainement sur la Corée. Ce volume sera divisé en trois parties: la première résumera les travaux dont ce pays, si peu connu, a jusqu'ici été l'objet; la seconde contiendra le récit même du voyage, que nous donnons aujourd'hui, dans la troisième; enfin, l'auteur se propose de déterminer, tant d'après ses observations personnelles que d'après les travaux de ses devanciers, la personnalité ethnique du peuple coréen. C'est donc seulement la partie anecdotique que nous détachons à l'avance du travail de M. Varat; elle fera, certainement, pressentir tout l'intérêt du reste.

Figure 1. Varat's Travelogue in *Le Tour de Monde* (BnF)

The geographical texts and travelogues written by foreigners were mostly published after the 1880s and these have been introduced to the Korean reader from early on. However, Varat's travelogue was unfamiliar, because the original text is written in French, making it less known than those written in English.

Varat's travelogue was published in the magazine *Le Tour de Monde*¹ in 1892 (Figure 1). In the 1994, Francis Macouin, who is curator in Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts (hereafter, Guimet Museum), published Varat's travelogue and released under the title *Deux voyages en Corée (Two Voyages to Korea)*. This edition was translated into the Korean language by Seong Gwisu as *Joseon gihaeng (Journey to Korea)* in 2001.

Varat's travelogue begins with his arrival at Jemulpo in Incheon city and narrates his journey from Seoul to Busan following Yeongnam Road. From Busan, he boards a passenger ship to Wonsanpo and travels to Vladivostok, Russia, and finally to Nagasaki, Japan. The 80 pages long record of this entire journey writes about the traditional culture, such as house types, the scenery of farming villages, and Korean folk customs, describing in detail how they live in harmony with environment. In the narration of the open ports, he writes about the spatial structure of the towns and even envisions the future development of these ports. When wrapping up his journey through the provinces, he provides an overview of each province's geographical information including the boundaries of ancient states based on the mountains and rivers, illustrating the extensive knowledge of Korean history.

"Voyage en Corée" features several maps, including Joseon jeondo (The Complete Map of Korea), which shows the route Varat traveled, Doseongdo (Map of Seoul), depicting the capital, and Wonsan jido (Map of Wonsan). This contrasts with other travelogues, which included maps of Korea created in the West. France by then was already a leading country in cartography ever since Jean-Dominique Cassini (1625–1712). In addition to those maps, over 70 drawings or engravings is inserted which was based on photographs, folk drawings, and other images. They provide readers with the vivid experience as if they are witnessing the scenes on the ground.

All of these elements in travelogue would have provided an opportunity

1 *Le Tour de Monde* (Around the World) was a French travel magazine first issued in 1860 and was published weekly until 1914. The magazine featured images including photographs and was very popular among its readers against the backdrop of Europe's geographical expansion at the time.

for the French to move beyond the preexisting perception of Korea. This essay is an attempt to gain a better understanding of how the French imagined Korea at the time by retracing the travelogue on Korean old maps. As the upcoming year, 2026, marks the 140th anniversary of the signing of the France-Korea Treaty, this essay will provide a basis for discussions about the future direction of Korean Studies in France.

Western Travelogues of Korea in the Late 19th Century

Western countries that signed commercial treaties with Korea in the 19th century subsequently sent diplomats and former soldiers, which was resulted in the publication of geography texts and travelogues. The main objective behind these efforts was to grasp the commercial activity of Korea and develop resources to expand the market for imperialist countries. Travelogues of Korea during this period therefore are not simply records of observations but gather and collate information on geography and history of Korea and additionally contain the traveler's impressions mainly of economic resources.

Table 1 shows the travelogues by Europeans and Americans who visited Korea in the late 19th century. A total of six works including “Voyage en Corée” have been confirmed. Almost travelers come from Germany, the United States,

Table 1. Western Travelogues of Korea in the Late 19th Century

Year of travel	Title of travelogue (English translation, year of publication)	Traveler	Nationality	Occupation	Areas of travel
1866, 1868	<i>Ein verschlossenes Land: Reisen nach Corea (A Forbidden Land: Voyages to Korea, 1880)</i>	Ernst J. Oppert	Germany	Businessman	Around Asan Bay
1884	<i>Inside the Hermit Kingdom</i> (2007)	George C. Foulk	America	Soldier, diplomat	Jeolla and Gyeongsang Provinces
1884–1885	<i>Life in Corea</i> (1888)	Willams. R. Carles	England	Diplomat	Hamgyeong and Pyeongan Provinces
1888	<i>La Corée ou Tchösen (Korea or Joseon, 1894)</i>	Charles Chaillé-Long	America	Soldier, diplomat	Jeju Island
1888	“Voyage en Corée” (Voyage in Korea, 1892)	Charles L. Varet	France	Traveler, scholar	Jemulpo, Seoul, Busan
1894–1897	<i>Korea and Her Neighbours</i> (1897)	Isabella B. Bishop	England	Traveler, literary person	North Han River, Gwanseo area

and England. Only Varat was the French person. The occupations of travelers were either businessmen, former soldiers, or diplomats. Diplomats left daily records and their itineraries to report back to their homeland, among which some were published into books.

Charles Varat's Life: Maps of Korea and His Travel Route

Personal Life and Academic Background

There is almost nothing known about Varat's personal life or his academic background. In the preface of *Deux voyages en Corée*, Macouin described Varat as valuing honor and having the financial means to readily pay the costs it entailed. He also wrote that Varat had never held a public post and that his academic activities took place only in certain spheres such as founding Société Sinico-Japonaise (Sino-Japanese Society) in 1891, although he does not specify the exact academic discipline Varat studied. Macouin merely introduces him as an expert traveler who was half geographer and half ethnographer. In fact, before his journey to Korea, Varat had already traveled Europe, America, North Africa, Asia, including India and Cambodia, and Russia, where he had crossed Siberia while collecting items of the Samoyedic culture.

His travel in Korea, however, seemed to be particularly meaningful to him. He gave presentations on his travels in Korea at academic conferences and had a plan to compile his records into a book. The objects he collected during his journey were donated to the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (Ethnographic Museum of the Trocadéro) and later transferred to the Guimet Museum. Varat died suddenly of an illness in 1893, and his plan to compile his work and publish a book on Korea was unable to come to fruition. Unmarried and without any descendants, most of the material related to Korea was left unattended, leading to the loss of the original plates of photographs he had taken during his trip there. "Voyage en Corée" became his sole legacy.

Maps of Korea in France

The late 19th century when Varat explored Korea was during the Belle Époque



Figure 2. Royaume de Corée, 1737, 55 x 39 cm, BnF

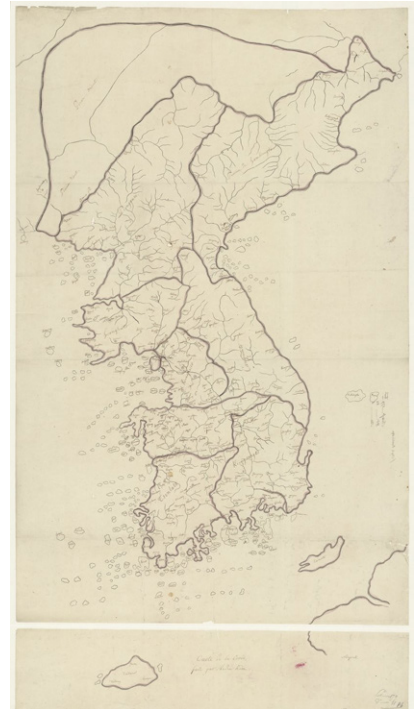


Figure 3. Carte de la Corée, Andrew Kim Daegeon, 1845, 114 x 61 cm, BnF

(Beautiful Era) of France,² which was also the period of France's colonial expansion in Southeast Asia. At the time, cartography was highly developed in France, which produced a considerable number of maps of Korea. Varat likely consulted many of these maps before departing for Korea to see whether the journey was feasible and to plan his itinerary in detail. The 1880s was also when old maps of Korea were actively being produced and disseminated across society. Thanks to Collin de Plancy, the French consul who helped Varat prepare for his trip, Varat accessed a fairly large collection of maps of Korea.

Europeans would have first seen the Korean peninsula in the 18th century. The first elaborate and complete map of Korea was the map titled "Royaume

2 La Belle Époque in France refers to the period from 1871, when the Franco-Prussian War ended, to 1914, when World War 1 broke out. France was in its Third Republic. The Belle Époque was characterized by enlightenment, romanticism, and scientific, technological, and cultural innovations. In addition to the completion of urban planning of Paris, there were large advancements in architecture, literature, music, and art. The Eiffel Tower was also completed in the year the Exposition Universelle (1889 Paris Exposition) was held.

de Corée" (Kingdom of Korea) by Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville (1697–1782),³ which was produced as a copperplate engraving (Figure 2). While there are some differences in terms of the coastline, the mountains, rivers, villages, and islands, their names are highly accurate. The cartouche⁴ on the right of the map features a nobleman holding a marten, an animal whose hair was used for making calligraphy brushes. This emblem therefore signifies that Korea was a country of letters. The map was widely distributed within France and across Europe, playing a large role at the time in spreading geographical knowledge of Korea in these countries.

In the late 18th century, Jean-François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse (1741–c. 1788), who served on the French Navy, was appointed by Louis XIV to lead an expedition that included the sea of East Asia, particularly the east coast of the Korean peninsula and the north Pacific area. The crew surveyed the coastline of Korea in 1787 and created a maritime chart, even naming what is currently Ulleung Island as Dagelet. Although the map itself was in the possession of the French Navy back then and was not open to the public, it contributed to forming geographical information of the coastline of Korea.

The relationship between France and Korea during the 19th century was marked by a series of persecutions of missionaries of Catholicism. Three French Catholic priests were martyred in 1839. And in 1846, Andrew Kim Daegeon, the first Korean Catholic priest, was martyred. He created *Carte de la Corée* (Figure 3), a map of the Korean peninsula with place names written in the Roman alphabet, which is preserved in the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (National Library of France, hereafter, BnF) after being in the possession of the French Navy. This map created an opportunity in France to play a role in sharing geographical knowledge of Korea.

The Catholic Persecution of 1866 led to the French Disturbance in November which involved the invasion of Ganghwa Island by a fleet of French warships. It was during this incident when the *Illustrated Record of Rituals*

3 D'Anville included this map in his work *Nouvel Atlas de la Chine, de la Tartarie Chinoise et du Thibet* (*New Atlas of China, Chinese Tartary and Tibet*, 1737). The map is a translation of the Map of Korea in China's Huangyu guanzhi tu (Complete Map of the Imperial Territory, also known as Kangxi Atlas) of 1719, which was based on maps created in Korea at the time, and the areas along the Yalu River and Tumen River reflect surveys carried out by missionaries.

4 A cartouche is a decorative emblem on old European maps and usually contains the title of the map, printer, year of publication, scale, legends, illustrations, and other notes.

(Euigwe) stored in the Outer Royal Library (Oegyujanggak), among which were included maps such as Wang Pan's Cheonha yeojido (Map of the World) and Chensang yeolcha bunyajido (Celestial Chart of the Twelve Divisions), were taken out of the country by the French Navy. Remaining anchored at Ganghwa Island, they created maps of the waterways of the Han River and Ganghwa Strait. The year of 1888, when Varat was traveling around Korea, was after only 22 years and memory of 1866 would be remained until then.

Daedongyeojido in Korea and France

The 19th century was also when cartography developed rapidly in Korea. In 1834, Kim Jeongho created Cheonggudo (Map of Korea), and in 1861, he created Daedong yeojido. This map depicts the Korean peninsula on a scale of about 1:181,000 at traditional bar by depicting each row as 22 woodblock-printed sheets, which fold into accordion booklets. When all booklets are laid out completely, the entire map reaches about 6.6 m in length. The geographical information depicting in this map is based on Sin Gyeongjun's 申景濬 (1712–

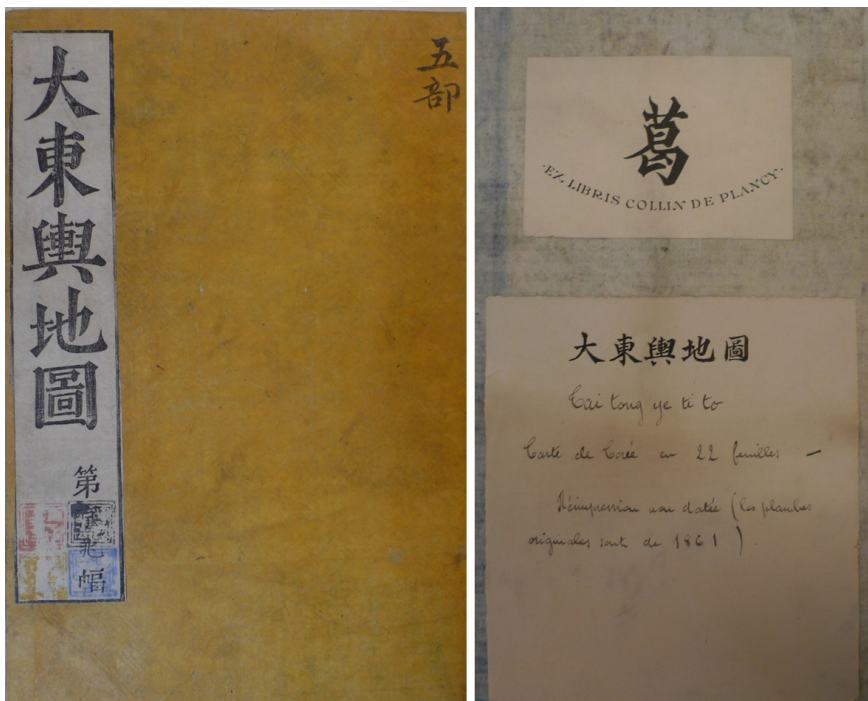


Figure 4. Cover of Daedong yeojido, 1864, 30 x 20 cm, INALCO

1781) county maps in 1770, which drew all major towns across the country on 20-ri grid system (10 *ri* is approximately 4 km) in terms of scale.

The creation of Daedong yeojido marks the zenith in the development of maps in Korea. The map, made of the printing woodblocks, was widely distributed across society as well. Although the basic forms of these copies are the same, some show traces of modification such as changing the place names, indicating that they were corrected. Most of the extant copies of Daedong yeojido have been colored in, although a copy preserved in the National Institute of Korean History (NIKH) is only one of the uncolored.

To date, thirty-eight editions of the woodblocks have been found. More than ten copies were preserved in foreign countries including France. The Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations (University Library of Languages and Civilizations, hereafter, BULAC) in Paris, France, currently reserve two copies of Daedong yeojido. Among them the wood-block version is the 1864 edition. Inside the cover, a paper with the Chinese character “葛” is attached to indicate that it was the possession of Plancy,⁵ and the writing underneath briefly explains that the map was made based on the 1861 edition.

Plancy graduated from the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations, hereafter, INALCO), which was at the time a professional school for training diplomats. After serving as French consul in Korea from 1886 to 1891, he returned in 1896 as chargé d'affaires for the French legation and was later promoted as minister plenipotentiary and remained in this position until 1906. During this period, Plancy not only performed diplomatic duties but also collected many items of cultural heritage such as old texts, ceramics, and maps of Korea. Among these items, Plancy donated the old books and maps including Daedong yeojido to his alma mater (Figure 4).⁶ The map's accession date is recorded as November 15, 1891, suggesting that Plancy gifted it to the school when he had returned to France after finishing his service as French consul during his first stay.⁷

Maurice Courant (1865–1935), who served as interpreter of the French

5 The Chinese character “葛” comes from “葛林德,” which were the Chinese characters for Plancy's name.

6 Plancy owned many copies of old maps. In 1911, he put up the old maps of Korea in his possession for auction at the Hôtel Drouot (Drouot auction house) in Paris. They were purchased by the BnF, where they are currently housed.

7 I would like to thank Cho Jungki, who is currently pursuing her doctorate at Université Paris VII-Paris Diderot, for her help in accessing the map's accession information.

legation, also listed information of this map in his work *Bibliographie Coréenne* (*Korean Bibliography*).⁸ In his introduction, Courant writes about Daedong yeojido, noting in detail how the 23-sheet map was created in Korea in 1861 by indigenous methods, and expresses his admiration.⁹ The indigenous, or traditional, method here refers to how it depicts a consistent and unified geographical whole, with all mountain ranges spreading out from Mt. Baekdu reaching each town or village.

One of the notable features of this edition of Daedong yeojido formerly owned by Plancy is that the cover page is also a woodblock print. To date, there are only seven copies of Daedong yeojido whose covers are woodblock print, making them extremely rare. The fact that both the UWM (University of Wisconsin Milwaukee) and INALCO copies were once in the possession of diplomats has further implications for research on how those maps were transferred out of the country.

Varat's Preparations and Travel Route

“Voyage en Corée” records the the careful preparations for travel in advance. Varat seemed to get the French map of Korea produced in 1886 to make plans to decide an itinerary. The French legation in Korea provided the detailed informations, and he procured the items he predicted that he would need for exploring and investigating specific places on site. The travelogues he mentions in “Voyage en Corée” are those by Hamel, Oppert, and Carles.¹⁰ Varat drew the routes they had taken in detail on the map he included in his records. Their experiences and Plancy’s advice helped his decisions, such as in the way he

8 Courant was the interpreter for the French legation at the time. Following Plancy’s suggestion, he examined the old books and documents in both private and public possession in Korea and created a bibliography of 3,821 old books. Following the publication of Volume 1 in 1894, he published Volume 2 in 1895 and Volume 3 in 1896, which was followed by the publication of Volume 4 as a supplement to the first three volumes in 1901. These four volumes of *Bibliographie Coréenne* include approximately fifty old maps, which, although not many, provide a glimpse into the content of old maps of Korea at the time.

9 “[Les Coréens] ont dressé un grand nombre de cartes de la Corée: l’une d’elles, qui date de 1861 et est composée de vingt-trois feuilles formant ensemble une surface de deux mètres soixante-dix sur six mètres trente, est un travail remarquable d’exactitude, et d’autant plus admirable qu’il a été fait par les seuls procédés indigènes” (Courant 1894–1899, 167).

10 The route that Sir Elliot took in 1890 and 1891, at a later point than Varat’s voyage, is also mentioned. This shows that supplement was during the publishing process.



Figure 5. Route of Varat's Voyage on Daedong yeojijeondo, 104 x 64 cm, National Library of Korea

decided how to travel via Yeongnam Road as follows:

Mr. Collin de Plancy absolutely approved of this project, but he advises me to go through Taïkou, the capitale of Kyeng-sang-to. This almost doubles the length of the journey, as a result of the difficulties of the road, but is of much greater ethnographic interest than the direct route. There is no need to hesitate.¹¹

11 The original text is as follows: "M. Collin de Plancy approuve absolument ce projet, mais il me conseille de passer par Taïkou, la capitale du Kyeng-sang-to. Ceci double presque la longueur du voyage, par suite des difficultés de la route, mais offre un bien plus grand intérêt ethnographique que la voie directe. Il n'y a pas à hésiter" (Varat 1892, 314). All translations of the citations into English are by the author, unless otherwise mentioned.

Varat seemed to exchange letters with Plancy before setting off for Korea. Taking Plancy's advice about the ethnological richness of Daegu-bu, he ended up choosing to travel Gyeongsang-do unlike other previous travelers to Korea, making him the first French person to travel via Yeongnam Road. Gyeongsang-do at the time would have provided Varat with many traditional sights and scenes of Korean Confucian culture. He writes about how the provincial governor welcomed him when he arrived in Daegu-bu and their conversation about the future of Korean society.

When traveling in Korea, Varat possessed around a travel document in the form of a letter written by the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs in lieu of personal identification. The letter was addressed to local government officials and included the following content.

Order of Minister of Foreign Affairs to the public officials of each locality. We have received from Mr. Collin de Plancy, Commissioner of the French government, a letter stating that his compatriot, Mr. Varat, on the orders of the king of France (!!!), has come to our country to study our customs, our traditions, our manners, and to bring together at his own expense a collection of all our artistic, industrial, and agricultural products, which he will offer to his country.¹²

France at the time was in the Third Republic following the fall of Napoleon III and the collapse of the Second Republic after losing the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Varat's voyage was a personal endeavor that was not funded by the French government, and the letter was likely issued to indicate the only official support of his journey without financial assist. In terms of travel expenses, Varat prepared a small amount of cash in *yeopjeon*, which were copper coins with a square hole cut out, and settled the remaining costs using a payment guarantee issued by the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the help of Plancy.

Anticipating the need to cook while on the road from Seoul to Busan, he prepared a brazier, cooking tools and utensils, wine, and canned goods. The group consisted of thirteen people including Varat, one interpreter, two soldiers,

12 "Ordre du ministre des affaires étrangères aux mandarins de chaque localité. Nous avons reçu de M. Collin de Plancy, commissaire du gouvernement français auprès de nous, une lettre où il est dit que son compatriote, M. Varat, sur les ordres du roi de France (!!!), est venu chez nous pour étudier nos habitudes, nos usages, nos mœurs, et réunir à ses frais une collection de tous nos produits artistiques, industriels et agricoles, qu'il offrira à son pays" (Varat 1892, 314).

one cook, and eight horsemen and eight horses. Members were referred to one another as a number, and Varat was assigned the number 13.

Figure 5 shows the route Varat took, marked on old map of Korea, Daedong yeojijeondo 大東輿地全圖. After arriving at Jemulpo, he and his group traveled by land, crossing the Han River and passing Mapo, to reach Seoul, after which he crossed the river again and headed south, passing Gwangju and Icheon in Gyeonggi-do. This route does not follow the Han River because of selecting shortcut.

After crossing a tributary of the Han River, Varat entered Chungcheong-do, passed Chungju-mok, and crossed Joryeong Pass around Mt. Songni, which was part of the Baekdudaegan mountain range. This route led Varat into Gyeongsang-do. The group passed Mungyeong Fortress, followed the Nakdong River, passed Sangju-mok, and arrived at Indong. Varat then crossed the Geumho River, reached Daegu-bu. And he continued on south, passing Cheongdo, Miryang-bu, and Yangsan, and finally arrived in Busan. And then Varat took a ship to Wonsan.

If his entire journey were to be retraced today, the route from Seoul to Mungyeong via Icheon, Chungju, and Joryeong would be made by taking National Route 3, and from Mungyeong to Busan via Sangju and Daegu, by National Route 25. In the Joseon dynasty, the journey along Yeongnam Road, from Seoul to Busan took 15 days by foot; but today it can be made in just only 4 to 5 hours with Express Roadway or high-speed railway network.

Texts, Maps, and Figures

"Voyage en Corée" was published in vol. 63 of the weekly magazine *Le Tour de Monde* (1892). The travelogue includes references made to the Eiffel Tower, whose construction was completed in 1889, as well as travelogues of Korea which were published in 1890 and 1891, both of which postdate Varat's journey. Those texts after 1888 were added in the process of the magazine's publication.

The travelogue is a mixture of text and figures, more specifically, 3 maps, 11 folk drawings, 41 drawings or engravings based on photographs, and 17 other types of figures as shown in Table 2. "Voyage en Corée" consists of five chapters. The entire travelogue spans eighty pages divided into five chapters which are arranged in temporal order. The itinerary is provided at the head of each chapter.

As no specific dates are provided in texts, it is difficult to figure out the exact itinerary dates.

Table 2. Breakdown of “Voyage en Corée”

Chapters		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Geographical scope of route		Jemulpo to Seoul	Seoul	Gyeonggi-do, Chungcheong-do	Gyeongsang-do (Daegu)	Miryang to Busan and Wonsan		
Page numbers		289–304	305–320	321–336	337–352	353–368	80 pages	
Figures	Maps	0	2	0	0	1	3	
	Photography	Drawings	6	3	5	3	9	26
		Engravings	9	4	1	1	0	15
	Korean folk drawings		0	5	0	6	0	11
	Other		0	2	8	5	2	17
	Total number of figures		15	16	14	15	12	72

Texts

Varat recorded the place names of the towns, mountains, rivers, and even the villages located along his route by transliterating the pronunciation in French. It is impossible to match them with their exact corresponding place in Korea, especially given that many rural farming villages disappeared due to urbanization; however, they are significant as historical material showing traces of place names.¹³

The text shows Varat’s efforts to vividly capture what he saw during his travels. He provides the real name of the peoples in his records such as Plancy, the French consul, Guérin, who was the interpreter, Blanc, the Vicar Apostolic of Korea, Cotte, a Catholic priest, Kim Myeongjin, the governor of Gyeongsang-do, and even foreigners he briefly encountered while traveling on land or by ship, thereby avoiding anonymity and explaining the relationships between places and people.

It is worth noting how Varat wraps up his account on each province he

13 I have referred to Seong Gwisu’s 2006 translation to determine the place names written in French. Places that cannot be confirmed are written in their original French transliteration.

passes through—Gyeonggi-do, Chungcheong-do, and Gyeongsang-do—by summarizing its geography. The following text is the example about Gyeonggi-do.

We should note here that this province occupies the northwest center of Korea and is bounded on the north by Hoang-hai-to, on the east by Kang-Ouen-to, on the west by the Yellow Sea, and on the south by Tchyong-tchyeng-to. The region is very mountainous, particularly in the north, where rises Poul-tok-san; the Han-Kang, which has many tributaries and sub-tributaries, flows from south to the northwest. Like the rest of the country, there are a wide variety of mines, but they have long since been abandoned due to the old laws we have already spoken about.¹⁴

As this explanation shows, Varat sums up the location of the province, its surroundings and geographical features such as the mountains and rivers, the mineral resources, which he notes were not being taken advantage of historical elements, and finally gives an overview of the administrative districts and population. This structure is often used even today in regional geography.

Maps

Three maps are inserted in "Voyage en Corée," whose titles are the Map of Korea, Seoul, and Wonsan. The Map of Korea depicts the Korean land at the time, including the mountains, rivers, coast, towns, and administrative units (Figure 6). The shape of the mountain ranges are exaggerated, with Baekdudaegan mountain range particularly prominent, and drawn in the so-called ox-hair (umo 牛毛) style, which uses short hair-like lines to three-dimensionally express mountain elevation. The depiction of the river courses between the mountains is quite accurate.

The place names are written in the French alphabet, and some are written together with the transliteration of their Korean names. For instance, both "Yalou

14 "Disons ici que cette province occupe le centre ouest-nord de la Corée, et est bornée: au nord par le Hoang-hai-to, à l'est par le Kang-ouen-to, à l'ouest par la mer Jaune et au sud par le Tchyong-tchyeng-to. Le pays est très montagneux, particulièrement au nord, où se trouve le Poul-tok-san; il est arrosé du sud au nord-ouest par le Han-kang, qui y compte de nombreux affluents et sous-affluents. On y trouve, comme dans toute la Corée, les mines les plus diverses, mais elles sont depuis longtemps abandonnées, par suite des anciennes lois dont nous avons parlé" (Varat 1892, 327).

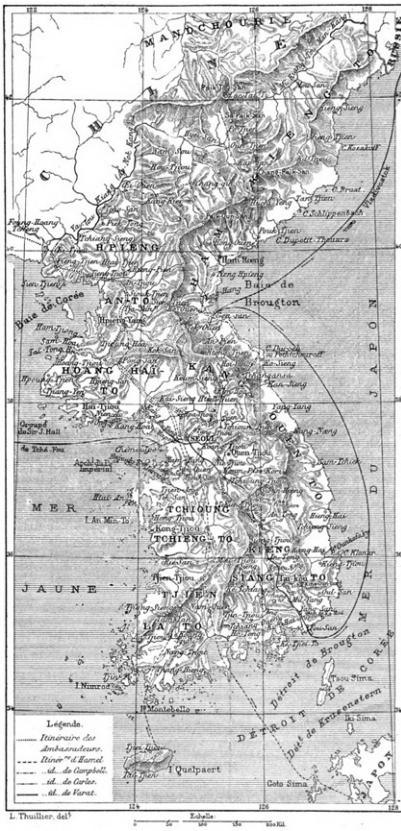


Figure 6. Map of Korea (Varat 1892, 315)



Figure 7. Corée (Korea), 1886, 32 x 49 cm, BnF

Kiang” and “Ap Nok Kang” are written to indicate the Yalu River, and “Mi Kiang” and “Touman Kang” are written in the case of the Tumen River. The confluence of the North and South Han Rivers are shown near Yangju (written as “Yang Tjiou”), and the Han River is drawn as passing through Seoul and Mapo (“Mapou”), finally flowing into the Yellow Sea north of Ganghwa (“Kang Hoai”).

But some place names along the coast are transliterations used at the Western map. Yeongheung Bay at Wonsan is written as “Baie de Broughton,” and Jeju Island is marked as “I. Quelpaert.” Broughton Bay was named by William Broughton himself, the naval commander of the British warship HMS Providence, after surveying the coastline of Wonsan Bay in 1797.

On the lower left hand corner of the map, legend is inserted. This explains the routes taken by previous travelers, including a Qing envoy, Hendrik Hamel, Charles W. Campbell, Carles, and Varat himself. Varat’s travel route is drawn



Figure 8. Map of Seoul (Varat 1892, 312)

in a thick solid line connecting Jemulpo, Seoul, Mungyeong, Daegu, Miryang, Busan, to Wonsan and Vladivostok via the sea.

Figure 7 is the map of Korea that served as the basis for Varat's map. This map resembles Dongguk jido of the 18th century or Andrew Kim Daegeon's map of Korea created in 1845 (Figure 5), albeit with differences in how the mountains and rivers are depicted. A similar map is also included in *Corea e Coreani (Korea and Koreans)* by the Italian Carlo Rosetti. This shows that it was one of the maps used in spreading geographical knowledge of Korea among European countries at the time.

Doseongdo (Map of Seoul, Figure 8) depicts Seoul mainly inside the city walls. Mt. Bukhan and Mt. Bugak are visible towards the upper center of the map, while on the south, Mt. Mongmyeok is drawn by using a stippling method. Within the city walls, the palaces such as Gyeongbokgung Palace and Changdeokgung Palace can be seen. The four gates, including Sungnyemun Gate, Donimun Gate, and Heunginjimun Gate, are depicted in the city walls, along with the course of Cheonggye stream, which flowed out below Heunginjimun Gate on the east, and roads such as Jong-ro.

This map is based on the same title map at BnF (Figure 9). Those maps are very similar in terms of geographical contents. Except for the placenames, the overall composition of Varat's map is identical with the map at BnF. Also, map at BnF resembles Doseong daejido (Great Map of Seoul) at Seoul Museum of History, Doseongdo (Map of Seoul) at Kyujanggak, and Hanyangseongdo



Figure 9. Doseongdo (Map of Seoul), 71 x 75 cm, BnF

(Map of the Walled City of Hanyang) at Ho-Am Art Museum in Korea. Those maps are similar in terms of color, size and place names.

Map at BnF is in color, and on the north, which is the top of the map, is Mt. Bugak, and on the south, Mt. Nam is depicted using a stippling method. The same goes for Mt. Nak on the east and Mt. Inwang on the west. Mt. Dobong and Mt. Samgak, located outside of the city walls, are drawn as stone mountains and are colored lightly to indicate that they are in the distance.

Within the city walls, Cheonggye Stream is depicted as flowing along the red solid lines indicating roads, including the main road called Jong-ro. The walls encircling the city are not particularly outlined, although mountains with fortresses are indicated by using stippling, and the area around Sungnyemun Gate toward the lower lefthand side, where the city walls were built on flatland, not in the mountains, is marked by a solid gray line.

It is possible to see the Chinese characters referring to many foreign legations in the Jeong-dong area inside Donuimun Gate such as the French legation “法國府,” Russian legation “俄國府,” American legation “美國府,” and the British legation “英國府.” These are legations of the countries that signed a treaty of commerce with Korea in the 1880s. The French legation is drawn in Jeong-dong, which means that the map was created after the legation relocated from Gwansu-dong to Jeong-dong in October 1889. This map has the seal of Plancy, who owned the map until he donated it to BnF on November 29, 1921. Courant’s *Bibliographie coréenne* records that it was created by a middle person



Figure 10. Map of Wonsan (engraving by Krakow based on the Korean map) (Varat 1892. 366)

named Kim Changyeo 金昌如.

The Map of Wonsan (Figure 10) depicts Wonsanpo which was open port. The frequent appearances of Western forces on the shores of Korea in the 19th century led to the creation of many pictorial maps of major fortresses. These maps were relatively simple and seemed to be drawn by painters belonging to local government offices.

Wonsan at the time was the belonging port of Deogwon-bu. Geopolitical conditions with the closest distance to Seoul on the eastern coast made it the hub of East Asian cargo. The Galma peninsula as depicted in the map functioned as a seawall, making Wonsan geographically conditioned as a port. The map depicts government buildings, likely in charge of customs, shows that the map was produced after the port was opened. The stream on map is Jeokjeon Stream. A similar map with this is currently preserved in Kyujanggak.¹⁵

Figures

In addition to maps, "Voyage en Corée" includes 41 drawings or engravings of photographs, making them the most numerous types of figures in the travelogue. Most of them are of houses, farming villages, and people and are taken with an

15 The map of Wonsan at Kyujanggak can be viewed online via their database website at <https://kyudb.snu.ac.kr/main.do> (call number: 古軸4709-52).



Figure 11. Queen's Palace
(engraving by Privat) (Varat
1892, 304)

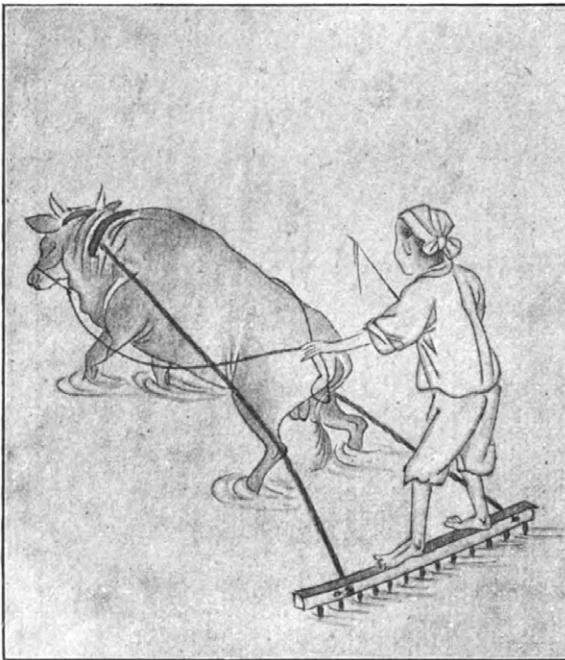


Figure 12. Harnessed Ox
(engraving by Krakow) (Varat
1892, 304)

excellent sense of composition and attention to detail. Varat seems to have taken the photographs himself, as there is no mention of there being a photographer in the texts on travel preparations.

Figure 11 is a picture of engraving based on a photograph as a case of Seunghwaru Pavillion at Changdeokgung Palace. Although Varat titled the Queen's palace, this pavilion was used as a library for the prince's studies and was connected to Junghuidang Hall, the crown prince's main quarters. This pavilion displayed *samsamwa* (hexagonal roof form 三三窩). The signboard with the Chinese characters for the name "Seunghwaru Pavillion" 承華樓 can be seen in

the image as well.

There are also 11 Korean folk drawings included. Similar drawings like this can be found in travelogues by other Westerners as well. This is because they are based on paintings by the same Korean artist, Gisan 箕山 Kim Jungeun 金俊根. Gisan produced folk paintings in Busanpo, Wonsanpo, and Jemulpo between 1880 and 1900 and sold them to Westerners there. Consequently, similar illustrations were featured in several travelogues and led to the formation of a shared image of Korean folk customs. Varat donated approximately 170 folk paintings to the Guimet Museum. Such paintings, like photographs, were produced in the magazine as engravings by artists such as Krakow.

Figure 12 features where Varat is traveling around Gyeongsang-do. It shows a farmer using an ox for puddling, or harrowing rice paddies. Gisan's folk paintings like this preserved in many archives such as the Guimet Museum and the Seoul Museum of History in Korea (Hong 2009).

Itinerary of Voyage and Records of Landscapes

This section will look at Varat's itinerary by grouping into three parts: 1) Jemulpo and Seoul, 2) Gyeonggi-do and Chungcheong-do, and 3) Gyeongsang-do and Wonsan.

Jemulpo and Seoul

The first section involved arriving at Jemulpo and moving to Seoul. At the time, there were two routes to go from Jemulpo to Seoul: traveling by water via Ganghwa Strait or by land. The transportation of heavy cargo was usually done by water, whereas travelers usually chose to go by land. Varat, after staying for a day or so in Jemulpo, traveled to Seoul by land. Table 3 shows the names of place they passed.

Jemulpo in Incheon-bu was the gateway to sea-route trade with China. The Chinese resided in here, and after opening the port, many foreign concessions were formed, such as China, and Western countries. The port prospered as it functioned to connect trade to Zhifu Port in Shandong, China. As modern harbor infrastructure began to be built, the scenery of Jemulpo became a mixture of the traditional and the modern.

Table 3. Place Names Mentioned from Jemulpo to Seoul

City	Place names
Jemulpo/ Seoul	“Tchémoulpo” (Jemulpo 濟物浦)–“Pel-ko-kai” (Byeol gogae, Seonghyeon 星峴)– “Mapou” (Mapo 麻浦)–“Mountoro-tsintari”–Séoul–French legation
Seoul	“Hoa-chan”* (Hwasan 花山, Bugaksan 北岳山)

Note: Places names that have been geographically identified. Names in double quotation marks are how they are written in the original text. Places that have been confirmed are followed by their current names and Chinese characters in parentheses.

The large tidal range of Jemulpo made it difficult to embark or to unload cargo. The port had conditions unfavorable for large ships to sail. Consequently, most of the cargo between Seoul and cities in China after the opening of the port was moved via Ganghwa Strait from Jemulpo.

Figure 13 is a drawing of the coast between Jemulpo and Wolmi Island when the tide was out. Boats are depicted lying on the mudflats that have become exposed. Varat writes that the employee of the hotel he was staying in urged him to use the low tide as an opportunity to get his luggage from the ship to avoid difficulties later, describing how the tide would rise or fall by 26 to 30 feet. Varat describes how a small vessel anchored to their steamer already appeared to be held upright by beams, making it look like a large spider from a distance, giving the readers a sense of how low the tide was.

While staying at the European concession, Varat looked around in the coastline of Jemulpo and the waters of Ganghwa Strait flowing towards Seoul. This waterway was how the French Navy invaded in 1866. He observed the roads, government buildings, and fishing village in Jemulpo, noting how the entire city was turning mainly into a Japanese settlement and that there were only two or three merchants in the European concession. His description of the Koreans, such as the laborers and the porters dressed in white cotton, carrying luggage on a wooden A-frame, with barefoot or wearing straw shoes, are slightly negative gaze. And he writes that they are larger in physique than the Japanese but more shabbily dressed. His observations of Korean women and children are written in the same tone.

After staying in Jemulpo, Varat moved to Seoul via “Pel-ko-kai,” “Mapou,” and “Mountoro-tsintari.” Figure 14 shows his route. Varat took the road north to the Incheon government office, which was at the foot of Mt. Munhak. “Pel-ko-kai” refers to the place marked as Seonghyeon 星峴. This hill is located



Figure 13. Port of Jemulpo at Low Tide (drawing by Weber) (Varat 1892, 291)

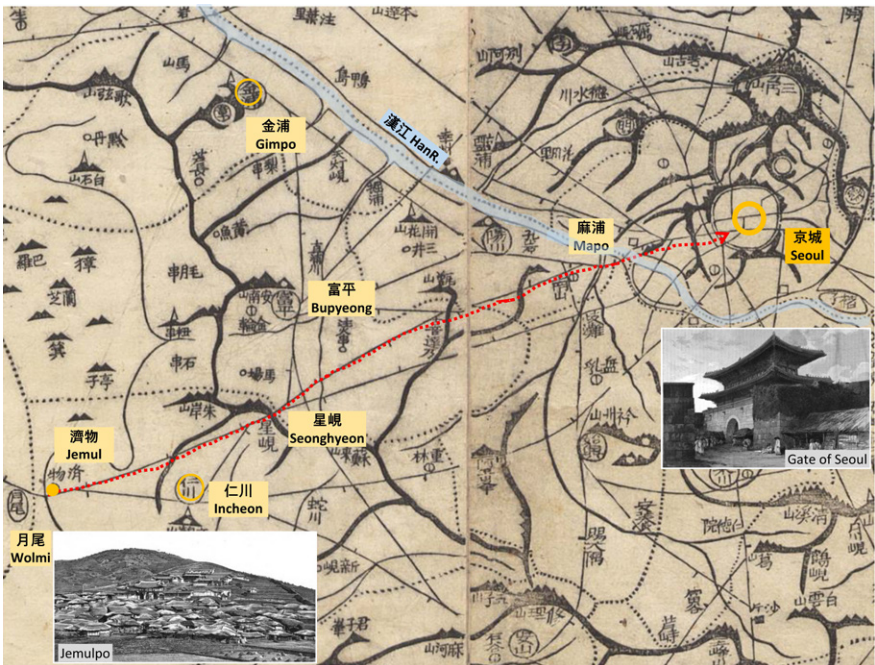


Figure 14. Varat's Route from Jemulpo to Seoul

Note: Photographs on map are from the travelogue (Varat 1892, 295; 297). Base map is from the copy at NIKH.

between Namdong and Bupyeong-gu in Incheon-si. This site is variously called Byeol gogae, Biru gogae, or Byeolli gogae nowadays.

After passing the hill, Varat crossed the Han River to reach “Mapou,” which refers to Mapo that used to exist around the northern foot of Mapo Bridge. Mapo was located where the Han River intersected with the road leading to the three southern provinces of Korea and, along with Yanghwa, Seogang, Yongsan, and Hangang-jin, was one of hubs for the trade of grain from the south and marine products from the Yellow Sea. In the late Joseon dynasty, steamships were sailed between Mapo and Incheon. Varat’s first impression of Mapo was that it was incomparably larger than Jemulpo and a bustling, lively place of commerce and trade.

After passing Mapo, Varat headed towards Seoul along a route in a basin. He records passing “Mountoro-tsintari,” which roughly reads as Mt. Jintari. Since those places were outside of the city walls, Mt. Jintari appears to refer to somewhere in the hilly area of Mallijae today. Vara hastened his pace and finally entered the city walls of Seoul through Sungnyemun Gate before they closed.

The first thing Varat noticed upon passing through the gates was the view of tile-roofed houses mixed with thatched-roof houses. After seeing the residential area, he realized that the capital was large city. What caught his interest was the smoke coming from the chimneys of the houses, which he later learned was the result of the traditional Korean underfloor-heating system. In the evening, Varat managed to find the French legation and met Plancy. In 1888, the French legation was still in Gwansu-dong between Jong-ro and Cheonggye Stream today.

While staying in Seoul, Varat visited many places and left records of them, including the history of Seoul as capital, the mountain ranges including Mt. Bugak, the city walls, the gates and the pavilion built on top of them such as Sungnyemun Gate and Cheonggye Stream which flowed across the city.

Varah traveled many places together with Missionary Blanc, the Vicar Apostolic of Korea, and his acquaintances. They visited palaces such as Gyeongbokgung and Changdeokgung Palaces, and Seonggyungwan which was the center of Confucianism. Beside those places they experienced marketplaces and royal tombs outside of the city walls.

Varat also explains Korean folk customs such as their clothes, cottage industry, and the traditional Korean houses with illustrations. And he purchased folk items near the French legation as well as receiving donations of artifacts from

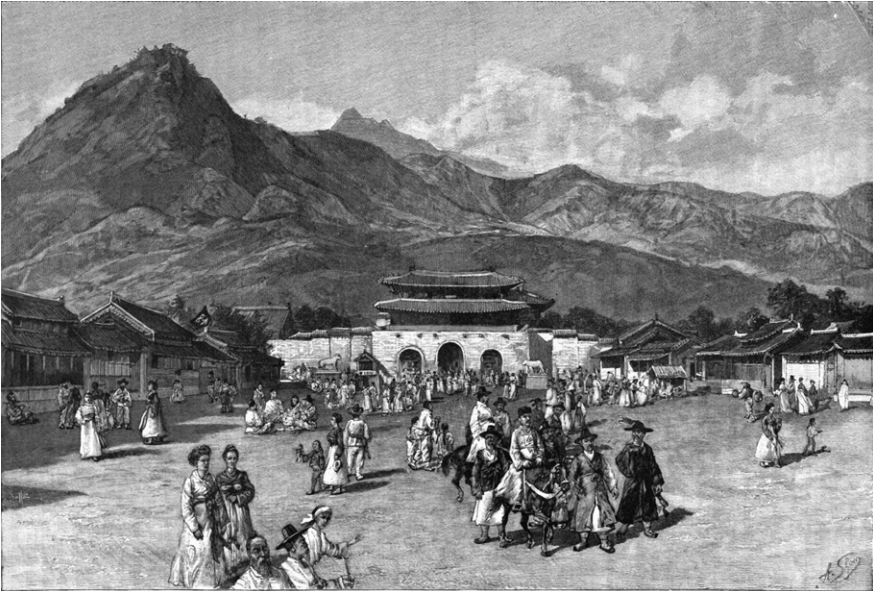


Figure 15. Main Street of Seoul (drawing by Slom) (Varat 1892, 301)

the Myeongdong Cathedral construction site.

Figure 15 is a drawing based on a photograph of the main road stretching out from Gyeongbokgung Palace. It is part of Gwanghwamun Square today. The two-story tower stands above Gwanghwamun Gate, in front of which there are two statues of the mythical lion called Haetae (Ch. Xiezhi), or Haechi, which are known to dispel evil and symbolize justice in East Asian mythology. The buildings on either side of the road are the government buildings of the Six Boards. Many travelogues by other travelers feature photographs similar to Figure 15, suggesting that this place was a famous site to visit in Korea.

Varat described the urban structure of Seoul by writing about the mountain ranges and the crenellated city walls, mountain fortresses built along them. The city walls and four gates surrounding Seoul began to be constructed in 1396. Gyeongbokgung Palace and Royal Ancestral Shrine were built within the walls. But the palace was burnt down in 1592 during the Imjin War and began to be rebuilt in 1865. By the time Varat was traveling, the reconstruction of the palace was completed.

Varat writes about Cheonggye Stream, noting its course and the network of roads and streets in the city as the following:

A wide main canal crosses Seoul from west to east carrying the water of all the small rivers that descend from the mountains and form a multitude of small streams flowing perpendicular to the central canal. Parallel to this canal stretches a wide road as well as three other narrower ones: many more streets intersect with these four at right angles, the main ones which lead to the old royal palaces and the Temple of Confucius in the north of the city.¹⁶

Cheonggye Stream originates from mountains such as Mt. Bugak and flows eastward and the residential areas were formed along the banks of the stream. The landscape created by the stream and its surroundings were known for its beautiful scenery. The wide road running parallel to the stream Varat mentions in the records is Jong-ro today. The name which is translated to Bell Street, comes from the Bosingak 普信閣. This bell was used to tell official clock time. The Temple of Confucius in text refers to Seonggyungwan, where the spiritual tablet of Confucius was enshrined to honor him.

Varat also notes the residential area consisting mainly of traditional tile-roofed Korean houses (Figure 16). The drawing based on a photograph depicts mountain ranges soaring behind houses and a stream flowing across, exemplifying the mountain at the back and water flowing in front. This shows the ideal type in Korean geomancy. The large mountain in the figure seems to be Mt. Bugak, and the city wall at the foot indicates that it is around Nuha-dong which is adjacent to the western wall of Gyeongbokgung Palace nowadays.

In describing those traditional houses, Varat writes about the *ondol* system in detail, which heated the floor via smoke carrying heat from a fire lit in the furnace in the kitchen. The smoke passed beneath the stones below the floor, heating them in the process, and was expelled through the chimney. Notably, in his description of the oiled paper covering the floors to prevent the smoke from entering the interior of the houses, he highly regards traditional Korean paper (*hanji*), which is made from paper mulberry trees, and assesses it as being far better than that produced in China or Japan.

While staying in Seoul, Varat usually purchased Korean folk items every

16 “Séoul est traversé de l’ouest à l’est par un large canal principal portant au fleuve l’eau de toutes les petites rivières qui descendent des montagnes et forment une multitude de petits cours d’eau perpendiculaires au Canal Central. Parallèlement à celui-ci s’étend une large voie, ainsi que trois autres plus étroites: toutes quatre sont coupées à angle droit par un grand nombre de rues, dont les principales se dirigent vers les anciens palais royaux et le temple de Confucius au nord de la ville” (Varat 1892, 300).

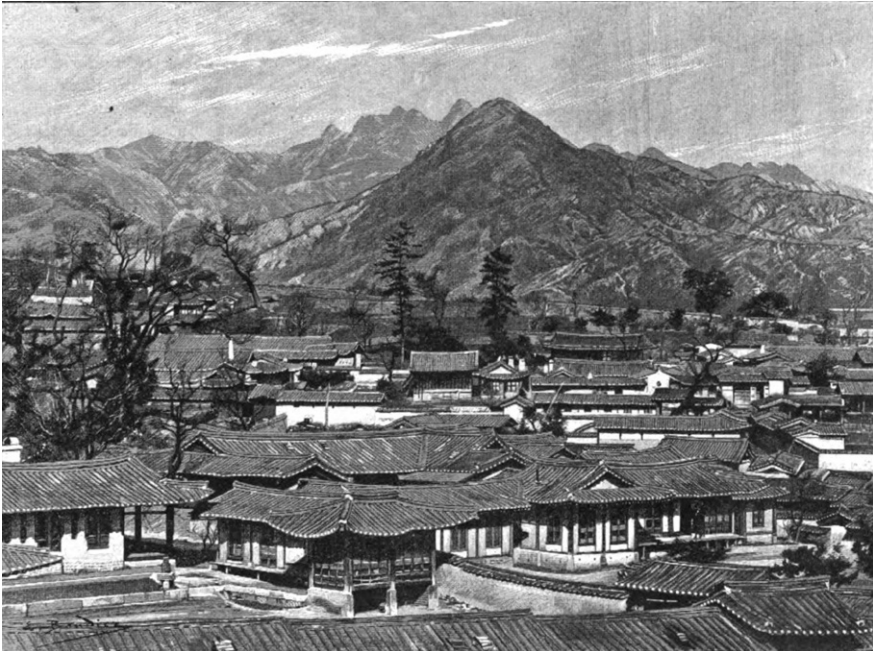


Figure 16. Noble district in Seoul (drawing by Bouldier) (Varat 1892, 299)

morning. Merchants would flock around the French legation with goods to sell after hearing the rumor—deliberately spread by Plancy—that a French traveler was buying up Korean artifacts. Varat would carefully examine each item presented by the merchants and decide whether to purchase them or not. An important process for Varat was to discern whether they came from abroad, particularly from China. Guérin, the interpreter, proved very helpful during this process.

Varat visited Missionary Blanc at the construction site of Myeongdong Cathedral nowadays, which was called as Jonghyeon Cathedral at that time. Marie-Jean-Gustave Blanc (1844–1890) was a missionary from the MEP and began his missionary activities in Korea from 1876. In 1882, he was appointed the coadjutor bishop after the French priest Ridel was expelled from Korea and became the 7th Vicar Apostolic of Joseon in 1884. Mentioned with Blanc's group, Eugène Jean George Coste (1842–1896) was referred, who played a central role in the designing and construction of churches after arriving at Korea in 1885. Coste also served as the acting vicar before Mutel was appointed the next Vicar Apostolic of Korea after Blanc's death.

At the site where Myeongdong Cathedral stands today, traditional Korean

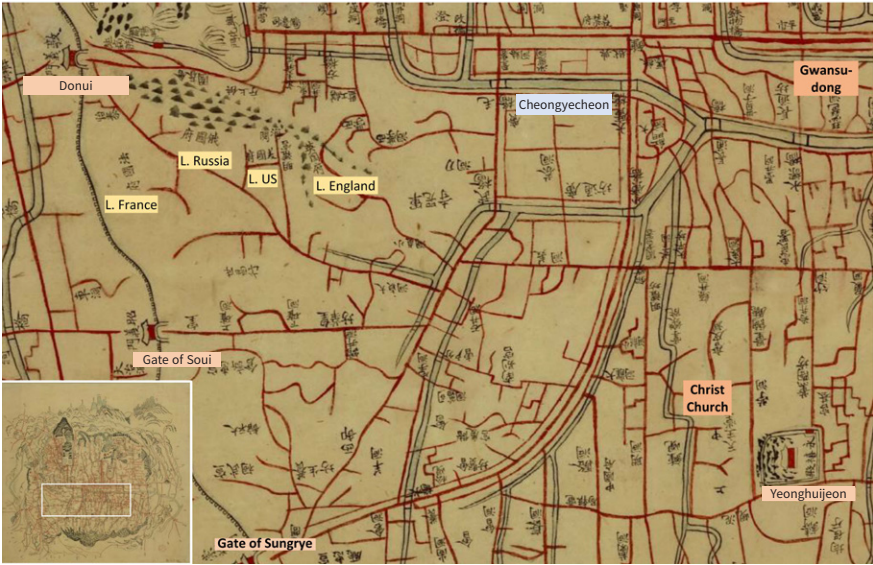


Figure 17. Locations of Foreign Legations and Christ Church on Doseongdo (BnF)

house which King Gojong bestowed to Chimgye 栲溪 Yun Jeonghyeon 尹定鉉 (1793–1874) was located. The house was used as a place to hold Catholic services. At the time of Varat’s visit, construction of the cathedral had been ordered to stop due to the topographical conditions of the site and its proximity to Yeonghuijeon 永禧殿 Shrine (Figure 17).¹⁷ This shrine is depicted on map and the Christ Church (Cheonjudang 天主堂) towards the west of the shrine. This refers to Yun Jeonghyeon’s house where religious services were held.

Gyeonggi-do

After finishing Seoul travel, Varat started his tour southward headed towards Gyeonggi-do. Eighteen place names were mentioned as shown in Table

17 The MEP bought the plot in 1887 and began preparing to build a Catholic church. The royal court of Korea at the time, however, held on to the ownership, making excuse that the site was higher than where the palace was and that it was too close to Yeonghuijeon Shrine, where the portraits of previous kings of Joseon were enshrined, which obstructed the flow of the energy of the land. When the court demanded that construction be halted, the diocese refused it and continued to proceed. This even led to the issuance of a ban on proselytization in April 1888. It was only in 1892 that the traditional Korean house was pulled down and construction resumed. The cathedral was completed in 1898.

4. Except Maljukkeori, the exact locations of those place names cannot be geographically confirmed.

Table 4. Place Names Mentioned in Gyeonggi-do

Province	Place names
Gyeonggi-do	"Séoul"–"Narou-Kay"–"Koum-Koutan"–"Ma-tchou-kori" (Maljukkeori 馬粥巨里, Yangjae 良才)– "Ta-ri-net"–"Han-ko-oune"–"Chou-yan-chang"–"Sam-sam," "Montagne à Trois Pics"–"Mo-ko- kay"–"Pi-ho-ri"–"Kop-tol-koi-kai"–"Kop-tong-ko-kol-mak"–"Bi-ji-ma-thon"–"Mori-san"–"Tol- mok-ton"–"Cha-mian-lsan"–"Koum-mak"–"Than-hol"

Note: Places names that have been geographically identified. Names in double quotation marks are how they are written in the original text. Places that have been confirmed are followed by their current names and Chinese characters in parentheses.

Based on the network of roads on map, Varat appears to have passed Gwangju-bu in Gyeonggi-do, shifted directions inland, passed Icheon and Eumjuk, and crossed Tanheul which was a tributary of the Han River, wrapping up his journey in Gyeonggi-do. During this part of the journey, he described mainly Maljukkeori, Gwangju-bu, thatched-roof houses in rural villages, and rice terraced fields.

Figure 18 shows the route from Seoul to Gwangju-bu on map. Varat admires the beauty of the landscape where they cross the Han River. The river port where they crossed the river was likely around Hannam Bridge nowadays. Apkkujeong where was at the south of river was the site frequently drawn by artists for its beautiful scenery. On the fourth hill he climb, Varat arrived at Maljukkeori. And he records on the bloody battle that had taken place between China and Korea as follows.

We soon arrive at Narou-Kay, where the passage takes place of the Yang-kiang; The landscape is splendid: in the distance. [. . .] A fourth ascent leads us to the plain of Ma-tchou-kori, which means: "Food for the King's horses." [. . .] Two hours later, we are in Ta-ri-net, where a bloody battle took place between the Koreans and the Chinese, then we reached Han-ko-oune.¹⁸

18 "Nous arrivons bientôt à Narou-Kay, où a lieu le passage du Yang-kiang; le paysage est splendide [. . .] Une quatrième ascension nous conduit dans la plaine de Ma-tchou-kori, ce qui veut dire: 'Nourriture des chevaux du roi.' [. . .] Deux heures plus tard, nous sommes à Ta-ri-net, où eut lieu une sanglante bataille entre Coréens et Chinois, puis nous gagnons Han-ko-oune" (Varat 1892, 316; 319).

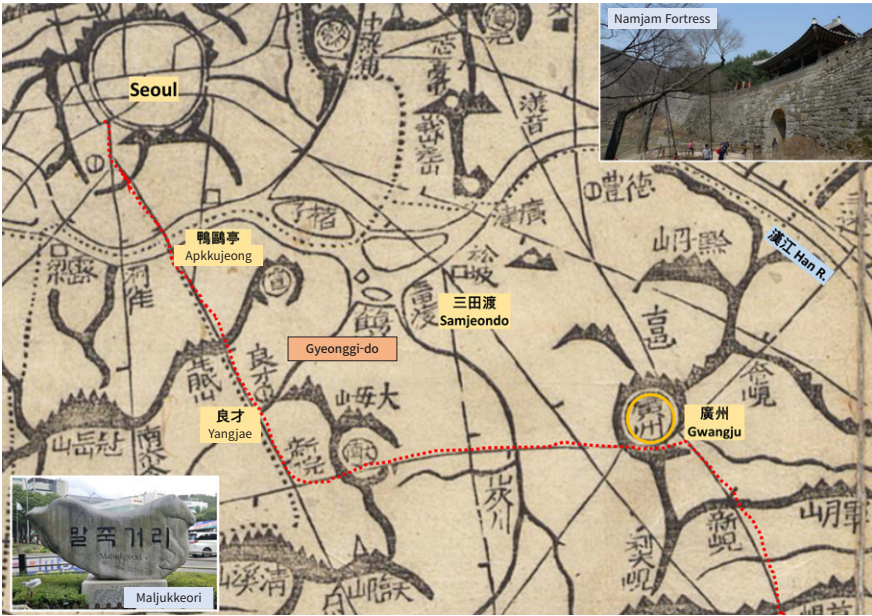


Figure 18. Route from Seoul to Gwangju
Note: The photographs on map were taken by the author in March 2011 and August 2025.

Maljukkeori is currently the area around Yangjae 良才z Subway Station. In the Joseon dynasty, there used to be a stopover station here that functioned as the gateway to Seoul. The bloody battle he mentions is the Manchu Invasion in 1636. The location of the government building of Gwangju-bu on map was in the Namhan Fortress.

Varat experienced diverse scenery as he traversed plains, crossed rivers, and made their way over hills and through valleys. They met Korean government officials and sometimes offered peasants a taste of French wine or some canned food. The sight that increasingly caught Varat’s attention was the thatched-roof houses. This type of roofs with straw was an familiar practice in Korea, although foreigners found it completely strange type of loof.

Figure 19 is a photograph of a family of five—one male and four females—living in a traditional house. Thatched roofs like this were made by straw that could be easily procured by rice farming. It was not heavy and well suited for the climate of Korea, where four seasons were distinct with the rainy summer season.

On the the roof of house, pumpkins were ready for harvest. This shows



Figure 19. Korean Cottage (drawing by Gotorbe) (Varat 1892, 321)

that Varat traveled in the autumn. The walls with the stone around the house are made by stacking stones. The floor plan of the house appears to be L-shaped, which was common in the central region of Korea. The female standing at the left end is carrying objects that look heavy on her head.

Varat observes how Korean houses were built. At first placing the cornerstones, setting up the four pillars that will form the corners of the house, installing crossbeams and rafters, then immediately moving on to the roof, which is followed by installing the *ondol* system and the flooring, and finally, ending with the construction of the walls. He found that this sequence was in the opposite order of French buildings.

As Varat traveled, he was astonished at the rice terraces (Figure 20). The rice terraced fields, which were frequently spotted in rice farming villages. Rice is one of the grains that supports the high population density and therefore usually grown in highly populated regions. Since they are grown in wetlands, countries with high precipitation in East Asian countries such as China, Korea, and Japan are better suited to cultivate them. In areas with insufficient precipitation that lack irrigation facilities, rice paddies are created to be entirely reliant on rainwater, leading to the formation of rice terraces like this. Varat is much impressed by such intensive farming methods, naturally leading him to consider applying them to farming in the Auvergne in France.

Above and below us stretch many rice paddies; they cut across the mountain horizontally, one after another, forming what resembles steps of a giant's

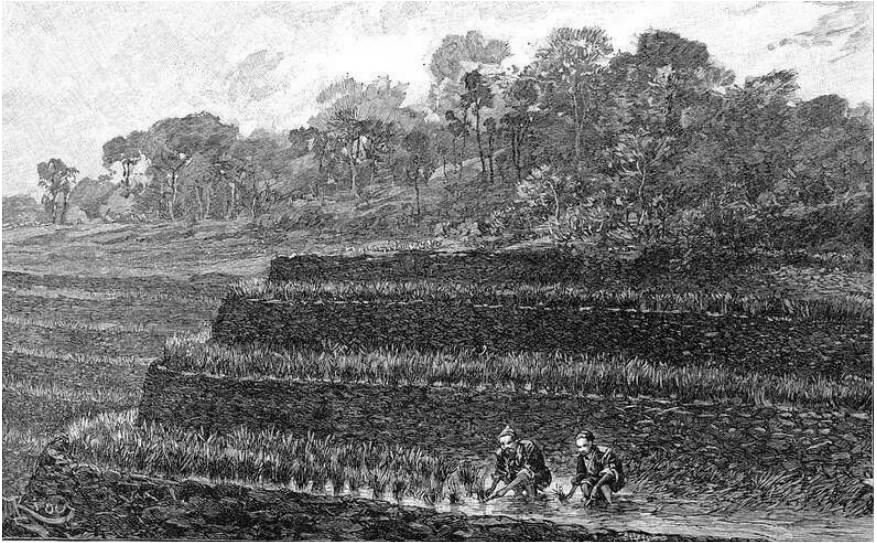


Figure 20. Rice Paddies (drawing by Riou, Rizière) (Varat 1892, 324)

staircase whose flagstones are replaced by immense sheets of dark green water. The water pours successively from one to the next through small, admirably arranged channels; for nowhere in the world is the irrigation of rice paddies better understood than in Korea. [. . .] I believe that this method of cultivation, if applied on certain unproductive hills of France, especially in the Auvergne, would certainly contribute to increasing the natural resources of our country.¹⁹

Chungcheong-do

After finishing the travel in Gyeonggi-do, Varat crosses “Than-hol,” likely the name of a tributary of the Han River, possibly Dal Stream and continue to Chungcheong-do tour. Table 5 shows the only eight place names Varat

19 “Les gorges se resserrent de plus en plus, et maintenant les déclivités des collines sont seules cultivées. Au-dessus et au-dessous de nous s’étendent de nombreuses rizières; elles coupent la montagne horizontalement, se succèdent les unes aux autres, et forment comme les marches d’un escalier de géants dont les dalles seraient remplacées par d’immenses nappes d’eau d’un vert foncé. L’eau s’épanche successivement de l’une à l’autre par de petites rigoles admirablement aménagées; car nulle part au monde l’irrigation des rizières n’est mieux comprise qu’en Corée. [...] Je crois que cette culture, appliquée sur certaines collines improductives de France, notamment en Auvergne, contribuerait certainement à augmenter les richesses naturelles de notre pays” (Varat 1892, 325–26).

mentioned less than those mentioned in Gyeonggi-do. His records in this province are mainly about folk customs and practices of Korean gardens and Mt. Songni.

Table 5. Place Names Mentioned in Chungcheong-do

Province	Place names
Chungcheong-do	"Than-hol" – "Ouen-tong" – "Sai-soul-mak" – "Nam-tchang" – "Na-oul" – "Em-kol" – "Mo-do-ri" – "Song-na-san" (Songnisan 俗離山) – "Paik-oun-san" (Baegunsan 白雲山) – "King-pang-tcha-nadri"

Note: Places names that have been geographically identified. Names in double quotation marks are how they are written in the original text. Places that have been confirmed are followed by their current names and Chinese characters in parentheses.

Varat does not include any illustrations of Korean gardens but describes their characteristics in comparison to Japanese gardens.

The Koreans, in contrast, as a lover of landscapes, always choose the location for their garden admirably well. In the center [of the garden], a pond surrounded by gentle undulations of the land at a distance, whose luxuriant vegetation is softly reflected in the water, which always plays the main role here; it is sometimes covered with lotuses, whose admirable foliage and dazzling flowers are a feast for the eyes.²⁰

Japanese gardening, on the other hand, according to Varat, was skilled at the grotesque reduction of real beauty. For instance, a tree aged one hundred years old would be transformed into a tree less than only one meter high, almost like the land of tiny people in the book *Gulliver's Travels* by J. Smith. In comparison, Korean gardens, with their ponds created by using granite, were arranged to harmonize naturally with the surrounding landscape. These gardens reminded viewers of old age, and at times the owners would cast a fishing line into the pond within their garden.

Finishing the travel in Chungcheong-do, Varat experienced Mt. Songni

20 "Le Coréen, au contraire, amoureux de paysages, choisit toujours admirablement bien l'emplacement que doit occuper son jardin. Au centre, un étang entouré à distance de légères ondulations de terrain, dont la luxuriante végétation se reflète doucement dans l'eau, qui joue toujours ici le premier rôle; elle est quelquefois recouverte de lotus, dont l'admirable feuillage et la fleur éblouissante sont une fête pour les yeux." (Varat 1892, 330).

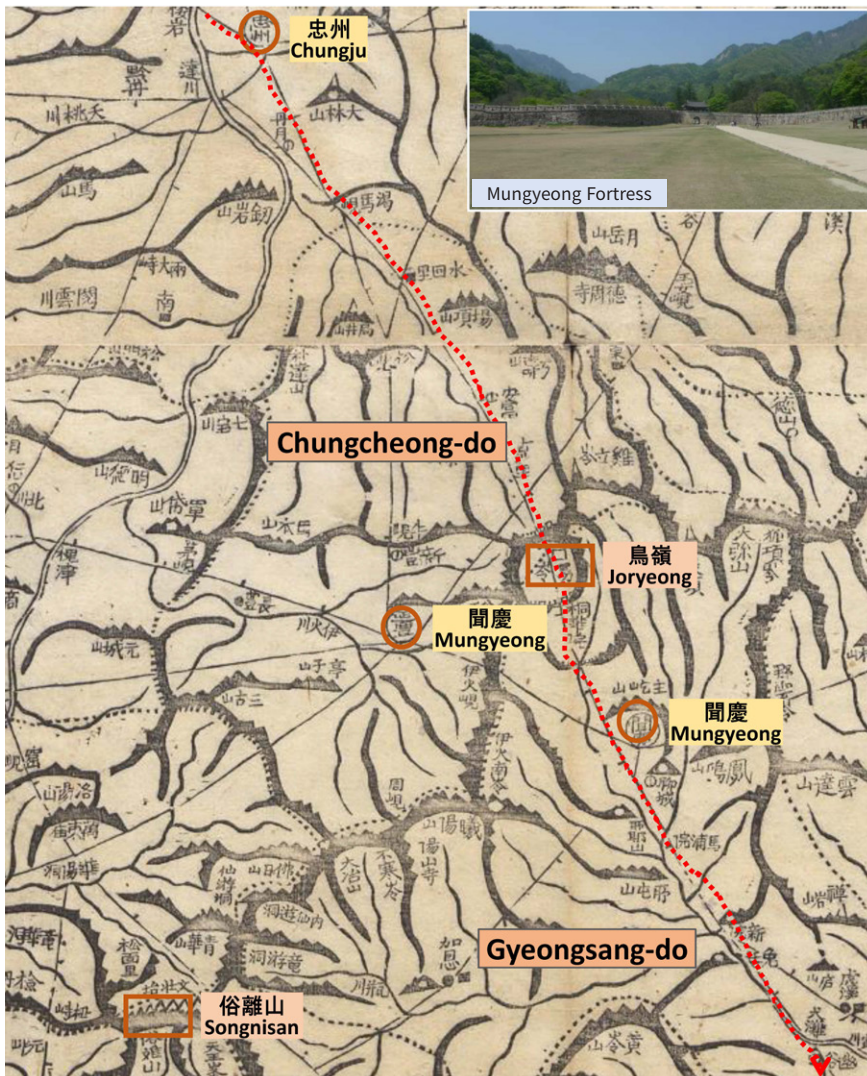


Figure 21. Varat’s Route over Joryeong Pass
Note: The photograph on map was taken in May 2025.

which was border of Gyeongsang-do. This mountain was the part of the Baekdudaegan mountain range and characterized by its rugged terrain. The mountain passes to Gyeongsang-do via Joryeong, Ihwaryeong, and Jungnyeong Pass. Among those passes, he took Joryeong the route from Chungju to Mungyeong. This pass corresponds to National Route 3 nowadays.

Figure 21 is the route Varat took from Chungju to Mungyeong. He vividly

describes the rugged beauty of the mountainous terrain in the following excerpt.

Here, we soar as if in the open air, overlooking a thousand undulating ridges covered in dark green, which together form a kind of raging sea, as formidable in its height of its enormous waves as it is admirable for their superb undulation, filled with contrasting shadows and light. I am absorbed by all the poetry of this alpine landscape when, not far from a small chapel overflowing with offerings, the caravan suddenly stops at the bend of a knoll. It is impossible for our first rider to cross the narrow path before him without being hurled with his pony into the abyss, which we overlook from a dizzying height.²¹

Gyeongsang-do and Wonsan

After reaching Gyeongsang-do, Varat visited Daegu, traveled to Busan, and later to Wonsan in Hamgyeong-do. As Table 6 shows, Varat's itinerary is richer in content than that of Gyeonggi-do and Chungcheong-do.

Varat seemed to have reached Daegu via Myungyeong, Sangju-mok and Indong-bu, and crossing the Geumho River. Although Table 6 lists many place names, the locations of most of them cannot be geographically confirmed.

The first place Varat experienced after passing Mt. Songni was Mungyeong Fortress.²² The gates he encountered impressed him as a Chinese architecture style. Mungyeong Fortress, one of the representative gateways, was built as checkpoints for anyone passing through. Unlike the walls of the capital or towns, they were built in a long, linear shape. Varat notes how the wall, which used to mark the boundaries of ancient states, now functioned to define the provinces.

While passing through Mungyeong, Varat mentioned its limestone geographical features. Nowadays, Mungyeong is where a cement factory—currently not operating—was built. He continued to move southward, passing

21 "Ici, nous volons comme en plein azur, dominant mille crêtes onduleuses, recouvertes d'une sombre verdure, qui forme en son ensemble comme une mer démontée, aussi formidable par la hauteur de ses énormes vagues qu'admirable par leur ondolement superbe, rempli d'ombres et de clartés contrastantes. Je suis absorbé par toute la poésie de ce paysage alpestre, quand, non loin d'une petite chapelle toute remplie d'offrandes, la caravane brusquement s'arrête au détour d'un mamelon. Impossible à notre premier cavalier de franchir l'étroit sentier qui s'offre à lui sans se précipiter avec son poney dans l'abîme, que nous dominons d'une hauteur vertigineuse" (Varat 1892, 334).

22 For this, see the photograph inserted on Figure 23.

Table 6. Place Names Mentioned in Gyeongsang-do and Hamgyeong-do

Route	Place names
Joryeong Pass to Daegu	“Moun-kiang” (Mungyeong 聞慶)–“Ching-Chang-tong”–“Ma-pouang”–“Sai-ouen”–“Oul-mori”–“Poul-tcheouen”–“Youg-san-tong”–“Haing-tong”–“Tong-kang-tchou”–“Smo-tang”–“Oung-ouen-y”–“Tol-kokai”–“Ouen-tchon”–“Hai-ping”–“Tchang-thai”–“Tchang-nai”–“Savane”–“Mal-sai-tchang-tchang”–“Tong-kang-soul”–“Ka-tchang-mou”–“Kong-tek-y”–“Song-tong”–“Tchin-san”–“Morai-tong-y”–“Tong-hai”–“Tchang-na-y”–“Nam-tchang-moran”–“De-nai”–“Kam-tong”–“Ho-kong-nai”–“Sam-thang”–“Mam-tong”–“Hiran”–“Komoukan” (Geumhogang 琴湖江)–“Taïkou” (Daegu 大邱)
Daegu to Busan	“Taïkou” (Daegu 大邱)–“Tcha-kine-oune-san”–“Tchangto” (Cheongdo 淸道)–“Mil-yang” (Miryang 密陽)–“Ori-tchang”–“Sain-rang”–“Kou-fa”–“Tchung-ka-moe”–“Sang-san-natri”–“Fou-san” (Busan 釜山)
Busan to Wonsan and after Wonsan	“Fou-san” (Busan 釜山)–“Gen-san” (Wonsan 元山)–“Tok-ouen” (Deogwon 德原)–Vladivostok, Russia–Nagasaki, Japan

Note: Places names that have been geographically identified. Names in double quotation marks are how they are written in the original text. Places that have been confirmed are followed by their current names and Chinese characters in parentheses.

“Hiran,”²³ crossed Geumho River, a tributary of the Nakdong River, and arrived in Daegu-bu. The gates of the walled town of Daegu were closed as they arrived late at night. Varat’s group had to spend a night outside of the walls and entered the town the next morning. They visited the provincial governor Kim Myeongjin 金明鎭 (1840–?).²⁴ Governor Kim assisted their travel in Daegu-bu around the walled town and Buddhist temples such as Donghwas Temple. Varat recorded about conversations with the governor about Korea’s future and took biological anthropological notes after observing Korean children.

Figure 22 is the old map which depicts Daegu-bu in the 18th century. The prefecture is located at the south of Mt. Palgong and the Geumho River. The walled town and government buildings were along the northern foot of the mountains in the south. Those walls began to be built in 1590, and Daegu became the center of Gyeongsang-do. Government building was built in 1601. The walled town had four gates: Jindong Gate on the east, Yeongnamjeil Gate on the west, Dalseo Gate on the south, and Gongbuk Gate on the north.

Varat describes the walls encircling the town, like a parallelogram, the magnificent gates on each side and the pavilion towers built on top of them, and admires how the Geumho River winds through the golden plains of ripe grains

23 Seong Gwisu (2006) sees this place as referring to present day Chilgok, Gyeongsang-do.

24 Varat incorrectly refers to Kim Myeongjin as “Kim-Kiang-Tchin” in the text.



Figure 22. Daegu-bu in Yeojido (part), 18th century, 30 x 29 cm, National Library of Korea

soon to be harvested and how they all come together to create a harmonious view. The town walls started being destroyed as railway was constructed and urbanization took place in the 1900s .

After wrapping up their stay in Daegu, Varat headed south to Miryang, passing through Cheongdo on the way (Figure 23). He captures how the walled town of Cheongdo was destroyed and almost in ruins.

After crossing the fairly high mountain pass of Tcha-kine-oune-san, we arrive at dusk before the crenellated walls of the city of Chang-to. The double fortified gate is wide open, but to my great surprise, we see neither guard nor passersby, nor merchants—people one generally meets in these kinds of places. We enter the city: the same solitude, same silence, grass growing in the streets, and, despite the noise made by the caravan, no one rushes to greet us, no door opens to see us; it is worse than the castle in “Sleeping Beauty,” where one could at least glimpse people drowsing.²⁵

25 “Après avoir traversé le Tcha-kine-oune-san par un col assez élevé, nous arrivons à la chute du jour devant la ville de Tchang-to aux murailles crénelées. La double porte fortifiée est toute grande ouverte, mais, à ma vive surprise, nous ne voyons ni gardien, ni passants, ni marchands, gens qu’on rencontre généralement en ces sortes de lieux. Nous pénétrons dans la cité : même solitude, même silence, l’herbe pousse dans les

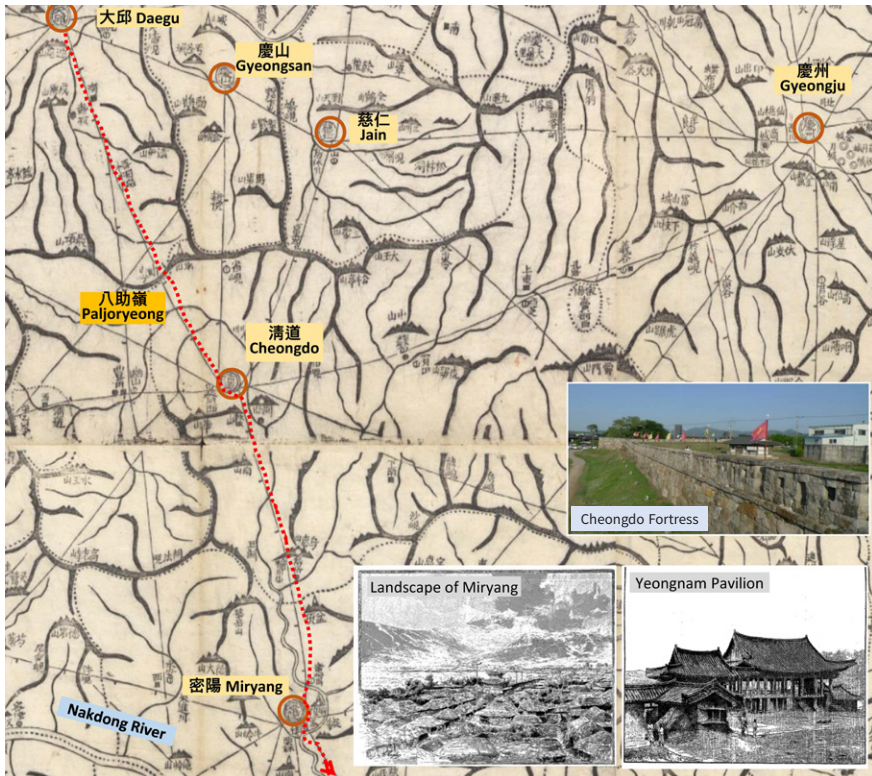


Figure 23. Route from Daegu to Miryang via Cheongdo

Note: The images on map are from Varat 1892, 345; 350. The photograph was taken in May 2025.

Cheongdo had grown as a local center along Yeongnam Road on the way to Daegu from Miryang. The walled town of Cheongdo was built in a square along Cheongdo Stream, which originated from Mt. Biseul. The town had included the government building, a public school, and an icehouse. Plains around Cheongdo Stream had provided abundant grains. Varat finds it unfortunate how the land of Korea was not being taken care of.

The place names of “Tcha-kine-oune-san” on the way from Daegu to Cheongdo appears to be a name of a peak on the mountain ranges of Mt. Biseul. This site seems to be somewhere around Paljoryeong Pass, which connects

rues, et, malgré le bruit que fait la caravane, nul n'accourt à notre passage, aucune porte ne s'ouvre pour nous voir, c'est pis que le château de la 'Belle au bois dormant,' où l'on apercevait du moins les assoupis' (Varat 1892, 350).

Daegu and Cheongdo nowadays. The mountain ranges of Mt. Biseul forms the watershed of the Guemho River and the Miryang River.

After passing Cheongdo and arriving at Miryang, Varat were impressed at the scenery created by Yeongnamnu Pavilion built by the Miryang River (Figure 23). This pavilion used to be an annex building of the former guesthouse of Miryang-bu, and banquets were held for important guests. Yeongnamnu Pavillion, together with Chokseongnu Pavillion in Jinju and Bubyongnu Pavillion of Pyongyang are the three famous pavilions in the Korean peninsula. The shape of the pavilion, especially its hip-and-gable roof, is superbly beautiful and blends harmoniously with its natural surroundings.



Figure 24. Old Map of Miryang (part), 19th century, 119 x 71 cm, National Library of Korea

So that day [...] I finally yielded to everyone's repeated request and stopped at Miryang, which suddenly appears before us along with the river. The city rises like an amphitheater on a hill, an exceptional feature in Korea, since we have seen that people generally live at the foot of the hills, probably the survival of an old custom whose origin should be investigated. This ancient

city presents itself to us in the most picturesque aspect. At the top of the hill, a yaman [pavilion] stands in ruins; only the elegant and superb roof, supported by gigantic columns through which the sky is visible, remains. Two or three temples and a few public buildings covered with multicolored tiles emerge amid numerous thatched roofs, under which rise the ramparts, half destroyed and covered in moss.²⁶

Varat's description of Yeongnamnu Pavillion is written together with his impression of the government building. Figure 24 is an old map of Miryang-bu. River flows around the walls, and Yeongnamnu Pavillion was depicted on the southeast of town. The government buildings are grouped at the foot of the mountain, which corresponds to Naeil-dong today. The building that Varat describes as being on top of the hill would have been one of the government buildings.

While staying in Miryang, Varat appreciated the beauty of the town and was moved by the way residents respected the elderly. He bought an eight-panel calligraphy screen and experienced reading the eight characters on the screen and understanding the spiritual world of Koreans, which changes his preconceptions of Korea.

Varat's journey after leaving Miryang is to Busan. As he approaches near to Busan, he experienced the vast plains of Gimhae-bu, Nakdong River Delta nowadays. And he observes how traditional and modern scenery is intermingled, such as the traditional totem poles standing along with electric poles.

The landscape of Busan strikes Varat as being very similar to Jemulpo (Figure 25). And he is surprised at the residents' local dialect. Busan, the first port to be opened after the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1876, was where Choryang Japanese Quarters was since the former Joseon dynasty. Varat's visit was when urbanized area was expanding around the Japanese concession.

26 "Aussi ce jour-là, [. . .] je cède enfin à la demande réitérée de tous et m'arrête à Mil-yang, que nous apercevons brusquement ainsi que le fleuve. La ville s'élève en amphithéâtre sur une colline, chose exceptionnelle en Corée, car nous avons vu qu'on habite généralement au bas des coteaux, survivance probable de quelque ancienne coutume, dont il y aurait lieu de rechercher l'origine. Cette antique cité se présente à nous sous l'aspect le plus pittoresque. Au sommet de la colline s'élève son yamen en ruines, dont il ne reste que l'élégante et superbe toiture, soutenue par de gigantesques colonnes entre lesquelles on aperçoit le ciel, Deux ou trois temples et quelques édifices publics couverts de tuiles multicolores surgissent au milieu de nombreux toits de chaume, au-dessous desquels se dressent les remparts à demi détruits et recouverts de mousse" (Varat 1892, 352).



Figure 25. A Street in the Japanese Quarters of Busan (drawing by Boudier) (Varat 1892, 353)



Figure 26. Old Map of Dongnae (part), 19th century, 133 x 83 cm, National Library of Korea

Figure 26 is an old map of Busan Bay in the late 19th century. Busanpo was part of Dongnae-bu during the Joseon dynasty. The sea was deep, and Yeongdo Island functioned as a natural embankment, providing optimal conditions for the development of a port. Busanjin Fortress was built where a fishing village was distributed around the fortress. Japanese Quarters were on the west around Mt. Yongdu. And other foreign concessions formed around Choryang.

Varat describes how Busan could be divided into four geographical zones: Busanjinseong fortress, Dumopo fishing village, the Japanese concession, and other foreign concessions. Busanjinseong was where the first battles against the Japanese break out in 1592 during the Imjin War. The fortress was built along the coast around the structure of Jaseongdae. Dumopo was used to be a Japanese quarter before the Choryang Quarters. Most of the residents made a living by fishing. Varat envisions Busan's future as becoming the most important port in Korea.

Figure 27 shows sardine fishing taking place in Busan. Sardines were fished along the shores of Gyeongsang-do mainly to be exported to Japan and used as fertilizer. The catch were stored in pits dug near the houses of fishing villages. He recorded the fishery life in detail as follows.

The native town, extremely poor and destitute, is partly inhabited by fishermen; in front of their houses, which are located along the Korean Strait, are large circular pits about three meters in diameter and one meter deep that have been dug into the ground and covered with clay. Four posts, each two meters high, are placed perpendicularly in a square around these pits and support a light thatched roof to cover the sardine fertilizers prepared for export in large quantities to Japan, where it is used to fertilize the land. The ban of having any contact with foreigners, punished by death if violated, prevented Korean sailors from going to the open seas for centuries; thus today, most of their fisheries are still located on the shore. Huge wooden fences are erected there, with a single entrance, towards which the fishing boats drive the fish by frightening them; the opening is then closed to capture all the fish.²⁷

27 "La ville indigène, fort misérable, est en partie habitée par des pêcheurs; les maisons de ceux-ci, situées au bord du détroit de Corée, sont en général précédées de grands trous circulaires d'environ trois mètres de diamètre sur un mètre de profondeur, creusés dans le sol et recouverts de glaise. Quatre pieux de deux mètres de haut, placés perpendiculairement en carré autour de ces réservoirs, supportent une légère toiture de chaume destinée à abriter les engrais de sardines qu'on y prépare pour les exporter en grandes quantités au Japon, où ils servent à fumer les terres. L'interdiction sous peine de mort d'avoir des rapports avec les

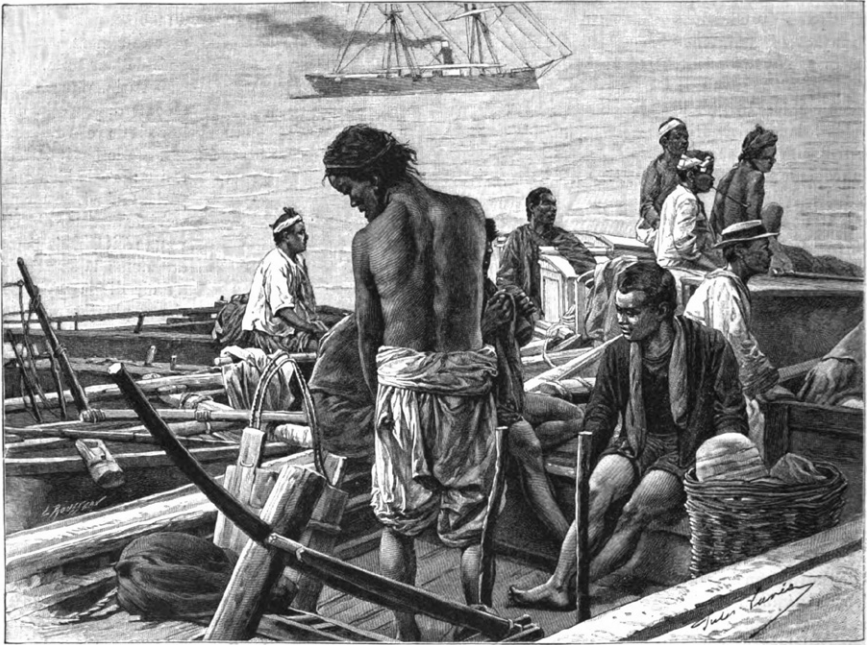


Figure 27. Fishermen in Busan (drawing by J. Lavée) (Varat 1892, 364)



Figure 28. Map of Wonsan, 19th century, 109 x 80 cm, Kyujanggak

After wrapping up the travel in Busan, Varat parted ways with his travel companions and went to Wonsanpo setting off to Vladivostok. Wonsan is currently located in Gangwon-do of North Korea. Wonsanpo was a port in Deogwon-bu and the second port to be opened in Korea. Wonsan was a geopolitically important port due to its proximity to Seoul and its role as a hub for maritime transportation between Russia and Japan.

Figure 28 is an old map of Wonsan in the late 19th century. Compared to the map of Wonsan in “Voyage en Corée” (Figure 10), this map provides a broader and more detailed view, particularly of residential area along the seashores. The Galma peninsula, which functioned as a natural embankment, is depicted in Yeongheung Bay.

Varat explains Wonsan’s geography around the government building, roads and the lively commercial activities such as trade of maritime, and agricultural products from wild animals such as fur. He also considers Wonsan’s future in light of its close distance to Seoul and the direct routes connecting Busan, Vladivostok, and Nagasaki and envisions that Wonsan will become a central city internationally on the base of its geopolitical conditions.

Conclusion

As he wraps up his voyage, Varat writes,

Some naysayers, after finishing reading this account, may accuse me of having concealed many dangers, downplayed many hardships, and embellished many things. Yes, I have done so and deliberately, for by doing so I am infinitely closer to the absolute truth than if I had exaggerated every minor event for my own benefit.²⁸

étrangers empêcha pendant des siècles les marins coréens de prendre la haute mer ; aussi aujourd’hui la plupart de leurs pêcheries sont-elles encore installées sur le rivage. On y dresse d’immenses clôtures en bois, avec une seule entrée, vers laquelle les bateaux pêcheurs poussent les poissons en les effrayant ; puis on ferme l’ouverture pour y prendre tous les prisonniers” (Varat 1892, 360).

28 “Quelques esprits chagrins, en terminant la lecture de ce récit, m’accuseront peut-être d’avoir caché bien des dangers, atténué bien des fatigues, embelli bien des choses. Oui, je l’ai fait et de propos délibéré, car en agissant ainsi je suis infiniment plus près de la vérité absolue que si j’avais dramatisé à mon profit les moindres événements” (Varat 1892, 367).



Figure 29. Munjado (Calligraphy Screen), 19th century, 8 panels, 63 x 34 cm each, Musée Guimet (Chae 2025)

These words are Varat's earnest recommendation towards the parents in France to send their sons abroad to travel even if the journey sounds difficult. He says in addition that their sons will return as a stronger, more loving, and more worthy person.

Compared to the travelogues by other travelers, which tend to take a more technical and stiffer tone to narrate objective facts, Varat's "Voyage en Corée" reveals his optimistic character and willingness to embrace the different culture of country foreign to him. The subtly delicate narration and flexibility evident in his words allow the reader to feel as if they are traveling with him.

Varat also reflects upon his own view as a foreigner while appreciating the calligraphy screen he bought in Miryang and gains a deeper understanding of the essence of Korean culture. The screen (Figure 29) is currently housed at the Guimet Museum. Calligraphy screens were created to maintain a sense of order in everyday life and in society. The characters symbolizing Confucian virtues were created into pictorial ideographs on a screen that was usually eight-panels. From right to left, Varat reads the eight characters, "ghai" (hyo 孝), "tche" (je 悌), "tchoug" (chung 忠), "tching" (sin 信), "rey" (rye 禮), "ry" (eui 義), "vom" (ryeom 廉), and "tchy" (chi 恥), meaning filial piety, love between siblings and friendship, loyalty to the country, faith and trust between friends, propriety towards neighbors, righteousness, conscientious honesty, and humility, respectively.

As Varat appreciates the way the meanings of each virtue are depicted by animals or objects in brilliant colors, he realizes the essence of the spiritual world of Koreans. The paintings on panels remind Varat of Persian and Indian art as he assesses the sophistication of Korean art. And he regrets his thoughts that Koreans had been seen as being backward and vulgar.

Most of travelers who visited Korea during the late Joseon dynasty were diplomats or businessmen. Varat, in contrast, was a folk geographer on the base of intellectual curiosity and collectors of folk items. His travelogue is not constrained by a certain format but instead written freely thanks to his open-mindedness and extensive knowledge as a scholar. The content of the narrative itself also comprehensively deals with nature and aspects of the humanities. Varat explains not only the geography and history of the places he visited but their folk customs and practices, clothing, housing, and rituals as well. He sought to understand the spiritual world shared among Koreans by examining legends and indigenous beliefs. The way he summarizes each province's geography resembles regional geography nowadays.

Varat's narration of the landscape of places he visited reflects the concept of *pays*, or region, which was a central concept of French geography at the time. Each *pays* had a distinct *genre de vie*, variously translated as "way of life," which develops over time in the interaction between human and environments. This view resembles the Landscape School in French geography, which saw culture as the agential element in a region's narrative. Varat (1842–1893) was a contemporary of Paul Vidal de La Blache (1845–1918), the French geographer who popularized the concept of *pays* and played a key role in the area of geography studies in France. Those show that Varat's travelogue would be influenced by Vidal's geography.

"Voyage en Corée" displays both the attention towards universality and uniqueness. For instance, Varat compares Sungnyemun Gate in Seoul and Mungyeong Fortress to structures in China from the perspective of universality. Additionally, he points out the uniqueness of Korean gardens compared to Japan. But he again notes the similarities between the scenery of the foreign concessions in Jemulpo and Busan. This coexistence of different gazes reflects the turbulent time and place during those days.

Translated by Boram SEO

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Abstract

This essay is to retrace the French folk geographer Charles Varat's journey in Korea in 1888 by following his route on Daedong yeojido. In the 19th century, Korea was uncharted land to Westerners. After the 1880s when treaties with Western countries proceeded, many travelers visited Korea and left records of their journeys. Varat's trip began in October 1888 at Jemulpo and continued for approximately 2 months. In his travel, he experienced various places including Seoul, Daegu via Joryeong Pass, and Busan, after which he sailed to Wonsan. During his stay, he left detailed records of his experiences of each place and of collected folk items. The maps, drawings, and engravings of photographs featured are rich in detail compared to other travelogues. And his narration is free and unconstrained by any fixed format. Varat displays encompassing and inviting views towards Korea, who were foreigners to him, and he gains a deeper understanding of the spiritual world of Koreans. "Voyage en Corée" is about Koreans' way of life in harmony with their environment and displays an attentiveness to uniqueness and universality both. This shows that Varat was influenced by the study of human geography of France during this period. His travelogue influenced the formation of a new image of Korea, moving beyond the previous image created by missionaries and soldiers.

Keywords: old map of Korea, map of Seoul, Victor Collin de Plancy, Charles Chaillé-Long, Maurice Courant, Gisan 箕山