

Special Feature

Historical Geography of Landscape and Heritage Discourse

HONG Keumsoo



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Introduction

Traces of the past persist within the present, and time, referring to the interval between moments, is sometimes expressed as spatial distance. As such, history and geography are inextricably linked (Ko 2021, 50–52). Therefore, it seems natural that they are positioned as interrelated rather than dichotomous. Immanuel Kant himself, who had initiated the debate by defining history as “the record of events that follow one another in time” and geography as “the record of phenomena that occur next to each other in space,” later shifted to an integrated perspective, stating, “Events always take place in a certain setting, . . . developing through time in a variety of places that present different opportunities. The changes of history result in ‘completely new geographies’” (Darby 1962). There have been attempts within the geographical academic circle to differentiate historical geography from other fields. However, from the recognition that all events in the past were once present and that the present is in the process of being transformed into the past at every moment, geography has become able to frequently summon the past, just as history studies the contemporary and the present. As human geographers expand the scope of the present to half a century, exploring the past to test their theories and models, the “immediate present” of human geography encounters the “recent past” of historical geography at an ambiguous point (Baker 1996).

Environments, landscapes, regions, and spaces of the past are key clues to understanding the geography of the present. Many geographers, including Llewellyn Rodwell Jones, a former professor at the London School of Economics Department of Geography who proclaimed, “All geography is historical geography,” have persisted with the idea that a line cannot be drawn between geography and history since no statement of geography is complete unless it takes cognizance of the fourth-dimensional factor of time, for change is constant and the present is the past of the future (Baker 1996). Historical geography, having emerged from the historical transition in geography and the geographical transition in history, is a subdiscipline of human geography that reconstructs the original form of geographical patterns, systematically explains and analyzes the subsequent process of change, and interprets it using theory and philosophy. For Henry Clifford Darby leading the British geographic academia, historical geography uses data that is historical, yet its topics and the methods are geographical. After reviewing the literature, Darby identified three

ways of combining history and geography: geography behind history, the past geographies, and history behind geography. He refined his arguments, including “geographies of the past” as a cross-section of regional geography at a specific point in time, “changing landscapes” as a topic that should be approached vertically and diachronically, “the past in the present” as a clue to the historical explanation of present geography, and “geographical history” that discusses the influence of the natural environment and other geographical conditions on the course of history (Darby 1953, 1962). Regardless of which way is taken, the present geography and landscape are legacies of geological, prehistoric, and historical periods, and thus the fourth dimension of time is an indispensable element. Halford Mackinder, who contributed to the institutionalization of British geography, also argued that geographers must redraw the geography of the past and reveal the processes of change through which it arrived at the present.

In response to the recommendations of their predecessors, historical geographers in modern Anglo-American societies laid the foundation in the 1920s and 1930s for historical geography to become an independent discipline by the mid-20th century. In the United Kingdom, Darby conducted the Domesday Geography project (1952–1977), which reconstructed temporal cross-sections of major regions in 11th-century England, and—through this project—elevated historical geography to the status of a representative subfield of geography, a significant contribution that earned him a knighthood in 1988. For Darby, the reconstruction of past geographies and the transformation of landscape were both the starting point and goal of his research. He focused on vividly reproducing historical sources on maps (Martin 2005, 231; 240). In the United States, Carl Sauer of the University of California, Berkeley, influenced by German landscape studies and Berkeley anthropology, researched historical geography, which led him to establish cultural history that explores the morphology and transformation of cultural landscapes, i.e., cultural-historical geography.

Around the 1980s, a new movement emerged, which challenged the assumptions and practices of Darby and Sauer’s tradition, moving away from the two-dimensional and static descriptions of historical materials and approaching historical geography from a constructive, interpretive, and critical perspective (Heffernan 2008; Baker 1996). This was a small shift from empirical historical geography to a theory-oriented one, triggering the emergence of radical cultural geography, which combined the Berkeley School’s cultural geography with British social geography. This shift assumed the representation of landscapes

through images and texts, unraveled their symbolic meanings, and deepened into a new cultural geography that criticized the ideological function of landscapes. This pluralistic interpretation, incorporating post-ism as a new theory of the humanities and social sciences, such as aesthetics, literature, and philosophy, led to a cultural and interpretive turn in historical geography. Within this series of trends lies hidden a fierce competition over the interpretation of “landscape.” As will be described later, this was a clash between the old tradition of reducing landscape to a region and the new approach of regarding it as scenery imbued with emotion and ideology.

Along with this academic trend, the United Kingdom is also considered a country that has successfully popularized landscape. This was made possible with the assistance of local historian William Hoskins, who, through rigorous analysis of historical materials, explained the historical nature of the landscape in his book, *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955), and then presented it in plain yet compelling language through the mass media. His landscape history was unique in that it addressed ordinary, commonplace landscapes. However, those landscapes possess accumulated, multilayered histories, along with a multitude of meanings in terms of nature, habitat, artifacts, systems, problems, wealth, ideology, place, and aesthetic (Meinig 1979, 33–48). The relationship between humans and the land they stand on is fully reflected in the landscape. To truly grasp its meaning, it is necessary to examine the natural environment, customs, technologies, mindsets, aspirations, and tastes of the time, rather judging the landscape by current standards (Lewis 1979, 22–24). In that sense, Hoskins made a satisfactory achievement.

While landscapes appeal to both researchers and the general public, serious discussion of historical landscapes has yet to be as vibrant as research on cultural landscapes. It is time to marshal the capabilities to convert the heightened interest in landscape history into the development of refined theories and methodologies. This paper explores the theoretical possibilities of historical landscapes, which have been gaining attention amid the cultural turn in historical geography. Beginning with an understanding of the transition in the concept of landscape from regions to scenery during the transition of society from a medieval, feudal one to a modern, capitalist one, this paper outlines the process of establishing historical geography in the West and major Northeast Asian countries, which placed landscape at their core. It then points out that landscape has been understood as an alternative concept to the region in the

methodology of traditional historical geography, which reconstructs the original form of geography of the past and examines subsequent transformations. The discussion here focuses on the emergence of new cultural geography, and the context in which landscape is interpreted as a critical, constructive, and symbolic entity from the perspectives of “a way of seeing,” “text,” and “iconography,” thereby revitalizing historical geography. Furthermore, this paper draws attention to the conservation discourse for the sustainable use of historic landscapes, particularly in situations where natural and cultural landscapes possessing historical rarity and outstanding universal value to humanity are designated and managed as national and world heritage sites within the heritage industry.

The Shift from “Region” to “Scenery” and Research on Cultural and Historical Landscapes

Expressions corresponding to the term “landscape” can be found in many Western languages, including *landschaft*, *landskap*, *landskab*, *landschap*, and *landscape* in German and *paysage*, *paesaggio*, and *paisaje* in Latin. Nearby, Japan uses a mix of 風景, 景物, 景色, and 景觀, among which 風景 and 景觀 are terms that are also often encountered in Korea. Regarding Japan’s *keikan* 景觀, the translation of the English word “landscape” recognized by academics in Korea, China, and Japan, Tsujimura Taro (1937, 1) attributes the origin of landscape to a translation of the German word *landschaft* by Dr. Miyoshi Manabu (1862–1939), a biology graduate from Tokyo Imperial University who studied abroad at the University of Leipzig, although he provided no supporting evidence. As far as this author has confirmed, Miyoshi mentioned “the plant landscape of mountainous areas” 山地植帶ノ景觀 in his 1899 book, *Lectures on Botany* 植物學講義, then frequently mentioned “the plant landscapes” in his 1902 book, *The Beautiful Landscape of Plant Ecology* 植物生態美觀. He even used the term in his 1905 book titled, *Atlas of Japanese Vegetation* 日本植物景觀, thereby matching the Japanese word 景觀 with the English word “landscape.”

While using the terms “landscape” 景觀 and “scenery” 風景 interchangeably, Japanese geographers distinguish their subtle differences in meaning: the former refers to an object subjected to scientific analysis as an organic unity that projects regional characteristics, whereas the latter refers to a subjective world that is constructed by the viewer with value judgments and emotions added as

the appearance of nature unfolding before their eyes. They explain that such a distinction reflects the difference between empirical analysis based on rationalism and a methodology that respects the subject's values (Fujioka 1976, 13–14; Community Research Institute 1992, 5–8; 14; Takahashi et al. 1995, 159–160). Landscape, as understood by Korean scholars, consists of the visible object 景 and the act of seeing 觀, with the emphasis placed on the latter. Rather than simply referring to an image captured by the naked eye and organized through visual perception, landscape is perceived as a matter of the mind's eye, which sees it along with the subject's experience and ideology through their mind and thoughts (Hwang 2011, 17–23; 46; 49; Tuan 1979). Although the term was borrowed from Japan, Korean researchers reinterpreted the concept in their own style by adding philosophical and speculative significance.

The word, “landscape,” stems from *landskipe* or *landscaef*, which, in the context of medieval Europe, directly referred to a specific area of land, particularly farmland, the economic source of the lower-class peasantry. As part of the surface of the earth occupied, used, and managed by a single group, it was essentially land or a region transformed by human intervention or interaction, rather than in its natural state (Hwang 2011, 24; 74–77, 84).

The transition of landscape—from being viewed as farmland, land, and region to scenery being appreciated and visually consumed—came along with political, economic, religious, and artistic turmoil. At the center of the turn of event was the Netherlands. The rise of a bourgeois class, inspired by Calvinist Protestantism, sparked a collective backlash against the absolutist policies and Catholicism imposed by Philip II of Spain in the late 16th century, leading to the Dutch Declaration of Independence in 1581. As a center for trade in wool, lumber, and grain along the North Sea and Baltic coasts, the Dutch enjoyed economic prosperity by taking the lead in expanding to the New World and establishing the East India Company, backed by urban and industrial development. During the transition to modern capitalism, land was revalued in terms of exchange value based on its commodification, rather than its use value, and became subject to sentimental consumption, rather than remaining a site of production closely tied to the cultivator (Cosgrove 1984). This series of transitional circumstances was wholly reflected in landscape painting.

Inspired by the free-wheeling spirit of civil society, liberated from the shackles of religious authority, genre paintings, still-life paintings, and landscape paintings emerged in the forefront of the fine arts, replacing the sacred, historical,

and portrait paintings patronized by the privileged classes—kings, priests, and aristocrats. Indeed, manors were primarily agricultural as lords were emotionally attached to the countryside and land was at the heart of the economy. Against these backdrops, the absence of landscapes in that time may sound paradoxical. However, their rediscovery awaited the phrased dismantling of abstruse theological metaphors and symbolic systems. The pious and idealistic Classical (Symbolist) landscapes of the Italian Renaissance were the first to establish themselves, which depicted ideals from myth, fable, and history, as well as the biblical world of God. These paintings attempted the panoramic representations of Flemish purism in a period when the basis of understanding nature shifted to human reason. Finally, landscapes that flourished in the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries depicted onto canvas the natural beauty of the land and the daily life of pastoral rural areas by projecting the liberal and progressive spirit of the bourgeoisie, as well as national pride of the country (Ma 2003, 57–59; 330–33; Hwang 2011, 87–89). Thus, landscapes were no longer estates owned by privileged aristocrats, but they assumed the appearance of pure, plain, “picturesque” vistas. As the illusion of the hidden world of myth and religion dissipated and trees, flowers, streams, hills, skies, and birds that had adorned the background were relocated to the foreground, the natural scenery of rural areas reproduced as works of art came to be referred to as “landscapes.” The Dutch landscape style is classified as naturalistic landscape painting because it realistically expressed nature in people’s everyday life while excluding idealization. It influenced the French Barbizon School and Impressionism, which depicted nature with light and color through outdoor sketches, the British Naturalists, who lyrically painted rural sceneries, the German Romantics, who freely pursued a mysterious and supernatural world, and the American Hudson River School, which captured peaceful, pastoral, and sometimes sublime riverside scenes on canvas.

Landscape, which had come to encompass everything from the land and region to the pictorial rural scenery of villages, forests, fields, and roads seen from hilltops, naturally became a subject of study in geography, art, and aesthetics (Mikesell 1968; Stilgoe 1982, 24–25). Since landscape primarily reflects the interaction between culture and nature, particularly the transformation of the environment by human influence, it aligns closely with the traditional subject of geography. In Germany, where the term *landschaft* had long been used ambiguously as the conceptual connection between landscape and region remained strong, Nicholas Krebs formulated the landscape research system by

distinguishing between *naturlandschaft*, referring to land in its natural state, and *kulturlandschaft*, referring to land under the influence of culture. Krebs adopted an integrated approach in which the two coexist, blending in different aspects and weights. For Siegfried Passarge, who was interested in plant landscapes that appear differently according to the geology and topography of each climate zone, there was only the natural landscape (*natürliche landschaft*) as the living space of living things. However, after recognizing the significance of culture, he accepted the cultural landscape that links natural landscape and human geography. Otto Schlüter defined geography as the study of landscape (*landschaftskunde*), which deals with visible objects on the surface of the Earth that can be perceived through human senses and covers the natural landscape and the cultural landscape as a whole. He emphasized the need to adopt the methodology of morphology and genetics, proposing to explain it centered on the process by which cultural landscapes were derived from the pristine landscape before humans had made large-scale changes (Dickinson 1969, 128–32; Martin 2005, 175–76). The French geographical circle understands landscape (*paysage*) as the traces of human activity left on the land and has a clear particularistic stance on *pays* as pre-industrial rural areas and regions where distinctive lifestyles (*genres de vie*) were formed. Therefore, for Paul Vidal de La Blache, the founder of French geography, landscape was nothing other than a visible expression of regionality, resulting from the symbiotic relationship between cultural groups and the environment (Coones 1992, 72).

In the United States, natural landscapes were first accepted as subjects of geomorphological study before Sauer, influenced by German landscape studies, established landscape morphology as an independent paradigm for cultural geography. Inspired by Passarge, Sauer viewed landscape as a colligation of interconnected elements such as topography, climate, and biology (Dickinson 1969, 139–40; Martin 2005, 179). In his 1925 paper, “The Morphology of Landscape,” he explained that the cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group, and in the process, culture acts as the agent, the natural landscape (natural area) as the medium, and the cultural landscape as the result (Sauer 1925). This is a simple and straightforward diagram in which environmental elements are developed into climate, continents/oceans, and vegetation, forming natural landscapes through their interconnections, and with culture added, resulting in cultural landscapes encompassing population, housing, production, and transportation. With the introduction of time as a

variable, landscape morphology not only contributes to the formation of natural and cultural landscapes but also deeply engages with the successive causative changes of cultural landscapes, thereby providing the basis for the Berkeley School's morphogenetic cultural history, or cultural-historical geography (Coones 1992, 72; Whelan 2014, 161–62).

Sauer's cultural landscape research emphasized form, and thus his subjects of research were tangible, material cultural elements, such as houses, fences, and fields. It was understood that these landscape elements represented the lifestyles of communities residing in specific environments and projected cultural experiences and values that were differentiated from those in other areas. Therefore, the cultural traits and cultural complexes that constitute landscapes were used to categorize cultural regions, i.e., categorizing cultures with regions at various scales as units. In essence, cultural landscapes are visible expressions and traces of culture, as well as records of its origins, diffusion, and development (Lewis 1979; Takahashi et al. 1995, 133).

Given that landscapes embody the ambiguity and tension between region, subjected to scientific and objective analyses, and landscape as the representation of human emotions (Rowntree 1996, 128–29), Sauer, who understood landscape as an analogous concept of region, ultimately inherited the tradition of regional studies starting from Ferdinand von Richthofen and continuing to Alfred Hettner through landscape morphology. The characteristic distinctive to Sauer was his use of cultural concepts to explain regional diversity, a shift in thinking stemming from his close contact and exchange with Alfred Kroeber, who laid the foundation for the anthropology department at the University of California, Berkeley. According to Sauer, culture, which determines regional characteristics, originates, disseminates, and dynamically evolves over time and space, and therefore, the changes in cultural landscapes were considered natural as they were formed by culture. Sauer's "cultural" geography synthesized material cultural elements, which were imprinted on the surface of the earth and imparted characteristics to regions, by observing and collecting them in the field, and at the same time traced the evolution of landscapes (regions) from a genetic perspective. This naturally led to historical geography, "the study of the landscapes of the historic past" and the systematic elaboration of "the changes that the landscape has undergone through human occupation" (Sauer 1927).

The tradition of empirically studying the evolution of cultural landscapes as a result of human intervention into primitive natural landscapes was transmitted

to both Eastern and Western geographers and persisted for some time. In particular, it was frequently cited by settlement researchers, and multifaceted studies were conducted on the location, scale, form, and process of change, which are determined by natural environments (e.g., water, topography, soil, vegetation, and rivers) and human conditions (e.g., defense, transportation, economic activities, land system, and social groups). The study that officially propounded morphology for the first time in Korea was carried out on rural landscapes in Yeosu and Icheon, Gyeonggi Province. The study analyzed village locations, house plans, building materials, and farmland forms by regarding them as types of cultural landscape since they maintain an ecological relationship with the natural environment and at the same time contain history (Ryu 1979).

Establishment of Historical Geography and Empirical Reconstruction of Historical Landscapes

Historical Geography in the Anglo-American World

Landscapes are constantly changing; cultural landscapes are formed from natural landscapes and then again transform into other forms of cultural landscapes. The pace and scale of change are greater in the present than in the past, more prominent in cities than in rural areas, and assume a disruptive aspect as technology advances. In this sense, landscapes can be viewed as a kind of “process.” Recognizing this, all cultural landscapes, though varying in the degree of transformation, are essentially historical landscapes, in which traces of the past are recorded (Rostlund 1955, 3–4).

Interpreting historical landscapes as landscapes of the past is both a prerequisite for understanding the present and a significant task for predicting future changes. Human settlements leave diverse traces, and the longer the period of occupation, the more complex the cumulative patterns of landscapes become. Exploring this requires both archaeological and historical approaches that provide material clues, as well as geographical methodologies that systematically structure the human phenomena unfolding in the natural environment. As an alternative that can meet these requirements, historical geography, which combines the two approaches, aims to reconstruct the past geography shaped by the interaction between humans and the natural environment and to reconstruct

the subsequent, sequential changes. Historical geography in the Anglo-American world developed while retaining its own characteristics.

For a time in the 20th century, British historical geographical groups, led by historians, addressed issues such as the relationship between history and geography, exploration, maps, empires, and the environment. However, with the advent of John Unstead, who shifted the focus to “a diachronic approach to historical cross-sections,” “geography of the past,” “continuous development,” and “evolution of man’s environment,” they further clarified the position of historical geography in geography through descriptions of regional cross-sections, narratives of change, and reconstruction of natural settings. In the 1920s and 1930s, amidst the institutionalization of academic geography, Mackinder proposed defining the historical present as historical geography in its true sense. In 1932, a joint discussion held by geographers and historians on the topic “What is historical geography?” yielded definitions of historical geography: “the reconstruction of past geographical conditions,” “the study of the geography of past periods,” “the reconstruction of the regional geography of the past,” and “the ensemble of past geographies, with present geography as the culmination.” In the same year, Darby, who earned the first doctorate in geography from Cambridge University with his dissertation titled “The Role of the Fenland in English History” (1932), asserted that all the past was once present and devoted himself to refining his methodology (Darby 1987; Martin 2005, 238).

The cross-sectional study, a unique approach developed and applied by the British historical geographical circle, was first employed in the work, “A Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800” under the leadership of Darby (1936). While the faithful study based on historical sources was well-received, it still faced methodological challenges: cross-sections were divided into “thin” cross-sections that failed to arrive at the process of change and “thick” cross-sections with a strong narrative aspect. Furthermore, a longitudinal method was additionally required to reflect geographical change sufficiently. Throughout the 1930s, discussions continued on an appropriate compromise between cross-sections and narratives, patterns and processes (Darby 1987). The application of temporal cross-sections limited to 11th-century England culminated in the Domesday Geography of England, a project which Darby co-led from the early 1950s to the late 1970s based on the *Domesday Book*. Among the seven volumes of the outcome report, the first, analyzing eastern England, was published in 1952. During the 1950s and 1960s, significant progress was made in excavating

and utilizing historical materials, such as taxation data, harvest statistics, trade directories, parish registers, and censuses, and as well as in refining methodologies. However, the prevailing atmosphere was to adhere to the established methods and pursue refinement rather than innovation (Baker 1972).

The proliferation of quantitative, analytical, and law-oriented geography in the 1960s and 1970s led to the expansion and verification of spatial theories based on mathematical terminology, instead of basic classifications, and the construction of models of change over time (Baker 1972). Instead, landscape was criticized as an ambiguous object and research method that had no distinct substance. It was considered not refined, theoretically weak, and limited to a simple description of form rather than an analysis of process. Cynically, it was perceived as appealing to historical geographers who were unwilling to embrace specialized techniques and methods, pursued only non-controversial aspects, and were uncreative and accustomed to repetitive work (Coones 1992, 70; 72). Then, as humanist philosophy and social theory dominated academia against the backdrop of skepticism about spatial science-sustaining positivism and the quantitative, value-free, and abstract world of the unreal, attention was drawn to values, symbols, and aesthetics. Around the mid-1980s, as a tendency to delve into issues of space and power also emerged, a turn to new cultural geography became evident, sparked by the works of poststructuralist Michel Foucault and the University of Birmingham's Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies. In the process, studies and discussions on the sociopolitical composition and representation of landscape transformed historical geography into cultural and historical geography. More recently, as landscape has become intertwined with issues of identity, critical research on the impact of colonial and imperialist projects on landscape and the environment has gained momentum. British historical geographers have moved toward diversification, rather than insisting on specific methodologies, theories, fields, and techniques. In this sense, the historicization of human geography is evident (Darby 1983, 425–26; Heffernan 2008).

As observed above, Darby had a virtually absolute presence in the history of British historical geography (Figure 1). After obtaining his doctorate from the University of Cambridge in 1932, he lectured there until 1945. He then moved on to the University of Liverpool (1945–1949) and the University of London (1949–1966), where he devoted himself to nurturing his students and returned to his alma mater, serving as department head for about ten



Figure 1. Representative Anglo-American Historical Geographers: **1.** Carl Sauer (1889–1975); **2.** Ralph Brown (1898–1948); **3.** Henry Clifford Darby (1909–1992); **4.** Andrew Clark (1911–1975); and **5.** Alan Baker (1938–)

years before retiring in 1976. His nearly 45 years of research and teaching produced numerous students who went on to disseminate historical geography at universities worldwide. Among the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students he supervised, 21 became professors from the University of Cambridge (John Langton, Richard Dennis, Bruce Campbell, Mark Overton, Tim Unwin, Gerry Kearns, etc.), 5 from the University of Liverpool (Paul Wheatley, Richard Lawton, etc.), and 28 from the University College London (Hugh Prince, Ian Simmons, Alan Baker, Hugh Clout, Howard Fox, etc.) (Prince 2000). For the Darby School, landscape was so important that, as a bridge connecting the humanities and nature, it defined the goal and identity of historical geography.

American historical geography, unlike that of Europe rooted in history, is characterized by its origins in geology and geography and an extension from cultural geography. Proto-historical geography focused on factual records of exploration and the excavation of continental lifestyles, explored the relationship between humans and the environment, as George Marsh did, and explained the relationship between the natural environment and social development based on the Frontier Thesis, initiated by progressive historian Frederick Turner. Building on the foundation laid in the 19th century, Ellen Semple offered a panoramic overview of history unfolding on the geographical stage of the United States yet inevitably faced criticism for mechanically explaining social development from an environmental determinist perspective. In the 1920s and 1930s, American historical geography was reestablished academically by Harlan Barrows, who shifted his focus away from determinism toward human ecology; Ralph Brown, who heralded the advent of historical geography in the country by selecting 1810 as the “historical present” and deeply exploring the past geography of the East Coast; and Sauer, who, through his interactions with anthropologists, conducted genetic studies on indigenous communities from a perspective of landscape morphology.

Historical geography is a discipline grounded in rigorous historical analysis. Brown set an exemplary precedent by synthesizing historical geography earlier than 1870 in *Historical Geography of the United States* (1948). He maintained a stance faithful to the essential principle that historical geography is only half-baked as long as it focuses solely on cultural landscapes without historical criticism. Sauer, on the other hand, prioritized the reconstruction and transformation of natural and cultural landscapes of the past. It is widely known that the historical orientation of the Berkeley School's cultural geography is grounded in the material culture of Native American societies. The cultural geography with temporal layers added is often defined as "cultural" historical geography, cultural and historical geography, or cultural history (Mikesell 1978, 10; Jordan and Rowntree 1976, 32–34). Sauer also systematically trained the next generation of scholars during his tenure of over 30 years from 1923 to 1957. The dissertations written by his 37 students were mainly on cultural and historical geography. In his address, "Foreword to Historical Geography," delivered as president of the Association of American Geographers, he expressed concern about geographers' indifference to historical processes. He also urged them to strive for greater progress, while outlining specific considerations for conducting research, and emphasized the need to transcend the perception confined to the present, to pursue analysis of origins and processes, and to become familiar with maps and historical sources to reconstruct past stages. Above all, he highlighted the importance of fieldwork (Sauer 1941).

The tradition of historical geography based on historical source analysis was continued by Andrew Clark, who succeeded Brown, who died at a young age. Clark established his foundation in economic history in Canada and studied under Sauer at the Berkeley graduate school. His dissertation on the geographical changes in the South Island of New Zealand, resulting from the influx of alien flora and fauna and the arrival of colonial power, is considered a masterpiece. Clark's historical geography is summarized into geographical change through time. Rather than reconstructing a temporary geography of the past, he aimed to understand the continuum of geography that is constantly changing, based on the belief that understanding patterns would be possible only when preceded by an analysis of the process and structure of change. His moves were impressive, as he applied sequential cross-sections to case studies, emphasized a longitudinal approach to "changing geography" and "geographical change" that focused process, and called for a shift to model building (Clark 1954,

1960; Butlin 1993; Martin 2005, 390). From 1971 to 1977, Clark planned the Oxford University Press series titled “North American Historical Geography.” In 1974, he launched the *Journal of Historical Geography*, serving as its first co-editor-in-chief alongside the British scholar John Patten. His methodology was further refined by his students at the University of Wisconsin, including David Ward, Sam Hilliard, Terry Jordan, James Lemon, Robert Mitchell, Cole Harris, James Gibson, and Ralph Vicero. Through meticulous ascertainment of various documents and landscapes, they contributed to revealing the formation and transformation of past geography and identifying regional characteristics.

Scholars outside the school of geographers also contributed to the development of historical geography. Derwent Whittlesey (1929) adopted a diagram of sequent occupance explain that spatial occupation of human societies progresses in stages according to botanical principles of succession. He proposed a hypothesis that such spatial occupation changes by stages along a set trajectory, only to be deviated from this trajectory by external factors. However, it is criticized for leaning toward historical determinism, failing to provide sufficient explanation of static spatial patterns, lacking an adequate analysis of the causes of change, and facing significant practical challenges in dividing periods and determining the scope of research when applying the model (Martin 2005, 392). Nevertheless, this model has gained recognition for its value, as it breaks away from the conventional practice of focusing solely on cross-sections to capture changes in complex geographic landscapes. Donald Meinig’s efforts also merit attention, as he attempted to synthesize the panorama of American historical geography from 1492 to 2000 in a comprehensive manner in his four-volume book, *The Shaping of America*. He explored and boldly integrated the dynamics of the United States as a massive geographical entity transforming its characteristics, structures, and systems from the perspectives of context, scope, scale, structure, tension, and change (Conzen, Rumney, and Wynn 1993).

Since Sauer’s time, Berkeley’s geography programs have shifted toward urbanism, behaviorism, Marxism, structuralism, and postmodernism, which suggests that American historical geography has entered a new phase. Along with debates surrounding socially charged gender interpretations and race issues, discourse and critical theory inspired by European thinkers like Foucault are injecting fresh vitality into American historical geographers’ efforts to interpret landscapes.

Historical Geography of Northeast Asia

Ancient geography, characterized by an interest in Classic of Mountains, the “Tribute of Yu” of the *Book of Documents* 尚書 禹貢, the Geography section of *Book of Han*, and ancient maps, was integrated with Western geographic knowledge introduced in the late 16th century by Jesuit missionaries such as Matteo Ricci, Giulio Aleni, and Ferdinand Verbiest. As a result, traditional Chinese geography, which had been studied within the framework of Confucian scholarly activities, encompassing classics, astronomy and calendrical science, historical geography, and physical geography, was transformed into modern geography in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At a time when geography primarily dealt with historical details centered on administrative districts, and thus lacked context, the Translation Agency of the Jiangnan Arsenal was established in 1867 for the purpose of translating and publishing Western books. It introduced modern geography books. Chinese books on world geography, such as Wei Yuan’s *Atlas and Description of the Countries Beyond the Seas* 海國圖志 (1838) and Xu Jishi’s *Concise Records of the World* 瀛寰志略 (1850), also spread throughout intellectual society during the Self-strengthening Movement and faithfully fulfilled their role of enlightenment. By the early 20th century, geography was firmly recognized as “the study aiming to explain phenomena on the surface of the earth inhabited by humans” and “the study on natural phenomena on the surface of the earth and various human-related phenomena” (Que 1995; Han 2011).

Historical geography in China originates from the Qing dynasty’s chronological geography (*yange dili* 沿革地理學), which explored geographical records and maps that documented the historical changes in central and local administrative districts, including the historical research and annotation of the “Tribute of Yu,” the first volume of the *Book of Documents* and the first publication on Chinese geography, which divided the country into nine regions and recorded details on mountains and rivers, soil, regional products, communications, and population. It also expanded its scope to include the study of border history. Chronological geography, a term referring to traditional geography, was considered almost synonymous with historical geography. Chronological geography persisted even with the introduction of Western geography and the promotion of academic reforms. Following the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, the Republic of China established departments of



Figure 2. Leading Historical Geographers in Three Northeast Asian Countries: **1.** Ogawa Takuji (1870–1941); **2.** Zhu Kezhen (1890–1974); **3.** Gu Jiengang (1893–1980); **4.** Komaki Saneshige (1898–1990); **5.** Hou Renzhi (1911–2013); **6.** Tan Qixiang (1911–1992); and **7.** Lee Chan (1923–2003)

geography, historical geography, and geology in universities, with geography categorized as a natural science department and historical geography as a historical department. Around this time, Zhang Xiangwen founded the Geography Society of China in 1909 and published the first academic geography journal, *Journal of Geography*, in which numerous papers on historical geography were published.

During the imperialist era, geography was a discipline of enlightenment for saving the nation. Zhu Kezhen (also known as Chu Coching), who obtained his doctoral degree in the field of meteorology from Harvard University, was appointed as the first chief of the geography department at the National Southeast University in 1921. In 1935, he was named the president of the National Chekiang University and established the Department of Historical Geography. In the historical community itself, Yugong Society, a symbol of new historical geography, was founded for academic national salvation in 1934, under the leadership of Gu Jiengang of Yenching University, an authority on the “Tribute of Yu” and *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (Figure 2). The society’s founding purpose and activities are detailed in the inaugural issue of *The Evolution of Chinese Geography*, which Gu co-edited with Tan Qixiang of Fu Jen Catholic University. Facing the pressures of imperialism, the organization emphasized the inseparable connection between ethnicity, geography, and history and expressed its aspiration to incorporate progressive and scientific methodologies into the political approaches of the Qing dynasty scholars, thereby overcoming the stagnation in the research on chronological geography. Specific plans included drafting a chronological history of geography in China, producing a chronological geographical map, compiling a dictionary of Chinese historical

place names, verifying and supplementing official historical geography books from previous eras, completing unfinished projects from the Qing dynasty, and extracting and organizing cultural and economic history data from geography books. Beginning with the publication of Issue 3 of the journal in 1935, the English title was changed from *The Evolution of Chinese Geography* to *The Chinese Historical Geography*, marking the beginning of historical geography (Kikuchi 1995; Mori 1935, 170; Akiyama 2001; Que 1995).

Gu inherited the tradition of chronological geography as a nation-salvaging field of study centered on the identity of mainland China and the Chinese people and contributed to its qualitative development into modern historical geography. Tan Qixiang, Hou Renzhi, and Shi Nianhai, who worked with Gu to lead the Yugong Society in its early stage, later became leading historical geographers in China. While pursuing his master's degree under Gu, Hou edited *The Chinese Historical Geography* and studied abroad at the University of Liverpool, where, under the guidance of Darby, he received his doctorate in 1949 with a thesis on the historical geography of Beijing. After returning to his alma mater as a professor, he clarified the distinction between historical geography, a branch of modern geography, and traditional chronological geography. Tan, also Gu's student, mobilized researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Fudan University at the behest of Mao Zedong to carry out the project of compiling *The Historical Atlas of China* (1963–1973). The project was published in eight volumes sequentially from 1982 to 1988. This atlas, which includes a total of 304 maps and over 70,000 place names up to the Qing dynasty, identifies the most extensive territory of the Qing dynasty as of 1840 as national territory and distinguishes China from external regions. Based on this, the book sparked discussions on the national system that spanned from the Qing dynasty to the Republic of China, as well as the identity of the Chinese people. Tan was also the founder of the Institute of Chinese Historical Geography at Fudan University. Shi, who earned a degree from Fu Jen Catholic University, is also considered one of the pioneers of modern historical geography, with contributions in areas such as territorial history, urban history, population history, canal research, changes of forests and grasslands on the Loess Plateau, and stream channel changes and flood control of the Yellow River Valley (Chiang 2005; E. Choi 2012).

While Hou, Tan, and Shi all received training in the field of history, they contributed to the official renaming of chronological geography to historical

geography in 1953. In 1979, the Committee on Historical Geography, formed by the members of the Geographical Society of China who gathered in Xi'an, decided to hold academic conferences every two to four years. The first Conference on Historical Geography was held in Xi An in June of that year. At the conference, Tan from Fudan University was elected president, while Hou from Peking University and Shi from Shaanxi Normal University served as vice presidents. These key figures who once led the Yugong Society demonstrate the roots of Chinese historical geography (Kikuchi 1995). Building on tradition as a foundation, China's historical geography underwent political and economic changes brought by the country's reform, opening, and economic growth in the 1980s. Now, historical geographers in the country tend to be descriptive rather than theoretical. Nevertheless, they are actively conducting research in historical and physical geography, regional geography, historical maps, and methodology, as well as historical and human geography, including administrative districts, place names, environmental changes, cities, population, agriculture, social culture, and transportation (Tan and Ge 1990; Que 1995; Chiang 2005).

Western modern knowledge was introduced to Japan in the late 19th century, during the Meiji Restoration, a period when Japan reorganized its national system based on European models to achieve centralized power. With the shift from Sinocentric to a Eurocentric ideology, geographers also sought a new path. The Meiji government introduced Western science and technology and, in 1872, invited European scholars to help establish its new educational system, using this as a catalyst for modernization. Following the establishment of Tokyo Imperial University in 1877, the Tokyo Normal School and the Tokyo Higher Normal School were founded, and geography courses were introduced. By 1887, the government and educational institutions had begun hiring foreign intellectuals as lecturers (Martin 2005, 323). Amidst this, in 1899, ten historians from the geography department at the Tokyo Imperial University, including Kida Sadakichi, took the initiative to organize a society of historical geography researchers in Japan (renamed as the Society of Historical Geographers in Japan in 1906). Among the 20 people who supported its launch was Koto Bunjiro, considered the father of Japanese geology. The ambitiously launched research group published its journal, *Historical Geography*. Its inaugural issue in October outlined its founding principles, while emphasizing the inseparable relationship between history and geography, as well as the importance of fieldwork in historical geography research, alongside the study of documents and maps. Its

research topics included historical sites, topographical changes, past and present geographical knowledge, and political geography. However, the organization and its journal had an extremely limited impact on the development of historical geography as its empirical research was far distant from geography in general. In addition, the organization's discriminatory view that geography supplements history as a source of historical information, and the fact that many of its members graduated from the history department at the Tokyo Imperial University seems to have created a sense of incongruity (Kawai 2006).

In 1907, Kyoto Imperial University opened Japan's first course in historical geography, and the following year, Ogawa Takuji was appointed as the first professor in the Department of History of the Faculty of Literature, marking the beginning of modern historical geography. As a graduate of the geology department at the Tokyo Imperial University, he specialized in Chinese geology. However, his capability of reading and interpreting Chinese literature led him to study the geography of China and Taiwan. He also surveyed Jiandao (Gando in Korean) on the orders of the Japanese Residency-General of Korea. While remaining in the geography department for 13 years until moving to the Faculty of Science in 1921, he established Kyoto Imperial University's unique tradition of historical geography research, distinguishing it from topography-centered Tokyo Imperial University with a focus on a wide range of topics, including the floor plans of ancient capitals, the origins of settlement patterns, urbanization, transportation development, and methodology. The students trained became leading figures in historical geography in the 1920s and 1930s (Senda 1982, 2009; Kinda 1997; Committee for Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Dr. Ogawa Takuji 1930).

Ishibashi Goro, a scholar who assisted Ogawa in leading the geography department, was promoted from assistant professor to the second professor in 1919. While studying history at Tokyo Imperial University, he encountered Shiga Shigetaka's *An Essay on Japanese Landscape* and developed an interest in geography. He then went on to graduate school, where he studied political and commercial geography and frequently contributed related articles to the journal *Historical Geography*. After taking up a post at Kyoto Imperial University, he shifted his research focus from historical geography, which emphasizes elucidating the past, to historical method-using human geography, which examines the geography of the past to understand the present (Kawai 2010; Faculty of Literature Department of Geography 2008). The historical geography

methodology of the Kyoto Imperial University, established by Ogawa and Ishibashi, highlighted temporal cross-sections. This is based on the logic that, to the extent data permits, historical geography is equivalent to studying the present since it selects and approaches a specific one among countless cross-sections of the past. In this regard, what is noteworthy is the role of Komaki Saneshige, who majored in geography under Ogawa and Ishibashi and then went on to graduate school to study archaeology and Japanese history before becoming the third professor in the Department of Geography of the university. Having studied abroad in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France while he was a student, and even delving into German geography, he internalized Western geographical thought and earned his doctorate in 1937 with his thesis, “Studies in Prehistoric Geography,” which explored the relationship of the prehistoric settlement and archaeological site locations with their topography (Senda 1982; Yonekura 1990; Shibata 2005).

Komaki stated that his historical geography is an independent branch of geography, not a supplementary discipline to history, and that its primary purpose is to reconstruct the form of a region (landscape) as a unified whole composed of the natural and human phenomena of the past, thereby explaining, analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting its structure. He also evaluated it as consistent with Mackinder’s description of historical geography as “a study of the historical present.” While he anticipated that infinitely increasing the number of temporal cross-sections or reducing the gaps between them would allow for a clearer account of the origins and development of present-day regions (landscapes), he acknowledged the limitations of being content in reality with describing specific cross-sections. He distinguished the geographic methodology, which depicts the static aspects of a landscape through temporal cross-sections, from the historical methodology, which traces and elucidates its dynamic, genetic changes, and development (Komaki 1933). These methods, equivalent to modern cross-sectional and longitudinal methodologies, demonstrate his relatively clear understanding of historical geography’s methodology (Yonekura 1990).

After the war, Kyoto Imperial University maintained its status as a leading institution for historical geography, with its scholars accumulating research results primarily focused on morphology, such as reconstructing the locations, floor plans, and transportation routes of local administrative hubs using ancient landscapes as the subject, and elucidating the ancient land plotting system 條里制. Their interests expanded to medieval manorial settlements and land use,

urban development of early modern times, the structure of castle towns 城下町, and modern cities. In the 1940s and 1950s, Fujioka Kenjiro, a professor at the university, combined archaeology, anthropology, history, and geology with geography to approach prehistoric and ancient historical geography, thereby earning recognition for incorporating the role of the natural environment and history into landscape studies, which otherwise can easily become superficial. Fujioka independently devised a method for landscape history, seeking to trace the long-term process of regional changes rather than dwelling on a specific point in the past. The temporal cross-sectional method, aiming to construct geographic patterns and landscapes statically, may overlook dynamic change and transformation. This problem, however, can be solved by establishing multiple cross-sections, depicting the landscape at that specific time period, describing the changes between cross-sections, thereby connecting them based on significant events, which is precisely how landscape history works. Though similar to successive cross-sections, this methodology differs in that it strengthens the narrative by combining horizontal cross-sections with vertical topics. Fujioka's unique methodology, as well as fieldwork, has been widely accepted by academia and adopted in studies on a wide range of issues, such as agricultural systems, land reclamation, irrigation systems, the ancient land plotting system, settlement landscapes, urban patterns, postal roads, castle towns, and villages near Buddhist temples (Suizu 1986; Kinda 1997, 2003; Faculty of Literature Department of Geography 2008).

In 1958, the Japan Historical Geography Research Group (renamed as the Association of Historical Geography in Japan in 1966) was established to consolidate the capabilities of historical geography researchers. It published featured academic papers on specific topics as well as general papers in the annual journal *Historical Geography Bulletin*, while communicating with its members through *Member Communications*, which was released four to six times a year, featuring its news and short papers. The two publications were integrated into *Historical Geography* in 1991 (Aoki 1998). Landscape has been a core concept underlying the study of historical geography from its inception, and diverse materials, such as the natural environment, literature, statistical data, topographic maps, aerial photographs, and archaeological sites, are mobilized for its reconstruction. The period spans from prehistoric times to ancient times, the Middle Ages, early modern times, and modern times. Recently, historical geographers have expanded their research horizons by paying attention to the

significance of past landscapes utilizing methodologies such as phenomenology and semiotics (Senda 1982; Martin 2005; Faculty of Literature Department of Geography 2008).

Historical geography in Korea has its modern roots in the development of geography during the late Joseon dynasty. In a situation when a scholarly tradition of empirical classical research was established in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties and scholars reflected the theory of *li* and *qi* of Neo-Confucianism and the Doctrine of Mind and Nature of Yangmingism, the dissemination of scientific technology and world geographic knowledge by Western missionaries gave rise to a discipline rooted in practical learning, replacing hollow ones based on empty theories. This led to the establishment of geography based on *silhak* for the rediscovery of the motherland. Literally meaning practical studies, *silhak* was a new ideology independently formed by the Confucian literati outside the government. Its theoretical framework was established by Yu Hyeong-won (1662–1673), influenced by the scholarship and thought of Han Baek-gyeom, Yi Su-gwang, and Heo Mok, and was further refined by Yi Ik (1681–1763), who embraced Western learning with his pursuit of pragmatic statecraft. This was further strengthened by the philosophical approach for economic enrichment, pursued by Hong Dae-yong (1731–1783), Park Ji-won (1737–1805), Yu Deuk-gong (1749–?), and Park Je-ga (1750–1805). Ultimately, *silhak* was compiled by Jeong Yak-yong (1762–1836), who drew upon the precedents of Yu Hyeong-won, the theories of Yi Ik, Western thought, and the economic enrichment approach of Park Ji-won and Park Je-ga (Cho 2011; T. Kim 2011).

In the *silhak* tradition, historical geography was conducted through the compilation of geographic documents such as *Dongguk yeoji*, *Yeojidoseo*, and *Daedong jiji*, which organized the human and physical geography of the central and local regions, including the founding years of villages, names of counties and districts, mountains and rivers, local products, clan names, reservoirs, post stations, messenger stations, bridges, pastures, temples, markets, and historic sites. Historical geographies characterized by exceptional literature research include Han Baek-gyeom's *Dongguk jiriji*, which went beyond a simple enumeration of items to systematically record historical changes of territory; Shin Gyeong-jun's *Ganggyeogo*, Yu Deuk-gong's *Balhaego*, and Yeojigo of *Dongguk munheon bigo*, which examined the river systems and place names of each era; Jeong Yak-yong's *Abang gangyeokko* and *Daedong sugyeong*; and Han Jin-seo's

Haedong yeoksa jirigo (Yang 2011). Practical thought was inherited by Choi Han-gi (1803–1877) and connected with Western modern thought. Subjective geographers based on the *silhak* tradition, which encountered Western modern geography during the period of port opening, urged scholars to expand their horizons globally, building on a foundation of pride in the uniqueness of Korean culture and geography. However, amidst the twists and turns of Japanese colonial rule, historical geography, influenced by a distorted view of Korean history that justified colonial policy, became shackled by a deterministic perspective. Historical geography instilled a fatalism by linking the geographical situation of the Korean peninsula, protruding from the East Asian continent into the ocean, to heteronomy and peripherality, transforming into a geopolitical logic that justified Japan's invasion of Korea (Lee 1987).

After the Department of History was established at the Tokyo Imperial University in 1887, Japanese scholars who had been studying Korean history based on positivism and rationalism under the influence of Western modern history internalized the colonial view of history as the theory of Japanese and Koreans sharing common ancestry and the argument for conquering Korea gained ground following the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty. They then turned their attention from the Korean peninsula to Manchuria, Mongolia, China, and other regions, as Japan expanded its political stage onto the continent. Shiratori Kurakichi, an Asian historian who began researching Korean and Manchurian history for the said reason, established the Research Institution on the Geography and History of Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula in Tokyo in partnership with the South Manchuria Railway Company and published *Historical Geography of Manchuria* (two volumes, 1913), *Historical Geography of Korea* (two volumes, 1913), and *Research Report on the Geography and History of Manchuria* (16 volumes, 1915–1941). Through these books, the history of Manchuria and Joseon 滿鮮史 and the history of Manchuria and Korea 滿韓史 gained their presence, serving as a basis for historical distortion. The cultural essence of Korea, which was inextricably undetachable from the continent from its birth, was said to be merely the culture of China, and any possibility of its independent development was thoroughly denied. The theory of heteronomy functioned as an ideology that justified Japanese colonial rule. A special issue of *Historical Geography* devoted to the Japan-Korea Annexation even praised it as a reenactment of ancient history, when the Japanese gods and emperors supposedly ruled Korea (Hatada 1987).

Modern historical geography emerged with the task of overcoming Japanese colonial historiography and critically inheriting the geographical thought of the *silhak* scholars of the late Joseon dynasty. Under these constraints, Lee Byeong-do conducted research to determine the locations of city-states and confederated kingdoms through comparison and documentary research. Although historical geography was perceived as a symbol of colonial historiography, used to justify imperialism, and his education at Waseda University made him susceptible to criticism, his scholarship was rooted in the historical geographic perspectives of *silhak* scholars such as Han Baek-gyeom, Yi Ik, An Jeong-bok, Han Chi-yun, and Jeong Yak-yong. After Korea's liberation from Japan, the study of historical geography was neglected more than necessary in an atmosphere that emphasizes the need to overcome colonial historiography (D. Kim 2013). Even after Korea's first geography departments were established at Seoul National University and Kyungpook National University in 1946, it took time for historical geography to gain a foothold in the country. Fortunately, research on historical geography revived with the foundation of the Joseon Geographical Society in 1945 (renamed as the Korean Geographical Society in 1949), which published its journal *Geography* in 1963 (later renamed as the *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society* in 1993). Korea's modern historical geography began with the first generation of scholars, who studied geography and history at universities in Japan. The prominent work is the pioneering one of Roh Do-yang, a graduate of Komazawa University who began his career in earnest after the liberation. He set an example for reconstructing past geography by extracting and mapping geographic entries from the *Veritable Records of King Sejong*. As Korea's first doctorate in geography who studied cultural and historical geography under Fred Kniffen at the University of Louisiana in 1960, Lee Chan (1923–2003) also made a remarkable contribution. Lee transplanted the Berkeley School's historical geography methodology, based on literature and fieldwork, to Korea and opened Korea's first historical geography course in the late 1960s when he served as a professor at Seoul National University (Hong 2014; Ryu 1996, 262).

The gathering of historical geographers was made possible in 1987 in the form of the first Korean Traditional Geography Lecture Series, and this momentum led to the foundation of the Association of Korean Cultural and Historical Geography Researchers (renamed as the Association of Korean Cultural and Historical Geographers in 1990) in 1988. The following year, the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Cultural and Historical Geography* was

published as an academic journal for presenting the organization's research findings. Lee Chan spearheaded the formation of the association, serving four terms of presidency from its founding in 1988 to 1995. Lee's historical geography was a Berkeley School-style cultural and historical geography that explores the spatial distribution of tangible and intangible cultural attributes or cultural complexes, formed by humans as lifestyles on the surface of the earth, and examines the origins, diffusion, and historical changes of landscape as the synthesis of these elements from a generic perspective. Lee moved to the College of Education, Graduate School of Education, and then College of Social Sciences at Seoul National University, where he conducted personal research in the fields of chorographic works, traditional maps, and the history of geography for over 28 years, while also nurturing many master's and doctoral students, laying the foundation for Korean cultural and historical geography.

Reconstructing Historical Landscape

Landscape is undoubtedly one of the common keywords shared by the Berkeley-Wisconsin School represented by Sauer and Clark, the Cambridge School of Darby and Baker, China's Yugong School, Japan's Kyoto School, and the so-called Lee Chan School, centered around the Association of Korean Cultural and Historical Geographers. In historical geography, landscape is likened to a palimpsest, a parchment duplicate that symbolizes layeredness, much like a layered document. A palimpsest has similar attributes to landscape: history is completed on the former as narratives are gradually cumulated in the repetition of erasing and rewriting on the soft skin of a lamb, calf, or goat, while dynamic changes are accumulated on landscape through formation, transformation, replacement, decay, extinction, and reformation (Febvre and Martin 1976, 15–19) (Figure 3). Using landscapes as clues, researchers connect the past and present, but geography of the past can never be fully restored and only be reproduced close to the facts through historical sources. This process or procedure is called reconstruction.

Philosophers and thinkers of the past have seriously contemplated the concepts of constancy and change. For Kant, constancy signified continuity, a source of stability and trust. However, Henri Bergson acknowledged that the ultimate reality is the continuous process of change itself—i.e., duration

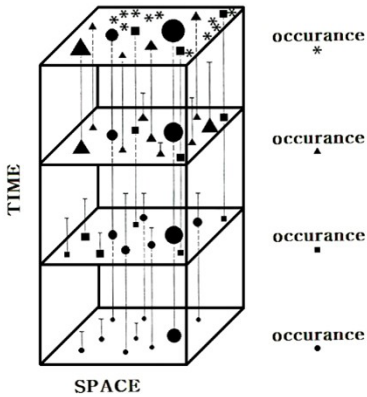


Figure 3. Palimpsest of Historical Landscapes

(*durée*)—and dialectically understood that change also includes constancy. In fact, duration is experienced through the connection between past, present, and future, where parts of the past continue into the present and the future unfolds from the present (Ko 2021, 56–57). A technical account of the philosophically and dialectically intertwined aspects of rupture and continuity underlines that when continuous change is halted temporarily or for the short term, the patterns of that period become clear. In contrast, in the long term, the process of change becomes more evident. Historical geographers have developed various approaches, while grappling with the question of which approach to prioritize.

The tradition of cross-section construction and explanation, emphasizing the reconstruction of historical landscapes from the 1920s and 1930s, was established in the initial process of answering questions about geographic patterns of a specific point or period in the past, rather than the present. However, human-inhabited areas and places are constantly in a state of flux, rather than maintaining equilibrium. Therefore, regionality and the process of landscape change must also be taken into consideration. Theoretically, there are countless historical cross-sections, and selecting historical cross-sections with abundant data and arranging them chronologically—that is, using comparative statics, which assumes multiple cross-sections—can partially provide a relatively rigorous explanation of geographical change. By extension, to fundamentally address the limitations inherent in single or sequential cross-sections, longitudinal cross-sections, which emphasize the vertical themes of historical narratives or landscape and geographical change, are effective alternatives (Baker 1995; Arizono et al. 2001).

In England, a project led by Darby was launched to reconstruct cross-

sections of the entire England in the 11th century based on the *Domesday Book*, a reference for taxation, and to establish a baseline for the landscape changes that would unfold later. The document contains basic information on settlements, population, forests, meadows, wetlands, fishing grounds, salt pans, wastelands, mills, churches, towns, livestock, markets, ferries, tollgates, ironworks, pastures, and beekeeping in 37 counties surveyed to secure tax revenue in England after William I conquered it in 1066. It was referred to as a *descriptio* (enrolling) before it obtained its name from the locals, likening it to “domesday” (doomsday). The survey began in 1084–1085, and the compilation of manuscripts for each region is estimated to have been completed either shortly after William I was dead in 1087 or around 1100. During the Domesday Geography project, Darby conducted joint research with his students on England, dividing it into five regions: eastern, central, southeastern, northern, and southwestern. The results were reported in a seven-volume book containing various thematic maps that represented the landscapes of that time (Darby 1952, 1977). This is a prime example of establishing the foundation for studying past geography through cross-sectional analysis. Brown’s *Mirror for Americans* (1943), which adopted the temporal cross-sections of the east coast of the United States in 1810 as the historical present and reconstructed its historical geography based on the data of that time, is also considered a masterpiece that fundamentally implemented the cross-sectional approach.

Sauer (1927) defined historical geography as the study of past landscapes, the transformations of cultural landscapes, and the periodic reorientation of human areal use and stated that it entails the reconstruction of past cultural landscapes. In constructing a cross-section, the natural environment of the past is more important than cultural landscape. The distribution of vegetation, including forests, grasslands, and fenlands, along with topography, climate, and soil, provides a baseline for assessing the extent of human intervention that has changed nature. Prior to this, Robert Gradmann conducted research that reconstructed the primal natural landscape and discovered clues for comparatively determining the locations of early German settlements. Otto Schlüter also reconstructed forests of Central Europe around the 7th century and reported the results in a forest distribution map (Darby 1962). The reconstruction of the paleoenvironment cannot be addressed solely through geography; it requires the collaboration with archaeology and natural sciences (e.g., geology, soil science, biology, ecology, and climatology), and as crucial



Figure 4. Sequential Cross-sections of the Yongsan Special Army Garrison Landscape: “Entertainment at Damdam Pavilion by Kim Seok-sin (1800s); From *A Book of Gyeongseong* 京城府之卷; by George Rose (1904); Photographed by the Author

clues for comparison and inference, current topography, vegetation, and soil conditions should be confirmed through fieldwork (Arizono et al. 2001, 6–7). Historical landscape can be reconstructed by placing the human landscape, confirmed through analysis of ancient documents, archaeological cultural layers, life history data, old maps, cadastral maps, paintings, photographs, place names, and aerial photographs, on top of the restructured natural landscape.

Alfred Hettner once asserted that a historical geography of any region is, in principle, possible for any period of its history; there is not merely one but a multitude of historical geographies (Darby 1962). This suggests that it is possible to identify stages of landscape change through a static comparative method that assumes multiple cross-sections. For example, the Harvard Forest models visually represent the sequence of landscape change in central New England, from pre-settlement forest (1700), clearing by early settlers (1733), agricultural intensification (1830), farm abandonment (1850), establishment of white pine forests (1910), succession to hardwoods (1915), and finally vigorously grown hardwood forests (1930). Alfred Meyer’s (1935) study of the Kankakee Marsh in Illinois presupposed four distinct resident types and land utilization:

Indian hunters and French traders (before 1840), frontier-pioneering hunters and farmers (1840–1880), ranchers and recreational hunters (1880–1910), and cornfield farmers and riverside vacationers (1910 and later). The landscape changes in Yongsan since the 19th century can also be visually confirmed through cross-sectional comparisons over time. The current landscape, which no longer includes the Damdam Pavilion at the summit of Yongsan depicted in a painting, the Eupcheong Pavilion in the special army garrison below, and the storage of the garrison seen in the old photograph, provides a glimpse into the historical and geographical transformations (Figure 4).

Sequential cross-sections, which arrange multiple historical geographic patterns in a time series to demonstrate gradual change, certainly facilitate a more in-depth approach than a single cross-section. However, they still have limitations because not all elements in the landscape change simultaneously or at the same rate. This means that draining of a wetland does not necessarily lead to reclamation of grasslands (Darby 1953, 5). Behind such change, as seen in the hexagonal scheme of Walter Christaller's central place theory, a timeless geographic structure operates simultaneously (Arizono et al. 2001, 14). Thus, the elements constituting a landscape exhibit different tendencies toward change and constancy and inherently have universal spatial principles and a low level of "geographic inertia." While those elements may seem stagnant since their change may appear relatively difficult and slow, change is ultimately irreversible in the long term. Additionally, principles and rules are not immutable, exhibiting regional variability. Therefore, a complete understanding of the true nature of a landscape requires questioning about the processes of change.

Darby (1953), who shifted his attention from his initial focus on cross-sectional analysis to the patterns and an agency of landscape change, paraphrased that places in Blache's analogy of geography as the "study of place" are types transformed by humans and suggested that the current landscape is not a static arrangement of objects but instead has been transformed into its current state and is in the process of transforming into a different form. Darby seems to have grasped the situation well through his study of the fenlands of eastern England and to have convinced himself with his subsequent work, "The Changing English Landscape" (1951), which analyzed land utilization changes caused by logging of forests, drainage of wetlands, and reclamation of heathlands from a vertical perspective. The theme of landscape change was also indirectly evoked in works, including Marsh's *Man and Nature* (1864), Nathaniel Shaler's *Man*

and the Earth (1905), Robert Sherlock's *Man as A Geological Agent* (1922), and Clark's *The Invasion of New Zealand by People, Plants, and Animals* (1949), which pointed out human-induced environmental invasion or revolutionary change. In addition, works on urban and industrial topics, with keywords, such as origin, evolution, development, growth, transformation, and decline, analyze changing landscapes from a geohistorical perspective (Darby 1953, 1962). However, even this vertical approach, emphasizing narratives, had apparent limitations: its patterns are not sufficiently taken into consideration, and to critics who stubbornly delve into the discipline's identity, it was fundamentally not different from history.

Ultimately, it is possible to infer that a landscape approach can become ideal by appropriately compromising time slices and narratives. In that sense, various case studies have attempted to integrate horizontal patterns and vertical processes. Jan Broek (1932) refined and applied Whittlesey's sequential occupation model to his dissertation study of the Santa Clara Valley in California, earning praise from numerous researchers for implementing an ideal methodology that integrated cross-sectional reconstructions of representative landscapes from each era with socioeconomic narratives. This work adopts a creative approach by, in line with its subtitle, "A Study in Landscape Changes," beginning with the landscapes that Europeans first encountered, establishing three distinct periods—the Spanish-Mexican period, the early American period, and the present (early 1930s)—presenting characteristic landscapes for each period and finally explaining the changes brought about in the transitional processes through socioeconomic factors. Fujioka Kenjiro's landscape transformation history is considered a similar compromise to Broek's. Darby, in *A New Historical Geography of England before 1600* (1973), also used a method of constructing specific temporal cross-sections (e.g., 1086, 1334, 1600, 1800, 1850, and 1900) and vertically connecting changes between them through narratives (Faculty of Literature Department of Geography 2008; Darby 1936, 1973).

South Korean academia has also adopted Western methodologies to select regions and time periods of various scales, reconstruct landscapes, and explain their changes. This has been a consistently explored topic in the categories of villages (clan villages, mountain villages, reclaimed villages, fishing villages, and temple villages), national land improvement, land utilization, and regional historical geography (Ryu et al. 2002). Roh Do-yang (1969) reconstructed 15th-century geography nationwide, using the Geography section of the *Veritable*

Records of King Sejong as a primary source. Ryu Je-heon (1994) applied cultural ecological theory and methods to dynamically analyze, using longitudinal cross-sectional methods, the environmental, social, and economic changes accompanying the modernization of the Honam Plain, spanning from pre-industrial to semi-industrial and industrial periods. Choi Yeong-jun (1974), who first employed the concept of landscape, focused on Incheon before and after the opening of its ports and then expanded his area of interest to topics such as ancient roads, inland water transportation, and reclamation. His study of the reclamation of the Ganghwa coastal wetlands involved reproducing sequential cross-sections by constructing and arranging four cross-sections—before reclamation, at the end of the Goryeo dynasty, in the 1800s and in the 1990s. He also detailed the changes during these periods, based on literature and fieldwork. This approach remains a successful experiment. A group of scholars has established guidelines for the historical geography of rural landscapes by focusing on agriculture, mountain, fishing, and reclaimed villages and by reconstructing aspects of location, form, and change. Detailed studies on the form, structure, and function of commoner houses and noble houses, as well as research on land reclamation, irrigation, and land use, have also been conducted using traditional methods. Several researchers have actively utilized cadastral maps to empirically reconstruct the spatial structure based on the arrangement of administrative and ceremonial landscape elements within local administrative centers. In addition, in-depth examinations were conducted of mountains where logging was forbidden, government-run ranches, fortress walls, irrigation facilities, the spatial differentiation, streetscapes, and residential landscapes of the colonial city of Gyeongseong, and thus the introduction of modern transportation and landscape changes (Hong 2017).

The results of past geography reconstructed through the above research are presented in the form of text records (e.g., excavated ancient documents, anthologies, and diaries) and image materials (e.g., photographs, ancient paintings, and old maps), or the geography of memories is recorded in the form of oral narratives. They often replace the landscape of a specific period by reorganizing the data resulting from analyses and syntheses of historical materials into thematic maps. According to Hugh Prince (1971), the research area of historical geography is primarily composed of the objective real world, the subjective perceptual world, and the geometric abstract world, and therefore, the reconstruction is carried out in the form of a realistic reproduction of the past, a

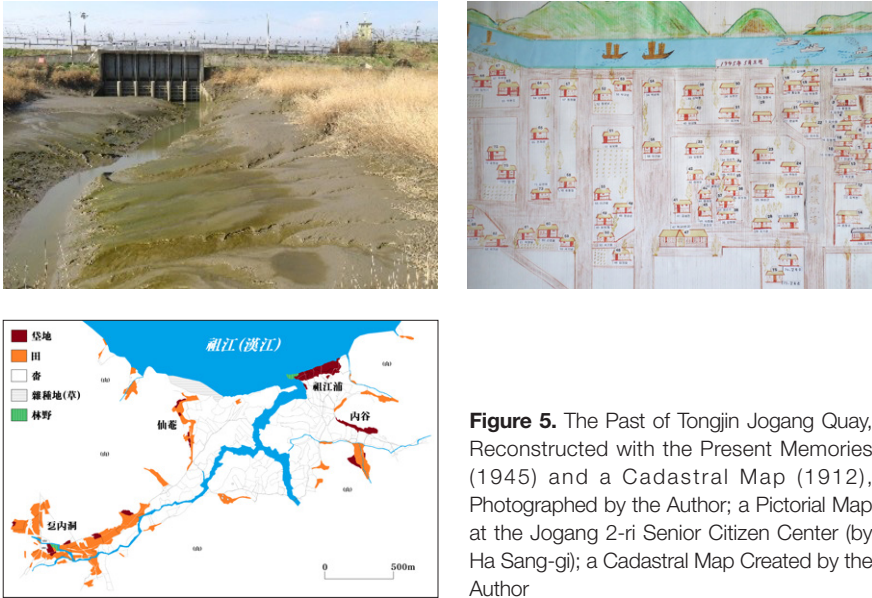


Figure 5. The Past of Tongjin Jogang Quay, Reconstructed with the Present Memories (1945) and a Cadastral Map (1912), Photographed by the Author; a Pictorial Map at the Jogang 2-ri Senior Citizen Center (by Ha Sang-gi); a Cadastral Map Created by the Author

projection of the inner landscape latent in consciousness and memory, and the production of a map that combines a spatial model on the geometric dimension and abstract symbols of points, lines, and surfaces. In the case of Tongjin Jogang Quay (Figure 5), the village destroyed in the aftermath of the Korean War “exists” as a desolate landscape in the border area. However, it is vividly revived as a “cognitive” map engraved in the memory of villager Ha Sang-gi, and the old landscape of the Jogang Quay settlement, which flourished 110 years ago, is reconstructed in geometric space based on the 1912 cadastral map.

The Establishment of New Cultural Geography and the Interpretive Turn of Historical Landscapes

Around the mid-20th century, the academic understanding of landscape broadened and deepened. In addition to its rich cultural and historical implications as a subject of study, landscape began to embrace its emotional dimension as a familiar landscape encountered in everyday life. At the heart of this shift were William Hoskins, who traveled and pictorially interpreted regional historical landscapes throughout England, and John Jackson, who conveyed the cultural significance and symbolism embedded in vernacular landscapes

by founding the magazine *Landscape*, which appealed to the public through friendly photographs. These two brought a breath of fresh air to landscapes, once confined to scholarly pursuits, by making them accessible to ordinary people. While somewhat aligned with the Berkeley School's empiricist tradition, which emphasized material culture, Hoskins and Jackson are evaluated as having redefined the intellectual agenda for landscapes by the late 1970s by tapping into emotions such as taste, values, and aspirations (Mikesell 1978, 3; Schein 1997, 661; Whelan 2014, 162–63). They opened the way to emotionally interpret landscapes and add philosophical depth by incorporating metaphors from literature and art.

It was an impressive attempt to distinguish between British and American landscape characteristics, citing taste as a factor that defines cultural identity (Lowenthal and Prince 1964, 1965; Lowenthal 1968). The landscape reflecting British tastes is bucolic, picturesque, and tidy and focused on façades, yet it is seemingly aloof from the secular world. In the British landscape, traces of imitation are detected due to the emphasis on diversity and openness, devices that contain private interest are prepared by prioritizing public interests, and the tendency to prefer outdoor activities and emphasize amenities are reflected. This is in stark contrast to the American landscape characterized by its vastness, wildness, and casual chaos, and the taste of Americans, who often go to extremes, prioritize ideals over reality, are individualists, and prefer splendor over ordinariness.

The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes (1979), edited by Meinig, is also often mentioned as a breakthrough in landscape studies. The essays included in this book remind of the continuation of the legacy of traditional cultural geography while also pointing to new trends, such as landscape as “text” and “symbol.” It signaled a shift from the intellectual whirlwind created by encounters with the latest theories in art, literature, philosophy, and sociology toward a “new cultural geography” that seeks to transcend traditional understandings of culture and landscape (Whelan 2014, 163). The existing methodology identifies the distribution of material cultural elements in rural sites with well-preserved tradition, elucidates their origins and diffusion, and establishes cultural regions based on these findings. However, it inevitably faced criticism for neglecting urban-based popular culture and falling short of the realm of theoretical and rhetorical interpretations of literature, art, music, film, symbols, style, and ideology.

The deterministic perspective of the superorganism, which regards culture

as a supraindividual entity, makes it difficult to grasp culture dynamically as an object of contention and conflict surrounding power, identity, justice, and significance. Consequently, it had to await the creative destruction, depending on postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, cultural materialism, and feminism. When James Duncan (1980) exposed the limitations of cultural geography and emerged to express a forward-looking critique, the atmosphere shifted, leading to a series of movements seeking alternatives. Coincidentally, with the addition of Peter Jackson and Denis Cosgrove, both of whom were familiar with a long tradition in social geography and cultural studies at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of the University of Birmingham, “New Directions in Cultural Geography” became an irreversible trend, officially defining new cultural geography as post-Sauer cultural geography (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987). Books and papers demonstrating “radical” cultural geography were published one after another, rapidly eliminating skepticism and even outright hostility toward new cultural geography, which was allegedly caught up in the “linguistic game.” They redefined culture as a medium through which social change is experienced, contested, and constructed, and landscape as a way of representing and symbolizing the environment surrounding humans, thereby turning the direction of cultural geography from form-centered to interpretation-oriented.

In the conflict between the old and new in cultural geography, landscape was a fiercely contested topic. Traditionally, landscape was seen as a material entity and macroscopically the region itself, while from a critical perspective, it was regarded as a symbolic representation or an ideological construct. In the new interpretation, the representation of landscape is situational, contextual, and particularly related to politics. Rather than being cast aside, it is socially constructed within power relations of diverse intersecting identities rooted in class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other differences. As a representation mediated by images and texts, landscape possesses a multifaceted metaphor: ways of seeing defined by ideology; text as a signifying mode through which people communicate with and experience society, a social document awaiting interpretation; and icon as a site of symbolic interpretation (Seymour 2000; Whelan 2014).

First, landscapes are reinterpreted through the lens of “a way of seeing.” Since subjects’ perceptions cannot be identical, interpretations of landscapes vary. People have their own eyes, so do they have their own ways of seeing. People are influenced by what they know or believe to be true. The problem is

that their beliefs about landscapes can sometimes be distorted, manipulated, or subverted by the interests of the dominant social forces. This suggests a possible situation where the ruling class's perspectives are forced to reproduce vested interests—in other words, people's perspectives are monopolized by power and capital. As a mode of cultural representation and symbolization, landscapes exist not simply to be seen and read but rather act as an ideological means of reproducing the material and social foundations of the ruling class. Landscapes that are uncomfortable or unsightly to them, or that impede the reproduction of economic, social, and cultural capital, are hidden from view. Landscape undergoes naturalization, thoroughly appropriating the perspectives of workers, who are directly involved in the creation of the landscape, tenant farmers, as well as third parties who view the reproduced landscape, thereby solidifying the intended social relationships (Berger 1972).

Landscape as a way of seeing has its origins in Western Europe of the 16th to 18th centuries, when changes in religion and science coincided with the rise of capitalism and colonial imperialism. Cosgrove, who examined the case of the Venetian Republic of the 15th to 16th centuries, argues that this “landscape way of seeing” emerged in connection with the concept of space and the urban merchant class's property holding in the Renaissance. Merchant landowners measured their land acquired through purchase, reclamation, and drainage, using geometrical three-dimensional linear perspective and improved surveying techniques. This new technology not only enabled the production of detailed and sophisticated maps but also developed into a painting style characterized by forward-open perspectives and bird's-eye views, which were applied to depict farms on canvas. As a way of seeing projected into landscape paintings, landscape was a visual ideology of the ruling class, including urban merchants and landowners—a privileged way of seeing, a symbol of their power, and a celebration of possessions that represented, naturalized, and reproduced class relations (Cosgrove 1985; Seymour 2000, 195–96)—such a viewpoint overlaid the landscape, previously understood as a value-neutral material culture, with ideology.

The second new interpretation is cultural landscape as text. While the term “text” primarily conjures up literary works, this interpretation is a metaphor that encourages the reader's free interpretation, instead of denying the author's authority by drawing on the support of semiotics and poststructuralism. The metaphor of landscape, as a coded document to be deciphered—a text with ambiguity—implies the uncertainty, relativity, and interrelationship of meaning

and therefore, has an effect of exposing the context that enforces definitiveness, absoluteness, and hierarchy. Text contributes to diverse interpretations based on three relevant concepts: textuality, a text-related concept implying that meaning is not original but rather arbitrary and follows established conventions, indicating the polysemic nature of meaning; intertextuality that emphasizes the relationship between texts; and a textual community that shares the reading of texts. In particular, as a concept similar to inter-subjectivity, one of Alfred Schütz's control devices for excessive relativity, along with *epoche*, thick description, and deconstruction, textual community emphasizes the aspect of the landscape socially constructed by a group that shares interpretation (Duncan and Duncan 1988). In the real world, meaning and text are unstable, indefinite, and constantly in conflict rather than corresponding transparently. In the midst of chaos, the meaning shared by multiple readers provides stability to some degree.

Third, the theoretical and historical interpretation of symbolic landscapes is based on iconography. In situations where signs are recycled and even inverted depending on context, the landscape as a visual image loses its transparency and becomes dominated by superficial, depthless meanings. Iconography, an approach that delves beneath superficial appearances into inner meanings to reveal the symbolism, meaning, ideology, value, and power represented in landscapes, was proposed and developed by the art historical school, founded by Aby Warburg and continued by Erwin Panofsky, in the process of elucidating the essence of Renaissance painting. Crucial methods of art historical research that identify the symbolic elements inherent in the visual representation of a painting and derive socio-cultural meaning from them are divided into three by depth of idea: a) pre-iconography that describes the realistic meaning of motifs through sense and experience; b) iconography that analyzes cultural meaning of allegory based on knowledge; and c) iconology that comprehensively interprets essential meaning of symbolic value based on intuition (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, 2; Harris 2006, 148; Kaemmerling 1997, 160).

Cultural geography adopting iconography pursues in-depth interpretation by delving beneath the surface to uncover the symbolism of cultural landscapes represented not only in paintings but also in rituals, architecture, literature, and maps (Whelan 2014, 163–64). In *The Iconography of Landscape* (1988), Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels defined landscape as a cultural image, i.e., a pictorial way of representing, constructing, and symbolizing the surrounding environment. They identified a shift in the direction of approaches to landscape,

which had been reified as an object of empirical inquiry, toward interpreting its inherent meaning as a cultural symbol or image. They regard iconographic interpretation, or icon hermeneutics, as interpretation of the essence and symbolic value of meaning, distinguished from a lower-level iconographic analysis that describes the form and composition of a landscape and identifies its inherent meaning within a historical context. They further emphasize that the landscape is ideological and highly political as it is constructed by sociocultural processes and, conversely, drives these processes (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, 1–10).

While the Berkeley School addressed the transformation of cultural landscapes in the realm of cultural-historical geography, the convergence of new cultural geography and historical geography heralds the advent of new cultural-historical geography, deepening its scope. In the discourse of new cultural geography, the spatiotemporal dynamism and diversity of historical landscapes imply tensions and competition surrounding the construction or interpretation of meaning (Jin 2013). Researchers are proposing diverse landscape metaphors, including theater, carnival, spectacle, symbols, and signs, as well as metaphors of a way of seeing, text, and iconography, and engaging in in-depth interpretations of them.

A notable example of an early Korean paper interpreting historical landscapes in line with the theories of new cultural geography is Kim Duk-hyun's attempts (1983, 1986, 2001) to interpret clan villages and Naeap Village in Andong within the context of Confucian cultural landscapes. He delves into the formation and symbolic meaning of these village landscapes, focusing on the Confucian edification of rural communities. Kim elucidates the characteristics of the landscape: the village center is home to the main family house, where the village founder's shrine is located; *seowon*, a private Confucian academy that enshrines the central figures of the clan, is sited in the scenic area at the village entrance; and the pavilions of Confucian scholars representing the village are scattered. Regarding the village with a stream, where the Uiseong Kim clan in Imha-myeon, Andong resides, he analyzes the meaning of Confucian ideology, existential space, and ideal dwelling from landscape texts, such as Gaehosong, a forest surrounding the village that plays a cultural, ecological function and symbolically protects the village against the void at the mouth of the watercourse, Doyeon Pool, a place of unity with nature, Seonyujeong Pavilion with a beautiful scenery, the main family house as the center of clan unity, Waryongchodang and Doyeonseodang as lecture venues, and Gyeongjeolsa as a shrine for ancestral rites. In terms of socio-historical geography, Jeon Jong-han (2002) traces the process in which a clan regionalizes

beyond the scope of blood ties. Adopting, as visual ideologies, Confucian landscapes symbolizing the power acquired from the central government, royal favors, and education, such as *jeongnyeo* (bannered gate commendation), shrines for those credited by the state, and private schools, based on the perception of ancestral hometown as a symbolic site projecting the will to power, a clan expanded its periphery of social networks through school ties, regional ties, and intermarriage and created a domain of its power. Jeon interpreted the symbols constructed by powerful clans as a means of flaunting and territorializing their social standing and as a semiotic system symbolizing power relations.

The Confucian landscape, created with a focus solely on the ways of the privileged seeing, failed to provide a critical perspective that encompassed diverse social compositions, thereby narrowing its scope. While the gentry's living spaces—mansions with servants, warehouses, horse barns, and farmland—were sited in one area, the lives of small farmers and tenant farmers coexisted in the other area. While it is natural to predict gentrification, where the influx of an upper class armed with the power and land capital inherent in their social status, and their tastes profoundly impact the local landscape, it does not necessarily lead to a permanent transformation of the village (Thirsk 2000, 16–19). It frequently failed to take root in the face of the stubborn resistance of commoners to change. Consideration into the diverse social strata clarifies that the Confucian landscape is not merely an object of aestheticization but instead contains the seeds of competition and conflict.

Research attempting to interpret historical landscapes as texts is also actively conducted. The dismantling of the Government-General Building underscores the diversified perspectives on landscapes and the sharp discursive conflict surrounding symbols (Yoon 2001). Leaving aside the symbolic disputes between the building and Gyeongbokgung Palace, the textual community's stance on the preservation of the Government-General Building can be categorized into three: a) discourse on the dissolution of nationalism, b) discourse on pragmatic preservation seeking to learn from history, and c) discourse on the Japanese imperialism driven by nostalgia for a golden age. However, the fiercely contested discussion on justification ultimately resulted in a compromise, preserving some of the building after dismantling it at the Independence Hall of Korea (Figure 6). Another impressive study structured the social (re)construction of placeness in the intense collisions among the textual communities surrounding the transformation and meaning of Changgyeonggung Palace following

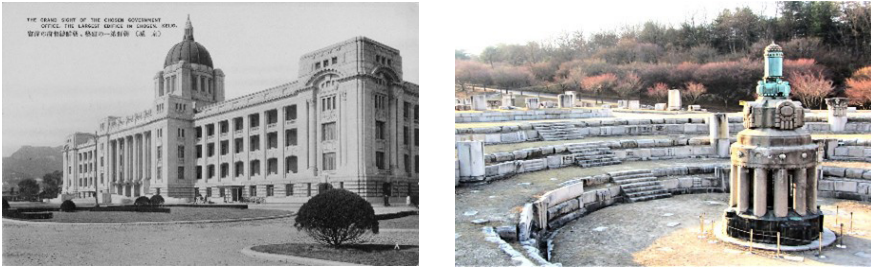


Figure 6. The Government-General Building and its Dismantled Remains Placed at the Independence Hall of Korea (left: a postcard from the Japanese colonial period [National Museum of Korea eMuseum]; right: photographed by the author)

change of ruling power into a diagram of naturalization during the dynastic period—de-naturalization during the colonial period and re-naturalization during the post-colonial period (Song 2007). In addition, clashes to win dominance in the interpretation of meaning unfolded with intensely contested discourses over historical landscapes from both the near and distant past, such as Gwanghwamun Gate, the statue of Admiral Yi Sun-sin, the statue of General MacArthur in Jayu Park, Manguk Park (currently Jayu Park), Jeondong Cathedral, Seoul Plaza, Dongdaemun Stadium, and the Gyeongbu Expressway.

Interpretations of the historical landscapes of the Japanese colonial period are sharply divided into two textual communities: one focused on colonial modernization and the other on colonial exploitation. These are narrowed down to the issues of cooperation with and national resistance against colonial imperialism. Colonial modernity, raised by some researchers, is gaining attention as a discourse for post-nationalism. Emphasizing complementarity, hybridity, ambivalence, multilayeredness, and overlapping relationships, it unearths the diverse aspects of colonial daily life that have been silenced, providing alternative interpretations from new perspectives. It proposes attention to the complex interrelationships and contexts of gender, class, status, urban-rural relations, popular culture, and print capitalism, rather than interpreting them from an essentialist perspective based on colonialism, nationalism, and modernity. By highlighting individuals, not ethnic groups, and modern people, not Koreans, as the colonial subject, colonial modernity seeks to elucidate the cultural practices and consumption that unfolded in the everyday lives of the colonial modern cities, thereby disrupting the grand narrative of nationalist resistance to oppression and exploitation (Shin and Robinson 1999, 1–18).

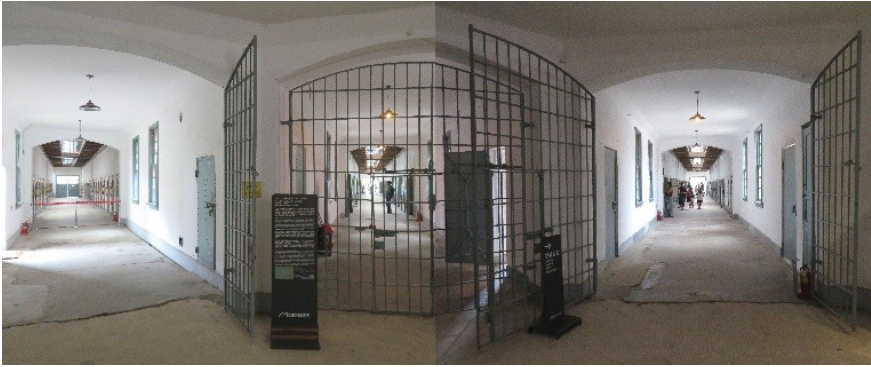


Figure 7. The Panopticon Structure of the Seodaemun Prison, a Symbol of Colonial Oppression, and the Department Store as a Symbol of Modernity (upper: photographed by the author; lower: a postcard from the Japanese colonial period [National Museum of Korea eMuseum])

In reality, colonialism can stimulate nationalist narratives and obscure understanding of complexly intertwined historical processes by excessively emphasizing Japan's political coercion, economic exploitation, and sense of cultural superiority, and therefore flexible approaches are needed to dissolve the ideology. According to Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, for instance, the cultural industry was utilized as a strategy to elicit voluntary consent from the ruled, forcing them to confront the grim reality. Some advocated for the scheme of colonizing consciousness through consent rather than coercion, others were adapted to it, and still others firmly opposed it. Nationalism was interpreted as a progressive force against Japanese imperialism. Even various social movements, such as the women's liberation movement, the abolition of social class, and labor disputes, were celebrated as resistance against Japanese oppression. As long as all identities—social status, gender, class, and urban-rural continuum—are reduced to the concept of nation, colonial-era social movements have an intrinsic risk of being distorted into anti-colonial nationalist movements. Furthermore, the intervention of colonialism in Korea's journey toward modernity does not mean that Koreans were merely passive recipients. While modern mass media, including publication, radio,

theater, and schools, acted as a potent means of reinforcing hegemony through standardization and brainwashing, they also created new spaces for counter-hegemony. Even assimilation education as a tool for imperialization provided some Koreans with opportunities to elevate their social status and foster national consciousness. Driven by commodity capitalism, Korea's modern boys and girls who masqueraded as Japanese and strutted along Jingogae, the main street (*bonjeongtong*, or *honmachi dōri* in Japanese), which was also called Ginza or Shinsaibashi of Korea, appeared to consent to colonial modernity voluntarily. However, those who had experienced advanced civilization laid the foundation for achieving Korea's political independence and modernization (Figure 7). Since the complex relationship between colonialism, nationalism, and modernity, each characterized by its own duality, opens up a new venue for historical interpretation, it is necessary to attempt to interpret the historical landscape pluralistically, from a flexible perspective of colonial modernity.

Choi Young-jun's *Rice Straw Stacks of Korea* (2002), which explores the function, structure, distribution, and symbolism of rice straw stacks (*tongari*) based on materials collected over 20 years of nationwide fieldwork, is a representative study that interprets folk landscapes from an iconographic perspective. Categorizing traditional straw stacks, cultural heritage preserved for thousands of years since rice farming, into phallic, cosmic mountain, and breast shapes, Choi interprets that straw embodies the religious meanings, wishing cyclical regeneration, eternity, the creation of life, and abundance (Figure 8). Discussions on *pungsu* (Korean word for *feng shui*) are also all about iconography. The exploration of landscape archetypes within the human mind is embodied in the *pungsu*, which deals with sites with mountains at their back, fields stretching out in front, and streams meandering, providing a sense of psychological stability. *Pungsu* is the art of land selection in harmony with nature, by establishing capitals, administrative hubs, villages, dwelling, and graves on auspicious sites that correspond to the principles of *yin-yang* and the five elements and the function of earthly energy. It has the logic of dragon veins (*gannyong*), concealing wind (*jangpung*), gaining water (*deuksu*), auspicious spots (*jeonghyeol*), orientation (*jwahyang*), topography (*byeongguk*), and remedial complements (*bibo*) (C. Choi 1984, 21–49; W. Choi 2004). Compared to the *mentalites* of the Annales School's history of mentality, *pungsu* is introduced as representing Korean geomentality (Yoon 1987), and a multi-layered interpretation of *pungsu* landscapes has been attempted along

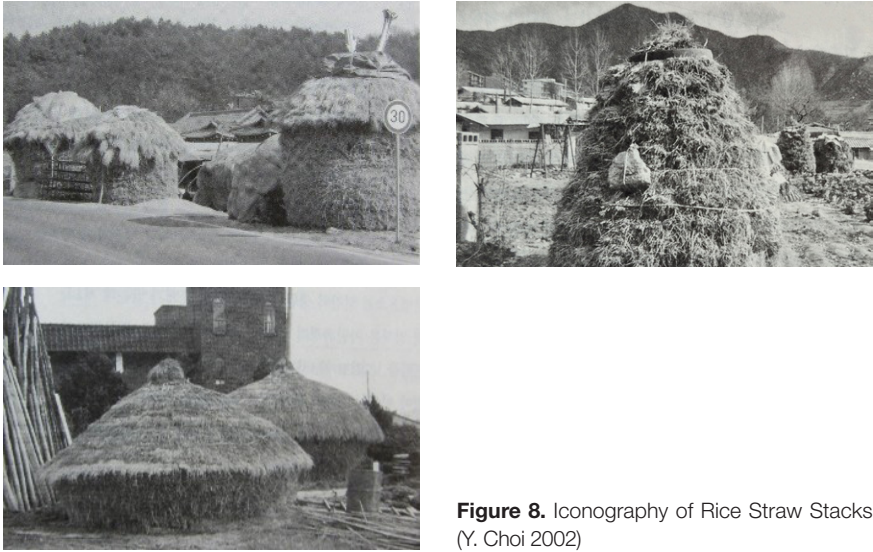


Figure 8. Iconography of Rice Straw Stacks
(Y. Choi 2002)

with macroscopic discussions on its origin, spread to the Korean peninsula, implications in the history of environmental thought, ecological function, and environmental management. Limited to the theory of *bibo*, iconographic discussions were made on the meaning of *boheo* (complementing the weak spot) and *apseung* (suppressing strong energy) through symbolic formations such as temples, pagodas, *jangseung* (totem poles), rock pillars, phallic stones, stone guardian dogs, artificial mountains, forests, and ponds.

Architectural landscapes possess a special meaning within themselves, serving as devices for self-expression and collective identity. They also reinforce the meaning by interacting with the surrounding environment as a context. Their style, height, scale, color, and orientation act as implicit messengers. Yeongeunmun Gate, built in the style of a *pai-loo* (decorative gateway) with its majestic tall stone foundation supporting a double-eaved hip roof, functioned as a symbolic boundary for the imperial envoys of the Ming and Qing dynasties entering the heart of the Joseon dynasty. It was built in 1538 under the initial name of Yeongjomun Gate, following the Mohwagwan Guest Hall (also known as Mohwaru), which was constructed in 1407 to receive Chinese envoys and embodies the ideology of admiration for China. The demolition of the gate in 1895 served as a powerful iconography delivering a message of severing tributary ties with Qing. Around that time, Yuan Shikai, who was dispatched by Li Hongzhang, the de facto power broker of the late Qing dynasty who

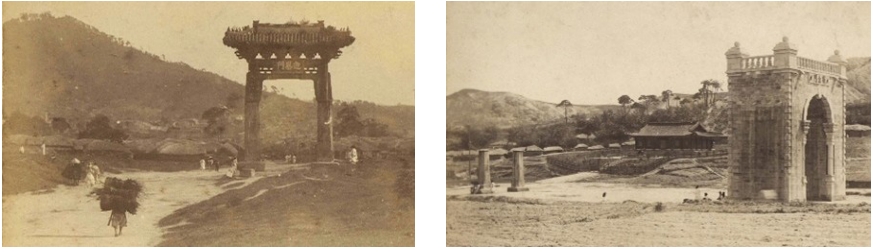


Figure 9. Iconography of Yeongeunmun Gate and Dongnimmun Gate, Housed in the Independence Hall of Korea

led the modern reforms of the Self-strengthening Movement, with the title of “Chinese Minister of Commerce and Negotiation to Joseon” after the Gapsin Coup, was deeply involved in all of Joseon’s national affairs, including politics and diplomacy, for 10 years, beyond his duties of protecting trade and Chinese merchants. However, in 1894, Japan won the Sino-Japanese War off the coast of Pungdo Island, Korea, resulting in the foundation of the Reform Council, the establishment of the Gabo Cabinet of moderate reformists, the use of the founding year (31st year of King Gojong’s reign; 503rd year after Joseon’s foundation), and the enactment of the 14 Reformatory Articles. Amidst a series of events, Yeongeunmun Gate dismantled, with only its cornerstones and stone pillars left. At the time, plans were in place to demolish Mohwagwan Guest Hall, Hongjewon Station, and the Stele to the Great Qing Emperor, situated in Songpa, but the cabinet failed to reach a consensus. As a result, Mohwagwan was renovated in 1897 and renamed Dongnipgwan (Independence Hall) to serve as the office and meeting hall of the Independence Association, which was formed in 1896. In the place where Yeongeunmun Gate was demolished, Independence Gate was erected on November 20, 1897, after a year of construction led by the Independence Association. It was conceived by Seo Jae-pil, an advisor to the organization, as a miniature version of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, designed by the Russian engineer Afanasy Seredin-Sabatin, and constructed by Sim Ui-seok. However, as seen in Figure 9, the cornerstones of Yeongeunmun Gate, once magnificent, appear extremely shabby compared to Independence Gate, which looks down the gate from the north (S. Kim 2012). In the relationship between rulers and the ruled, the dominant ideology seeks to achieve the goal of naturalizing rule through monumental landscapes. To achieve this, three strategies are adopted: a) erasing the old landscape and creating in that place a new landscape that embodies the ruling ideology; b) damaging part

of the existing landscape and establishing a new landscape that overwhelms it, thereby creating a stark contrast and insulting the old ideology; and c) erecting monuments for the conquered out of compassion (Yoon 2001). The Independence Gate, embodying the desire for independence from Japanese rule, clearly illustrates the second strategy: demoralization through mockery.

The height of a building symbolizes status. It is universally observed in iconography that the height expresses the sacredness of religious architecture, and a chapel located in a high place serves as a symbol communicating power (Rapoport 1990). During the Japanese colonial period, shrines held an additional significance. Transplanted to subvert Confucian symbolism, shrines functioned as an ideology of colonial rule as they sought to perpetuate it by stressing reverence for the emperor and thereby achieving the principle of Japan and Joseon as one entity. The shrine landscapes, a polysemic symbol reinforcing the sacredness of Japanese culture and history, were situated on hills that had excellent views and were accessible only by climbing numerous stairs, as a spatial strategy of effectively displaying and radiating the power of visual domination (J. Choi 2006).

A map is an essential material for interpreting iconography in geography. A map, created through observation and measurement based on geometry, is not simply a transparent and objective window into the world but also has aspects of art as it is a product of cultural norms and social values. As a crucial medium connecting the human psyche with the outside world, it contains the worldview and territorial conception of the time when it was produced. As a form of cultural text and system of signs, it also incorporates the rhetorical code of sacredness when the power of a monarch is exercised; therefore, interpreting the symbolic meaning contained in a map is akin to iconography (Takahashi et al. 1995, 178). In accordance with the request of John Harley (1989), who advocated the deconstruction of maps by breaking the assumed relationship between reality and representation and discovering the silence and contradiction concealed between the lines and in the margins, the Korean academic world has interpreted the idea of immortals projected on the Circular World Map, the idea of circular heaven and square earth, the idea seeking a balance of heaven, earth, and human as fundamental components of the world, and the Sinocentric worldview contained in the world map, along with functional research that seeks to clarify the lineage of maps by focusing on the explanation of the creator, period, and characteristics of traditional and modern maps and their connection with similar maps created before and after their production (Oh 2001, 2009).

Korean scholars have also given a deeper meaning to *sando*, which sketches geomancy caves (*byeol*) and propitious sites of *pungsu*.

Utilizing and Preserving Historic Landscapes as Heritage

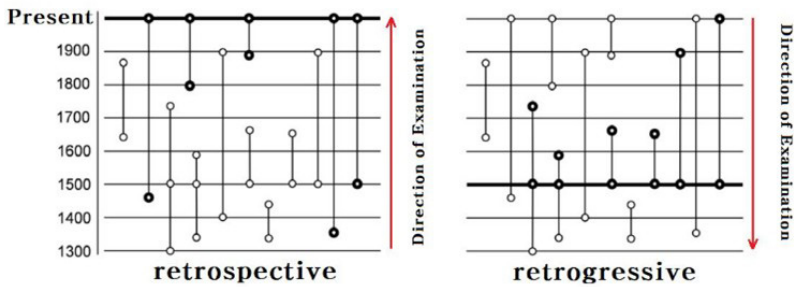
Landscapes undergo a cycle of transformation and restoration, reflecting the ups and downs of time. During periods of rapid land development through logging, reclamation, and drainage, they underwent extensive changes. When population declined due to epidemics and natural disasters, they changed slightly, while nature was able to recover, albeit partially, to its original state. The modern era is in a state of swing between the two phases: changes driven by urbanization and industrial development are prominent, while some call for the preservation of wilderness, forests, and wetlands as a positive response to diverse landscapes. At this crossroads, the desire to embrace change intersects with the emotions to preserve memories of nature before it was tamed by humans. There is growing recognition that rural landscapes, close to nature, contain qualities that should not be damaged and reflect significant events from the past. Hoskins is considered an influential figure in guiding people into the history latent in landscapes, since he appeared in mass media to form public opinions favorable to preserving the diversity represented by landscapes by examining the forms of everyday landscapes, such as hedges and trails, ruminating their meaning and explaining their origins (Thirsk 2000, 10–11).

Arable land is replaced by forests, terraced plots are left out with their traces barely discernible among the vegetation, and new roads open, leaving old ones less used and eventually disappearing altogether. Settlements decay naturally, disappear due to floods and epidemics, or are relocated for political and administrative reasons. It's not uncommon for majestic temples and pagodas to remain as isolated ruins as culture flourishes and declines. These changes were experienced not so long ago. Perhaps influenced by this, historical geography has also begun to gradually shift its focus onto the recent past. Perhaps it is because of a simple assumption that historical research should be directly related to the present. There are no clear criteria for determining where to place the starting point of "historical" exploration in present or past. "Existing historical human landscapes" are sometimes conceptualized as historical landscapes, and such landscapes include ruins first revealed through excavation, ruined houses and

farmland, and urban districts, roads, and irrigation facilities that still tell their past despite their altered function and purpose (Fujioka 1977, 1–16). While such historical landscapes are narrowly-defined ones, they are undeniably in an inextricable relation with the present.

“Past in the present” is a type of historical geography that reconstructs past geography using extant landscapes as clues. Hoskins, who echoed Richard Tawney, an economic historian who asserted, “What historians need is not more documents, but stronger boots,” also adheres to the principle that an approach to local history should begin with an understanding of the phenomenon. He also shares the retrogressive method (*la méthode régressive*) advocated by Marc Bloch, an Annales School historian who pointed out that historical research should not necessarily respond to the sequence of events. This method, in other words, is a technique that goes back in time, reading from the near past and moving from the known to the unknown. Like a flashback in a play, shifting to a scene in an earlier time, the method explains the landscape unfolded by returning it to the past from which it originated. Even in Roger Dion’s retrospective method, which begins by turning back the clock to explain present-day geography, then chronologically returns through the recent past to the present, and the present is indispensable and even becomes the goal (Darby 1962; Baker 1968) (Figure 10). As historical landscapes become linked to the present, development and preservation become a matter of choice. While the thirst for roots primarily promotes the preservation of the visible past remaining on the surface, historical geographers can play a role in establishing objective indicators of what should be preserved among the old (Baker and Harley 1973, 6). Furthermore, the selected historical landscapes hold a significance as heritage, directly linked to collective memory and identity, rather than simply remains that have endured the passage of time.

As discourse on preservation intensifies, disillusionment with the painful present, born from the destructive changes and confusion of identity experienced since the modern era, evokes nostalgia as a safe and inevitably good refuge. Familiar experiences from the past make the present environment familiar, legitimizing current attitudes and behaviors by confirming their similarities with those of the past, and influence the formation of a sense of identity, imparting meaning, purpose, and value to existence (Lowenthal 1985). Access to the past is provided through memory, history, and landscape. Landscape provides confirmation to memory and history that the past existed, which leads to reaffirmation. Landscape is a symbol of the past, a visualized form of history, and



◦ Form | Duration • Features studied(source) — Landscape in focus

Figure 10. Retrospective and Retrogressive Approaches (Antonson 2018)

simultaneously preserves collective memory, thereby testifying to the experiences and achievements of past eras (Boholm 1997, 250–51; 266; Lowenthal 1961, 260; 1975, 6; 10).

The most significant appeal of historical landscapes lies in their coexistence with the present as a visible representation of the past. However, the heterogeneous and diverse traditional landscapes, created in close linkage between the lives of residents and the natural environment, are being neglected due to indifference and even replaced by homogeneous, standardized landscapes that emphasize efficiency and profit-driven commercialization. As the past becomes more distant, people seek to recall it by preserving and restoring its landscapes (Lowenthal 1985). As physical manifestations of the past that live and breathe within the present, few vulnerable historical landscapes gain more value especially when they are at risk of being abandoned or forgotten, while some of them are designated as heritage sites. Heritage is defined as “artifacts and cultural traditions inherited from the past” (Hardy 1988, 333), and historic landscapes are included within this category. It is not limited to the distant past but also encompasses even the recent vernacular and popular elements (Lowenthal 1998, 184).

Historical landscapes are marketed as tourist attractions. They are becoming the vanguard of the heritage, driven by the economic purposes of the present. However, the initial stance on the heritage industry leans more toward criticism due to Robert Hewison’s *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (1987). He argues that the heritage industry reflects a social-pathological situation where, amidst the current economic downturn and anxiety about the future, people seek to rebound by seeking salvation in the past, an absolutely

safe asset. He ruthlessly points out that heritage exacerbates dissatisfaction with the present by contrasting a declining present with a developing past. He feels regretful that although the past is a trustworthy cultural resource, and its ideals and values inspire creation, it is now being commercialized for exploitation as a tourist attraction. The obsessive preservation leads to the mass production of heritage, which is nothing more than a counterfeit that destroys the authentic past, resulting in poverty of meaning and undervaluation. Critics who agree with him also devalue heritage as a sign of a weak society, a deliberately chosen project of historical recollection, being used for knowledge to secure the ruling elite's hegemony in that it merely obsesses and sentimentalizes the past while distorting the true past and fixating on an idealized one (Hong 2009).

On the other hand, Raphael Samuel (1994), who defined heritage as relics or environments at risk, positively evaluated the heritage industry as a legitimate mechanism for securing connections with the past. In an age of uncertainty, it serves as a valuable tool for confirming national identity and integrating the old and the new. It exhibits remarkable dynamism, continually evoking long-standing characteristics while transforming into new forms, providing a stage for cultural renewal and experimentation. At the same time, its role in preserving past relics cannot be ignored. For David Lowenthal (1998), heritage is another expression of roots, a sense of belonging, and identity, grounded in collective solidarity and thus a source of patriotism. Lowenthal boldly states that, unlike history, which explains the past, heritage is in a realm of emotion and belief and is expected to play a role in depreciating history for the purposes of the present. What matters is not the truth but the loyalty and uncritical acceptance of community members. Thus, heritage gains vitality from exaggeration, fabrication, and oblivion and thrives on ignorance and error. He diagnoses that it celebrates conquest and victory and at the same time grows out of the trauma and crisis of defeat and tragedy.

The heritage industry radically restructures the past and historical landscape to meet the demands of the times. It involves inscribing a national narrative into the national imagination, which is inevitably intense, and it is visualized as landscape memorials that foster loyalty, such as monuments, religious facilities, cemeteries, and battlefields. This goal is also achieved through a nationalistic reinterpretation of natural landscapes, a prime example of which is Japanese geographer Shiga Shigetaka's (1863–1927) *An Essay on Japanese Landscape* (1894). Here, landscape assumes exactly the role of ideology, where

culture played in the Frankfurt School's concept of the cultural industry. Shiga interpreted that Japan's landscapes, formed in an environment with diverse climates and ocean currents, abundant water vapor, volcanoes and volcanic rocks scattered throughout, and intense water erosion, are more varied and exquisite than those of the West, China, and Korea. He even elaborated that the Japanese possess a keener appreciation of natural beauty. By enlightening the beauty of Japanese landscapes through a causal approach, he stimulated national consciousness and fostered patriotism among their citizens.

When defining the heritage industry as public and private commercial activities that produce commodities from heritage resources or materials, such as figures, events, myths, art, literature, relics, and landscapes, and sell them targeting consumption, what stands out the most is heritage tourism. The demand for heritage can be intertwined with economic growth. Yet at times, it exhibits duplicity, fueled by escapist fantasies of post-industrial society or the praise of past glories. The heritage industry, often likened to the modern utilization or consumption of the past, embellishes and beautifies heritage resources, such as historic landscapes, to enhance their exchange value, thereby imbuing the past with new meaning and interpretation. Heritage products, promoted and sold with a nostalgic image, are labeled "traditional," mass-produced, and standardized to stimulate tourism demand. As expected, it is challenging to expect authenticity from them because they merely present a selected portion of the past adapted for present purposes (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000). Driven by commercialism, only the past that is expected to generate profit is chosen and interpreted in a biased manner, ultimately distorting cultural value. However, it is impossible to deny the positive aspects that the tourism revenue generated from them is used to maintain and preserve the values of heritage. The problem lies in a situation where commercial values dominate preservation values. Therefore, sophisticated management that provides high-quality heritage resources to the tourism market is needed by prioritizing culture and strengthening preservation (Newby 1994, 207–16; 226–27).

The conditions of landscape heritages vary: some are irreversibly damaged; others, like rural landscapes, are deteriorating as they fail to attract greater attention, while often being overlooked in management and preservation priorities; and still others are provided as attractions for heritage tourism. The sustainable use of historically significant landscapes entails the issues of management and preservation, whether physical or in terms of value and

authenticity. Wise utilization requires a comprehensive consideration of factors such as the pace of change and the pressures of development (Newcomb 1967; Coones 1992). Preserving historic landscapes involves expense and is challenging to guarantee profitability. Because their preservation competes with modern land uses for space, it is challenging to coordinate stakeholders' interests. However, society as a whole must take steps to protect the heritage of the past from destruction and to restore and reuse it, if necessary. In this context, historical geographers are expected to play a crucial role. They must define which landscapes are valuable, clarify the criteria and rationale for such judgments, carefully examine the justifications for acceptable modification and preservation, and actively engage in public opinion formation to prevent destruction and promote restrained change in a desirable direction. A well-preserved past entertains and educates visitors, contributing to local and national economies. The integration of preservation and recreation to maintain the visible past is a call of the times. Whether due to ignorance of the importance of historical landscapes or to the degradation, damage, and destruction caused by developmentalism, past heritage can be removed from view at any time if measures are taken belatedly or inadequately. Legal support is also needed to effectively preserve these vulnerable assets and ensure their use and enjoyment in the present (Newcomb 1979).

In addition to its beautiful natural landscapes, Korea boasts distinctive cultural landscapes, which are shaped by seasonal customs derived from its four-season climate, some of which have been protected and managed as cultural properties. According to the Cultural Heritage Protection Act, enacted in 1962, cultural heritage is artificially or naturally formed national, ethnic, or world heritage of outstanding historic, artistic, academic, or scenic value, including tangible cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage, monuments, and folklore resources. Among these, monuments encompass facilities with outstanding historic, landscape, or academic value, and "scenic sites of outstanding artistic value with excellent scenic view" are also specified in the provision (see Ministry of Government Legislation Korean Law Information Center website). Internationally, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee defines World Heritage as "sites of outstanding universal value (OUV) to humanity" and is responsible for the excavation, evaluation, protection, management, and preservation of natural, cultural, and mixed heritage sites. Cultural heritage, as defined in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and

Natural Heritage (1972), includes monuments, groups of buildings, and sites, while natural heritage includes natural features, geological and physiographical formations, and natural areas.

As heritage is incorporated and managed within international networks, Korean cultural heritage has also been included in a national heritage system, conforming to UNESCO standards, with the enactment of the Framework Act on National Heritage on May 17, 2024. Among the national heritages stipulated in the law, cultural heritage refers to “a product of the Korean history and traditions, which is the tangible cultural heritage indicating the uniqueness of culture, the identity of the people, and changes in the lives of citizens,” natural heritage means “natural objects, such as animals, plants, topography, and geological features, or any cultural heritage created by interactions with the natural environment,” and intangible heritage refers to “cultural heritage, which is inherited over several generations and is constantly recreated by interactions between communities and groups, and history and environment.” The Act on Conservation and Utilization of Cultural Heritage has seven subcategories: (a) Animals (including their habitats, breeding grounds, and migratory places); (b) Plants (including their communities); (c) Topographical, geological, or biological products, or natural phenomena; (d) Natural reserves; (e) Natural landscape; (f) Historical and cultural landscape; and (g) Complex landscape. According to the Act, the Administrator of the Korea Heritage Service may designate and publicly notify the first four subcategories as natural monuments and the last three subcategories as scenic spots.

Korea's heritage sites, recognized as possessing outstanding universal value to humanity, are designated as World Natural and Cultural Heritage sites, gaining an international reputation and potentially playing a substantial role in revitalizing the tourism industry. Beginning with the Depositories for the Tripitaka Koreana Woodblocks at Haeinsa Temple (1995), Jongmyo Shrine (1995), Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple (1995), and the recent Bangucheon Petroglyphs (2025), a total of 17 sites have been designated as World Heritage sites (see UNESCO World Heritage Center website). It is considered timely to include them in a national heritage system that reflects global trends. Given the legislation at an early stage, further revision is likely necessary. “Heritage created by interactions with the natural environment” and “historical and cultural landscape” are defined as natural heritage, which appears to be a mistake, resulting from the failure to properly review the revised

World Heritage Convention, a reference of the legislation. In addition, several convincing suggestions should be considered: expanding the heritage paradigm to make heritage a part of everyday life; shifting the focus from preservation to current utilization and future value; improving the system from a state-led approach to one that encourages local governments and communities to develop shared governance; and giving serious consideration to the concept of heritage as a social construct (Jeon 2024).

Interestingly, the World Heritage Committee moved beyond the dichotomous thinking of nature and culture confronting each other and recognized those created by diverse interactions between nature and humans as heritage. Consequently, the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, released in 1992, added cultural landscapes, symbolizing the long-standing interactions between humanity and the natural environment as “combined works of nature and of man,” to the World Heritage List. Japan, which still adheres to its Act on Protection of Cultural Properties, also added cultural landscapes, defined as “landscapes created by the lives or livelihoods of residents and the local environment, essential for understanding those lives or livelihoods,” to cultural properties, alongside tangible cultural properties, intangible cultural properties, folklore cultural properties, monuments, and traditional buildings. Likewise, Korea fully recognizes the importance of historic landscapes as heritage, even though the Framework Act on National Heritage and the Landscape Act, which is separately enacted for landscape management, planning, policy, and projects, use different terms, “historical and cultural landscape” and “landscape featuring regional historic and cultural characteristics” for historic landscape, respectively.

Conclusion

Historical geography, which deals with the reconstruction and historical change of past geography, has developed as its methodological foundations were established by the Berkeley-Wisconsin School, influenced by the German tradition of regional studies, and the historically oriented Cambridge School. Its core concepts and approaches were then disseminated to the Yugong School in China and the Kyoto School in Japan. In Korea, Lee Chan, who studied under Sauer’s disciple Fred Kniffen, founded the Association of Korean Cultural

and Historical Geographers, bringing the tradition of landscape morphology to Korea to continue its legacy. Researchers from these major Eastern and Western schools understood geography or regions of the past as “landscapes” and reconstructed past regional patterns, tracing time-series changes driven by human activity with a focus on the process.

Historical geography has recently witnessed a cultural turn. As theories and philosophies from the humanities, social sciences, and the arts have infiltrated into cultural geography, the flat description and explanation of cultural landscapes based on morphology have shifted toward in-depth, critical interpretations, utilizing metaphors such as “a way of seeing,” “text,” and “iconography.” The influence of new cultural geography has permeated historical geography, expanding the horizons of historical landscapes beyond simple reconstruction and explanation to interpretive reading utilizing diverse rhetoric. Landscapes are no longer mere physical entities; they construct meaning through the recognition of symbolic aspects and at the same time act as agents of ideological function that reproduce and conceal the political and social vested interests of the ruling elite. New cultural historical geography reveals the mechanisms used by the ruling class to appropriate a way of seeing, deconstructs the constitutive aspects of the discourse conflicts within textual communities, and unravels the deeper meanings embedded in landscape iconography.

Historical landscapes, along with memory and history, serve as a gateway to the past. They stimulate collective memory and function as a medium for affirming identity, thus they are granted a status as heritage and are utilized in the heritage industry. Rather than simply being confined within a protective framework, they serve as heritage tourism resources, teaching lessons to visitors driven by nostalgia, rekindling their identity, and promoting their regions. To ensure their intrinsic value, rigorous research by historical geographers is required and legal assistance is needed for systematic and continuous management. In terms of heritage preservation and management, historical landscapes can have a higher chance of sustainability as long as they are designated as National Heritage Sites, or as World Heritage Sites when they have outstanding universal value to humanity.

The essence of landscape lies in its organic integration. As a holistic image formed through the infinite interaction between man and nature, it aligns with the essence of geography, which seeks regional synthesis. Landscape is also consolidating, as it encompasses both territorial and visual meanings. Originating

from the concept of land and region, the meaning of landscape, influenced by Renaissance painting, has expanded to presuppose the perception of the subject. As a region stripped of emotion and metaphor, landscapes are merely spatial units that have lost their original meaning and value. However, adding a dimension of perception can enrich discussions. Currently, approaches to reconstruct landscapes and examine their continuous transformations are being attempted through both empirical research in traditional historical geography and interpretive research in new historical geography. The compatibility of these two approaches can be a positive outcome of the ambiguity inherent in landscapes, which embody the dual meanings of region and scenery.

A past-oriented approach to landscapes enables the detection of the uniqueness and relativity inherent in everyday landscapes and provides the insight to perceive landscapes from a constructive perspective by accepting changes over time, rather than their initial form, as natural. Based on the empirical tradition, historical geographers from early on have developed and applied approaches and methodologies that observe landscapes through fieldwork, analyze historical materials such as maps, photographs, paintings, and literature, and then reconstruct their original form, comprehensively explaining subsequent transformations unfolding against the backdrop of the local environment. In addition, they have frequently delivered the message that an emphasis should be put on the environmental impact of human-induced landscape change. Now, by shifting their attention to how landscapes represent the past with a solid theoretical foundation, researchers are making efforts from the critical perspective to interpret the symbolic meaning of landscapes and unravel the ideologies latent in historical landscapes. Diverse interpretations are given to landscapes depending on the subject. Given that diversity and ambiguity are inherent to landscapes, it seems necessary to fully reflect the differences in interpretation based on key factors, such as class, gender, and preferences. Furthermore, applied research as a contemporary reinterpretation of historical landscapes should be promoted, including measures to effectively manage and preserve vulnerable heritage landscapes, which are fundamentally limited by time constraints.

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HONG Keumsoo (kshong85@korea.ac.kr) teaches cultural and historical geography at Korea University. His research topics comprise environmental history, colonial geography, culture history, landscape interpretation, and history of geographical thoughts. Recently he has delved into the bicycle transportation in modernizing Seoul, Carl Sauer's environmental attitude, and Seoul's nightscape. He has also reconstructed the changing landscapes of Kimpo Plains in the western suburb of Seoul driven by the drainage of backswamps of the Han River, population growth, and accelerating urbanization.

Abstract

Historical geography is a distinct subdiscipline within human geography whose prime concern lies with the reconstruction of past geographies and tracing their transformation in the regional context. The geographies of the past that the Schools of Cambridge, Berkeley, Kyoto, Yugong, and Lee tried to reconstruct were customarily called historical landscape as well. Initially landscape denoted a concrete realm of the region and it was only after the onset of modern capitalism in the 16th century that landscape came to indicate a genre of art or rural scenery to be consumed emotionally and visually. Geomorphology turns out to be the first which made landscape, formerly agrarian land or landscape painting, an object of disciplinary inquiry. Also responsible for the institutionalization of landscape studies were English historians, historical geographers, and Carl Sauer of Berkeley. On condition that landscape consistently transforms itself with time, European scholars set out to reconstruct cross-sections of the past and those on the other side of the Atlantic focused on changing cultural landscape in line with Sauerean culture history. The year 1980 marked the turning point which saw the transition from empiricist traditional cultural geography into theory-oriented new cultural geography. The subsequent cultural turn of historical geography leads up to more nuanced, critical, and interpretative historical geography embracing the metaphors of ways of seeing, text, icon, etc. Another point of reference is that historical landscape is put to the test of time; it is shaped, transformed, and—with the exception of a few—vanished near the end of its life cycle. The fact that historical landscape both as clues about the past and as heritage is on the verge of extinguishing asks for protection and preservation. As if to respond to the urgent call, natural and cultural landscapes start to be discussed within the realms of environmental ethics and, as they represent collective memory and group identity, heritage preservation. Amid growing concern for the utilization of landscape heritage, some historical landscapes of prime importance have been designated world heritage—natural or cultural—to be visited by and preserved for world tourists and be transmitted to the next generation.

Keywords: historical geography, historical landscape, text, iconography, ways of seeing, heritage