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Ontological Dualism in a *Feng-shui* Landscape: Four Collective Ancestors' Tombs of *Darsil* Village*

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풍수경관의 존재론적 이중성: 달실마을 조상들의 음택풍수경관을 중심으로*

송원섭**

Abstract : This empirical case study contributes to re-thinking the existential division between landscape considered as representational within new cultural geography and landscape considered as non-representational within post-new cultural geography. Specifically, this study focuses on a change to the apparent form of a *feng-shui* landscape in relation to four collective ancestors' tombs located near a local-lineage-based village in South Korea, before and after a national reforestation project in the 1970s, to explore how the ontological dualism involved in apprehending this *feng-shui* landscape has been resolved in the villagers' lived experiences of this landscape. In doing so, this paper attempts to empirically show that, in the lived experiences of human agents, the representational and the non-representational are inseparably interrelated.

Key Words : New cultural geography, Non-representational geography, *Feng-shui* landscape, Representational landscape, Affective landscape, Local-lineage-based villages of South Korea

요약 : 본 논문은 신문화지리학과 비재현지리학의 맥락에서 풍수경관의 존재론적 이중성에 대한 탐구를 수행한 논문이다. 이를 위하여, 한국의 대표적인 동족마을들 중 하나인 달실마을의 음택풍수경관 사례를 실증적으로 분석한다. 1970년대 국가 주도 하의 식목사업 이전까지 마을사람들에게 있어 풍수경관은 신문화지리학에서의 풍수이데올로기가 재현된 경관으로 존재할 수 있었는데, 그 이유는 해당 풍수경관을 육안으로 관찰할 수 있었기 때문이다. 하지만, 1970년대 심어졌던 나무들이 모두 자라난 이후부터 해당 풍수경관은 나무들로 완전히 가려져 육안으로 관찰할 수 없게 되었다. 나무들이 심어지기 이전의 경관을 육안으로 관찰한 경험이 전무한 젊은 사람들에게 그 풍수경관은 더 이상 풍수이데올로기가 아닌 '정서'의 경관으로 존재하게 되었다. 동일한 풍수경관이 이와 같이 서로 다른 두 가지 방식으로 존재하는 지리적 현상을 '풍수경관의 존재론적 이중성'으로 개념화함으로써, 풍수에 대한 새로운 문화지리적 접근의 가능성을 모색해보고자 한다.

주요어 : 신문화지리학, 비재현지리학, 풍수경관, 재현경관, 정서경관, 동족마을

I. Introduction

This paper aimed to understand the ontological dualism of a *feng-shui* landscape, related to four collective ancestors' tombs located near a local-lineage-based village in South Korea, that underwent significant change after the 1970s. Here, ontological dualism in relation to a *feng-shui* landscape refers to the co-existence

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of representational and non-representational aspects in the villagers' lived experiences of such a landscape. Focusing on this type of ontological dualism, I am interested in the boundary between landscape considered as representational in new cultural geography and landscape considered as non-representational in post-new cultural geography (non-representational (or affective) geography).

During the 1980s and 1990s, new cultural geography emerged within the world of historical and cultural geography, after distancing itself from the people-centred approach of humanistic geography and re-connecting with the Sauerian concept of landscape, to explore landscapes as ways of seeing. For cultural and historical geographers within the field of new cultural geography, landscape is representational. In the landscape studies of new cultural geography, the core objects 'represented' through landscape are ideology, discourse, and power (see, for instance, Cosgrove, 1985; Jackson, 1989; Duncan, 1990; Rose, 1993, 1999; Matless, 1998). Landscape studies in new cultural geography have two fundamental premises. First, ideological and discursive dimensions underlie. Second, powerful subjects influence the production or re-production of the ideologies and discourses embodied in landscape (Song, 2015; 2019).

In the early 2000s, certain cultural and historical geographers influenced by non-representational theory began to raise questions about 'the representational' in the landscape studies of new cultural geography. Starting with Nigel Thrift's lament that the representational geography of new cultural geography was 'dead geography' (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000), these non-representational geographers have identified and explored the non-representational dimensions of geographical worlds (see, for instance, Wylie, 2005; Lorimer, 2008; Macpherson, 2009; 2010; McCormack, 2012; 2013; Wylie, 2012). To realise their common ambition of changing dead geographies into vitalised geographies, non-representational geographers have placed 'minimal humanism' (Thrift, 2008: 13), which acknowledges human diversity, at the centre of their studies. To achieve minimal humanism and reject the 'mammoth statements' (Thrift, 2008: vii) that inevitably function reductively within the representations of new cultural geography, non-representational geographers give priority (in terms of ontological order) to the 'relations' between landscape and humans with respect to three realities; landscape as object, human as subject, and the relations between the two (see, for instance, Wylie, 2005; Harrison, 2008; Simonsen, 2013). This ontological approach, which refuses to privilege itself in terms of objectivity, subjectivity, and representation, lies at the centre of non-representational geography.

Through this paradigm shift in landscape studies within new cultural geography that has led to non-representational geography, the width and depth of landscape studies in human geography have been expanded. In terms of the ontological status of landscape within these two approaches to cultural geography, however, I would like to adopt a sceptical view concerning any allegedly existential division between the representational and the non-representational. Although studies have indirectly explored problematic views on this existential division (see, for instance, Whatmore, 2006; della Dora, 2009), it appears that no empirical study of geography based on human agents' lived experiences of landscape has been undertaken in which the existential division between the representational and the non-representational has been problematized.

This study attempts to engage critically with the assumption of an existential representational/non-representational ontological division through a case study of the ontological dualism arising within a *feng-shui* landscape related to four collective ancestors' tombs of the Kwon family in *Darsil* village due to changes occurring within that landscape after the 1970s. This study is organised as follows. First, I briefly review the socio-symbolic meanings of the four collective ancestors and their tombs to the Kwon family of the village. Second, I explore changes to the apparent form of the *feng-shui* landscape after South Korea's national reforestation project in the 1970s in terms of landscape

semantics. Third, a short conclusion describes some of the wider implications of this analysis.

II. The Empirical Context

1. *Darsil* Village

Darsil village was established by Bŏl Kwon in 1520 (the middle of the Chosŏn dynasty). Considering the fact that Bŏl Kwon was a member of the lineage of *Andong* Kwon, establishing *Darsil* village, in which the descendants of Bŏl Kwon would live together, meant establishing a new sub-lineage of the higher lineage of *Andong* Kwon. The new sub-lineage would be known as the '*Darsil* Kwon' lineage.

Darsil village is located in the upper area of the south-eastern part (Gyeongsangbuk-do) of South Korea. As with any other local-lineage-based village in the Gyeongsang-do area with agricultural lands, *Darsil* village is surrounded by a mountainous area. It is impossible to mark the exact boundary line of *Darsil* village, because the unit of the village had not been an administrative district in Korea until the late 1800s. The boundary line of *Darsil* village has usually been recognised and decided by the villagers' memories and experiences (Song, 2017: 96).

However, GIS analysis of all land ownership in *Darsil* village between the 1910s and the 1980s showed that the sketchy boundary of *Darsil* village could be inferred (Fig. 1). According to the GIS analysis, the area of *Darsil* village is about 3,000 acres. Specifically, the paddy field area is about 400 acres, the dry field area is about 240 acres, the residential area is about 30 acres, the mountainous area is about 2,400 acres, and the forest area is about 15 acres (Song, 2017: 96).

As can be seen on the GIS map (Fig. 1), most parts (which are coloured red) of *Darsil* village have been occupied by Kwon family members. Considering the fact that a large amount of the area not coloured red has been occupied by relatives of Kwon family members,

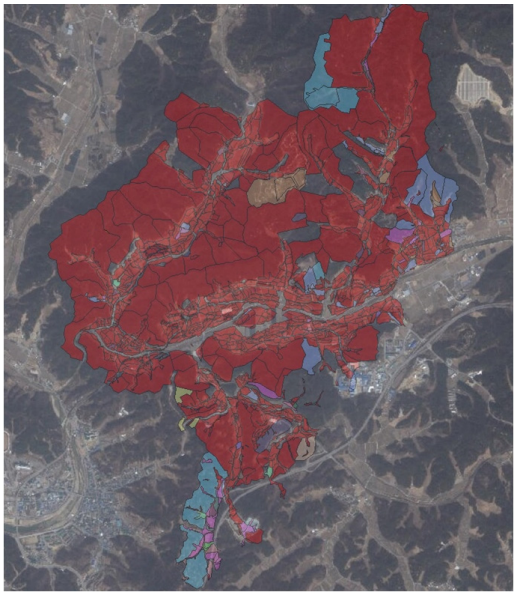

Fig. 1. Land Ownership in *Darsil* Village in the 1910s

* The 1910s land registry records for *Darsil* village, the genealogical books of the Kwon family, and interviews with the elders of the Kwon family.

** Red colour refers to surname Kwon, and non-red colour refers to other surnames.

it could be said that almost all parts of *Darsil* village have been occupied only by Kwon family members. In this sense, obviously, *Darsil* village is a local lineage-based-village of the Kwon family (Song, 2017: 97).

2. The Four Representative Collective Ancestors

As in all other local-lineage-based villages in South Korea 1), the Kwon family of *Darsil* village can largely be categorised into two groups, namely, into a senior family line and into other branches of the family. The Kwon family in this village consists of a senior family line, three collateral junior family lines and their representative collective ancestors. Bŏl Kwon (權橃, 1478-1548), Dong-mi Kwon (權東美, 1525-1585), Se-choong Kwon (權世忠, 1594-1644), and Sŏk-choong Kwon (權碩忠, 1606-1634) signify and symbolize the four genealogical lines (Fig. 2). After Bŏl Kwon established *Darsil* village in 1520, the descendants of Bŏl Kwon

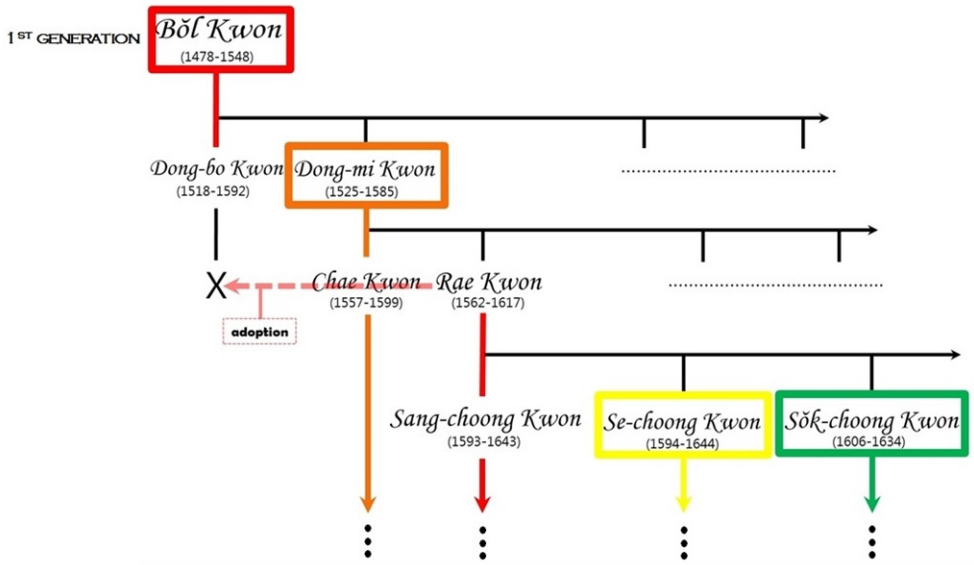

Fig. 2. The Four Collective Ancestors of the Kwon Family of *Darsil* Village: A Genealogical Tree

* The genealogical books of the Kwon family and interviews with the elders of the Kwon family.

who occupied and lived in the village have based their social identities on their representative ancestors.

For the Kwon family members in the village, these divided identities (highlighted by the red, orange, yellow and green colours) according to their representative ancestors, reflect a potential desire for independence within the branch lines. In the history of Korea, it has generally been the case that the more the population of a lineage grows, the greater the possibility of lineage segmentation, with higher-order lineages growing to include thousands of members. With the passing of time, some collateral junior lines of certain higher-order lineages became separated from the higher-order lineages and formed their own lineages as sub-lineages of the higher-order lineages (Kim, 1989). If segmentation occurred, the new segment did not remain under the control of the most senior family line, and the members of the sub-lineage established their own local-lineage-based villages (Janelli and Janelli, 1982; Deuchler, 1992). Therefore, for the Kwon family members of the village, the four collective ancestors of the village are a sort of collective representation of the four genealogical lines and stand as signs and symbols of the four genealogical lines and their potential (future) independence.

Given this context, it might be inferred that there would be social tension between the senior line and the collateral junior lines, and among the collateral junior lines, in the Kwon family community of the village. However, in my observation, any social tension caused by a potential desire for independence within the branch lines has not had any negative ramifications in the village. Instead, this potential tension has generated a socio-political mechanism through which the social stability of the Kwon family within the village could be achieved. The senior line members already recognise that hierarchical relationship between the senior line and the junior collateral lines cannot be maintained through the charismatic authority of the senior line and that the other junior collateral lines have potential desires for independence. This recognition ensures that the other three branch lines' members are not viewed simply as partial descendants of the first collective ancestors, Bŏl Kwon, but as partial descendants of the other three collective ancestors. In turn and in response

to this recognition, the other junior collateral line members remain under the umbrella of Bŏl Kwon, leading to a strong sense of familial homogeneity expressed through 'the Kwon family of Bŏl Kwon' (Song, 2017: 203-204). According to Simmel (1950; 1956, as cited in Coser, 1977: 184), such a development indicates that the existence of branch lines has been 'shaped by a fundamental unity, which could be accounted *only through* the synthesis or coincidence of two logically contradictory dominations' (Song, 2017: 204).

3. The Tombs of the Four Collective Ancestors

To endow the four collective ancestors with symbolic iconicity as the collective representations of the village, 'cultural vehicles', through which the villagers' public memory of the four collective ancestors could be consolidated, were required. In the Kwon family, the tombs of the four collective ancestors performed the role of manifesting the material presence of the physical remains of both the four collective ancestors and of their symbolic iconicity, functioning as sacred places that shelter their ancestors' bodies and exhibit their symbolic representativeness. This performance was made explicit in the *feng-shui* landscape surrounding the four collective ancestors' tombs in which a sacred narrative could be embodied. In this context, the Form School's approach to traditional *feng-shui* theory2) allows for engagement with the villagers' lived experiences of the sacredness of the *feng-shui* landscapes in relation to the tombs. In the view of the Form School, the best place for tombs is a place surrounded by a harmonious arrangement of mountains, mountain ridges and water-courses, as expressed through the following metaphoric and symbolic figures: the forefather, great-grandfather, grandfather, dragon ridge, white tiger, blue dragon, red bird, and black tortoise (Song, 2017: 221).

The arrangement of the metaphoric and symbolic figures of the Form School originated from ancient Chinese constellations according to which the Chinese sky was divided into five great regions: north, south, east, west, and middle. In ancient Chinese astronomy, the four directions, namely, north, south, east, and west, referred to the four directions in which the constellations spread out from the equator (Xu, 2009, as cited in Song, 2017: 223). The representative constellations involved a black tortoise, depicted with a snake in the north, a red bird in the south, a blue dragon in the east, and a white tiger in the west. Finally, the middle region in the ancient Chinese sky was considered to indicate the location of the Supreme Palace enclosure. The arrangement of the metaphoric and symbolic figures of the Form School copy the arrangement of the ancient Chinese constellations exactly; and the best place for tombs is determined in relation to the position of the Supreme Palace enclosure (Song, 2017: 223). In other words, the arrangement of a black tortoise hill in the north, a red bird hill or ridge in the south, a blue dragon ridge in the east, a white dragon ridge in the west, and an ideal place for tombs surrounded by these features, reflects the cosmogony of the sacred, because the symbols of the five great regions of the ancient Chinese sky are present (Mote, 1971).

According to this Form School view of traditional *feng-shui* theory (see, for instance, Choi *et al.*, 2018; Kim and Park, 2018; Cho, 2020), the Kwon family members needed to place the four collective ancestors' tombs in the most favourable locations. This would have been very important for the Kwon family members because, in traditional *feng-shui* theory, the landscape around the four collective ancestors' tombs was sacred. For the Kwon family, engaging with this sacredness of the landscape around the four collective ancestors' tombs played a key role in confirming the tombs' legitimacy as the most important material medium of the villagers' public memory of the four collective ancestors. However, and interestingly, in the Kwon family members' lived experience of the *feng-shui* landscape in relation to their four collective ancestors, the metaphoric and

symbolic features of the landscape were accentuated, and the cosmic dimensions of traditional *feng-shui* theory derived from ancient Chinese cosmology were overshadowed by those features (Song, 2017: 224). In practice, the arrangement of the actual geographical properties themselves to form a landscape ideology functioned as a landscape-reading manual for the Kwon family, with the cosmic dimensions of traditional *feng-shui* theory playing no role.

Ⅲ. The Ontological Dualism of *Feng-shui* Landscapes

1. The *Feng-shui* Landscape as Representational before the 1970s

The landscape of the four collective ancestors manifested a *feng-shui* landscape. In other words, the tombs of the four collective ancestors were placed in the best place for tombs according to traditional *feng-shui* theory. The four essential prerequisites of traditional *feng-shui* landscape theory, namely, a black tortoise hill in the north, a red bird hill or ridge in the south, a blue dragon ridge in the east, and a white dragon ridge in the west, are clearly located in the landscape of the four collective ancestors (Fig. 3). The perfect arrangement of these four essential prerequisites in the landscape of the four collective ancestors indicates the presence of the tombs and reminds the faithful not only where they should go to commemorate the dead but also that they should commemorate them (Song, 2017: 225).

Confirming a *feng-shui* landscape as a material expression of the culture of ancestor commemoration was very important both for the senior line members and for the other junior collateral line members of the Kwon family, because the representativeness of the four collective ancestors could be materially embodied through this landscape. However, while this type of *feng-shui* landscape was certainly important for the members of the senior line, it was of even more critical importance for the descendants of Dong-mi Kwon, Se-choong Kwon, and Sŏk-choong Kwon because perpetual ancestral rites could not be celebrated for those three collective ancestors. In other words, a *feng-shui* landscape materially expressing the culture of ancestor commemoration was the sole way to visibly commemorate the five more junior collective ancestors. Therefore, for the senior line members, while this type of *feng-shui* landscape reinforced the superior representativeness of Bŏl Kwon as the first collective ancestor, it also allowed the other junior collateral line members to maintain the representativeness of their three collective ancestors (Song, 2017: 227).

For the descendants of the four collective ancestors, the sacredness of the four collective ancestors' tombs formed a bridge between the representativeness of the four collective ancestors and the identity of their genealogical lines. The sacredness of the four collective ancestors' tombs contributed to making the four collective ancestors into iconic figures who could be considered as exemplary, virtuous, and representative ancestors. The four collective ancestors would not have been able to become the representative ancestors of their genealogical lines in secular locations. They needed to lie in sacred locations. More precisely, the descendants needed to place the four collective ancestors in sacred locations because they were the representative ancestors of their genealogical lines. It is noteworthy that the sacredness of the four collective ancestors' tombs derived from the *feng-shui* landscape of their tombs. For the descendants of the four collective ancestors, the landscape of the ancestors' tombs was considered a landscape that was completely oriented according to traditional *feng-shui* theory, and the sacredness of the ancestors' tombs was the result of that orientation. Traditional *feng-shui* theory provided the power to mark out metaphorical and symbolic figures in the landscape of the ancestors' tombs, to draw boundary lines through using these figures, to discover the place where the cosmic energies were concentrated, to create arrangements among the

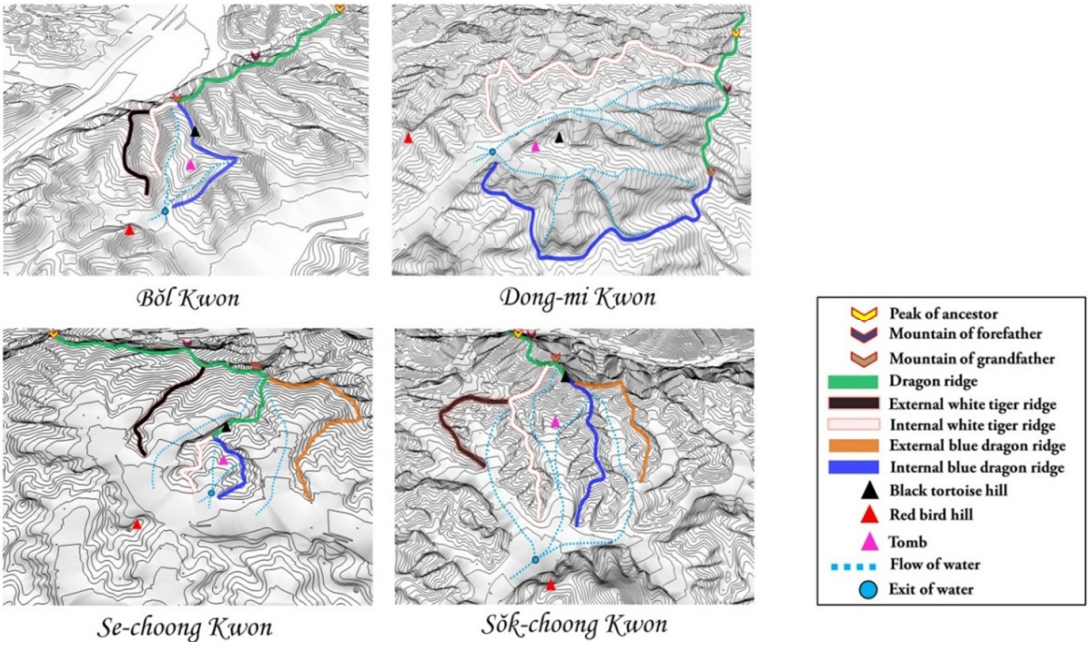

Fig. 3. *Feng-shui* Landscapes of the Six Collective Ancestors' Tombs[3]: Four Recreated Visual Depictions
* Contour maps provided by the National Geographic Information Institute of South Korea as digitalised in ArcScene programme.[4]

figures, and to orient the landscape in relation to all of those qualities. In other words, through this way of seeing the landscape in relation to specific ancestors' tombs in which various metaphorical and symbolic figures appear in the landscape surrounding the tombs, traditional *feng-shui* theory 'polarised and oriented' the landscape around the ancestors' tombs (Song, 2017: 228).

Through this orientation of the landscape of the ancestors' tombs, the sacredness of the location of those tombs could be manifested because that orientation contributed to making the villagers believe in the genuine sacredness of the location. For the villagers, the ancestors' tombs were a site that represented the sacred world to which the ancestors had ascended. Furthermore, the ancestors' tombs formed a meeting point between this world and the sacred world such that the site of the ancestors' tombs had to be regarded as part of that sacred world (Song, 2017: 229).

One Kwon family member made the following observations:

> When you invite a very important person into your home, do you leave your home in a dirty state and wear very informal clothes? Unless you are an abnormal person, I do not think you behave like that. And so, with the ancestors, especially the four ancestors, it is similarly very important how the villagers and the village treat them. Given this, how could it be possible to place their tombs in just an ordinary space? It was very natural to place their tombs in a very highly regarded space. I do not know whether or not the ancestors have stayed in the tombs, but I can feel the spiritual atmosphere created by the ancestors at the tombs… Actually, I am not sure whether the spectacle of the mountain ridges of the *feng-shui* landscape influences the spiritual atmosphere, but I can be sure that if the *feng-shui* landscape had not been set up properly for the tombs, I would not be able to feel the full spiritual atmosphere of the ancestors.
>
> (Y. Kwon, 72 years old)

In line with these sentiments, traditional *feng-shui* theory provided the villagers with 'a way of seeing' the

landscape of their ancestors' tombs. As a set of beliefs prescribing a way of seeing landscape, traditional *feng-shui* theory directed and focused the villagers' comprehension of the landscape around the ancestors' tombs, generating a 'landscape ideology' for the villagers, that is, it provided a manifest manual for reading landscape that regulated their thinking and practice (Song, 2017: 229). The villagers did not doubt that cosmic energies were gathered and concentrated at the best place in the *feng-shui* landscape because this was considered a self-evident truth according to traditional *feng-shui* theory. Therefore, the villagers could read and understand the landscape in relation to the ancestors' tombs.

However, this theory concerning a *feng-shui* landscape, namely, that cosmic energies can and should be gathered and concentrated according to a *feng-shui* landscape form, cannot be empirically verified. Nevertheless, it was very clear that for the villagers, their *feng-shui* landscape worked as a cognitively meaningful landscape ideology, without the support of specific empirical observation, which had been inherited as collective 'knowledge' about landscape by the villagers. It functioned not simply as a value judgement on landscape but also as a 'statement of fact' about landscape that provided an objectification of the villagers' cognitive behaviour and practices in relation to the landscape. In other words, a *feng-shui* landscape ideology entailed an understanding to the effect that a *feng-shui*-suffused reading of landscape was a natural (or systematic) reading of landscape. Through facilitating this perception, the *feng-shui* landscape ideology was sustained through its capacity to address precisely the villagers' need to justify the spatial sacredness of the ancestors' tombs (Song, 2017: 230).

Traditional *feng-shui* theory performed the role of providing a landscape reading manual for finding a suitable landscape in which to place the four collective ancestors' tombs. For Cosgrove (1985: 55), this implies that traditional *feng-shui* theory involves 'a way of seeing, a composition and structuring of the world so that it may be a detached, individual spectator to whom an illusion of order and control is offered through the composition of space'. In terms of the landscape around the four collective ancestors' tombs, the metaphoric and symbolic qualities of this landscape, namely, a dragon ridge, a black tortoise hill, a white tiger mountain ridge, and a blue dragon mountain ridge, ordered and controlled the villagers' landscape epistemology much more than the cosmic dimension of traditional *feng-shui* theory (Song, 2017: 231).

This landscape form in relation to the four collective ancestors' tombs that comprised metaphorical and symbolic figures was the ideal landscape form. In the villagers' experience, the landscape form became the ideal form through the villagers actively integrating the segmented elements (the actual-geographical properties) of the landscape form according to the metaphorical and symbolic values of the *feng-shui* landscape. When the villagers attended their collective ancestors' tombs and acknowledged the landscape surrounding those tombs, only the metaphorical and symbolic figures of the landscape were accentuated, and the actual-geographical properties of the landscape became a secondary element. In this situation, in contrast to the cosmic dimension of traditional *feng-shui* theory, the *feng-shui* landscape itself provided an epistemological technique that enabled the villagers to change the site of the four collective ancestors' tombs into a sacred site, through orienting the landscape surrounding the four collective ancestors' tombs according to traditional *feng-shui* theory to facilitate the villagers' public commemoration of the representativeness of their four collective ancestors (Song, 2017: 231-232).

2. The *Feng-shui* Landscape as Non-representational after the 1970s

After South Korea's national reforestation project in the 1970s, the landscape changed considerably as the Korean peninsula had previously been virtually treeless (Fig. 4). In her book, *Korea and Her Neighbours* (1898), Isabella Bishop (1832-1904) described the mountains of

Fig. 4. A Largely Treeless View in the Vicinity of *Munsan* Station, *Gyeong'gi-do*, at the Beginning of the 1960s[5)]

Source : Lee and Lee, 2013: 31.

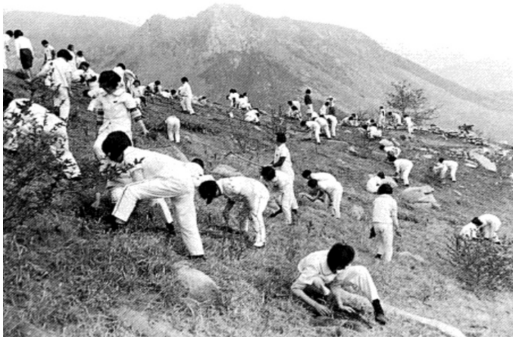

Fig. 5. High-school Girls Taking Part in Tree Planting during the 1960s

Source : Lee and Lee, 2013: 66.

Korea, noting how lacking they were of trees; 'it is surrounded by mountains with sparse shades of pine trees here and there but they are almost denuded'. No changes in terms of this largely treeless landscape occurred in Korea until the 1970s.

At the beginning of the 1970s, based on his interest in and concern for forest reclamation, then-President *Chung-hee Park* named himself as the head of a national tree planting project. Subsequently, considerable private and public effort in Korea was devoted to tree planting (Fig. 5). President *Park* promoted the tree planting project at the national level primarily: (1) to provide fuel-wood forests for the public in rural areas; (2) to control erosion in the mountains; and (3) to increase the beauty of the mountains. The elders of the Kwon family in *Darsil* village informed me that a landscape of treeless mountain land had been typical around the village prior to the 1970s.

Following the successful completion of the national tree-planting project, the colour of all of Korea's mountains, which were now covered with trees, changed from red-brown to green. This success of the forest reclamation project was recognized in an official report by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), a United Nations agency based in Rome. In 1982, it stated, 'The Republic of Korea (South Korea) is the only developing country in the world that has succeeded in reforestation since the Second World War'. Thus, the FAO extolled Korea's forest reclamation (Lee and Lee, 2013: 227, as cited in Song, 2017: 236).

According to interviews with village elders, however, it seems that the Kwon family did not realise how greatly the success of the national tree planting project would affect the ontological dimension of the landscape in relation to their collective ancestors' tombs (Song, 2017: 236-237). The trees, which were planted on the mountains in which the collective ancestors' tombs were placed, decreased the ideological power of that landscape. Before the trees were planted there, the form of the mountains and mountain ridges provided visible representations through which the *feng-shui* landscape of the collective ancestors' tombs was transformed into visual certainty. The villagers could 'see' the clear surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges and the resulting *feng-shui* landscape with their own eyes. This fulfilled the necessary and sufficient condition for that *feng-shui* landscape to exist, namely, that the surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges be clearly visible, because it was only through those forms that the metaphoric and symbolic figures of the invisible forms of the *feng-shui* landscape could be made visible (Song, 2017: 237).

Therefore, before the national tree-planting project, the villagers could fix and objectify the visible surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges surrounding

their ancestors' tombs according to traditional *feng-shui* theory and could envisage them as a *feng-shui* landscape. The visible surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges were the fundamental matter required for the existence of a *feng-shui* landscape. With the vital help of the visible surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges, the ideal components of traditional *feng-shui* theory ((a) a dragon ridge making a link between the peak of the ancestor, the mountain of the forefather, and the mountain of the grandfather; (b) a black tortoise hill; (c) a white tiger mountain ridge (left side); (d) a blue dragon mountain ridge (right side); (e) a red bird hill; and (f) the direction of water flow) could be reconstituted as metaphoric and symbolic figures of a *feng-shui* landscape, which could be visually detected through the landscape's surface forms (Song, 2017: 237-238).

In this way of seeing landscape (a *feng-shui* landscape), the 'positivistic' properties of the metaphoric and symbolic figures of a *feng-shui* landscape appear deducible from the visibility of the surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges. In this case, the label 'positivistic' can be attached to a *feng-shui* landscape because, in that way of seeing such a landscape, the arrangement of the mountains and mountain ridges was wholly regarded as providing the 'empirical' grounds for deciding whether a landscape was appropriate or not. In accordance with Merleau-Ponty (2012: 365), this indicates that the villagers' experience of a *feng-shui* landscape emerged through an engagement between their elemental consciousness and a system of objective correlations arising through creating a *feng-shui* landscape. In other words, through their way of seeing landscape (a *feng-shui* landscape), the villagers' experience of the landscape of their ancestors' tombs became integrated within an objective arrangement of the mountains and mountain ridges (Song, 2017: 238).

However, following completion of the tree-planting project, the situation completely changed because the fundamental matter necessary for the acceptance of a *feng-shui* landscape, namely, the surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges, became 'invisible', as all the mountains and ridges surrounding the ancestors' tombs were completely covered by trees (Fig. 6). Moreover, the form of the surficial elements and the manner in which they were arranged in relation to each other in a *feng-shui* landscape, along with the relative magnitude of each element, also become much less visible (Song, 2017: 238-239).

This outcome led to an existential change in the landscapes related to the collective ancestors' tombs as the power of a *feng-shui* landscape to function as a landscape ideology rapidly decreased. In other words, the trees planted on the mountains where the collective ancestors' tombs were placed changed the landscape around the collective ancestors' tombs from representing an objective world to something that simply became perceptible. Previously, when the surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges surrounding the tombs' sites were highly visible, the villagers read (or analysed) the landscape of the tombs through their traditional landscape reading manual: *feng-shui* theory. However, once they lost their landscape reading manual after the trees had rendered the surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges surrounding the tombs' sites practically invisible, the villagers could only 'feel' (or 'perceive') the landscape of the tombs. This indicates that, for the villagers, the landscapes of their collective ancestors' tombs had changed from being a presence not perceived through the senses to becoming a presence that could only be perceived through the senses. Critically, following this ontological change in the landscapes related to the villagers' collective ancestors' tombs, the power of a *feng-shui* landscape to function as a landscape ideology was diminished (Song, 2017: 242-243).

Once covered by trees, both the *feng-shui* landscapes of the collective ancestors' tombs and their material basis (the clear surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges), were erased as the trees obscured what had been the material basis for a *feng-shui* reading of the landscape. Only sketchy contours of the clear

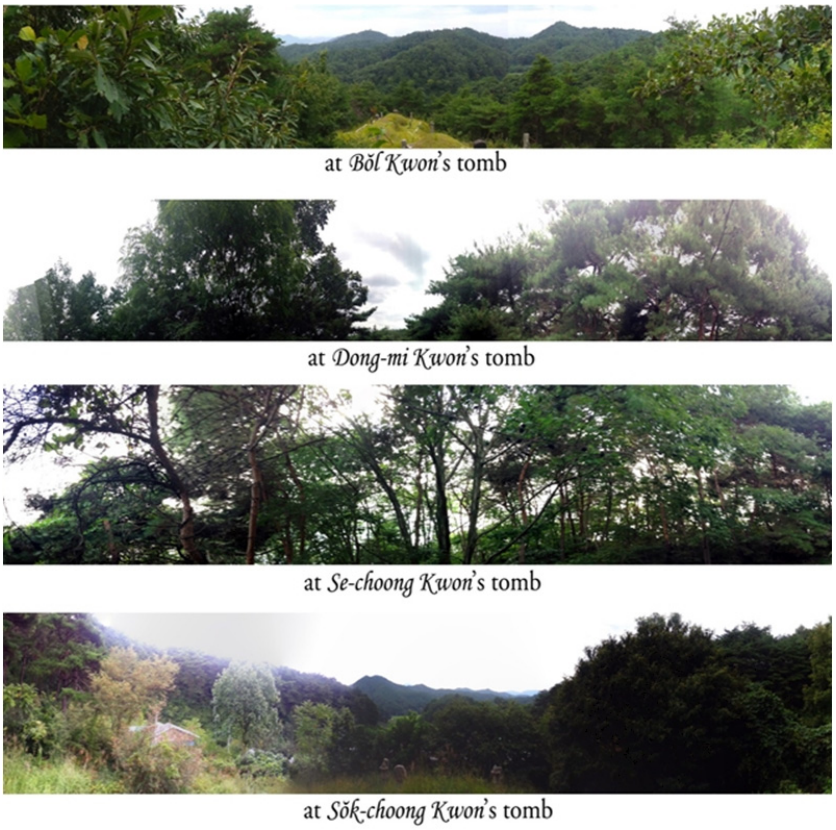

Fig. 6. Tree-covered (*Feng-shui*) Landscapes of the Six Collective Ancestors' Tombs: Four Photographs
Source : Photographed by author in August 2016.
* 180° panoramic views.

surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges remained, which could only hint at a possible *feng-shui* reading of the landscape that had previously been authoritative for all members of the Kwon family in the village in experiencing the landscape. Those sketchy contours now meant that the Kwon family members no longer possessed the landscape as previously nor could they know the truth of the landscape as previously known (Song, 2017: 247). Instead, the Kwon family members were obliged to focus on the actual appearance of the landscapes. This outcome indicates that, for the Kwon family, the landscape related to their collective ancestors' tombs had come to exist not as a true and precise landscape, that is, a *feng-shui* landscape, but rather as an expressive landscape that could only be recognised through the villagers' immediate sense perception.

In terms of the *feng-shui* landscapes of the collective ancestors' tombs, perception of the elders of the Kwon family ends in the landscape as a way of seeing – *feng-shui* ideology, but that of the younger members of the Kwon family ends in the affective landscape – feelings on sketchy contours of the clear surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges. This implies that not one of ideological and affective dimension of the mountains and mountain ridges is landscape itself. Landscape is the geographical reality that covers these dimensions and all possible dimensions. With only the Kwon family members themselves to examine, they know nothing of reaching the geographical reality, and

the 'gaze', which is as indubitable as their own views, and which they know just directly. In other words, their own views always come from somewhere – ideological and affective dimension without thereby being locked within the geographical reality hidden behind the landscapes. Therefore, for the Kwon family members, to see a landscape is to have in ideological or affective margins of the geographical reality and to be able to focus on it, or to correspond to this solicitation by focusing on it.

IV. Conclusion

It is certainly debatable whether the distinction between the representational and the non-representational in *feng-shui* landscape. Despite of this limitation, my main aim in this present project is much more modest: to explore a small possibility of the semantic dimension of *feng-shui* landscape in the context of cultural geography. In one theory concerning images, the idea of 'figure-ground' has been proposed where images are considered to possess a pair of distinguishable attributes identified as the 'figure' and the 'ground' (Zakia, 2002: 2).

Generally, the figure comprises those objects that are most striking to a viewer's eyes, whereas the ground comprise the background in which the viewer places the central objects in his or her attention. According to Kern (2003), this viewpoint can be found 'in Cubism and its pictorial language, equally important as the foreground objects, thereby bringing to an end a long Western artistic tradition that had begun as early as the fifteenth century' (cited in Kwon, 2006: 179). In his book, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, Stephen Kern (2003: 153) describes the aesthetic and more general significance of adopting this viewpoint:

> One common effect of this transvaluation was a levelling of former distinctions between what was thought to be primary and secondary in the experience of space. It can be seen as a breakdown of absolute distinctions between the plenum of matter and the void of space in physics, between subject and background in painting, between figure and ground in perception, between the sacred and the profane space of religion. Although the nature of these changes differed in each case, this striking thematic similarity among them suggests that they add up to transformation of the metaphysical foundations of life and thought.
>
> (Kern, 2003: 153)

I would like to suggest that this transvaluation of aesthetics is closely connected with the development of sceptical views concerning the existence of an existential division between landscape viewed as representational in new cultural geography and landscape viewed as non-representational in non-representational geography. Since the 1970s, for the Kwon family members, the ontology of their *feng-shui* landscape has become two-sided, which, in terms of semantics, has entailed moving between the two sides and between two different ontological statuses in relation to their *feng-shui* landscape. This ontological organisation is based on a principle of concentric dualism and consists of an epistemological complex that shows this principle in a form of circular duality. The two sides of the complex indicate the *feng-shui* landscapes have both representational existence and non-representational existence.

For the elders of the Kwon family who retain memories of the form of the *feng-shui* landscape before tree planting began in the 1970s, the tree-covered forms of the mountains and mountain ridges still have a representational existence in which the *feng-shui* landscape ideology is embodied landscape. Although the Kwon family's elders can no longer see the clear surficial forms of the mountains and mountain ridges and how the *feng-shui* landscape is subsequently created, they can encounter that *feng-shui* landscape through their memories. Applying insights from Derrida (1976: 23), this means that for the elders, the representational (or ideological) dimension of the *feng-shui* landscape can be seen as 'derivative with regard to difference between

entity/ontic [the clear surfaces of the landscapes before the tree planting] and being/ontological [the tree-covered forms of landscapes after the tree planting]'. Through this process, the representational in *feng-shui* landscapes continues to have force in the lived experiences of the elders of the Kwon family even after the tree planting.

However, for the younger members of the Kwon family, who have no memory of the form of the *feng-shui* landscape before the tree planting in the 1970s, the tree-covered forms of the mountains and mountain ridges have a non-representational existence whose irreducible immanence can be only be perceived through immediate sense perception. As Merleau-Ponty (2012: 51) notes, 'our body does not have the power to make us see something that does not exist; it can only make us believe that we see it'. For the younger members of the Kwon family, the *feng-shui* landscape existed not as the 'right' landscape that could be understood through traditional *feng-shui* theory but as a 'good' landscape perceivable only through the senses.

In support of this conclusion, I contend that for the Kwon family community of *Darsil* village, landscape as having a representational existence and landscape as having a non-representational existence cannot be considered distinct. Only through the co-existence of the representational in the lived experience of the elders and of the non-representational in the lived experience of the younger members can the symbolic iconicity of the four collective ancestors be inscribed into a two-sided ontology involving the *feng-shui* landscape to its fullest extent at the level of the village community.

This conclusion provides some evidence in support a sceptical view concerning an existential division between landscape as having either representational or non-representational existence. This case study of the *feng-shui* landscape in *Darsil* village shows that such a division lacks explanatory power when exploring landscape that 'is always *already there* prior to' (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 7) any alleged existential division that needs to be considered when approaching and seeking to understand landscapes in the discipline of geography.

Lastly, ontological dualism of landscape discussed in the present project might provide an all-purpose nostrum to spatial problems in modern society. In geography, landscape is a means of questioning how human societies can be harmonious in a gradually cosmopolitan world. Considering ontological dualism of landscape, the realm of social practice of landscape never can be placed outside because ontological dualism of landscape refers to amalgam of two key dimensions – materiality and subjectivity.

This concerns how we have to link human action to landscape or spatial structure. The choice between these alternatives can be made through the consideration of ontological dualism of landscape. For example, climate change and global warming are the most serious environment problems. Bringing ontological dualism of landscape into these issues, it is clear that the environmental issues are not a simple natural disaster, but the product of the inter-relation between human action and environment.

This implies that theorizing this approach in geography indicated to not an experimental science but an interpretive science in search of meaning of landscape. One of the efficient methods to excavate the semantic dimension of landscape is to analyse collective memories on landscape. This makes it possible for us to place our collective existence at the centre of landscape studies in cultural geography. Ontological dualism of landscape provides a small possibility to illustrate the fact that our collective being-in-landscape includes active engagement with collective memories on place and space.

Notes

1) In South Korea, local-lineage-based villages are distinguished by, and identified with, their patrilineal surnames, and these include the notion of a lineage seat (Janelli and Janelli, 1982). The most important group in

a lineage consists of people who belong to the senior line (*jong'ga*) of the lineage. The collateral junior lines (*ji'ga* or *bun'ga*) of a lineage always had to assist the senior line of the lineage in the various tasks involved in the business of the lineage. However, the more the population of a lineage grew, the greater was the possibility of lineage segmentation, with a higher-order lineage growing to include thousands of members. As time went on, some of the collateral junior lines of the higher-order lineages were separated from the higher-order lineages and formed their own lineages as sub-lineages of relevant higher-order lineages. If segmentation occurred, the new segment did not remain under control of the senior main line, but the genealogical superiority of the senior main line was undisputed (Song, 1982; Kim, 1989, as cited in Song, 2017: 84).

2) There are two schools of thought and practice in *feng-shui*: the Compass School and the Form School (Needham, 1956). The Compass School, also known as the Directions School or the Classical School, is based on metaphysical speculations concerning cosmology. The Form School mainly involves checking the physical configuration of mountains and watercourses surrounding particular sites (Mak and So, 2011: 53). Its theory is based on an understanding of the landscape: the profiles of the land, the sources of rivers and the terrain (Mak and So, 2011: 53). The practices of the Form School concentrate their analyses on sites, seeing the shapes and visualisation of the landforms as having primary importance (Mills, 1992; cited in Mak and So, 2011: 53).

3) These are recreated images of the *feng-shui* landscape no longer visible to observers after national reforestation projects in South Korea in the 1970s.

4) These are recreated images of the *feng-shui* landscape no longer visible to observers after South Korea's national reforestation projects in the 1970s (Base Contour maps; Bŏl Kwon's tomb; map no. 36804031, Dong-mi Kwon's tomb; map no. 36804041, Se-choong Kwon's tomb; map no. 36804044, Sŏk-choong Kwon's tomb; map no. 36804037 in the National Geographic Information Institute of South Korea).

5) This scene is reminiscent of the American West. At that time, this kind of bare landscape was to be seen everywhere in Korea.

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