

## LIFE AND LANDSCAPE IN THE UTOPIA STORIES OF LATE CHOSŎN *YADAM* (野談)\*

By LEE KANG-OK

---

Due to *yadam's* characteristic narrative principles that foreground actions and plots, space has played a minimal role. However, particular attention has been paid to the description of space and landscape in the so-called 'utopia-seeking' *yadam* stories. This article analyzes the motives for creating a utopia and its manner of functioning as a landscape in these utopian *yadam* stories.

Utopia creators construct a very exclusive utopia into which they invite visitors to enter. The utopia creators want to show their visitors not just the landscape itself but traces of communal life. The third landscape is either discovered or presumed by these utopia creators, and then introduced to their visitors. This place of absolute spectacle transcends the utopia creators' lives. Once they become accustomed to the utopia as a place for living in, it loses its freshness and charm as a spectacle itself. Therefore, the utopia creators covertly seek another space that can be appreciated strictly as a spectacle. This experience of the third landscape provides visitors with a decisive chance to cleanse themselves from the dregs of worldly desire and be reborn as new human beings. The more strongly they experience the spectacle, however, the harder it is for them to return to their former lives when they return home. As a result, worldly men try to revisit the utopia; their attempts are unsuccessful, however, because a utopia will not accept anyone who tries to return from the earthly world. The utopian landscape stories of *yadam* hint at the paradoxical fate of people who simultaneously recall both a utopia and the earthly world.

Keywords: *yadam*, utopia, landscape, visitor, communal life, spectacle, paradoxical fate, earthly world

---

\* This research was supported by the Yeungnam University research grants in 2014

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Yadam* emerged as a classical Korean literary genre through a process of inheriting the contents and forms of various myths, legends, and folktales, and of reflecting the actual experiences and imagination of the Chosŏn people. In a proliferation of anthologies<sup>1</sup> recording orally transmitted *yadam* in Sino-Korean, the *yadam*<sup>2</sup> as a literary genre reached its apex in the late Chosŏn<sup>3</sup> dynasty. Late Chosŏn *yadam* relate stories with unique narrative principles. They foreground their characters' actions, and their plots are carefully knitted together from the beginning to the end. These characteristic narrative principles have marginalized any interest in space in *yadam*, which has been relegated to the background to play only a minimal role.

I will argue, however, that space and landscape are foregrounded in the utopian (*isanghyang*, 理想郷) *yadam* stories.<sup>4</sup> Narrators pay particular attention to the description of space and landscape, and characters actively seek new space and landscape in these stories. The space sought by the characters is materialized as landscape. While space is an objectively presented world, landscape is one onto which a subject's sense, sensibility, and ideology are projected. In this regard, therefore, space is an objective world, while landscape is a conflated world of the objective and the subjective.<sup>5</sup>

Utopia, a term densely loaded with discursive meanings, is a key proponent in the arguments of this article. Utopian discourse has a long tradition in both Western and East Asian literature and philosophy. In Western society, from Plato's *Republic* that proposed the first recorded utopia, to Thomas More's *Utopia* that

<sup>1</sup> Of the several dozens of *yadam* anthologies, *Ch'omyerok* [A record of eccentric stories], *Ch'onggu yadam* [Classic short stories from the Green Hills], *Kyesŏ yadam* [Classic short stories from west of the brook], *Tongya hwijip* [Assorted collection of the Eastern Field] are the most famous ones. They were recorded in Sino-Korean in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Their editors either transcribed orally transmitted stories or took the stories from previously published books. Each anthology contains 200 to 300 stories. They deal with a wide variety of subjects ranging from love to strange twists of fate. A *yadam* anthology, therefore, is a synthesis of Korean short narrative literature.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion on the history of *yadam*, refer to Lee Kang-ok (Yi Kang-ok), *Han'guk yadam yŏn'gu* [A study on Korean *yadam*] (Tolbaegae, 2006), 13–64.

<sup>3</sup> The Chosŏn dynasty lasted for over five centuries from 1392 to 1910. Late Chosŏn refers to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, 110–126.

<sup>5</sup> See Yosio Nakamura, *P'unggyŏng ūi k'waerak: k'ŭrieit'ŏ, p'unggyŏng ūl mandŭlta* [The pleasure of landscape: creator, the making of a landscape], Yŏngjo Kang trans. (Hyohyŏng Ch'ulp'ansa, 2007), 31–32.

contributed to placing the term into discursive currency, the word utopia has been used to describe both international communities that attempt to create an ideal society and imagined societies portrayed in fiction. Its satirical strain has also been an integral part of utopian discourse, revealing more about the society of its time than about the idealistic society it portrays.<sup>6</sup> In East Asian society, *The Peach Blossom Land* (桃花源), written by Tae Yuanming (陶淵明, 365–427), describes a utopia as a secluded place unaffected by the troubles of the outside world. A sense of timelessness was a predominant feature of the story, as a perfect utopian community remained perpetually unchanged. Eventually, the Chinese term *Peach Blossom Land* became a symbol of an ideal society and synonymous with a utopia.

This article, however, will not engage in discursive arguments on utopias. Rather, while keeping in mind a wide spectrum of utopian discourse, this article broadly defines a utopia as an ideal world yearned for by ordinary people who suffer in their earthly life. Utopia here does not have any satirical connotation but is used to indicate an ideal place that transcends the earthly world. Whether the place is imagined or real is not important. What is important is the fact that the characters believe in its existence. More significantly, this study examines the ironic existence of a “third landscape” as a place one step closer to the ideal than a utopia is—that is to say, another utopia which even people already in a utopia yearn for.

Utopia stories have two distinctive character types: creators and visitors, who construct and visit the utopia, respectively. The creators construct their ideal landscape in deep mountains or on secluded islands. These places are very secluded and exclusive. Nonetheless, the creators are eager to show their utopia to certain chosen people. Sometimes visitors stumble upon the utopia by accident. Why would the creators want to invite a specially chosen person into their space? What kind of landscape would be witnessed by the visitors? These questions initiate a very interesting discourse.

In general, the main characters in late Chosŏn *yadam* reveal a strong interest in new landscapes and spectacles and long for a chance to visit them. These longings are one of the characteristics of late Chosŏn people<sup>7</sup> and *yadam* reflect the zeitgeist of that time.

Space in *yadam* performs multiple functions: an extraordinary spectacle in itself, a realization of Daoist hermit ideology, the special energy of a particular person, and an alternative space to the reality of the age. This shows a considerable

<sup>6</sup> Sullivan, E. D. S. (editor), *The Utopian Vision: Seven Essays on the Quincentennial of Sir Thomas More*, (San Diego: San Diego State University Press, 1983), 25–79.

<sup>7</sup> See Lee Kang-ok *ibid.*, 284–287.

deviation from the discourse of the Chosŏn scholar-bureaucrats (*sadaebu*, 士大夫)<sup>8</sup> who regarded landscape primarily as a realization of the law of nature. This difference proves that *yadam* are more faithful to the zeitgeist of late Chosŏn, during which the expansion of knowledge and experience,<sup>9</sup> and the creation of new conditions for life were valued.

By placing space and landscape at the center of their narratives, utopia stories illustrate extraordinary sceneries in colorful and diverse ways. The manner in which these sceneries are portrayed is quite sophisticated. Particular attention and detailed analysis are required to elucidate the mechanism by which everyday life is incorporated into landscape. This article will focus on the reasons for and the process of utopia construction in late Chosŏn *yadam*, and then analyze how these constructed utopias were illustrated. Landscape in utopian *yadam* is described either for the sake of landscape itself or as a reflection of a certain ideology or desire. Curiously, a “third landscape” appears either within or outside the utopia. I will argue that understanding the functions and meanings of a “third landscape” is the key to solving the mysteries of landscape in the utopian *yadam*.

In analyzing the utopian landscape, this article will focus on the following works: *O ansa Yŏngho pong Sŏl saeng* (吳按使永湖逢薛生; O *ansa* meets Sŏl *saeng* at Yŏngho),<sup>10</sup> *Kwandong no cho u tŭng sŏn* (關東路遭雨登仙; Becoming a Daoist hermit on the road to Kwandong),<sup>11</sup> *Hong samun Tongak yu pyŏlgye* (洪斯文東岳遊別界; Hong Tongak goes sightseeing around a starry world),<sup>12</sup> *Sa u* (四友; Four friends),<sup>13</sup> *Chirisan no mi pong chin* (智異山路迷逢眞; Becoming lost in Mt. Chiri and meeting a Daoist hermit),<sup>14</sup> *Pak Yŏngsŏng ka chang ch'ŏnsin* (朴靈城假粧天神; Pak Yŏngsŏng disguised as a heavenly god),<sup>15</sup> *Yi Tonggo sang chi kyŏm in*

<sup>8</sup> *Sa* (士) refers to members of the *yangban* (兩班) class of Chosŏn who either became lower ranking scholar-bureaucrats or did not become bureaucrats at all. *Taebu* (大夫) indicates high ranking scholar-bureaucrats. The term *sadaebu* (士大夫), therefore, generally refers to the ruling class of Chosŏn society.

<sup>9</sup> Sin Ton-bok, “*Puja wal* (夫子曰) [Confucius says],” *Haksan hanŏn* [Leisurely stories recorded by Haksan], *Han'guk munhŏn sŏlhwa chŏnjip* [Anthologies of Korean written tales] vol. 8 (Minjok munhwasa, 1981), 305.

<sup>10</sup> Asea Munhwasa ed., *Ch'ŏnggu yadam* [Classic short stories from the Green Hills], Vol. 2 (Asea Munhwasa, 1988), 540–534.

<sup>11</sup> Im Pang and Chŏng Hwanguk trans., *Ch'ŏnyerok* [A record of eccentric stories] (Sŏnggyun'gwan Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2005), 393–398.

<sup>12</sup> Asea Munhwasa ed., *Ch'ŏnggu yadam*, Vol. 2, 491–493.

<sup>13</sup> An Sŏk-kyŏng, *Sapkyo chip* [Sapkyo collection], Vol. 2 (Asea Munhwasa, 1986), 257–270.

<sup>14</sup> Im Pang, *Ch'ŏnyerok*, 391–393.

<sup>15</sup> Yi Sin-sŏng and Chŏng Myŏng-gi, eds., *Yangŏn ch'ŏnmi* [Exposition of trivial stories] (Pogosa, 1999), 282–291.

(李東臯相之僉人; Prime Minister Yi Tonggo's servant),<sup>16</sup> *Sik Tan'gu Yu rang p'yobae* (識丹邱劉郎漂海; Yurang drifts across the sea and gets to know Tan'gu),<sup>17</sup> *Pang Towŏn Kwŏn saeng sim chin* (訪桃源權生尋眞; Kwŏn saeng pays a visit to a Daoist hermit at the Peach Blossom Land),<sup>18</sup> and *Sangwŏn O saeng chungnul* (祥原吳生仲訥; Eccentric O Chung-nul disguised as a beggar).<sup>19</sup>

## 2. MOTIVES FOR CONSTRUCTING UTOPIAS

The secular world is not perfectly conditioned. On the contrary, a wide variety of problems incessantly ebbs and flows, causing people to look for places that transcend earthly life. Even in the absence of any particular problems, people tend to get bored with their accustomed environment, can hardly find a meaningful landscape in their mundane space, and hence develop vague yearnings for strange places.

Yearning for strangeness in the utopian *yadam* stories is explicitly represented in the elaborate portrayal of landscape. Utopian *yadam* feature character types who are eager to leave their familiar environment and explore the unknown, turning them into special places. They want to attract people's attention by visiting a special space, usually a mountain, and by transforming it into a special landscape, gain satisfaction from it. They create a new space by utilizing part of the mountain, and then introduce it to others as an extraordinary landscape.

The motives that propel people to escape from their familiar environment and build a new, ideal landscape are summarized as follows:

Firstly, they want to create a new living space for ordinary people. In *Pang Towŏn Kwŏn saeng sim chin*, an old man, the leader of a utopia, explains that his great-grandfather stumbled upon a place by accident, where he brought his family and relatives and built a communal village cut off from the rest of the world. They constructed a utopia, where there are no wars or rebellions. Methods of cultivating lands, procuring salt, and marriage customs are explained in detail in these stories.

Secondly, a utopia is constructed to provide a place for hermits and monks. In the utopia of *Kwandong no cho u tŭngsŏn*, hermits lead a communal life and in that of *Hong samun Tongak yu pyŏlgye*, monks are portrayed as leading a communal life.

<sup>16</sup> Yi Hüip'yŏng, *Kyesŏ yadam* [Classic short stories from west of the brook], *Han'guk munbŏn sŏllwa chŏnjip* [Anthologies of written Korean tales] vol. 1 (Taehaksa, 1981), 150–152.

<sup>17</sup> Asea munhwasa ed., *Ch'ŏnggu yadam*, Vol. 2, 514–521.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 522–528.

<sup>19</sup> Kim Chonggwŏn, *Kŭmgye p'iltam* [Stories recorded at the silky brook] (Myŏngmundang, 1985), 204–205.

Their utopias provide them with perfect conditions for their unique ways of life by allowing them to be completely cut off from the mundane world.

Thirdly, a utopia is created as a place in which the survivors of a shipwreck can live. In *Sik Tan'gu Yu rang p'yohae*, fisherman Yu finds a utopia created by an old man who had previously been shipwrecked just like him.

Fourthly, a utopia is created out of the desperation caused by the political oppression of the time. In *O ansa Yŏngbo pong Sŏl saeng*, Sŏl saeng (薛生), who reveres integrity and loyalty, asks his friend, O Yun'gyŏm, when Kwanghaegun (光海君)<sup>20</sup> dethroned his royal mother in 1613, “what’s the point of being a high-ranking public official when there is no morality in this world? Why don’t we leave here and travel around?”<sup>21</sup> Even though Sŏl refers to it lightly as travel, leaving Seoul means seclusion from a world where the basic ethics between mother and son have been abandoned. In fact Sŏl never returns to Seoul.

Fifthly, a utopia is created in order to overcome poverty. In *Sa u*, ‘P’oksoja’ (暴燒者), who had been studying and preparing for the civil service examination at a Buddhist temple, disappeared when his wife, who had long supported him despite severe poverty, passed away. He later became a leader of thieves and showed his former friend, ‘Pin’gŏja’ (貧居者), his fantastically ideal village. In *Chirisan no mi pong chin*, Mt. Chiri is described as both a place for hermits led by a hermit, Chang, and a den of thieves.

Sixthly, a utopia is built to escape from social turmoil. In *Pak Yŏngsŏng ka chang ch’ŏnsin*, Pak Munsu finds a utopia in Mt. Chiri that was built by young people who had previously escaped from a rebellion led by Yi Injwa (李麟佐, ?–1728).<sup>22</sup> In *Yi Tonggo sangji kyŏm in*, Yi Tonggo’s servant finds a shelter for Yi’s family during the Japanese Invasion of 1592 (*Imjin waeran*, 壬辰倭亂).

Despite this variety of motives for constructing utopias, their representations are very similar. The way of life and landscape are not that different from one another. This suggests that despite the wide variety of causes that make worldly life unbearable, the resulting suffering does not differ greatly. As long as people can be protected from the delusional thinking that makes life painful, the world will be perfect if the basic standards of living are met. Therefore, differentiating one utopia from another depends on the visitor’s perspective. This also explains

<sup>20</sup> Kwanghaegun (光海君, 1575–1641) was the fifteenth king of the Chosŏn dynasty whose reign spanned from 1608 to 1623. He eliminated numerous political opponents whom he considered to be threats to his throne. He was dethroned by the supporters of King Injo (仁祖, 1595–1649) in 1623. This historical event is called the Injo Restoration (仁祖反正).

<sup>21</sup> Asea Munhwasa ed., *Ch’ŏnggu yadam*, Vol. 2, 540.

<sup>22</sup> In 1789 an alliance of the Soron (少論) and the Namin (南人) factions, both of which had been excluded from power during the early years of King Yŏngjo (英祖)’s reign, conspired to rebel against the king. Yi Injwa was the rebellion’s leader.

why the utopia creator actively seeks and invites the visitor, or the narrator has the visitor accidentally discover the utopia.

### 3. THE VISITOR'S PERSPECTIVE AND THE LANDSCAPE OF UTOPIA

To be cut off from the earthly world is the most significant prerequisite of a utopia. Nevertheless, the creator temporarily allows a visitor to enter his utopia. This invitation is indispensable for the plot development. More significantly, the builder's invitation reveals that seeing and being seen are fundamental human desires, regardless of any changes in their conditions of life. Ordinary people yearn for a strange and exotic place, a 'Shangri-La', and sincerely wish to visit it at least once in their lives. Both Koreans and Chinese are known to have had a strong yearning to visit Mt. Kūmgang before their death.<sup>23</sup> A passionate curiosity for fantastic and extraordinary scenery is as powerful a driving force in the formation of utopia stories as an urgent necessity borne of the demands of worldly life.

Visitors' attitudes towards utopian landscapes are contradictory. Accidental visitors tend to be less willing to explore the place, while others are actively seeking something special in the utopia. The utopia creator tries to show the visitor the outcome of his earnest effort. Sometimes harmonious but often contradictory interactions between the visitor and the creator constitute the essence of the utopian landscape.

---

<sup>23</sup> "As far as I know, even Chinese people wish to be born in Koryŏ and visit Mt. Kūmgang." Yu Mongin, "Myŏnggi Hwang Chini [Renowned Korean *kisaeng*, Hwang Chini]," *Ōu yadam* [Ōu's classic short stories] (Tolbaegae, 2006), 133; "His only regret was not to be able to visit high mountains, big rivers, and each of the famous scenic places. So whenever he was on an expedition to conquer the north and the south, or patrolled the frontiers on the emperor's orders, he made sure to visit the scenic beauties surrounding them. He was fortunate enough to visit beautiful mountains and rivers in almost every corner of China. Early on, he had heard that Mt. Kūmgang with twelve thousand peaks had exquisite scenery like lotus flowers carved against the blue sky and was one of the three most sacred mountains. He regretted that he could not visit the mountain, for it was located too far away in another country... Sin (who is a reincarnation of his father) allowed him to visit the mountain, believing that it was the wish of his previous life. Chŏngha went into Mt. Kūmgang with a little boy riding on a donkey and travelled around Inner Kūmgang, Outer Kūmgang, and the twelve thousand peaks. He left his traces in the mountain by composing many poems. When he came back home after spending half a year from spring to summer in the mountain, he avoided the onerousness of everyday life and enjoyed tranquility. He stayed calmly inside his house and did not look outside... When he was on the brink of dying suddenly in the following year, he told his father, "My only wish was to visit Mt. Kūmgang, and I achieved what I wanted for I have seen it." Yi Sinsŏng and Chŏng Myŏnggi trans. *Yang ūnch'ŏnmi* (Pogosa, 1999), 182–185.

### 3.1 Vistors who cannot see and those who are not willing to see

Kwŏn Chinsa (進士) is a visitor to the utopia in *Pang Towŏn Kwŏn saeng sim chin*. Kwŏn is a tourist travelling to every corner of Korea's eight provinces. "A certain Chŏmji" (僉知) notices him and invites him over. As a tourist, he is more likely to view the village as a place that transcends the earthly world. Strangely though, his arrival at the utopia is set at night-time, which leads him to rely on his ears rather than his eyes in taking in the new environment.<sup>24</sup> Everything he hears there, such as the sounds of calling people, barking dogs and mewing cats, and the pounding of clothes, is related to everyday life. In the darkness Kwŏn first hears the sounds of everyday life made by the residents of the utopia. The next morning Kwŏn sees a village of two or three hundred houses and fertile land. What he hears in the darkness affects his perception of the utopia as an ideal place for everyday life. Kwŏn is finally able to realize his life-long dream of witnessing a place almost like a Shangri-La. He asks Chŏmji about the place's origin. Chŏmji explains to him how elaborately the village was planned and constructed as a communal place by its creator. This story foregrounds the creator's obsession with constructing a perfect space for everyday life, and the creator also succeeds in changing the visitor's perception of the village.

In *Hong samun Tongak yu pyŏlgye*, Hong Cho is led to a utopia by a Buddhist monk. They face tremendous adversities on their way. A steep road hinders their progress. A sand dune is so slippery that they are only able to escape by moving their feet nimbly. They also encounter an abyss that only the monk can help Hong to cross. When he finally arrives at the utopia, Hong describes the place in detail:

The scenery is exquisite and the land is fertile. There are several dozen houses in which monks reside. All the houses look affluent. A brook winds around the village, and the valley is full of pear trees. Each house is filled with pears.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> When the sun set and the dusk settled in, Chŏmji could hear sounds from far away and answered.

"Here they come!"

When Kwŏn *chinsa* searched standing on the back of a cow, dozens of people with torchlight were crossing over the hill. They were all country people. They led him to cross over the hill and arrive at a big village. The village spread out over an entire valley. The sounds of chickens and dogs, and the pounding of clothes were heard from all directions. (日已西沒，時向黃昏，少焉，遠遠地有人呼聲，僉知亦應呼曰：“來矣！”權從牛背見之，則有數十把火炬，越嶺而來，皆是少年村氓。以炬前導，踰嶺而下，依微之中，有一大村，專占一壑。鷄狗之聲，砧杵之響，起於四隣。) Asea Munhwasa ed., *Ch'ŏnggu yadam*, Vol. 2, 524.

<sup>25</sup> 景物奇絕，田疇肥沃，有人居數十家，皆僧徒也。豐屋相接，泉石回匝，而滿洞皆梨樹，家家積梨。Ibid., 492.



Hong witnesses not only fertile lands but also an exquisite landscape. Then he illustrates the monks' communal lives in detail, while he hardly mentions the creator of the space or speculates on his motives. One can only guess by the way the communal life is elaborately portrayed that the creator prioritized communal life in the construction process. The monk who brought Hong only wants to show Hong exactly how the monks lead their lives there.

In *Kwandong no cho u tungŏn*, Yu saeng (儒生) is a student and bachelor who devoted his life to studying at a Confucian school. While on an errand to Kwandong (關東)<sup>26</sup> Province, he loses his donkey and servant. He cries out almost like a baby when he meets an old man. He is unwittingly led to a utopia by the old man. On their way, they encounter a forest of big pine trees, upright bamboo, and a brook beyond the forest. They confront obstacles that are laid out both vertically and horizontally. At last Yu saeng arrives at a spectacular pavilion:

At the pavilion there is just a stone platform desk. *The Book of Changes* is lying on it. A wisp of blue incense smoke is rising up from a stone brazier. Nothing else is there. The weather is so mild and bright that it seems that windy and rainy days have never existed there. The place is so calm and quiet that all the troubles of the world seem to have disappeared.<sup>27</sup>

The student erases the traces of worldly life and forgets its problems in the place he has unintentionally been led to. The deeper the old host leads him into the village, the more mysterious the scenery gets. The sky is clear, a wind is blowing, and the sun is shining brightly.<sup>28</sup> The overwhelming extent of the utopian scenery prevents the interference of worldly perceptions or prejudice. The way of life led by the Daoist hermits is incomparable to that of people in the earthly world. The palaces where the Daoist hermits reside are grander than those in the Chosŏn capital Hanyang (漢陽) and make them look like mere cottages or huts. The student is unable to keep an objective distance from the utopia; rather he is more and more carried away by it. This story is an example of a narrative in which the visitor's subjective perspective weakens dramatically and the distance between the visitor and the utopia is narrowest.

<sup>26</sup> Kwandong is located in the east of Taegwallyŏng (大關嶺). It refers to present-day Kangwŏn (江原) Province (道).

<sup>27</sup> 閣上只有一石几，几上置周易一卷，几前又有石爐，一炷香烟，裊裊而青，餘無所有。至此，天和景明，未嘗有風雨，境界清淨，塵慮自消。Im Pang, *Ch'ŏnyerok*, 394.

<sup>28</sup> 山川景物，愈入愈奇，天宇開朗，風月清明。Ibid., 394.

In *Sik Tan'gu Yu rang p'yohae*, fisherman Yu (劉) had been adrift in the sea before he arrived at the utopia. He was so exhausted that he could not keep his composure to appreciate the scenery.

Three of them stood up and followed a boy. When they arrived at his hut, the leader sat on the floor wearing worn-out cotton clothes and nothing on his head. He was an old man, and his face was charcoal black.<sup>29</sup>

There was absolutely no description of the scenery while the people who had been adrift finally came to their senses, were led to the old man's hut, and met him. Only several days later were Yu and his companions able to observe their surroundings:

The island consisted of clear sand and green pine trees interspersed with golden grass. Views were not obstructed in any direction, and houses were scattered throughout the island. They did not grow crops or mulberry. They only drank water and wore clothes made of grass. Two errand boys wore clothes made of white feathers.<sup>30</sup>

There is nothing special in the scenery. On the surface, the traces of life appear similar to those of the earthly world. In reality they are completely opposite. People in the utopia do not grow crops or mulberry. People in the earthly world cannot survive if they do not work. The absence of work does not cause any problems in this utopia, however, as its residents only drink water and wear clothes made of grass. Their lives have been liberated from the concerns of food and clothing. They achieve this freedom by revolutionizing consumption not production. This revolution of consumption subverts the visitors' common sense.

### 3.2 Visitors who seek something extraordinary

Some visitors firmly sustain their own perspectives as they engage with the utopia and try to reinterpret it on their own terms. *O ansa Yŏngho pong Sŏl saeng* represents one of the most distinctive cases. A utopia creator, the teacher Sŏl (薛), and a visitor, O Yun'gyŏm (吳允謙), have diametrically opposite views on valuing the utopian landscape. Sŏl's disillusionment with politics during the Kwanghae era led him to construct the utopia. O was Sŏl's close friend. When Sŏl decided to leave

<sup>29</sup> 三人即起行步，隨童子至先生處，則所謂先生，頭無所着，身衣破綿，坐一草幕，面如黑炭，一老翁也。Asea Munhwasa ed., *Ch'ŏnggu yadam*, Vol. 2, 516.

<sup>30</sup> 大抵此島晴沙碧松，而間有金莎草，一望平夷，間間有人家，而不農不桑，只飲水衣草而已。二童子或往或來，而其所衣則全身乃白羽衣也。Ibid., 517.

the earthly world, he asked O to come with him. O excused himself from joining Sŏl because he had to support his parents. They met again when O became the governor of Kangwŏn Province. During his inspection trip, O went sightseeing on a boat. Sŏl came sailing up in his boat through thick clouds and foggy waves, which functioned as a boundary between the earthly world and the utopia. Sŏl came back to this world, crossing the mysterious border and took O to the world he had created:

After travelling over a rugged mountain trail, we reached a precipitous cliff. Its mysterious grandeur was overwhelming. The center of the cliff was divided just like a fortress gate, and clear brook water ran on both sides. Next to it was a cave shaped like a dragon. A stony path on the right side of the cliff leading to the cave was so winding and steep that we had to grab kudzu vines and tree boughs to proceed. When we entered the cave by stooping and crouching, a mysterious new world appeared. The land inside the cave was spacious and fertile, and crowded with people. The hills were covered with mulberry and cedar trees, and the forests were composed of pear and date trees. Sŏl's residence at the center of the cave was spectacular. Sŏl invited O over and held a banquet for him with all sorts of delicacies. Exotic fruits were especially sweet and fragrant, and ginseng grew as fat as a person's forearm. When they went outside, the mysterious and spectacular landscape with forests and mountain peaks was indescribable. O felt ecstatic as if he was in Pangho (方壺)<sup>31</sup> and was ashamed of himself for becoming a civil official.<sup>32</sup>

This passage presents a detailed description of the journey to the utopia, its characteristics, the expansion of the visitor's sensibility, and the contradiction between the earthly world and the utopia. The steep cliff he first encounters on his way creates a vertical image countered by a horizontal image of water falling from a brook. The intertwined horizontal and vertical images shield the utopia from the rest of the world and deny easy access to the visitor. The visitor must undergo hardships in order to reach the dragon cave. The narrow and winding cave is the last gateway to the utopia and represents the utopia as well. O can pass the gateway by crawling on his hands and knees. On arriving at the utopia, what the visitor first sees is closely related to the visitor's point of view on the world

<sup>31</sup> Pangho (方壺) is a place where hermits were believed to reside.

<sup>32</sup> 崎嶇數里，有蒼岸斜立如削，奇形壯勢駭目，而中坼城門，左右，清流瀉出，石門之旁，乃回龍也。石路自崖坼處，右坼而上，屈曲巉岩，援葛攀木而進，始有窟焉。懸身偃僂，而入，既入則別洞天也。地甚寬平，土田膏沃，人居亦多，桑麻翳苑，梨棗成林。生之居，當窟內之中心，極華邃，引公上堂，薦以山味珍蔬，奇果香甘甚異，人蔘正果，肥大如臂。相携出遊，林巒泉石，奇怪壯麗，不可名狀。公悅然若入方壺，自覺軒冕之爲穢也。 Asea Munhwasa ed., *Ch'ŏnggu yadam*, Vol. 1, 541.

and its landscape. First O notices the grand, fertile land, residents, and mulberry, cedar, pear and date trees. Even in the utopia, O is interested in those elements that allow people to lead ordinary lives. The broad land and fertile earth suggest that growing crops is possible, and a large number of people lead a communal life. Mulberry trees provide clothes and cedar trees supply materials for everyday life. O observes the landscape of the utopia from the perspective of everyday life.

Söl, the creator of the utopia, has a different perspective from that of O:

Early on I took excursions to many places. Ever since I escaped from the earthly world, I have been busy travelling to wherever I wanted to go. I went west to Mt. Songni, north to Mt. Myohyang, and south to Mt. Kaya and Mt. Turyu. I visited all the places in the Eastern world famous for their beautiful scenery. When I found a place I liked, I cut down trees from the forest and built a house. I cultivated wasteland and grew crops. When I grew tired of the place one to three years later, I moved to another place. Hence, I have found many places whose mountains and brooks are ten times as spectacular and whose land and houses are as grand as those here. Hardly anyone in the earthly world knows about it.<sup>33</sup>

What Söl, the utopia creator, looked for was a place with spectacular views. Once he found a beautiful place he liked, he cleared the forest, built houses, cultivated land, and grew crops. The spectacle and the pleasure gained from it took precedence for Söl, followed by building the infrastructure for everyday life. Only after he finished preparing the place for everyday life could pleasure from the beautiful scenery be enjoyed in harmony with everyday life. Epithets such as “mysterious mountain,” “exquisite water,” “grand land,” and “spectacular house” can all be understood in this context.

Strictly speaking, such a harmony results not from Söl’s intention but from that of the narrator or visitor. When Söl initially asked O to leave the earthly world with him, O refused because he had to take care of his parents. In fact, he did not want and was not ready to leave the earthly world. When he met Söl again, he had already become the governor of Kangwŏn Province. As a civil official, it was not easy to view the landscape as scenery itself. On the other hand, Söl did not have any lingering attachment to the earthly world. Rather he was disgusted with the political reality of the Kwanghae era and eagerly wanted to escape from it.

<sup>33</sup> “吾嘗遊處往來之地，不獨此也。吾自逃世以來，恣意遊觀，未嘗一日閑，西入俗離，北窮妙香，南搜伽倻頭流之勝，凡東方山川之以絕特聞者，足殆遍焉。遇適意處，輒芟茂而築焉。闢荒而耘焉。居或一年，或三年，興盡輒移而之他，以此吾之所居山之奇水之絕，田廬之華曠，十倍於此者亦多，但世人莫有知者。” *Ibid.*, 542.

He had to distance himself from the world as far as possible. I will argue that this attitude was reflected in the process of constructing his utopia.

O experienced the utopia with the sensibility of an ordinary man from the earthly world, while Sŏl prioritized his experience of the beautiful spectacle itself and then incorporated the conditions of everyday life later. O finally realized the difference and “reflected on himself, sighing and crying.” He also recognized that he could not help continuing to live in the earthly world, and that it was impossible to live harmoniously between life and landscape in the earthly world. He deeply sensed the inferiority and wretchedness of earthly life.

Two more events were later added in this story: Sŏl’s visiting O in the earthly world and O’s return to the utopia to meet Sŏl. In the first event, O wanted to recommend Sŏl to a civil official’s position. Sŏl was deeply offended and left without a farewell. In the second event, when O returned to the dragon cave, it remained only as a ruin. The former foregrounds the shame of becoming a civil official in the world, while the latter stresses the impossibility for ordinary people like O to live in a utopia.

Choosing whether to enjoy the spectacle itself in a utopia or to seek traces of everyday life even in a utopia depends on the subject’s world view and sensibility. This attempt to construct the ideal infrastructure of communal life and find traces of everyday life even in a utopia originated from the Taohuayuan (Peach Blossom Land) and was strongly reinforced by the atmosphere of the late Chosŏn *yadam*. Ultimately, the utopia creator wants to show the visitor traces of communal life, not its landscape. The visitor also tries to discover everyday life, not the landscape.

Life in the utopia is significantly different from that in the earthly world. The visitor is shocked and affected by the difference. He admires the life in the utopia. However, there is no fundamental difference between everyday life and utopian life in that the subject’s sensibility is mainly concerned with food, clothing, and shelter. The utopian life is a reproduction of everyday life.

## 4. A THIRD LANDSCAPE WITHIN OR OUTSIDE A UTOPIA

### 4.1. The meaning of a third landscape

Perceiving a utopia as simply a place for everyday life does not fulfill the narrative expectation of a utopia, for the utopian narrative seeks to transcend or escape from everyday life. No matter how satisfactory and mysterious life in a utopia is, it remains no more than another way of life, which triggers the necessity of establishing a third landscape. As a result, the visitor’s itinerary proceeds from the

earthly world through the utopia to the third landscape and then back to the earthly world.

Then what is the meaning of the “third landscape” that the visitor visits just before returning to his earthly world? In *O ansa Yŏngbo pong Sŏl saeng*, *Chirisan no mi pong chin*, and *Sa u*, the utopia creators and visitors were acquaintances in the earthly world: they were either close friends or helped each other on certain occasions. While the visitor remained in the world, the creator left to build his own world. This separation reflects the differentiation of life in the late Chosŏn period in which people with a similar status and background had to reinvent their way of life according to the changing conditions of society. The three works also allude to the possibility that utopia creators might have been thieves. Even though they are self-sufficient in a completely secluded place, supplies from the outside world are indispensable for constructing and maintaining a utopia.

In *O ansa Yŏngbo pong Sŏl saeng*, O sighs and sheds tears when he witnesses the utopia created by his friend, Sŏl. He regrets that he has been shackled with the responsibilities of being a civil official. Only a few days’ experience in the utopia brings out a hint of his inner change. O deeply feels that life in the earthly world is inferior and miserable and resolves to return to the utopia someday. The impact of the utopia is sufficiently strong to change O fundamentally. Neither does Sŏl view the utopia as just a living space. In this regard, neither of them needs shock or inspiration any more, which is the reason why a third landscape is not introduced.

*Chirisan no mi pong chin* and *Sa u* have similar beginnings to that of *O ansa Yŏngbo pong Sŏl saeng*, but the experience of a third landscape differentiated from the utopia is added. The visitor in *Chirisan no mi pong chin* is also a civil official and enjoys the grand banquet Chang (蔣) prepares for him. The exotic food and bright dishes are heavenly, and the music with songs and dances played by ten young and beautiful women are novel. However, in essence this is not greatly different from a banquet in earthly life. The impact of this kind of hospitality is not strong enough to change the visitor’s mentality. A new landscape not completely separated from the utopia but different in nature needs to be established:

That night the civil official stayed at a special mansion. Its windows, doors, eaves, and lattices were all made of precious jewels so that it looked bright and transparent, and it was shining as bright as daylight. He was shocked to the bone and so clear-headed that he could not sleep.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> 夜使寄宿於一別殿，窓闌簷樞，皆以珊瑚水晶等奇寶爲之，玲瓏瑩澈，通明若晝，骨冷神清，不能成寐矣。Im Pang, *Ch’ŏnyerok*, 393.

The civil official experiences a special space that is not completely separated from the utopia. He experiences the place through his tactile and visual senses. Through the experience of one sleepless night, his senses become “acute and clear.” He becomes a different person. Even after he returns to the earthly world, he tries to seek utopia again.

*Sa u*<sup>35</sup> offers one of the most distinctive cases in which a third landscape changes the visitor fundamentally. Here, the utopia and the third landscape are completely separated, and their political orientations are wide apart. Four friends appear in *Sa u*. In their youth, P’oksoja (暴燒者), Pudaeja (負戴者), Honambaek (湖南伯), and Pin’gōja (貧居者) studied and prepared for the state examination together at a temple. One day P’oksoja disappeared due to the death of his wife, who had supported him despite dire poverty. Pudaeja disappeared next. Honambaek and Pin’gōja stayed until the examination. Only Honambaek passed the examination and later became the governor of Honam Province. Pin’gōja failed and led a destitute life: he was so poor that he could not marry his daughter off. Pin’gōja went to see Honambaek to ask for financial help. On his way, he met P’oksoja.

Pin’gōja describes the landscape in which P’oksoja resides,

Riding on a fast steed, we ran through valleys. We ran two hundred *li* (里) and saw not a single person in one hundred *li*. Finally we arrived at a big village. A tile-roofed house stood there in parallel with the mountain and had a vast backyard. With flags, drums and horns, the guards looked a lot like those at the barracks. However, the food, music, and maids were much better than the barracks’.<sup>36</sup>

This utopia was built by P’oksoja. P’oksoja earnestly entertains Pin’gōja and tells him the news that Pudaeja lives in Mt. Myohyang and had become a Daoist hermit and that he avoids eating cooked meals. P’oksoja tells Pin’gōja that he really envies Pudaeja. P’oksoja strongly encourages Pin’gōja to visit Pudaeja’s residence as a third place because P’oksoja feels that his own place is not yet sufficiently perfect and honorable. Pin’gōja is not honorable either, because he

<sup>35</sup> “Puk sau sinsŭng nonsang” [A mysterious monk reads one’s fortune by physiognomy at a northern temple], and “Ch’aeksil sin’gyōng pōlp’ou” [Scolding and punishing a scholar who betrayed friendship], in *Tongya hwijip* [Assorted collection of the Eastern Field] have the same characteristics. See Yi Wŏnmyōng, *Wŏnbon Tongya hwijip* (Pogosa, 1992).

<sup>36</sup> 策駿馬，疾馳山谷間，一日可二百里，而百里則經無人之地。及一大洞府，瓦屋齊山，而門庭敞潤，旗纛鼓角，從衛使令，擬於藩鎮，而居處飲食，侍女音樂，乃非藩鎮所可比。An Sŏkkyōng, *Sapkyo chip* [Sapkyo collection], Vol. 2, 79.

also ended the friendship. Pin'gōja follows P'oksoja's recommendation and visits Pudaaja's place:

Pin'gōja made an excursion to Mt. Myohyang and went deep into the north of the mountain. He saw a person wearing a rainhat (*sakkat*, 蓑笠) and a straw raincoat. Riding on a blue bull, the person dashed away at full speed. Pin'gōja tried his best to chase him for almost one hundred *li* (里), but could not catch up with him. After tracking the traces of cow's dung and passing through a stone gate, he encountered a lone house on a rock hill. He knocked on the door, which was answered by Pudaaja.<sup>37</sup>

The landscape of Pudaaja's place is very austere, providing a contrasting view to that of P'oksoja. The landscape Pudaaja created in the deep woods is desolate, but the spiritual depth emanating from it is exceptional. Pudaaja scolds Pin'gōja, who deeply repents of his wrongdoings. Pudaaja's residence is an alternative landscape. Here, traces of everyday life are kept to a minimum. Even though people reside here, their traces are also erased from the landscape. At this third place, Pin'gōja, who deserted his friend due to poverty, is scolded and revived. The third landscape provides another opportunity for the visitor who failed to achieve a complete spiritual renewal in the utopia. Therefore, the visitor's attitude in exploring the third landscape is more serious.

#### 4.2 Realization and witnessing of a third landscape

*Kwandong no cho u tūng sōn* and *Sik Tan'gu Yu rang p'yohae* present a third landscape as a very special place, which seriously affects the visitor who witnesses the place. In *Kwandong no cho u tūng sōn*, an old hermit's daughter takes her husband Yu *saeng* (儒生) to the place where her father used to go sightseeing. This is the greatest treat that she has given him since she became his wife:

There it was a red and blue cliff and clear spring water falling off it, raising a cloud of spray. The deeper they got into the mountain, the more mysterious and exquisite the scenery got. Beautiful flowers and rare grasses were obstructing the sunlight. Sometimes curious birds and animals flocked together. After showing him around, the wife took Yu *saeng* to a mountaintop in front of the backyard of their house. The peak was not so steep, and they were able to reach the top by following a winding path. There was a several-story-high altar at the top. When they mounted the

<sup>37</sup> 貧居者，西遊妙香山，深入山北，見一人蓑笠蓑衣，跨一青牛，其疾如飛，竭力追之，一日百餘里，不見其人而跡牛糞，入石門，茅屋蕭然，獨在岩阿，扣門而有應，乃負載者也。Ibid., 76.



altar, an endless sea stretched out before their eyes. They could catch occasional glimpses of three islands beyond the surging waves. Over the islands ten hermit villages unfolded before their eyes. She pointed at them and explained each of them to him in detail.

“Over there are Pongnae, Pangjang, and Yŏngju.”

The spectacular view of Hyŏnp’o, Ch’angju, Kwangsang, Nangwŏn, and Kon’gu spread out on the sea. A golden palace and a silver castle were in the middle of the sky, and hazy and auspicious clouds and mists were warmly shining in the sky. They could see a man riding on a phoenix, another on a crane, another on a dragon, another on a giraffe, another sitting and jumping on the clouds, another walking on the air, and another walking on the sea. They were moving up and down, from the east to the west and the south to the north by twos and threes. The celestial sound of *saenghwang* (笙簧) and *tongso* (洞簫) echoed softly.<sup>38</sup>

Blue and red cliffs and foamy falling waters in between not only make it difficult to approach the third landscape, but also instill a strong sense of curiosity by stimulating the visual and auditory senses. On entering the backyard, closer scenery is described in detail. Moving from a close-range view to a distant view is a characteristic East Asian principle of perspective.<sup>39</sup> What is unique here is that instead of simultaneously showing a closer setting as the foreground and a distant setting as the background,<sup>40</sup> each setting is shown from a different perspective. The sentence, “After finishing showing him around the backyard, the wife took Yu *saeng* to the mountain peak,” clearly shows that they climbed up to higher ground in order to acquire a distant perspective. On a several-storied altar at the top of the mountain, they were able to get a perfect perspective of the distance. The three islands they could catch glimpses of beyond the boundless sea are Pongnae, Pangjang, and Yŏngju. The exotic scenery of Hyŏnp’o, Ch’angju, etc. is given a kaleidoscopic description. People riding on a phoenix and a dragon look

<sup>38</sup> 見丹崖翠壁，玉泉銀瀑，愈入愈勝，曲曲奇絕，琪花瑤草，處處掩映，珍禽異獸，往往翔集。生一入其中，樂而忘歸，周覽既畢，又復引生，登苑後一峯，其峯不甚高峻，透迤而上，及其頂，自成數層高壇。騁望平臨大海，見三島出沒於波上，十洲羅列於眼前。其妻爲生，指點而視之曰：“此卽蓬萊也方丈也瀛洲也。”玄圃滄洲廣桑閭苑昆丘等仙境，一一皆在遙望中，金闕銀臺，縹緲於天泮，祥雲瑞靄，暖暉於空外。騎鳳者，騎鸞者，控鶴者，乘龍者，駕獐者，坐雲而騰者，御風而飛者，步虛者，凌波者，或從上而下，或從下而上，或自東而西，或自南而北，三三五五，翱翔往來，笙簫仙樂之音，隱隱到耳。Im Pang, *Ch’ŏnyerok*, 396–397.

<sup>39</sup> Kim Chongjik, “*Yu Turyurok* [Mt. Chiri travelogue],” *Sŏnin tŭl ūi Chirisan yurammok* [Ancestors’ Mt. Chiri travelogue] (Tolbaegae, 2000), 250.

<sup>40</sup> In these rules of perspective, a courtyard in the foreground and a mountain as the distant view creates a compositionally perfect landscape. The landscape resulting from the harmonious composition of a well-tended garden and room and a faraway natural mountain leaves an indelible image on our minds. *P’unggyŏng ūi k’vaerak—k’ūriet’ŏ, p’unggyŏng ūl mandŭlta*, 23.

dynamic, and the movement of people jumping on the clouds and walking on the air and on the sea is fantastical.<sup>41</sup> The description of “moving up and down, from the east to the west, the south to the north by twos and threes” gives readers a vivid impression that Yu *saeng* is engrossed in the scenery unfolding in front of him. The celestial sounds of *saenghwang* and *tongso* also inspire auditory vitality.

In this way, Yu *saeng* experienced the third landscape. Prior to this experience, Yu *saeng* was at a loss, for he had unwittingly married a hermit's daughter. He was partly afraid of his wife and partly enchanted by her. At first he was so afraid of her that he could not even touch her. Ten or so days later his fear disappeared, and they were finally able to consummate their marriage. The next day his wife asked if he would like to visit where her hermit father used to go sightseeing. After they came back from the trip, her hermit father pointed out that they had not been able to have a child because Yu *saeng* had not been changed completely to the bone, and so he gave Yu *saeng* some pills. After taking them, Yu *saeng*'s body became light, and his spirit became clean and emptied. Finally his wife became pregnant. Yu *saeng*'s trip to the third landscape was closely related to his wife's pregnancy. In other words, their trip finally allowed Yu *saeng* to enter the world of a Daoist hermit and become its proper member.

Another landscape presented in *Sik Tan'gu Yu rang p'yohae* is grander and even more spectacular. Spatially it is completely separate from the utopia. Having been stranded on the island, fisherman Yu (劉) slowly adapts himself to the island's life. Since the island was created by stranded fishermen, Yu becomes a member of the community without much difficulty. Gradually he becomes interested in the spectacle of the sunrise. One day Yu asks the old man if he can visit a place to witness the sunrise:

When he woke up, Silver Mountain stood tall in the middle of immense surging waves, and the sun was rising above the top of the mountain. The intermingling of the sun and clouds, and the splendor of the red sunlight were indescribable from an earthly perspective. When the sun had risen completely, the air turned so cold that he could not help but shiver violently. Silver Mountain became transparent as if it were made of crystal, so transparent that he could almost see through the mountain.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Yearning for a fantastical landscape was an earnest longing for the people of late Chosŏn, even though it was hard to achieve in reality. It is interesting to witness the cases in *yadam* that fulfill such longings through magic. See Kim Chongwŏn trans., “*Sangwŏn O saeng Chungnul* [Eccentric O Chung-nul disguised as a beggar],” *Kŏmgye p'iltam* [Stories recorded at the silky brook] (Myŏngmundang, 1985), 204.

<sup>42</sup> 乃起開窓視之，則波濤萬頃，瀾泓洶湧，中有銀山萬丈接天而立，其顛日方上矣。雲海相盪，紅光射目，其廣大也，其光輝也，不可以俗眼目所可盡形。日上時，氣甚寒凜，令人戰慄，殆不能定矣。其銀山如水晶

This spectacle of the sunrise was incomparably grander than those witnessed from earthly mountains or seas. Even though Yu was not able to see the origin of the sunrise, he was able to approach closer than any other man could. Unprecedentedly, he witnessed and felt a spectacle never before imagined by any earthly person. On returning from the trip, he lost interest in life on the island and went back to his earthly hometown. After returning home, Yu was unable to lead a normal life, due partly to his old age, but also due to the fact that he had witnessed such a grand spectacle. When he came back to the earthly world, therefore, he had already transcended everyday life, as had been anticipated when he witnessed the spectacular sunrise.

Both *Kwandong no cho u tŭng sŏn* and *Sik Tan'gu Yu rang p'yohae* present a third landscape in which all traces of utopian and earthly lives have been completely erased. They both show spectacular and transcendental landscapes that are liberated from the limits of everyday life. The spectacle causes the visitor from the earthly world to undergo a fundamental existential transformation.

### 4.3 The paradox of sightseeing a third landscape

Utopia can exist either as an ideal living space or as a landscape for leisurely appreciation. Despite the differences of perspective between utopia creators and visitors, they are both inclined to regard utopia as a place in which people can live. This tendency is closely related to the spirit of the late Chosŏn era that had a strong orientation toward living in the moment.

Utopia is undeniably a living place for the utopia creators and a strange place for the visitors. Regardless of their intentions, visitors are led to the utopia and have special experiences. Instead of appreciating the utopia as a spectacle by keeping their distance from it, however, the visitors experience it as a place for living in.

Wherever people may be, no one is free from worldly calculations and obsessions, as long as they lead a worldly life. A living space cannot be an ideal place where one is liberated from desire and conflict. The more people become accustomed to a utopia as a place for living in, the more they lose interest in its freshness and charm. The utopia creators, therefore, covertly seek for another space and appreciate it strictly as a spectacle. They also introduce it to visitors.

A trip to a third landscape, which the utopia creator secretly appreciates and admires, is the greatest gift he can bestow on a visitor. Visitors are treated with food and drinks, just as in the earthly world. Hospitality in the utopia, however, is

---

削立，其外似可以通觀矣。問童子曰：“越彼巔則可見日出之本矣。”童子曰：“此山之外，吾先生亦不得往觀，勿復說也。” Asea Munhwasa ed., *Ch'ŏnggu yadam*, Vol. 2, 519.

differentiated by the invitations to the visitors to witness spectacular views. Treating the visitors with extraordinary scenery is more precious than entertaining them with a feast and fundamentally changes them by leaving them with fresh and deep impressions. This experience of the third landscape provides the visitors with a decisive chance to cleanse themselves from the dregs of worldly desire and be reborn as new human beings.

This experience, however, is a paradoxical one for the visitors: the more strongly they experience the spectacle, the harder it is for them to return to their former lives when they return home. In *Kwandong no cho u t'ung sŏn*, Yu saeng was forced to get married again by his mother as soon as he arrived home. His relationship with his wife was not harmonious and their marriage fell apart. In *Sik Tan'gu Yu rang p'yohae*, fisherman Yu was also subsequently incapable of leading a normal life. Even though as a worldly man he wanted to visit the utopia again, his attempt was not successful, for the utopia would not accept him back. In this regard, utopian landscape stories of *yadam* hint at the paradoxical fate of those who simultaneously recall both the utopia and the earthly world.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This article has analyzed so-called 'utopia seeking' *yadam* stories. Despite creating a very exclusive utopia, the utopia creators then desire to invite visitors. Although the motives for creating utopias are varied, the experiences of living in the utopias do not differ greatly; rather it is the visitors' perspectives that lead to differentiation among the utopian landscapes.

Constructing the foundations for communal living even in a utopia and searching for traces of everyday life, while enjoying the spectacles of the utopia, strongly reflect the atmosphere of the late Chosŏn *yadam*. The utopia creators want to show the visitors not just the landscape itself but also traces of communal life. Most visitors succeed in finding them. There is no fundamental difference between the utopian life and the worldly one. Utopian life is but an extension of worldly life.

Those who experience the place as a background or space for everyday life want another landscape that is separated from their everyday lives. For both creators and visitors, a utopia has to be a living space to which they can commit themselves. No matter where they may live, people are not free from worldly calculations and obsessions, as long as they lead everyday lives. Space for everyday living cannot be an ideal place liberated from desire and conflict. The utopia creators, therefore, covertly seek a third landscape. The experience of a third landscape provides the visitors with a decisive chance to cleanse themselves from the dregs of worldly desire and be reborn as new human beings.

However, this experience is a paradoxical one for the visitors: the more strongly they experience the spectacle, the harder it is for them to return their former lives when they return home. As a result, the worldly men try to visit the utopia again. However, their attempts are not successful, for utopia will not accept back anyone from the earthly world. In this regard, the utopian landscape stories of *yadam* hint at the paradoxical fate of people who simultaneously yearn for both utopia and the earthly world, but cannot find eternal rest in either place. Utopian *yadam* stories fantastically represent that fate.

Submitted: 18 March, 2014  
Sent for revision: 14 April, 2014  
Accepted: 27 April, 2014



LEE KANG-OK (kolee@yu.ac.kr) is a professor in the Department of Korean Language Education, Yeungnam University, Korea.

## REFERENCES

- An Sökkyöng. *Sapkyo chip* [Sapkyo collection]. Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1986.
- Ch'oe Kyöngghan. "Hwamyönsang üi p'unggyöng kwa sijök p'unggyöng üi ch'ai wa kün'gö" [The difference between scenic landscape and poetic landscape and its grounds]. *Han'guk kojön yön'gu* [Journal of Korean Classical Literature] 20 (2009): 39–72.
- Im Pang. *Ch'önyerok* [A record of eccentric stories]. Translated by Chöng Hwan'guk. Seoul: Sönggyun'gwan Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2005.
- Kim Chongjik. "Yu Turyu rok" [Mt. Chiri travelogue]. In *Sönin tül üi Chirisan jurammok* [Ancestors' Mt. Chiri travelogue]. Seoul: Tolbaegae, 2000, 246–253.
- Lee Kang-ok (Yi Kang-ok). *Han'guk yadam yön'gu* [A study on Korean *yadam*]. Seoul: Tolbaegae, 2006.
- Nakamura Yosio. *P'unggyöng üi k'waerak—k'üriet'ö, p'unggyöng üil mandülta* [The pleasure of the landscape-creator—creator, the making of a landscape]. Translated by Kang Yöngjo. Seoul: Hyohyöng Ch'ulp'an, 2007.
- No Myönghüm. *Tongp'aeraksong* [Memorizing by heart stories of our country]. Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1990.
- Pak Yongsik. *Han'guk yadam sabwa chip söng* [An anthology of history and stories of Korean *yadam*]. Seoul: Taedong, 1989.
- Asea Munhwasa ed. *Ch'önggu yadam* [Classic short stories from the Green Hills]. Vols. 1 and 2. Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1988.
- Sö Yu-Yöng. *Kümgye p'iltam* [Stories recorded at the silky brook]. Translated by Kim Chonggwön. Seoul: Myöngmundang, 1985.
- Sim Kyöngho. "Tongasia sansu kihaeng munhak üi munhwasajök üimi" [Cultural meanings of East Asian travel literature]. In *Han'guk hanmunhak yön'gu* [Journal of Korean Literature] 49 (2010): 89–124.
- Sin Tonbok. *Haksan hanön* [Leisurely stories recorded by Haksan]. In *Han'guk munhön sölhwa chönjip* [Anthologies of Korean written tales]. Vol. 8. Seoul: Minjok Munhwasa, 1981.
- Sullivan, E. D. S. ed. *The Utopian Vision: Seven Essays on the Quincentennial of Sir Thomas More*. San Diego: San Diego State University Press, 1983.
- Yi Hüip'yöng. *Kyesö yadam* [Classic short stories from Kyesö]. In *Han'guk munhön sölhwa chönjip* [Anthologies of Korean written tales]. Vol. 1. Seoul: Taehaksa, 1981.
- Yi Sinsöng and Chöng Myönggi, eds. *Yangün ch'önmi* [Exposition of trivial stories]. Seoul: Pogosa, 1999.
- Yi Wönmyöng. *Wönbon Tongya hwijip* [The original *Tongya hwijip*]. 2 vols. Seoul: Pogosa, 1992.

---

Yu Mongin. “*Myŏnggi Hwang Chini*” [A renowned Korean *kisaeng*, Hwang Chini].  
In *Ōu yadam* [Ōu’s classic short stories]. Seoul: Tolbaegae, 2006. 78–79.

K C I