

Korean Perceptions of the Environment as Viewed through Village Names

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Abstract

Toponyms can be used as the basic materials with which to develop an awareness of the regional and historical characteristics of a certain area. Furthermore, toponyms, which constitute the end result of people's perceptions of the environment, can provide important clues to identify how people perceived places, regions, and landscapes. The present study reviews Korean perceptions of the environment based on an examination of the toponymic terms used in conjunction with Korean village names during the early twentieth century. In addition, the study also compares the general regional characteristics of individual provinces. The toponymic terms analyzed herein are divided into those related to location, topography, water, and weather, with the frequency and ratio of each example measured. In the past, Koreans preferred closed geographical areas such as valleys and basins as a location for villages. Within such valleys and basins, they sought out places that were elevated, centralized, or located further inland. Furthermore, Koreans considered the supply of sunlight, a factor which greatly influenced everyday life and agriculture, as the most important weather-related attribute when it came to the determination of the location of villages. As such, toponymic terms such as yang (light), dong (east), and chun (spring) were frequently used in the names of village. The theory of yin 陰 and yang 陽 and the Five Elements, which constitutes a traditional Asian school of thought, also influenced the use of toponymic terms.

Keywords: toponym, toponymic term, village name, regional characteristics, environmental perception

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Introduction

Toponyms represent a kind of symbol created by humans to separate one specific place from others. However, as these toponyms were generated in a manner that reflected the local natural and human environment, such as topographic features, climate, vegetation, history, and culture, they involve much more than a simple symbol. To this end, as toponyms can provide important clues to the nature and history of a locale, significant interest has been paid to the study of toponyms in both the Eastern and Western worlds.

Many such studies have been conducted in the field of geography and, in particular, in the field of historical geography. Examples include studies that compared the toponyms recorded in historical materials with existing names in order to identify the correct location and to restore the historical landscape (Lee and Jeon 2005; Kim and Yoon 2006; Jeon 2006); studies which traced the origins and changes of toponyms and analyzed the relationship between toponyms and land use (Lee 1986; Nam 1997); and studies which have attempted to shed light on the establishment of leadership groups and cultural regions based on the distribution of toponyms (Kwon 2004; S. Kim 2004). Although fewer in number, some studies have also sought to identify people's perceptions of the environment based on toponyms, with the assumption being that toponyms were the result of environmental perceptions; there have also been studies which focused on the importance of climatic factors in terms of Korean perceptions of the environment, which revolved around the analysis of the distribution of toponyms related to the climate (Y. Kim 1986); and studies which analyzed the characteristics of Koreans' environmental perceptions based on village names (Jeong 1982; Park 1999). These studies concluded that toponyms were more than simple symbols; they in fact combined many meanings. In this regard, toponyms were shown to combine the awareness of man, who named the relevant places, and the inherent characteristics of the latter. However, as these studies were limited to certain parts of Korea or individual cases, they have essentially failed to examine the

general tendencies in Korea.

In keeping with the line of reasoning laid out in previous studies, the present study analyzes how people perceived and assessed places, regions, and landscapes, based on toponyms that were rooted in complex environmental perceptions. At the same time, to overcome the limitations of the previous studies, the present study quantitatively analyzes village names nationwide. More specifically, the study analyzed the village names in thirteen provinces during the early twentieth century to evaluate how the people in each province perceived their environment, and the assess regional traits. The present study adopted village names as the subject of analysis because the latter originated from the direct environmental experiences of local residents, and as such they contained elements of these environmental perceptions. Furthermore, the ability to conduct large, nationwide analyses makes it possible to identify regional tendencies in terms of environmental perceptions.

Village names in Korea went through many changes. In this regard, the reorganization of administrative districts at the national level implemented by the Japanese colonial government in 1914 brought about the biggest changes. The village names used in this study were extracted from the *Shinkyu taisho chosen zendo fugun menrido meisho ichiran* 新舊對照朝鮮全道府郡面里洞名稱一覽 (The Directory of Old and New Names of Districts, Counties, Townships, Villages, and Neighborhoods on the Complete Map of Joseon), compiled by Ochi Tadashichi in 1917, a work which saliently reflects the situation right before the reorganization of administrative districts.¹ This book, which consists of 1,096 pages, encompasses the names of all *ri* and *dong* in Korea before and after the reorganization of administrative districts in 1914. In this regard, the present study used this material because it contains village names prior to 1914.

1. As such, the village names—as well as the district units such as *myeon* (a subdivision of counties), *gun* (county), and *do* (province) to which these villages belonged—that were employed in this study were organized prior to 1914.

Table 1. Number of Village Names Analyzed by Province

Province	No. of villages	Province	No. of villages
Gyeonggi-do	5,220	Gyeongsangnam-do	4,485
Gangwon-do	2,956	Hwanghae-do	5,101
Chungcheongbuk-do	3,789	Pyeonganbuk-do	1,473
Chungcheongnam-do	7,599	Pyeongannam-do	2,458
Jeollabuk-do	7,017	Hamgyeongbuk-do	1,481
Jeollanam-do	10,336	Hamgyeongnam-do	3,292
Gyeongsangbuk-do	7,652		

The village names prior to 1914 found in the *Shinkyu taisho chosen zendo fugun menrido meisho ichiran* are broken down by province in Table 1. Village names which contained toponymic terms related to environmental perceptions were then extracted and used to analyze frequency and regional break downs. The selection of toponymic terms related to the perception of the environment was conducted by, based on a reference to previous studies, dividing the terms into four categories, namely, those related to location, topography, water, and climate (Jeong 1982; Lee 1986; Y. Kim 1986; Park 1999). Geographical terms that had various meanings and, as such, were difficult to classify were excluded from the sample.

Meanwhile, the analysis of toponymic terms was conducted using only the name of villages and not units such as *ri* and *dong*.² The name was then divided into front and back morphemes. For example, Sanggok-ri 上谷里, a two-morphemic word, is composed of the front (*sang* 上) and back (*gok* 谷) morphemes. One-morphemic words, such as Sang-ri 上里, were included in the front morpheme category. All the village names analyzed in this study were Chinese character-based toponyms, and the majority of them were composed of two-morphemic words.

2. *Ri* 里 and *dong* 洞 are the names given to the lowest sub-administrative units in Korea.

Analysis of the Frequency of Village Names by Category

Village Names Related to Location

The perception of location can be regarded as the most basic environmental perception. People perceive the spaces which they have experienced in an organized manner and attempt to bestow a meaning upon them. In this regard, the methods used to grant a meaning to the surrounding spaces, based on concepts such as distance and direction, as well as to interpret the implications of these spaces, have been universally shared by all mankind across time and space.

This method of developing environmental perceptions is rooted in the notion that people ultimately constitute the basic standard for all things in the universe. According to this notion, the relationship between the basic posture and structure of the human body, as well as people, represent the fundamental principle around which spaces should be organized and perceived. If we were to divide spaces based on the posture and structure of the human body, we would conclude that people, who stand upright, primarily divide things into front and rear, followed by left and right sides, and then upper and lower sections (Tuan 1995, 63-72).

The results of these spatial perceptions have also been reflected in toponyms. Toponyms related to location such as the front and rear, left and right, and upper and lower, are commonly found in all cultural zones throughout the world. Toponymic terms related to location also account for a significant ratio of village names in Korea, a clue that provides some insight into the earlier environmental perceptions. One finds many instances in Korea in which toponymic terms related to a location were used when a village was divided due to factors such as an increase in population or the development of farmland. The frequency with which toponymic terms, such as *jung* 中 (center), *sang* 上 (upper), *ha* 下 (lower), *nae* 內 (inside), *oe* 外 (outside), *jeon* 前 (front/forward), *hu* 後 (rear/backward), *jwa* 左 (left), *u* 右 (right), *dong* 東 (east), *seo* 西 (west), *nam* 南 (south), and *buk* 北 (north), related to location was employed was calculated herein, with the results pre-

sented in Table 2 and Table 3.

A look at the ratio of toponymic terms used in the front and back morphemes of toponyms reveals that with the exception of the words *jeon*, *nam*, and *buk*, the rest of the toponymic terms were used as the front morpheme. Moreover, *sang* was found to be the most frequently employed toponymic term related to location that was used in conjunction with village names at the national level. More to the point, *sang* was included in 5.28 percent of all village names in Korea. Terms such as *ha*, *nae*, and *jung* were also frequently employed. On the other hand, the least frequently employed toponymic term was *u*. *Jwa* was also used less frequently. As far as opposite toponymic terms are concerned, *sang* was used more than *ha*, *nae* more often than *oe*, *hu* more than *jeon*, and *jwa* more than *u*. In particular, *nae* was used almost twofold more than *oe*.

As far as the use of toponymic terms at the provincial level is concerned, Hwanghae-do province was found to feature the highest ratio of toponymic terms related to location. While the term “*sang*” was most frequently employed in Hamgyeongnam-do, Hwanghae-do, and Pyeonganbuk-do provinces, it was the least frequently employed in Jeollanam-do, Gyeongsangnam-do, and Gyeonggi-do provinces. For its part, the term “*ha*” was most frequently employed in Hwanghae-do and Gangwon-do provinces, and the least utilized in Jeollanam-do province. *Nae* and *oe* were most frequently used in Jeollanam-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces, and least employed in Hamgyeongbuk-do and Pyeonganbuk-do provinces. Toponymic terms related to location such as *jeon* and *hu* as well as *jwa* and *u* were not frequently utilized. In this regard, while *jeon* and *hu* were most frequently employed in Gangwon-do province, *jwa* and *u* were most popularly employed in Hwanghae-do province.

Meanwhile, the directional terms of *dong* (east), *nam* (south), *seo* (west), and *buk* (north)—according to frequency order—were used at the national level. *Dong* was more frequently used than the other directions. While *nam* and *seo* were used at a similar frequency, *buk* was less frequently utilized. One interesting aspect which emerged during the survey was the presence of clear provincial differences in terms of

Table 2. Number and Ratio of Village Names Related to Location (1)

Region	Frequency	Location-related toponymic terms													
		jung 中		sang 上		ha 下		nae 内		oe 外		jeon 前		hu 后	
		front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme
Gyeonggi-do	Number	64	15	178	43	164	68	88	45	34	11	8	13	23	12
	%	1.23	0.29	3.41	0.82	3.14	1.30	1.69	0.86	0.65	0.21	0.15	0.25	0.44	0.23
Gangwon-do	Number	46	14	162	34	148	32	47	19	35	3	8	5	23	3
	%	1.56	0.47	5.48	1.15	5.01	1.08	1.59	0.64	1.18	0.10	0.27	0.17	0.78	0.10
Chungcheongbuk-do	Number	77	22	152	33	134	26	75	17	51	2	1	2	11	0
	%	2.03	0.58	4.01	0.87	3.54	0.69	1.98	0.45	1.35	0.05	0.03	0.05	0.29	0.00
Chungcheongnam-do	Number	175	39	373	46	334	51	149	44	87	9	3	4	25	8
	%	2.30	0.51	4.91	0.61	4.40	0.67	1.96	0.58	1.14	0.12	0.04	0.05	0.33	0.11
Jeollabuk-do	Number	122	41	270	73	225	51	145	69	94	5	14	6	26	9
	%	1.74	0.58	3.85	1.04	3.21	0.73	2.07	0.98	1.34	0.07	0.20	0.09	0.37	0.13
Jeollanam-do	number	137	15	241	46	183	52	177	87	90	31	3	5	7	3
	%	1.33	0.15	2.33	0.45	1.77	0.50	1.71	0.84	0.87	0.30	0.03	0.05	0.07	0.03
Gyeongsangbuk-so	Number	152	50	313	153	268	138	114	62	81	10	10	11	14	3
	%	1.99	0.65	4.09	2.00	3.50	1.80	1.49	0.81	1.06	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.18	0.04
Gyeongsangnam-do	Number	87	11	138	36	97	35	98	33	56	15	5	8	12	1
	%	1.94	0.25	3.98	0.80	2.16	0.78	2.19	0.74	1.25	0.33	0.11	0.18	0.27	0.02
Hwanghae-do	Number	131	24	351	41	324	47	110	23	68	4	7	7	11	8
	%	2.57	0.47	6.88	0.80	6.35	0.92	2.16	0.45	1.33	0.08	0.14	0.14	0.22	0.16
Pyeongangbuk-do	Number	15	15	37	63	22	61	10	8	6	4	0	0	0	1
	%	1.02	1.02	2.51	4.28	1.49	4.14	0.68	0.54	0.41	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07
Pyeongangnam-do	Number	37	14	60	56	36	47	25	8	9	2	0	2	4	3
	%	1.51	0.57	2.44	2.28	1.46	1.91	1.02	0.33	0.37	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.16	0.12
Hamgyeongbuk-do	Number	19	4	64	24	41	22	8	13	2	5	0	1	2	2
	%	1.28	0.27	4.32	1.62	2.77	1.49	0.54	0.88	0.14	0.34	0.00	0.07	0.14	0.14
Hamgyeongnam-do	Number	121	56	166	165	117	64	37	13	12	3	1	9	4	4
	%	3.68	1.70	5.04	5.01	3.55	1.94	1.12	0.39	0.36	0.09	0.03	0.27	0.12	0.12
Nationwide	Number	1183	320	2505	813	2093	694	1083	441	625	104	60	73	162	57
	%	1.88	0.51	3.99	1.29	3.33	1.10	1.72	0.70	0.99	0.17	0.10	0.12	0.26	0.09

the frequency with which directional terms were employed. While *dong*, *nam*, *seo*, and *buk* was the order employed in terms of popularity in Chungcheongbuk-do, Jeollabuk-do, Jeollanam-do, Pyeongannam-do, and Hamgyeongnam-do provinces, the order was that of *dong*, *seo*, *nam*, and *buk* in Gyeonggi-do, Chungcheongnam-do, Gyeongsang-

buk-do, Gyeongsangnam-do, Hwanghae-do, and Pyeonganbuk-do provinces. Finally, while these directional terms went from *nam*, *dong*, *buk*, and *seo* in terms of popularity in Gangwon-do province, the order was that of *nam*, *seo*, *dong*, and *buk* in Hamgyeongbuk-do province.

Table 3. Number and Ratio of Village Names Related to Location (2)

Region	Frequency	Location-related toponymic terms											
		<i>jwa</i> 左		<i>u</i> 右		<i>dong</i> 東		<i>seo</i> 西		<i>nam</i> 南		<i>buk</i> 北	
		front mor- pHEME	back mor- pHEME	front mor- pHEME	back mor- pHEME	front mor- pHEME	back mor- pHEME	front mor- pHEME	back mor- pHEME	front mor- pHEME	back mor- pHEME	front mor- pHEME	back mor- pHEME
Gyeonggi-do	Number	2	1	0	2	94	5	66	9	39	14	17	20
	%	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.04	1.80	0.10	1.26	0.17	0.75	0.27	0.33	0.38
Gangwon-do	Number	0	0	1	0	29	5	18	6	23	18	24	10
	%	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.98	0.17	0.61	0.20	0.78	0.61	0.81	0.34
Chungcheongbuk-do	Number	0	0	4	0	41	36	24	29	20	38	9	21
	%	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00	1.08	0.95	0.63	0.77	0.53	1.00	0.24	0.55
Chungcheongnam-do	Number	2	1	3	0	125	43	62	36	61	27	26	31
	%	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.00	1.64	0.57	0.82	0.47	0.80	0.36	0.34	0.41
Jeollabuk-do	Number	1	3	2	2	97	36	67	18	63	29	19	23
	%	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.03	1.38	0.51	0.95	0.26	0.90	0.41	0.27	0.33
Jeollanam-do	Number	4	0	5	1	180	50	111	41	111	61	37	16
	%	0.04	0.00	0.05	0.01	1.74	0.48	1.07	0.40	1.07	0.59	0.36	0.15
Gyeongsangbuk-do	Number	2	2	2	0	103	38	79	42	75	43	40	22
	%	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.00	1.35	0.50	1.03	0.55	0.98	0.56	0.52	0.29
Gyeongsangnam-do	Number	7	0	2	0	91	47	75	35	60	36	20	17
	%	0.16	0.00	0.04	0.00	2.03	1.05	1.67	0.78	1.34	0.80	0.45	0.38
Hwanghae-do	Number	9	5	7	2	126	14	64	5	50	11	27	9
	%	0.18	0.10	0.14	0.04	2.47	0.27	1.25	0.10	0.98	0.22	0.53	0.18
Pyeonganbuk-do	Number	1	0	1	0	56	8	35	24	40	18	13	13
	%	0.07	0.00	0.07	0.00	3.80	0.54	2.38	1.63	2.72	1.22	0.88	0.88
Pyeongannam-do	Number	0	0	0	0	52	9	42	13	49	30	9	11
	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.12	0.37	1.71	0.53	1.99	1.22	0.37	0.45
Hamgyeongbuk-do	Number	0	0	0	0	20	3	23	3	32	21	8	11
	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.35	0.20	1.55	0.20	2.16	1.42	0.54	0.74
Hamgyeongnam-do	Number	6	0	6	0	125	46	66	50	71	71	13	3
	%	0.18	0.00	0.18	0.00	3.80	1.40	2.00	1.52	2.16	2.16	0.39	0.09
Nationwide	Number	34	12	33	7	1139	340	732	311	694	417	262	207
	%	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.01	1.81	0.54	1.16	0.49	1.10	0.66	0.42	0.33

Village Names Related to Topography

A look at toponyms in Korea reveals that many have been related to the natural environment (Lee 1986, 28). In this regard, toponyms related to topography were most frequently uncovered. This situation can be regarded as being rooted in the fact that the easiest and most precise way to classify land was to divide it based on its shape or topography.

The toponyms related to topography involved those linked to mountains, valleys, and plains. The frequency with which toponymic terms related to topography were employed was analyzed. More to the point, the frequency of the use of the terms *san* 山 (mountain) and *bong* 峰 (peak), which were regarded as toponymic terms that symbolized mountains, *gok* 谷 (valley) and *sil* 室/實 (dale), which reflected valleys, and *pyeong* 坪/平 (flat), *ya* 野 (field), *won* 原 (plain), and *beol* 伐 (arable), in their capacity as terms associated with plains, was examined in turn (please refer to Table 4 and Table 5).

Contrary to the toponymic terms related to location examined in the previous section, the toponymic terms related to topography were mainly used as the back morpheme for toponyms. In fact, only *beol* was used more often as a front morpheme than as a back one. Village names related to mountains were most commonly found, followed by those related to valleys and plains. 6.16 percent of the village names nationwide included the word *san*, 4.19 percent *gok*, and 3.18 percent *pyeong*. On the other hand, only 0.1 percent of the village names included the terms *ya*, *sil*, or *won*.

The majority of the provinces included a higher number of village names related to mountains, followed by those related to valleys and plains. However, Gyeonggi-do, Gyeongsangbuk-do, and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces featured a higher ratio of village names related to valleys than those related to mountains. Another point which can be focused on is the fact that while no significant differences were recorded in terms of the frequency of mountain and valley-related toponyms in the central and southern regions of Korea, the use of mountain-related toponyms was much more common in the northern parts of the

Table 4. Number and Ratio of Village Names Related to Topography (1)

Region	Frequency	Mountain-related toponymic terms						Valley-related toponymic terms					
		san 山		bong 峰		total		gok 谷		sil 峯/室		total	
		front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme
Gyeonggi-do	Number	64	233	3	19	67	252	18	315	1	11	19	326
	%	1.23	4.46	0.06	0.36	1.28	4.83	0.34	6.03	0.02	0.21	0.36	6.25
Gangwon-do	Number	26	112	2	18	28	130	4	138	1	8	5	146
	%	0.88	3.79	0.07	0.61	0.95	4.40	0.14	4.67	0.03	0.27	0.17	4.94
Chungcheongbuk-do	Number	54	153	2	22	56	175	4	216	1	3	5	219
	%	1.43	4.04	0.05	0.58	1.48	4.62	0.11	5.70	0.03	0.08	0.13	5.78
Chungcheongnam-do	Number	130	437	4	39	134	476	7	386	1	5	8	391
	%	1.71	5.75	0.05	0.51	1.76	6.26	0.09	5.08	0.01	0.07	0.11	5.15
Jeollabuk-do	Number	73	405	3	35	76	440	8	227	6	7	14	234
	%	1.04	5.77	0.04	0.50	1.08	6.27	0.11	3.24	0.09	0.10	0.20	3.33
Jeollanam-do	Number	128	699	6	51	134	750	4	383	1	4	5	387
	%	1.24	6.76	0.06	0.49	1.30	7.26	0.04	3.71	0.01	0.04	0.05	3.74
Gyeongsangbuk-do	Number	53	392	0	22	53	414	5	490	2	2	7	492
	%	0.69	5.12	0.00	0.29	0.69	5.41	0.07	6.40	0.03	0.03	0.09	6.43
Gyeongsangnam-do	Number	40	215	3	13	43	228	3	266	4	2	7	268
	%	0.89	4.79	0.07	0.29	0.96	5.08	0.07	5.93	0.09	0.04	0.16	5.98
Hwanghae-do	Number	47	225	3	34	50	259	12	80	2	1	14	81
	%	0.92	4.41	0.06	0.67	0.98	5.08	0.24	1.57	0.04	0.02	0.27	1.59
Pyeongangbuk-do	Number	7	68	3	49	10	117	0	17	1	0	1	17
	%	0.48	4.62	0.20	3.33	0.68	7.94	0.00	1.15	0.07	0.00	0.07	1.15
Pyeongangnam-do	Number	23	104	0	25	23	129	0	25	0	1	0	26
	%	0.94	4.23	0.00	1.02	0.94	5.25	0.00	1.02	0.00	0.04	0.00	1.06
Hamgyeongbuk-do	Number	13	33	3	19	16	52	0	7	0	0	0	7
	%	0.88	2.23	0.20	1.28	1.08	3.51	0.00	0.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.47
Hamgyeongnam-do	Number	20	117	1	55	21	172	0	16	0	2	0	18
	%	0.61	3.55	0.03	1.67	0.64	5.22	0.00	0.49	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.55
Nationwide	Number	678	3193	33	401	711	3594	65	2566	20	46	85	2612
	%	1.08	5.08	0.05	0.64	1.13	5.72	0.10	4.08	0.03	0.07	0.14	4.16

country than that of valley-related toponyms. For example, the ratio of village names related to mountains in Hamgyeongnam-do and Hamgyeongbuk-do provinces was ten times higher than that of village names related to valleys. It is also interesting to note that toponymic terms related to plains frequently emerged in Hamgyeongnam-do, Hamgyeongbuk-do, and Pyeonganbuk-do provinces.

An examination of the frequency with which individual toponymic terms were employed shows that *san* was used more frequently in southern parts of the country such as the Chungcheong, Jeolla, and Gyeongsang regions. Meanwhile, *bong* was used relatively more often in northern parts of the nation such as Pyeongan and Hamgyeong regions. *Gok* was used particularly often in Gyeonggi-do province and

Table 5. Number and Ratio of Village Names Related to Topography (2)

Region	Frequency	Plain-related toponymic terms									
		pyeong 平/坪		ya 野		won 原		beol 伐		total	
		front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme	front morpheme	back morpheme
Gyeonggi-do	Number	41	71	7	7	1	2	2	3	51	83
	%	0.79	1.36	0.13	0.13	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.98	1.59
Gangwon-do	Number	11	75	4	6	2	8	0	0	17	89
	%	0.37	2.54	0.14	0.20	0.07	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.58	3.01
Chungcheongbuk-do	Number	33	115	1	2	0	2	3	2	37	121
	%	0.87	3.04	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.98	3.19
Chungcheongnam-do	Number	81	121	5	9	2	3	10	5	98	138
	%	1.07	1.59	0.07	0.12	0.03	0.04	0.13	0.07	1.29	1.82
Jeollabuk-do	Number	59	178	7	3	1	2	4	2	71	185
	%	0.84	2.54	0.10	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.03	1.01	2.64
Jeollanam-do	Number	126	206	9	7	1	1	0	1	136	215
	%	1.22	1.99	0.09	0.07	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	1.32	2.08
Gyeongsangbuk-do	Number	55	194	2	13	2	10	5	1	64	218
	%	0.72	2.54	0.03	0.17	0.03	0.13	0.07	0.01	0.84	2.85
Gyeongsangnam-do	Number	62	92	0	1	0	3	1	2	63	98
	%	1.38	2.05	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.07	0.02	0.04	1.40	2.19
Hwanghae-do	Number	31	55	10	13	1	7	1	0	43	75
	%	0.61	1.08	0.20	0.25	0.02	0.14	0.02	0.00	0.84	1.47
Pyeonganbuk-do	Number	8	52	0	4	0	0	1	0	9	56
	%	0.54	3.53	0.00	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.61	3.80
Pyeongannam-do	Number	17	59	1	1	1	1	0	0	19	61
	%	0.69	2.40	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.77	2.48
Hamgyeongbuk-do	Number	5	81	0	1	2	1	0	0	7	83
	%	0.34	5.47	0.00	0.07	0.14	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.47	5.60
Hamgyeongnam-do	Number	17	151	2	1	4	5	0	2	23	159
	%	0.52	4.59	0.06	0.03	0.12	0.15	0.00	0.06	0.70	4.83
Nationwide	Number	546	1450	48	68	17	45	27	18	638	1581
	%	0.87	2.31	0.08	0.11	0.03	0.07	0.04	0.03	1.01	2.52

was also frequently employed in Gyeongsangbuk-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces. Moreover, while *pyeong* was frequently used in Hamgyeongbuk-do and Hamgyeongnam-do provinces, *ya* was routinely employed in Hwanghae-do and Gangwon-do provinces.

Village Names Related to Water

Water is an essential element of human life. Water was particularly important in traditional societies where agriculture represented the basic foundation of the society. Water was, as such, an essential element without which man could not survive for even a day. However, it could also cause fatal disasters that threatened human life and agriculture. As such, when selecting the location of a village, it became important to select a place where one could at once have easy access to water and be protected from floods. As a result, there were many village names related to water.

The present study analyzed the frequency of twelve toponymic terms related to water, namely *su* 水 (water), *jeong* 井 (well), *cheon* 泉 (spring), *gye* 溪 (creek), *cheon* 川 (stream), *gang* 江 (river), *ha* 河 (river), *ji* 池 (pond), *yeon* 淵 (wetland), *taek* 澤 (swamp/marsh), *ho* 湖 (lake), and *hae* 海 (sea). Among these twelve water-related toponymic terms, one finds many instances in which four (*su*, *gang*, *ha*, and *hae*) were used as front morphemes; meanwhile, the other eight terms were more frequently used as back morphemes.

A look at Table 6 reveals that the most commonly employed toponymic term was *cheon* 川 (stream), which was included in 2.18 percent of all village names. Other frequently used terms in village names included *su*, *jeong*, and *gye*. Meanwhile, the least popular term was *taek*, appearing in only 0.02 percent of cases, followed by *ha*, *hae*, and *yeon* used in less than 0.5 percent of instances.

A look at the frequency with which water-related toponymic terms were used at the individual province level shows that the use of *cheon* 泉 (spring), *cheon* 川 (stream), and *gang* 江 (river) was relatively evenly spread out. Meanwhile, regional variations were found in conjunction

with the other water-related toponymic terms. For example, while *su* was commonly employed in Hamgyeongbuk-do, Gangwon-do, and Hamgyeongnam-do provinces, *jeong* was frequently used in Gyeonggi-do and Hwanghae-do provinces. Moreover, *gye* was used relatively more often in Gyeongsangbuk-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces, and *ho* was more routinely found in Hamgyeongbuk-do and Hamgyeongnam-do provinces. Finally, *ji* was much more common in the southern parts of the country than in the northern regions.

Table 6. Number and Ratio of Village Names Related to Water

Region	Frequency	Water-related toponymic terms											
		<i>su</i> 山	<i>jeong</i> 井	<i>cheon</i> 泉	<i>gye</i> 溪	<i>cheon</i> 川	<i>gang</i> 江	<i>ha</i> 河	<i>ji</i> 地	<i>yeon</i> 淵	<i>taek</i> 澤	<i>ho</i> 湖	<i>hae</i> 海
Gyeonggi-do	Number	95	160	26	28	116	19	4	26	5	2	12	1
	%	1.82	3.07	0.50	0.54	2.22	0.36	0.08	0.50	0.10	0.04	0.23	0.25
Gangwon-do	Number	64	17	24	29	98	13	10	17	30	0	24	2
	%	2.17	0.58	0.81	0.98	3.32	0.44	0.34	0.58	1.01	0.00	0.81	0.07
Chungcheongbuk-do	Number	54	35	26	44	75	24	5	33	5	0	13	3
	%	1.43	0.92	0.69	1.16	1.98	0.63	0.13	0.87	0.13	0.00	0.34	0.08
Chungcheongnam-do	Number	118	117	41	94	160	43	4	28	21	1	21	13
	%	1.55	1.54	0.54	1.24	2.11	0.57	0.05	0.37	0.28	0.01	0.28	0.17
Jeollabuk-do	Number	123	115	19	80	150	33	3	52	12	1	22	13
	%	1.75	1.64	0.27	1.14	2.14	0.47	0.04	0.74	0.17	0.01	0.31	0.19
Jeollanam-do	Number	189	74	63	148	200	78	7	73	19	1	82	61
	%	1.83	0.72	0.61	1.43	1.93	0.75	0.07	0.71	0.18	0.01	0.79	0.59
Gyeongsangbuk-do	Number	106	59	64	153	239	39	17	72	22	2	63	6
	%	1.39	0.77	0.84	2.00	3.12	0.51	0.22	0.94	0.29	0.03	0.82	0.08
Gyeongsangnam-do	Number	48	38	33	81	121	17	4	36	20	1	32	8
	%	1.07	0.85	0.74	1.81	2.70	0.38	0.09	0.80	0.45	0.02	0.71	0.18
Hwanghae-do	Number	73	140	45	37	81	15	8	7	12	2	13	17
	%	1.43	2.74	0.88	0.73	1.59	0.29	0.16	0.14	0.24	0.04	0.25	0.33
Pyeongangbuk-do	Number	18	5	4	8	30	12	4	1	10	0	14	3
	%	1.22	0.34	0.27	0.54	2.04	0.81	0.27	0.07	0.68	0.00	0.95	0.20
Pyeongangnam-do	Number	37	58	37	21	21	11	2	12	11	1	9	8
	%	1.51	2.36	1.51	0.85	0.85	0.45	0.08	0.49	0.45	0.04	0.37	0.33
Hamgyeongbuk-do	Number	44	1	6	9	21	4	10	0	5	0	25	1
	%	2.97	0.07	0.41	0.61	1.42	0.27	0.68	0.00	0.34	0.00	1.69	0.07
Hamgyeongnam-do	Number	67	16	24	28	56	12	14	7	19	2	65	6
	%	2.04	0.49	0.73	0.85	1.70	0.36	0.43	0.21	0.58	0.06	1.97	0.18
Nationwide	Number	1036	835	412	760	1368	320	92	364	191	13	395	154
	%	1.65	1.33	0.66	1.21	2.18	0.51	0.15	0.58	0.30	0.02	0.63	0.24

Village Names Related to Climate

In its capacity as one of the natural elements that become inherent to a region, the climate greatly influences everyday life. The absence of significant regional climate variations in such a small territory as the Korean peninsula means that the climate was not frequently employed to demarcate land. However, toponyms were created based on climatic elements in cases where such elements strongly influenced the environmental perception of the local people. In other words, the emergence of an impressive climatic phenomenon in a region, or of instances in which such factors greatly influenced residents' lives, heavily increased the likelihood that such elements appeared in the toponyms selected by the residents.

The present study classified the climate-related village names into those related to sunshine, rainfall, wind, and seasons. To this end, while the toponymic terms related to sunshine consisted of *yang* 陽 (light), *eum* 陰 (shade), and *il* 日 (sun), those concerned with rainfall were composed of *u* 雨 (rain), *un* 雲 (cloud), and *seol* 雪 (snow). Meanwhile, the toponymic term related to wind was limited to *pung* 風 (wind), and those pertaining to seasons to *chun* 春 (spring), *ha* 夏 (summer), *chu* 秋 (autumn), and *dong* 冬 (winter).³ The frequency with which these toponymic terms were employed at the regional level were then calculated (refer to Table 7 and Table 8).⁴ All of these climate-related toponymic terms, with the exception of *yang* and *il*, were used as the front morpheme.

A look at these tables reveals that climate-related toponymic terms were not employed as frequently as those related to water or topography. As far as the toponymic terms related to climate were concerned,

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3. In addition, this research also extracted and analyzed temperature-related toponymic terms such as *han* 寒 (cold), *naeng* 冷 (cold), and *on* 溫 (warm). However, the majority of these terms were used as a modifier—for example, *naengcheon* 冷泉 (cold stream), *onjeong* 溫井 (warm well), and *hangye* 寒溪 (cold creek)—to express the nature of water by combining them with words such as *cheon*, *jeong*, and *gye*.
 4. The classification of types of toponymic terms related to climate was based on a previous study (Y. Kim 1986).

the study found that toponymic terms related to sunshine were the most commonly employed ones, followed by those pertaining to rainfall, wind, and season. While the most commonly employed climate-related toponymic term was *yang*, this was followed by *un*, *il*, *eum*, and *chun*. In descending order, the most frequently used sunshine-related toponymic terms were *yang*, *il*, and *eum*. However, *yang* was

Table 7. Number and Ratio of Village Names Related to Climate (1)

Region	Frequency	Sunshine-related toponymic terms				Rainfall-related toponymic terms			
		<i>yang</i> 陽	<i>eum</i> 陰	<i>il</i> 日	total	<i>u</i> 雨	<i>un</i> 雲	<i>seol</i> 雪	total
Gyeonggi-do	Number	49	6	18	73	2	29	10	45
	%	0.94	0.11	0.34	1.40	0.04	0.56	0.19	0.86
Gangwon-do	Number	26	4	20	50	2	43	1	49
	%	0.88	0.14	0.68	1.69	0.07	1.45	0.03	1.66
Chungcheong-buk-do	Number	48	5	7	60	2	27	2	32
	%	1.27	0.13	0.18	1.58	0.05	0.71	0.05	0.84
Chungcheong-nam-do	Number	92	15	13	120	0	50	5	59
	%	1.21	0.20	0.17	1.58	0.00	0.66	0.07	0.78
Jeollabuk-do	Number	71	11	9	91	5	87	2	94
	%	1.01	0.16	0.13	1.30	0.07	1.24	0.03	1.34
Jeollanam-do	Number	79	13	21	113	1	118	0	120
	%	0.76	0.13	0.20	1.09	0.01	1.14	0.00	1.16
Gyeongsang-buk-do	Number	75	16	37	128	4	47	3	54
	%	0.98	0.21	0.48	1.67	0.05	0.61	0.04	0.71
Gyeongsang-nam-do	Number	44	8	7	59	2	34	2	38
	%	0.98	0.18	0.16	1.32	0.04	0.76	0.04	0.85
Hwanghae-do	Number	93	12	14	119	1	45	5	56
	%	1.82	0.24	0.27	2.33	0.02	0.88	0.10	1.10
Pyeongangbuk-do	Number	25	2	3	30	0	23	1	24
	%	1.70	0.14	0.20	2.04	0.00	1.56	0.07	1.63
Pyeongannam-do	Number	52	7	9	68	0	55	3	60
	%	2.12	0.28	0.37	2.77	0.00	2.24	0.12	2.44
Hamgyeong-buk-do	Number	16	1	7	24	0	7	0	7
	%	1.08	0.07	0.47	1.62	0.00	0.47	0.00	0.47
Hamgyeong-nam-do	Number	105	1	8	114	0	51	3	55
	%	3.19	0.03	0.24	3.46	0.00	1.55	0.09	1.67
Nationwide	Number	775	101	173	1049	19	616	37	693
	%	1.23	0.16	0.28	1.67	0.03	0.98	0.06	1.10

Table 8. Number and Ratio of Village Names Related to Climate (2)

Region	Frequency	Wind-related toponymic terms		Season-related toponymic terms				
		<i>pung</i> 風	total	<i>chun</i> 春	<i>ha</i> 夏	<i>chu</i> 秋	<i>dong</i> 冬	total
Gyeonggi-do	Number	3	3	7	0	3	4	14
	%	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.00	0.06	0.08	0.27
Gangwon-do	Number	1	1	3	1	2	1	7
	%	0.03	0.03	0.10	0.03	0.07	0.03	0.24
Chungcheongbuk-do	Number	6	6	1	1	1	1	4
	%	0.16	0.16	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.11
Chungcheongnam-do	Number	2	2	0	0	13	6	19
	%	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.08	0.25
Jeollabuk-do	Number	8	8	6	1	6	3	16
	%	0.11	0.11	0.09	0.01	0.09	0.04	0.23
Jeollanam-do	Number	11	11	31	0	19	12	62
	%	0.11	0.11	0.30	0.00	0.18	0.12	0.60
Gyeongsangbuk-do	Number	2	2	4	1	14	4	23
	%	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.01	0.18	0.05	0.30
Gyeongsangnam-do	Number	3	3	6	1	6	3	16
	%	0.07	0.07	0.13	0.02	0.13	0.07	0.36
Hwanghae-do	Number	1	1	2	0	0	0	2
	%	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04
Pyeongangbuk-do	Number	1	1	3	0	4	0	7
	%	0.07	0.07	0.20	0.00	0.27	0.00	0.48
Pyeongannam-do	Number	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	%	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08
Hamgyeongbuk-do	Number	1	1	5	0	3	0	8
	%	0.07	0.07	0.34	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.54
Hamgyeongnam-do	Number	2	2	11	0	2	0	13
	%	0.06	0.06	0.33	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.39
Nationwide	Number	41	41	81	5	73	34	193
	%	0.07	0.07	0.13	0.01	0.12	0.05	0.31

used eight times more than *eum*. Meanwhile, *un* was the most frequently utilized rainfall-related toponymic term, followed by *seol* and *u*. Finally, the most common season-related toponymic term was *chun*, followed by *chu*, *dong*, and *ha*.

From a provincial standpoint, *yang* was employed most frequently

in northern regions such as Hamgyeong-do and Pyeongan-do provinces. Moreover, while *eum* was used least frequently in Hamgyeong-do province, *un* was the most common in Pyeongan-do province. Finally, *chun* was used most frequently in Hamgyeong-do province and least frequently in Chungcheong-do province.

Environmental Perceptions and Regional Characteristics as Viewed through the Geographical Terms Used in Village Names

Environmental Perceptions and Regional Characteristics as Viewed through Location-Related Geographical Terms

As previously mentioned, one finds many instances in which a location-related toponymic term was used in the front morpheme of a toponym. As the modifier is positioned in front of the element to be modified in the Korean language structure, the use of such terms in the front morpheme means that these served as modifiers. This can be regarded as the result of using location-related toponymic terms as a modifier in order to divide or give structure to a particular space. For example, when a village expanded to the point where it became necessary to divide it into two spaces, the terms “*sang*” and “*ha*” were added to divide it into the upper village and lower village.

As mentioned above, man primarily divides spaces into the front and rear parts and then into the left and right or upper and lower parts. However, a look at location-related toponymic terms reveals that *sang* (upper part) and *ha* (lower part) were used much more frequently than *jeon* (front) and *hu* (rear) in Korea. This can be regarded as the result of Koreans preferences to perceive spaces and environments as up and down. This environmental perception of the Korean people is above all related to the natural environment of Korea. Korea is a country that, comparatively speaking, features a high amount of mountains and hills. To this end, there are many cases in which villages located in an inclined area are divided into upper and

lower parts.

On the other hand, the reason why *sang* emerged more often than *ha* in toponyms can be explained by Koreans' preference for their villages to be located in elevated areas. In general, elevated areas, although more difficult to access, are advantaged over lower lying ones in terms of sunshine, drainage, and view. In addition, in the case of valleys or basins, areas in which many Korean villages were located, the highest place was also the most remote one. The social atmosphere of the Joseon era, during which these village names were created, also influenced this trend. The people of Joseon, who regarded the natural hierarchy of society as being of great importance, possessed the perception that *sang* was somehow higher and better. In this regard, this perception was reflected in their environmental perceptions as well.

Due to this environmental perception of Korean people, often villages that were located in lower lying areas than others, or that were at a similar altitude, were also named *sang*. This simple way to divide a space was not based on certain naming standards, but instead revolved around the affixing of the term "*sang*" to the original village and "*ha*" to the other that sprang from it (Jeong 1982, 64).

While *sang* and *ha* are toponymic terms related to vertical location, *nae* and *oe*, *jeon* and *hu*, and *jwa* and *u* were toponymic terms related to the horizontal location. Based on the usage frequency of these terms, we concluded that Koreans preferred *nae* to *oe*, *hu* to *jeon*, and *jwa* to *u*. In particular, the fact that *nae* was used twice as often as *oe* can be taken to show that Koreans perceived the interior as a better environment to live in than the exterior. The preference for *jung*, which was the fourth most commonly utilized location-related toponymic term, can also be regarded as the result of the environmental perception of Korean people. Endowed with a consciousness in which *nae* and *jung* were regarded as a good environment, Koreans came to view closed valleys and basins surrounded by mountains as the ideal place to live out their lives. In such places, rear mountains helped offset the impact of seasonal winds from the northwest and served as a source of food, fuel, and construction materials. Vil-

lages located in gradually inclined areas had easier access to water, received lots of sunlight, and had no risk of flood. Furthermore, as such villages were difficult for outsiders to find, they constituted places that were safe from an external invasion and which helped to foster psychological stability.

The preference for *hu* over *jeon* was also the result of a similar environmental perception. While open areas such as valleys or basins were regarded as the front (*jeon*), the areas where villages were located came to be perceived as the back (*hu*) (Jeong 1982, 65). Meanwhile, the preference for *jwa* over *u* was related to the notion of the theory of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements (*eumyang ohaeng-seol* 陰陽五行說), a concept which greatly influenced the environmental views of the Korean people. Although the majority of cultures regarded right as being greatly superior to left, much more emphasis is placed on the left in China, where the theory of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements was established. In the dichotomous classification known as *yin* and *yang*, the left is regarded as *yang* and as belonging to man; meanwhile, the right is *yin* and belongs to woman. This can be regarded as the result of the fact that the social space of the Chinese people revolved around the ruler that acted as the conduit between heaven and earth. As the ruler was regarded as leaning toward the south and sun, his left side was the east, where the sun rises, and indicated man. His right side was the west, where the sun sets, and indicated woman (Tuan 1995, 78).

The preference for *dong* (east) over *seo* (west), *nam* (south), and *buk* (north), which together constitute the toponymic terms used to indicate the absolute directions, is also related to the notion of the theory of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements. East is the direction of *yang*, where the sun rises, and indicates spring, or when all beings in the universe start life anew. This can be construed as the main reason why Koreans preferred east in terms of their perception of the environment. Meanwhile, *nam* (south) was the second most frequently used term. This originated from the fact that Koreans regarded southwards as being the ideal direction when they determined the site for their houses and villages. As such, Koreans' environmental

perception was one in which east and south, both of which enjoyed the benefit of the sun, were regarded as important elements when it came to the maintaining of everyday life and production. Meanwhile, *seo* (west) was used almost as frequently as *nam* (south), and there were many cases in which *seo* was used as a pair with *dong*.

The frequency of the use of location-related toponymic terms also sheds light on regional characteristics. In this regard, while *sang* 上 (upper) and *ha* 下 (lower) were used a lot in northern areas such as Hamgyeongnam-do and Pyeonganbuk-do provinces, they were much less prevalent in southern areas such as Jeollanam-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces. This can be construed as being closely related with these areas' topographic characteristics. One finds many village names that expressed the vertical location in the northern region, where there were more mountains and hills than in the south, the latter of which boasted more horizontal plains. On the contrary, *nae* 内 (inside) and *oe* 外 (outside), terms used to express the horizontal location, were more frequently employed in Jeollanam-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces.

With regard to the absolute directions, one aspect that stands out is that, contrary to the other provinces in which *dong* (east) was most frequently used, *nam* (south) was the most commonly found directional term in Gangwon-do and Hamgyeongbuk-do provinces. This situation can be attributed to the topographic and climatic conditions of these two provinces, which boasted many mountains and cold weather. The influence of sunlight conditions on residential life and agriculture was more pronounced in mountainous areas than in plains, as well as in areas with lower temperatures. Thus, residents' environmental perceptions, which were influenced by sunlight conditions, were also evident in the preference for *nam* (south) as a toponymic term.

Environmental Perceptions and Regional Characteristics as Viewed through Topography-Related Toponyms

Unlike location-related toponyms, topography-related toponymic terms were used in toponymic front morphemes. Thus, topography-related

ones tended to be formed prior to location-related toponyms, which were used as an implement to divide spaces or environments. As such, they can be regarded as toponymic terms that contain the primary environmental perceptions of Korean people regarding a certain region or place.

The fact that many mountain-related toponymic terms, such as *san* (mountain) and *bong* (peak), can be found amongst the topography-related toponymic terms shows that mountains played an important role with regards to Koreans' perception and division of their environments. As 70 percent of the Korean peninsula is mountainous, the importance and influence of mountains were profound and widespread not only in terms of simple topographic characteristics, but also in people's everyday life, culture, and even consciousness. In particular, Koreans perceived mountains as a transcendental being that connected heaven and man, and as a miraculous being that influenced mankind. Furthermore, because they towered high above and could be used to clearly separate the plains from surrounding areas and could visibly be seen from afar, mountains served as important landmarks. To this end, it should come as no surprise that mountains were used in village names.

The use of valley-related toponymic terms such as *gok* 谷 (valley) and *sil* 室/實 (dale) following mountain-related ones was motivated by Koreans' belief that valleys constituted the ideal environment in which to establish villages. On the contrary, toponymic terms related to plains, which were more open in nature, were not used very often when naming villages.

A look at regional characteristics reveals a high frequency of mountain-related toponymic terms in the north where numerous mountains were located. In particular, the ratio of mountain-related terms was higher than that of valley-related toponymic terms. In addition, the frequent use of *bong* (peak) in Hamgyeong-do and Pyeongan-do provinces can be regarded as the result of the fact that the mountains in this region were much higher and rougher than those in other regions.

Meanwhile, valley-related toponymic terms were more common

than mountain-related toponymic terms in the cases of Gyeonggi-do, Gyeongsangbuk-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces. Rather than higher mountains and wide plains, these regions were characterized by the presence of segmented valleys created by the presence of lower mountains and hills. The use of many valley-related toponymic terms in these areas can be explained by the fact that these valleys were used as the sites for villages. Furthermore, Gyeonggi-do province, which is located in the heart of the Korean peninsula, had long been embraced as the capital area. Gyeongsangbuk-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces also had a long history of significant population density. As they had a long history of human residence, the conclusion can be reached that villages were developed in these areas. Such villages with long histories were located in valleys or basins, areas for which Koreans traditionally had a clear preference. In addition to the

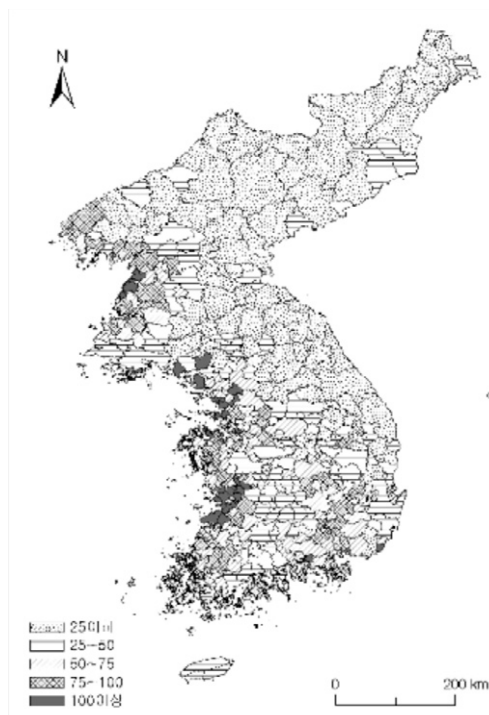


Figure 1. Population Density by *Gun-Hyeon* in 1789

above mentioned reasons, the preference for such sites was also based on the advantages they provided in terms of pursuing a self-sufficient lifestyle. These places featured plains that boasted fertile alluvial soil along the riverside and, as such, provided advantages for farming. Unlike large-scale rivers, they also had a lower risk of flood. Furthermore, as the streams and small rivers which flowed at high altitudes could be blocked to make reservoirs, these sites were regarded as the best places for rice farming.

Another point which should be focused on is the fact that there was a high usage of plain-related toponymic terms such as *pyeong* in Hamgyeongbuk-do and Hamgyeongnam-do provinces, while the use of valley-related toponymic terms was relatively limited. This would seem to indicate that, in Hamgyeong-do province, plains were preferred over valleys as the site for villages. This phenomenon can be explained by the difference in the distribution of population between mountainous and plain areas. Figure 1 shows the mapping of population density in counties and prefectures at the national level at the end of the eighteenth century and was prepared based on the *Hogu chongsu* 戶口總數 (Complete Register of Households) (Jung 2004, 37). One can see the differences in population density that exists between the Hamgyeong region and the central and southern regions. In particular, the inland mountainous areas in the Hamgyeong region were undeveloped as they boasted steep and precipitous topographies and a cold climate, all of which combined to make human settlement a rarity. The majority of the population in this area was concentrated in the plains along the coast. As the number of village names increased in a manner proportionate to the population, it is only natural that a high amount of plain-related toponymic terms were used in Hamgyeong-do province (Jung 2005, 66).

Environmental Perceptions and Regional Characteristics as Viewed through Water-Related Toponymic Terms

The most commonly found water-related toponymic term nationwide was *cheon* 川 (stream). The reason why *cheon* was used more often

than *gang* 江 (river) and *ha* 河 (river) can be explained by the fact that as *gang* and *ha* indicated larger-sized rivers than *cheon*, it was deemed inappropriate to use these terms in village names.⁵ More to the point, Koreans perceived the streams which flowed around their villages as *cheon* 川 (stream) rather than as *gang* 江 (river) or *ha* 河 (river). They perceived smaller waterways as *gye* 溪 (creek). *Su* 水 (water), which ranked the second in terms of the frequency of use after *cheon* 川 (stream), was in fact used most frequently at the national level because it was also used to mean *umul* (well) and *gang* (river). Meanwhile, *jeong* 井 (well) ranked the third as far as the use of water-related toponymic terms at the national level was concerned. *Su* and *jeong*, both of which meant “a well,” were an essential element in villages in that they provided a source of potable water. This can be understood as the reason why wells were perceived as sacred during the premodern era. Wells also played a central role in villages. As such, wells served as an important element in the environmental perception of Koreans, and were frequently used as a toponymic term.

On the other hand, Hamgyeongbuk-do province exhibited the highest frequency of the use of *su*, an outcome of the fact that *su* was used to name the tributary streams of the Amnokgang and Duman-gang rivers that flowed through Hamgyeongbuk-do province. *Gye* was frequently used in Gyeongsangbuk-do and Gyeongsangnam-do provinces, a situation that can be explained by the fact that valley-related toponymic terms were frequently used in this region. As *gye* meant a creek situated in a valley, this term was as such directly related to valleys. In his work *Taengniji* 擇里志 (Geographical Guide to Korea), the late Joseon scholar Yi Jung-hwan identified *gyegeo* 溪居 (residence next to a creek) as the best place in which to live. Yi asserted that as it possessed a peaceful beauty, pristine sceneries, and obvious benefits in terms of farming, the *gyegeo* constituted a good residential place (Lee 1912). As such, Confucian intellectuals at the time perceived the valleys, where small streams flowed, as the ideal residential environments. This notion was particularly adhered

5. In Japan, *kawa* 川 is the name given to large-sized rivers.

to in the Gyeongsang region, where the influence of Confucian culture was especially strong, with numerous villages erected on such sites and the suffix *gye* added to their village names.

The fact that *jeong* 井 (well), meaning artificially developed wells used to ensure a potable water supply, was used repeatedly in connection with village names in Gyeonggi-do and Hwanghae-do provinces can be taken as a sign of the long history of human residence in these regions. Conversely, the frequency of *jeong* was very low in Hamgyeongbuk-do province, where the history of human residence was very short. While the term “*ji* 池” (pond) generally referred to a natural or artificial pond, the Chinese character actually meant artificially-made facilities to store water.⁶ In Korea, this term was used to indicate small reservoirs built for rice farming. As a result, the term “*ji*” was more frequently used in the southern parts of the country where rice farming was relatively more popular than in the north where rice farming was rare. Although not very different from *ji* in that it also referred to a reservoir used to store water, *ho* 湖 (lake) in fact indicated a deeper- and larger-sized pond than the one evoked by the term “*ji*” (Morohasi 1985b, 126). The term “*ho*” was used more frequently in Hamgyeongnam-do and Hamgyeongbuk-do provinces. The use of the term “*ho*” in Hamgyeong-do province can be explained by the fact that these provinces were home to a greater number of large-sized lakes than any other provinces in Korea.⁷

Environmental Perceptions and Regional Characteristics as Viewed through Climate-Related Toponymic Terms

The climate-related toponymic terms were broken down into five categories: sunshine, temperature, rainfall, wind, and seasons. In this

6. *Ji* 池 has various meanings, including “a place where the earth has been dug up to store water,” “a place that contains seawater,” “a place dug up around a fortress to store water,” as well as “a waterway” (Morohasi 1985a, 934).

7. According to the land survey project conducted by the Japanese colonial government, there were a total of 81 lakes with a circumference of more than 2 km nationwide. While 30 of these were located in Hamgyeongnam-do and Hamgyeongbuk-do provinces, another 20 were located in Gangwon-do province.

regard, sunshine-related toponymic terms were most frequently used, an outcome that shows that Koreans' environmental perception was one that regarded sunlight conditions as the most important element during the process of determining the site of villages. Contrary to other climate conditions, such as temperature and rainfall, significant differences were recorded with regards to sunlight conditions even at the narrow regional level. In fact, one finds cases in which the sunlight conditions differed at two village sites located right next to one another. While sunlight conditions could be improved through a slight relocation of the village site, the temperature could also be adjusted through the regulation of sunlight conditions.

In many cases, a site that could receive the sunlight needed to endure the coldness of the winter season and to raise agricultural plants was selected as the place where a village should be established. This situation in large part explains why *yang* 陽 (light) and *il* 日 (sun) were the two most commonly used climate-related toponymic terms. *Eum* 陰 (shade) was the third most frequently used climate-related toponymic terms. This can be explicated by the fact that, in many cases, *eum* was added not because a shady place had been selected as the village site, but rather to serve as a counterweight to *yang*. In such cases, places were named based on the theory of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements and had little to do with sunlight conditions.

The use of *chun* 春 (spring), which proved to be the most popular amongst the season-related toponymic terms, was also closely related to the notion of the theory of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements. The frequent use of *dong* (east) amongst the direction-related toponymic terms can also be explained along the same lines. Koreans had a natural proclivity for spring, at which time all life started anew, as well as the east, the direction from which the sun rose. Of the remaining season-related toponymic terms, namely *ha* 夏 (summer), *chu* 秋 (autumn), and *dong* 冬 (winter), one finds many instances in which *chu* 秋 (autumn) was used separately rather than paired with *chun*. While *ha* was barely used, *dong* was used to mean a plant named *dongbaek* 冬栢 (camellia) rather than winter in almost half of

the cases.

As far as regional characteristics are concerned, the frequent use of *yang* in the Hamgyeong and Pyeongan regions proves that sunlight was regarded to be an important condition when it came to the selection of village sites. This conclusion is also supported by the frequent use of the location-related toponymic term “*nam*” (south). Conversely, *eum* (shade) was the least frequently used in the Hamgyeong region. One interesting point is the fact that *yang* was mainly utilized in east coastal areas such as Hamheung, Jeongpyeong, Hongwon, and Yeongheung.⁸ This can be perceived as being linked to the fact that it was not easy to find places with lots of sunlight in elevated and steep mountainous areas like the inland areas in the Hamgyeong region.⁹ Furthermore, as the preference for sunny places was deeply related to agriculture, it is estimated that *yang* was rarely used in the inland areas in the Hamgyeong region because little agriculture was carried out there (Jung 2005, 67). The fact that the highest use of *chun* occurred in the Hamgyeong region can also be regarded as being related to the link between *yang* and *chun*.

Conclusion

Village names reflect people’s perceptions of nature and their values. People determined the ideal site for their villages after observing and comparing the various natural environments based on their perceptions. Thereafter, they adjusted to the natural environment surrounding their villages and made their living by making active use of nature. These accumulated experiences are clearly evident in the village names. As such, village names are the results of residents’ environ-

8. In Hamgyeong-do province, 121 places included the morpheme “*yang*” in their village names. This included 21 places in Hamgyeong, 20 in Jeongpyeong, 16 in Hongwon, and 11 in Yeongheung.

9. Y. Kim (1986) revealed that the toponymic term “*yang*” was rarely used in mountainous areas, such as in Pyeonganbuk-do, Hamgyeongbuk-do, and Gangwon-do provinces.

mental perceptions, and constitute important clues with which to explain the regional characteristics of villages. This study analyzed Korean village names during the early twentieth century at the national level in order to identify not only the environmental perceptions of Koreans, but also the regional characteristics of each province.

The toponymic terms used in village names were broken down into those related to location, topography, water, and climate, with the frequency and usage ratios of each type of toponymic terms examined. First, location-related toponymic terms were used to divide or structure a village. In this regard, *sang* 上 (upper) and *ha* 下 (lower) were the most frequently used location-related toponymic terms, a situation that shows that Koreans' perception of the environment was based on a division into the upper and lower parts. This can be explained by the topographic characteristics of Korea with its mountainous topography, and the characteristics of a traditional society that placed great importance on hierarchy. In addition, the frequent usage of *jung* 中 (center) and *nae* 內 (inside) rather than *oe* 外 (outside), and *hu* 後 (rear/backward) rather than *jeon* 前 (front/ forward) can be construed as having been motivated by Koreans' belief that closed valleys and basins surrounded by mountains represent the ideal residential environment. In other words, *jung*, *nae*, *hu*, as well as *sang*, which also indicated the deepest place within a valley, possessed significant connectivity within the environmental perceptions of Koreans.

Furthermore, the preference for *jwa* 左 (left) over *u* 右 (right) and the widespread use of *dong* 東 (east) in terms of the absolute directions can be perceived as being closely related to the notion of the theory of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements. In the theory, the left side belongs to *yang* 陽, and represents man and the east where the sun rises. It is for such reasons that these terms were preferred by Koreans. In addition, the provincial distribution of location-related toponymic terms saliently exhibits the natural characteristics of each region.

The majority of the topography-related toponymic terms were used as the front morpheme of toponyms, an outcome that reflects the

primary environmental perceptions of Koreans. To this end, mountain-related toponymic terms were used most frequently, thus indicating that mountains played an important role in Koreans' perceptions of the environment. A clear regional difference in the ratios of the use of mountain- and valley-related toponymic terms was also evident. This gap can be explained by factors such as topographic characteristics, the distribution of population, as well as the history of villages and the occupations of residents.

The high frequency and ratio of water-related toponymic terms were also related to the history of human residence, agricultural practices, and preferences in terms of village sites. *Jeong* 井 (well), which meant an artificial well, was frequently in use in areas where residential history was relatively longer. Meanwhile, *ji* 池 (pond), which referred to artificially made facilities employed to store water, was used a lot in regions where rice farming was actively carried out. In addition, *gye* 溪 (creek) was prevalent in areas where those pursued the goal of *gyegeo* 溪居 (residence next to creek) had lived.

A high ratio of sunshine-related village names was found amongst the climate-related toponymic terms. This would seem to indicate that Koreans perceived the sunlight conditions as being an important climatic factor when selecting village sites. The use of sunshine-related toponymic terms was higher in places that were in colder regions.

Based on analyses of the toponymic terms used in village names, this study reviewed the environmental perceptions of Koreans and compared regional characteristics. However, as large volumes of materials were involved, a thorough analysis of the origins and history of individual village names could not be carried out. As such, given the ambiguity of meaning and metaphorical nature of these toponymic terms, the possibility that errors occurred in terms of the analysis of the materials cannot be ruled out. These issues should be addressed as part of future studies involving smaller target areas.

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