

The Symbolism of Suwon's Eight Scenic Spots: A Historical and Cultural Analysis of Landscape Transformations

Yun-Jeong Eo^{1*}

Abstract

During the Joseon Dynasty, sites with remarkable landscapes were identified as the eight or ten scenic spots, symbolizing their cultural prominence. Within Suwon, a city of historic and cultural significance, the Suwon eight scenic spots serve as crucial cultural landscape assets, with Hwaseong Fortress at their heart. The transformation from initially being recognized as the 16th view of Hwaseong Fortress to the current 8th view of Suwon followed landscape modifications. The primary focus of this study is to explore the inherent symbolism of Suwon's eight scenic spots by investigating the shifts in their landscapes and the historical and cultural values they represent. This investigation highlights the unique characteristics of Jeongjo's Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, fostering a sense of community pride and significance. The study expects to unravel the layers of history and culture tied to the evolving landscapes of these eight scenic spots, providing a comprehensive understanding of their symbolic and cultural value within the context of Suwon's rich heritage.

Keyword : Suwon, Hwaseong Fortress, Eight Views, Cultural Landscape, Landscape Change

1. Introduction

During the Joseon Dynasty, the tradition of designating certain locations for their picturesque beauty as the 'eight views' or 'ten views' held great significance. In adherence to this tradition, Dojun Chung established the Sindo Eight Views (新都八景) to commemorate King Taejo's decision to designate Hanyang as the capital and establish a new capital city, symbolizing hopes for the everlasting prosperity of Hanyang. Subsequently, King Jeongjo established the Suwon Spring-Autumn Eight Views, which appeared to inherit the conceptual framework of Dojun Chung's Sindo Eight Views.

Previous research related to Suwon City and its Hwaseong Fortress has been conducted. Song and Kim explores the different value-based profiles of visitors to Suwon Hwaseong Fortress and revealed revealed four value-based visitor segments [1]. Yoon and Chung focuses on the use of social media, specifically Facebook, as a promotional tool for Suwon City's Hwaseong Fortress and examines the strategies employed by Suwon City's official Facebook page to increase awareness and engagement with the World Heritage site [2]. Beside the current visitors and their economic values as a tourism site of

1 Suwon Museum, Kyunggi-do, Republic of Korea [Curator]
e-mail: uno1016@naver.com

Received(April 6, 2021), Review Result(1st: April 27, 2021), Accepted(June 4, 2021), Published(June 30, 2021)



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Suwon, this paper aims to delve into King Jeongjo's profound interest and sense of pride in Suwon by thoroughly exploring the cultural and historical values embodied within the 'Suwon Eight Views.' These views serve as significant cultural assets within Suwon, a city renowned for its rich history and cultural heritage.

By meticulously examining the cultural and historical dimensions of these eight views, this paper seeks to unravel the deep connection between King Jeongjo and Suwon and sheds light on the importance he placed on the preservation and promotion of Suwon as a vibrant cultural city. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper expects to unveil the underlying motivations and aspirations of King Jeongjo, as reflected in the establishment of the Suwon Spring-Autumn Eight Views.

2. Formation and transformation of Hwaseong Fortress

The construction of Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, a designated World Heritage site and Memory of the World, spanned a period of two years and eight months, commencing in 1795. As shown in [Fig. 1] with a circumference of 5.7 kilometers, the fortress encompasses various structures, including four gates, two jangdeas, poru, chi, and bongdon, all centered around Hwaseong Temporary Palace. Renowned as one of Asia's finest fortresses, Suwon Hwaseong Fortress seamlessly integrates with the picturesque natural surroundings of Paldal Mountain and Suwoncheon, showcasing meticulous scientific and aesthetic design elements [3].



[Fig. 1] Suwon Hwaseong Fortress

After ascending the throne, King Jeongjo chose a location for his father's tomb where Suwoneup was originally situated and relocated Suwoneup to the present site of Hwaseong Temporary Palace. A new town was established at the foot of Paldal Mountain, and residents from the old town were relocated there. The moving cost of one hundred thousand ryang was provided, and tax exemptions were granted to those who moved to the new town for a period of ten years. Construction of Suwon Hwaseong Fortress and Hwaseong Temporary Palace commenced and was completed within two years and six months, concluding in 1796. Kings, starting from King Jeongjo in the 20th year of his reign (1796), regularly visited Hwaseong Temporary Palace. This tradition of royal visitation continued until the reign of King Gojong. According to the Gojongsilrok, on March 13, 1868, King Gojong stayed at Hwaseong Temporary Palace to hold a memorial service for Geonreung, Hyunreungwon, and Hwaryeongjeon. Additionally, there is a record indicating that the roof of Hwaseong Temporary Palace was repaired at a cost of 20,000 nyang during the 11th year of King Gojong's reign (1874). However, it is unclear when exactly Hwaseong Temporary Palace gradually disappeared during the Japanese colonial era. Following the unfavorable treaty between Joseon and Japan in 1910, Japan enacted an ordinance for the removal of town fortresses in Joseon. Consequently, not only the royal palaces but also three hundred town fortresses were dismantled. It is presumed that Hwaseong Temporary Palace was removed during this period. In the place where Hwaseong Temporary Palace once stood, a medical institution called Jahyeeuiwon was established. According to the Gojongsilrok, on July 23, 1910, Jahyeeuiwon underwent a significant expansion at a cost of 62,500 hwan. Considering these circumstances, it appears that Hwaseong Temporary Palace was gradually removed starting from 1910. A publication titled Suwon in 1923 reports that Jahyeeuiwon was extensively expanded during that year, further suggesting the removal of Hwaseong Temporary Palace [4]. Subsequently, Jahyeeuiwon transformed into a provincial hospital. In the northern military camp area, a police station and Sinpung Elementary School were constructed, while tomokgwangu was located in the southern military camp, resulting in the near disappearance of traces of Hwaseong Temporary Palace. The remaining buildings from that era are Naknamhun (落南軒) and Noraedang (老來堂). Naknamhun was previously utilized as the Sinpung Elementary School building and Suwon County Office. Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, which suffered gradual destruction during the Japanese colonial period, underwent a restoration project starting in 1976. The restoration of Hwaseong Temporary Palace took place between 1996 and 2002 [5].

3. Hwaseong sixteen views and Hwaseong eight views

3.1 Hwaseong sixteen views

Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, a remarkable architectural achievement constructed over a period of two years and six months beginning in 1794, drew inspiration from Yakyong Chong's Seonghwajuryak (城華籌略). This construction project embodied the spirit of Beopgochangsin, encompassing various elements such as King Jeongjo's filial devotion to his father, Sadoseja, the expertise of government officials and artists, and the application of advanced scientific technology [6]. Positioned as a deliberately crafted 'clearly defined landscape', Suwon Hwaseong Fortress stood as a testament to King Jeongjo's intentions of restoring the dynasty, influenced by the establishment of Hanyang by King Taejo in 1394.

Following the completion of Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, King Jeongjo bestowed the designation of Hwaseong Spring Eight Views and Hwaseong Autumn Eight Views, collectively known as Hwaseong Sixteen Views. These views were distinct from the eight views, ten views, or twelve views found in other regions and served as a manifestation of King Jeongjo's profound attachment, interest, and pride in Suwon Hwaseong Fortress. The publication of “華城城役儀軌 (Hwaseongseongyeokeuigue),” a report documenting the construction of Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, played a significant role in widely disseminating knowledge about these views [7].

Spring eight views (春八景)

View 1 : Hwasanseoe (花山瑞靄): A view of Hwasan mountain where an auspicious atmosphere rises like haze.

View 3 : Yucheoncheongyeon (柳川晴烟): A view of Suwoncheon on a clear day when the misty fog lifts.

View 3 : Ogyosimhwa (午橋尋花): Maehyanggyo, a famous spot for flower viewing.

View 4 : Gilyagwansang (吉野觀桑): Gwangilya with its beautiful mulberry forest.

View 5 : Sinpungsaju (新豐社酒): A ritual of drinking liquor performed at Sinpungru.

View 6 : Daeyunonga (大有農歌): The sound of farmers' songs echoing in Daeyudun field.

View 7 : Hwausangu (華郵散駒): A view of horses romping around at Younghwa station.

View 8 : Hajeongbeomik (荷汀泛鷗): A view of a pond where water birds stroll between the lotus flowers.

Autumn eight views (秋八景)

- View 1 : Hongjeosoryeon (虹渚素練): A view of Suwoncheon flowing through Hwahongmun like extending white silk.
- View 2 : Seokgeohwangun (石渠黃雲): Golden waves near Manseokgeo, signifying the approaching harvest.
- View 3 : Yongyeonjewol (龍淵霽月): An autumn moon shining over Yongyeon on a clear day.
- View 4 : Guambanjo (龜巖返照): A view of Guam with brilliant evening light.
- View 5 : Seongseouryeop (西城羽獵): Hunting outside Hwaseomun.
- View 6 : Dongdaehwagok (東臺畫鵠): Archery on Dongjangdae.
- View 7 : Hanjeongpunguk (閒亭品菊): An autumn view where people appreciate the blooming chrysanthemums near Mirohanjeong.
- View 8 : Yangrusangseol (陽樓賞雪): Appreciating the view of snowfall on Hwayangru.

These sixteen views offer picturesque perspectives of the fortress, its surrounding landscapes, and the cityscape of Suwon. The significance of Hwaseong Sixteen Views lies in its cultural, historical, and aesthetic value.

3.2 Hwaseong eight views

An intriguing artifact within the cultural milieu of Suwon Hwaseong Fortress is the eight-fold folding screen adorned with a poem known as ‘Hwaseongpalgyeong.’ Scholarly estimates suggest that this folding screen was crafted during the reign of King Gojong in the later period of the Joseon Dynasty, with its origin falling between 1873 and 1895. Judging from the state of preservation, it is approximated that the poem was composed over a century ago, affording valuable glimpses into the historical context in which both the Hwaseongpalgyeong and the folding screen materialized. The title attributed to the folding screen, “華城O景” (Hwaseong Ogyeong), requires clarification, as it is widely acknowledged that the intended title is “華城八景” (Hwaseong Eight Views). Notably, this title distinguishes it from the Suwon Eight Views and assumes a critical position as a historical steppingstone linking the earlier Hwaseong Sixteen Views and the subsequent Suwon Eight Views [8].

Delving into the Hwaseong Eight Views folding screen and its accompanying poem promises significant insights into the artistic and cultural sensibilities of the period. Scrutinizing the composition, imagery, and symbolism deployed within the poem enables a deeper comprehension of the aesthetic traditions and artistic expressions prevalent during the late Joseon Dynasty. The [Fig. 2] illustrates the

view number 5 of the pavilion. Consequently, a comprehensive analysis of the language, thematic motifs, and poetic conventions employed in this piece facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the broader cultural heritage associated with Suwon and its representation within the evolving literary and artistic tapestry of the Joseon Dynasty.

The Hwaseong Eight Views (華城八景) are as follows:

View 1 : Sinpunghyogak (新豐曉角): The reed at Sinpungru at dawn.

View 2 : Byeongamgansu (屏巖澗水): Spring water (mineral water) from Byeongpungbawi.

View 3 : Dongseongbonghwa (東城烽火): The signal fire at Dongseong.

View 4 : Jangdaegwansa (壯臺觀射): Archery on Dongjangdae.

View 5 : Banghwasuryujeong (訪花隨柳亭): Banghwasuryujeong, a scenic pavilion.

View 6 : Yongyeonsunchae (龍涎蓴菜): Watershield plant in Yongyeon.

View 7 : Honggyocheongsu (虹橋廳水): The sound of water under a rainbow bridge.

View 8 : Seodaemangwon (西臺望遠): A distant view from Seojangdae.



[Fig. 2] Banghwasuryujeong, the 5th of Hwaseong's eight views

From the aforementioned observations, it can be deduced that the formulation of the Hwaseong Eight Views was influenced by the lived experiences and perspectives of the inhabitants of Suwon. [Table 1] illustrates the difference between sixteen views and sight views. This inference gains further weight when juxtaposing the Hwaseong Eight Views with the previously established Hwaseong Sixteen Views.

[Table 1] Hwaseong sixteen views and Hwaseong eight views

Subject		Time of construction and creation	Artist	Source
Hwaseong sixteen views	Calligraphy (書)	unknown	unknown	Pyoronggeulcham (標韓乙懺), an anthology by Gilju Hong (1786~1841)
	Painting (畵)	in 1795	Hongdo, Kim	Suwon City (1994) Hwaseongseongyeokeuigie, Volume 6: Jaeyong (財用) the last volume (下) A study on Hwaseongseongyeokeuigie from an art history perspective by Park Junghye (2002)
Hwaseong eight views	Calligraphy (書)	Estimated to be after the 19th century	unknown	Suwon City (1991) History and culture of our village Suwon Hyanggyo (2002) Suwon Hyanggyoji http://tour.suwon.ne.kr/
	Painting (畵)	Estimated to be at the end of the 20th century	unknown	http://tour.suwon.ne.kr/

4. Discussion

The transition from the Hwaseong Sixteen Views to the Suwon Eight Views highlights the distinctive scale and characteristics of Suwon's scenic landscapes in comparison to other regions. This transition also serves as a testament to King Jeongjo's profound sense of pride and affection for Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, which is evident in both the fortress's meticulous construction and the establishment of the Hwaseong Sixteen Views. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the locations and themes associated with the Suwon Eight Views during the Japanese colonial period lack direct historical connections to King Jeongjo's era, despite their surface similarities. During the Japanese colonial period, there was a significant interest in promoting the cultural heritage of Korea, particularly related to the Joseon Dynasty, for various reasons, including political and cultural influence. The creation of the Suwon Eight Views was part of this effort, aiming to mimic the aesthetic and cultural significance of the Hwaseong Sixteen Views. While the Suwon Eight Views may share visual similarities with the Hwaseong Sixteen Views, they lack the direct historical connections to the time period of King Jeongjo. This means that the locations and themes associated with the Suwon Eight Views were not originally part of King Jeongjo's vision or design for Hwaseong Fortress. The interpretation of these views varies depending on the sources and perspectives of those who describe the Suwon Eight Views.

5. Conclusion

The exploration of Suwon's Eight Scenic Spots highlights the intricate interplay of historical, cultural, and aesthetic value embedded within the landscapes. From their inception during the Joseon Dynasty as a way of acknowledging exceptional natural beauty, to their present status as significant cultural assets within Suwon, these scenic spots serve as poignant symbols of cultural prominence. The shift from Hwaseong's Sixteen Views to Suwon's Eight Views, however, was not merely a matter of aesthetic or geographical change, but also a testament to King Jeongjo's deep affection for the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress and his aspiration for preserving and promoting Suwon as a thriving cultural city.

However, it is critical to understand that the Suwon Eight Views, as constituted during the Japanese colonial period, lack the direct historical tie to King Jeongjo's era. Despite the aesthetic similarities with the Hwaseong Sixteen Views, the Suwon Eight Views were largely a product of cultural and political motivations of that period, aiming to highlight the cultural heritage of the Joseon Dynasty. These views may not truly reflect the initial vision or design of King Jeongjo for the Hwaseong Fortress. The interpretation of the Suwon Eight Views, therefore, can be considered a narrative shaped by the historical context and perspectives of those who defined them, rather than an unadulterated reflection of King Jeongjo's original design and aspirations.

This paper underscores the significance of cultural landscapes like Suwon's Eight Scenic Spots in providing a multi-layered perspective on the cultural and historical heritage of a region, while also stressing the need for careful and contextual understanding of their transformation over time.

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