

Home of the Heart: the Modern Origins of *Furusato*

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Nearly a century has elapsed since the popular melody “*Furusato*” (1914) was composed by Takano Tatsuyuki and Okano Teiichi, and yet its influence on how *furusato* is imagined has not yet begun to wane.

Usagi oishi kano yama

The mountain where I chased rabbits

Kobuna tsurishi kano kawa

The river where I fished carp

Yume wa ima mo megurite

I still dream of it, even now

Wasuregataki furusato

My hometown, I cannot forget you

Ika ni imasu chichi haha

How are you, mother and father?

Tsutsuga nashi ya tomogaki

Friends, are you well?

Ame ni kaze ni tsukete mo

In rain or in wind,

Omoi izuru furusato

I remember my hometown

Kokorozashi wo hatashite

Once I have achieved my goals

Itsu no hi ni ka kaeran

I shall return one day

Yama wa aoki furusato

Home, where the mountains are green

Mizu wa kiyoki furusato

Home, where the waters are pure

As evidenced by the lyrics, “*Furusato*” depicts an idyllic, countryside home to which the singer longs to return. Today, with over ninety percent of the population residing in urban areas and rural Japan facing depopulation and deterioration, returning to the countryside home is not only difficult for most Japanese, for some it is impossible (Iwamoto 18-9). And yet the *furusato* ideal persists; some would even say it is more ubiquitous than ever.

Though *furusato* (also rendered as *kokyō* in its Sino-Japanese reading) is commonly translated into English as “hometown” or “native place,” these words fail to capture certain unique characteristics of the Japanese term. For one, *furusato* is tightly connected with feelings of nostalgia. This means that if a person’s hometown or birthplace does not generate warm, fuzzy feelings, that person might feel reluctant to call that place his or her *furusato* (Narita, “Toshi kūkan” 13). It also means places that evoke feelings of nostalgia, even if they are not one’s hometown, can be called *furusato*.

Another unique characteristic of *furusato* is that it has a temporal dimension. Whereas the English “home” may denote a person’s residence in the past, present or future, the word *furusato* indicates a place from the past—suggested by its etymology, “old village.” Consequently, if a person presently resides in his or her place of birth, that place is typically not referred to as *furusato* because it continues to be a part of the present. A home may be called *furusato* only after it has been left behind.

This does not mean that *furusato* is purely confined to the past; as the lyric “*itsu no hi ni ka kaeran*” (I shall return home one day) reveals, *furusato* occupies a place in the future, as well. That is, *furusato* is not only the place that one returns to periodically as an escape from the chaos and clamor of the city, but it is also the place to which a person will ultimately return. This “circular” nature of *furusato* is implied in the Japanese idiom, “*kokyō ni nishiki wo kazaru*” (to return home a success), which states that after one has achieved some measure of success elsewhere, he or she may return home with pride. The assumption here is that *furusato* is both the starting point and terminus of a person’s life. Thus, in the concept of *furusato*, there is the sorrow of separation, but also “the soothing promise of the return” (Berque, *Nature* 178-9).

By its nature, *furusato* is a highly emotional concept, hence the oft-used phrase,

"*kokoro no furusato*" (home of the heart). The phrase implies that places are called *furusato* because of the kinds of feelings they evoke, rather than because of any factual basis. As previously stated, *furusato* evokes feelings of nostalgia, but also love, dependence, warmth, and protection. *Furusato* is often likened to a healing oasis, a paradise set apart from the crowded city. This link is perhaps further substantiated by the etymological relationship between the Japanese words "*sumu*" (to inhabit) and "*sumu*" (to settle down, to clarify), which reflect this soothing, calming quality of the home (Berque, *Nature* 171-2). There are several well-known Japanese idioms that emphasize the emotional component of *furusato*: for example, "*kokyō bōji gatashi*" (the home is difficult to forget), "*furusato wa tooki ni arite omou mono*" (home is something that one yearns for from far away), and "*hito wa kokyō wo hanarete tattoshi*" (people cherish the home after they have left it). These idioms show that *furusato* is not just an individual's home; rather, it represents all the feelings that accompany the *idea* of home.

How, then, did *furusato* come to encapsulate a feeling, rather than an actual place? This change is thought to have occurred sometime after Japan's modernization in the Meiji period (1868-1912).⁽¹⁾ In Japan's rush to modernize, much of the traditional way of life was lost in the process. As the majority of Japanese grew further away from their rural roots, the *furusato* ideal expanded "to become a more capacious metaphor, ... and thus there is now a proliferation of national, generalized *furusato*" (Ivy 104). Within this transformation, *furusato* shifted from signifying the concrete birthplace of an individual to symbolizing the home of the heart—a place accessible to every Japanese.

This paper is an attempt to analyze the factors that led to this transformation in how *furusato* is conceptualized. In other words, it will attempt to trace the origins of the present conceptualization of *furusato*. I propose that the birth of the present *furusato* ideal occurred at the end of the nineteenth century, during the first two or

three decades of the Meiji period. Further, I also propose that its emergence was highly connected to social and political changes that were occurring at the same time. More specifically, I want to suggest that three separate, but interrelated, factors led to the emergence of a generalized *furusato*, the home of the heart: one, the mass migration from the countryside to urban areas; two, the “discovery” of landscape as theorized by Karatani Kōjin; three, the development of the modern Japanese nation-state. Each of these three events will be explored in the following pages. While this paper primarily addresses the transformation in how *furusato* has been perceived in pre-modern as opposed to modern Japan, it also attempts to highlight the unchanging emotional and psychological importance of the home in Japanese culture.

1.1 *Furusato* and the City

There is one other unspoken assumption made in the aforementioned phrase, “*kokyō ni nishiki wo kazaru*” (to return home a success): that is, the place that a person goes to in order to achieve success—and, consequently, the place for which a person leaves his or her hometown—is the city. This same assumption underlies the lyric in “*Furusato*:” “*kokorozashi wo hatashite, itsu no hi ni ka kaeran*” (once I have achieved my goals, I shall return one day). This lyric echoes the belief that the city is where a person’s goals or desires (*kokorozashi*) can be achieved, and it is only after these things have been achieved that a person can return to his or her *furusato* with pride. Furthermore, in this construction, the city is ascribed a purely functional purpose—to achieve one’s economic or material goals—while the home is given an emotional one. Consequently, the city is attributed negative qualities, such as being cold, artificial, and dehumanizing, while on the other hand, *furusato* is warm, natural, and humanizing. Therefore, *furusato* and the city are positioned on two ends of a spectrum, forming two halves of a whole, each with a distinct role and

function. For this reason, it is more logical to consider the two as a set rather than as independent entities.

The Meiji period saw an unprecedented influx of people migrate from the country into major cities, especially Tokyo, which was already the largest city in Japan. Prior to the Meiji period, only a very small number of Japanese moved during their lifetimes, while the majority of people lived out their lives in the same region (Narita, “*Toshi kūkan*” 14). Starting from the latter half of the 1870s, ambitious young people from the countryside poured into cities with hopes of gaining employment or pursuing higher education. During this period, Japan’s cities also began to rapidly undergo industrialization. Two wars fought around the turn of the century—the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)—further accelerated the industrialization of cities and provided ample employment opportunities for people from the countryside (Nishikawa 115). As a result, in the fifteen years between 1887 and 1902, Tokyo’s population tripled from 580,000 to 1,700,000 (*ibid.*).

By the time of the Taisho period (1912-1926), Japan’s industrial revolution had been completed, and cities continued to grow dramatically in size (Nishikawa 115). In the postwar period of rapid economic growth that began in the mid-1950s, an increase in collective recruitment (*shūdan shūshoku*) and the amount of young people seeking higher education turned urban migration into a truly “mass” phenomenon (120-1).

Meanwhile, in contrast to the rapid expansion of its cities, Japan’s rural areas were quickly falling into ruin. In 1946, the year after World War II ended, the rural population had declined to seventy percent. Fifteen years later, in 1961, this number slid even further to a mere thirty percent. By 1977, it had sunk to ten percent of the total population (Iwamoto 18-9). In the forty years between 1960 and 2000, the total number of farming households decreased by half, and the number of

people engaged in farm labor fell to less than a quarter of what it had been. While young people who came to the city to achieve their ambitions dreamed of *furusato* from afar, outside the city limits, the countryside was quickly deteriorating, changing into something quite removed from the stuff of their memories. Ironically, the eagerness of Japanese youths to succeed in order to return home with pride had actually destroyed the homes they loved.

What exactly was the driving force behind this massive population shift from rural to urban areas? With the abolition of the class system came a new ideology of “individual personal advancement” (*risshin shusse*) in the Meiji period (Kinmonth 55). This ideology was interwoven into the new educational system established in 1872, which proclaimed that a man’s goal was “to ‘raise himself in the world’ (*mi wo tateru*), employ his property wisely, and make his endeavors to prosper on the foundation of ‘striving in the line of his natural aptitudes’” (*ibid.*). This ideology, which promoted self-advancement by way of ability and achievements, was the ideology that served as the primary internal force behind Japan’s rapid modernization from the Meiji period onwards (Mita, *Gendai* 185).

Since big cities were the only places where such aims as promulgated by self-advancement ideology could be achieved, ambitious youths left their hometowns for the big city in hopes of rising up in the world. These youths did not completely abandon their hometowns, however; they dreamed of them from afar, and longed to return to them after their goals had been achieved. In this way, Japan’s success story model is unique, because it combines a “universalistic competition principle” with a “particularistic attachment towards the home” (Mita, *Gendai* 206).

1.2 Pre-Modern Views of the City and Country

In its popular conception, *furusato* is generally depicted as a home in the countryside—or in Japanese, *inaka*. Prior to Japan’s modernization, over ninety

percent of Japan's population called the countryside their home, naturally leading to the concept of *furusato* being linked with rural areas (Nishikawa 124). In order to more deeply examine the transformation in the relationship between the city and *furusato* (and by extension, the *inaka*), two different studies on the pre-modern relationship between the city and the country will be used as references: Sonoda Hidehiro's book, *Miyako to iu uchū*, and Henry Smith's paper, "City and Country in England and Japan."

In pre-modern Japan, the epitome of urbanity was the *miyako*, usually translated as "capital" or "metropolis." The *miyako* was not only the location of the Imperial Court, but it was also the country's political center, as well as being a flourishing economic and cultural center (Sonoda 24). Much like the city is to *furusato*, the conceptual opposite of the *miyako* is the *inaka*, or countryside. *Inaka* is an ambiguous term in that it does not indicate a concrete place, but is rather a relational concept, gaining meaning through comparison with places that are not *inaka* (Sonoda 115). As such, *inaka* is typically defined in terms of what it is *not* rather than what it *is*: *unrefined*, *uncultured*, *non-urban* (*ibid.*). At the same time, the concept of *miyako* and its borders receives significance only when the existence of a vast *inaka* is given as a premise (*ibid.*). Just as the concept of *inaka* is dependent on the existence of a *miyako*, the *miyako* cannot exist without an *inaka* (117).

In Sonoda's book, he defines two distinct types of *inaka*, as seen from the eyes of *miyako* dwellers: "rustic" (*hina no*) *inaka* and "non-rustic" (*hina de wa nai*) *inaka*. The former describes the reality of country living, including hard physical labor and the stench of sweat and fertilizer, while the latter refers to a variety of "urbanized rurality," represented by the leafy shade and grassy banks that lined the Sumida River in the Edo period (Sonoda 122). For those living in the cramped quarters of the *miyako*, this kind of green space was necessary for *miyako*-dwellers to escape from the dullness of everyday life (122-3). Hence, while those residing in the *miyako*

cherished the non-rustic *inaka*, the rustic *inaka* was the object of their derision.

According to Sonoda, the chief distinction between rustic and non-rustic *inaka* is the people inhabiting the space. In non-rustic *inaka*, people were either non-existent or formed just one part of the overall landscape, and thus were not a major component of it. Conversely, the ‘rustic’ *inaka* included plenty of real people engaged in physical labor, people who formed a central part of the landscape. In the *miyako* consciousness, which regarded cultural refinement and urbane sophistication with the highest esteem, agricultural work ranked very poorly. The lives of physical laborers were seen as disparate from the *miyako* value system, and so the rustic *inaka* was completely removed from what was conceptualized as the borders of the *miyako* (133-4).

At present, however, the rural population has dwindled considerably, and domestic agriculture is suffering because of a lack of young workers. As such, the view towards the rustic *inaka* is rapidly changing. Previously, city-dwellers were surrounded with reminders that the rural world was just outside city borders. Now, for the average Tokyo denizen, rusticity has become practically inaccessible in day-to-day life. With this change, the rustic *inaka* ceased to be an object of the city-dwellers’ discrimination, and instead became an object of their curiosity—a sort of “internally-directed orientalism” on behalf of the Japanese themselves. According to Sonoda, at the root of this change is the fact that Japan’s *inaka* is increasingly becoming a space for those residing in the *miyako* (Sonoda 238-9).

Before beginning an analysis of Sonoda’s study and how it relates to the *furusato*-city relationship, I would like to introduce one other paper that is relevant to the discussion of the city and country relationship in pre-modern Japan. Henry Smith wrote a paper on two seemingly similar, but fundamentally different proverbs: the Latin phrase, “*rus in urbe*,” and the Japanese expression, “*kyō ni inaka ari*.” Both translate the same way in English—“the country in the

city”—but their inner meanings reveal very different cultural traditions in how urban space is conceptualized. Smith’s point of comparison is England and Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (dubbed the “long sixteenth century”), a period of dramatic social and economic change for both countries, in which the scale and function of cities underwent dramatic transformations (Smith 29). According to Smith, these changes were not spontaneous—they occurred within the context of previously existing, culturally-bound conceptions of the city, and set the foundation for how urban space would be conceptualized in the eighteenth century, as well (32).

At the time of the long sixteenth century, Renaissance ideology was prevalent throughout England and the rest of Europe, the roots of which were in classical Greek and Roman thought. One classical notion that was passed down through Renaissance ideology was the “pastoral” idea, “the concept of an idyllic and innocent countryside, contrasted with the corruption and politics of the city” (Smith 32). The phrase “*rus in urbe*” may be seen as a result of this classical pastoral tradition. A typical example of “*rus in urbe*” would be a large, country estate in the middle of an urban setting, cut off from the rest of the city. As Smith argues, the logic here is that the “city and country are in a basic way opposed, and the two can coexist only in an ironic sense, whereby the country ‘in’ the city is in fact apart from the real life of the city” (33). For the English gentry class, who circulated between their lavish estates in the countryside and residences in London, they had little need to re-create rurality in the city.

In Japan’s case, Kyoto was the *miyako*, the core of the nation, whereas the land surrounding it, the *hina*, was ranked in grades of decreasing sophistication the farther one moved out from the core. The *miyako* was home of *miyabi* culture, a polished, urbane aesthetic ideal, whereas the *hina* represented everything primitive and backward. The *miyabi* aesthetic suggested a process of “citiifying,” “pacifying,”

“instructing,” and “humanizing,” whereas the *hina* was seen by the Japanese elite as an untamed, barbaric landscape. Thus, the positive connotation of rural qualities never took root in Japan during this period, as they did in England and the rest of Europe.

Unlike “*rus in urbe*,” the expression “*kyō ni inaka ari*” is not a classical reference; its earliest documented usage is in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Smith indicates that this saying was likely a product of the long sixteenth century itself, reflecting the prosperity and prestige of Kyoto at the time. Hence, its basic meaning is that, “even in such a flourishing place as Kyoto, there remain rustic and uncivilized places” (Smith 36). Whereas in England, the countryside is preferable to the city, in Japan, the countryside is clearly inferior, “reflecting a continuation in the term ‘*inaka*’ of the older sense of *hina*, as an ‘uncivilized’ place” (*ibid.*). Furthermore, within the phrase “*kyō ni inaka ari*,” there is a sense that it is appropriate and even desirable that the city should have country-like places within it. For the English, the country would ideally replace the city, but for the Japanese, the country and city would ideally co-exist. The Japanese elite did not seek to escape from the city; rather, they drew the non-city *into* the city. In short, the relationship between the city and the country is one of opposites (either/or) in the English case, while in the Japanese case it is one of complements (both/and) (*ibid.*).

1.3 Transformation of the Urban-Rural Dynamic

In both Sonoda’s book and Smith’s paper, a similar picture of the relationship between the city and country in pre-modern Japan is given. The city, represented by the *miyako*, was the epitome of urbanity, refinement, civilization, and sophistication, while the *inaka*, or *hina*, was considered uncultured, uncouth, backward, and even barbaric. Compared to how the city and *inaka* are conceptualized in modern *furusato* discourse, this is a stunning reversal.

At present, the Japanese countryside has taken on connotations similar to the European pastoral ideology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: peaceful, simple, pure, as an *iyashi no ba* (place of healing). At the same time, the *inaka* is also imagined as a repository of Japanese tradition and culture, whereas the city is Westernized, artificial, and cultureless. This, too, marks a change from the way in which *miyako* and *inaka* were viewed in pre-modern times.

There is a dualistic view in the way the Japanese imagine rural areas: at once backward and unsophisticated, but at the same time pure, simple, and idyllic. In describing the common perception of the *miyako* in the pre-modern period, Yanagita Kunio remarked that the *miyako* was “the emotional home of much of rural Japan” (*ōku no inakabito no kokoro no kokyō*) (Smith 34). Now, the countryside, which is represented by *furusato*, is taken to be “the home of every Japanese person’s heart” (*nihonjin no kokoro no furusato*). Though *furusato* may be touted as the “true” Japanese landscape, however, it is important to note that it would never be suggested as a preferable alternative to the city. Its position will always be as an ancillary, but inseparable, part of the city—precisely the kind of non-rustic *inaka* that Sonoda described in his book.

What could have been responsible for this drastic change in how the countryside has been conceived? The mass migration of people into cities and the propagation of self-advancement ideology made *furusato* the point of reference, rather than the city. In addition, a side effect of the self-advancement ideology was that it firmly rooted the idea of *furusato* to the countryside, because it and the city occupied two distinct, opposing spheres. The dirty, crowded city was not a suitable backdrop for the success story model promoted by this ideology. As a result, however, the Japanese people grew more and more removed from the countryside, and as Sonoda states, they began to look at the country with curiosity and wonder. As it became more difficult to people to return home—for practical reasons, but

also physical—people lost their countryside roots, and so the role of *furusato* was relegated to one of the heart.

2.1 The Beautiful *Furusato* of Japan

In 2009, a weighty five-volume photograph collection called *The Beautiful Furusato of Japan* (*Utsukushii Nihon no furusato*) was published. The books are filled with lush, vivid, color photographs of the typical scenery one might see upon traveling out into the countryside: old farmhouses with thatched roofs beside yellowing rice fields, rough hewn stone steps that lead up to a five-story pagoda shrouded by looming cedar trees, bright yellow wildflowers dotting grassy banks along train tracks. Each volume focuses on a particular region—Tōhoku, Kyūshū, Kantō, Chūgoku, Kinki—and picks up a few quaint, rustic villages from each prefecture, describing the characteristics, historical significance, and notable scenery of each area. Yet, the subjects of the photographs, regardless of region, are so similar that it is difficult to differentiate between them. There is also a noticeable lack of human subjects in the pictures. All that is shown is the silent, still beauty of nature.

The same preface opens each volume, in which the photographer describes his motivation for initiating the ambitious project of trying to capture all of Japan's various *furusato* on film: "I wanted to explore the Japanese *furusato*, a place that is also called the 'arche-landscape' (*genfūkei*), which resides in the heart of every Japanese. Through [looking at] this arche-landscape, I wanted to affirm where it is that the Japanese people come from, and where they return to" (Kiyonaga 3). In *furusato* discourse, the term "arche-landscape" (*genfūkei*) frequently appears in conjunction with *furusato*.⁽²⁾ What the word refers to is the first landscape that a person experiences, which remains in the deepest recesses of his or her memory as a photographic image. As the arche-landscape represents the earliest memory

of a person's connection with the outside world, it is usually accompanied by some degree of nostalgia or sentimentalism. If *furusato* is the arche-landscape of the Japanese, that would mean it is the most primary, deeply rooted image in the Japanese psyche.

The photography also emphasizes the emotional aspect of the *furusato* landscape. He explains that the word *furusato* has a mysterious ability to revive a forgotten "something" in our hearts. Normally, that "something" stays dormant, but when we are lonely, sad, or upset, it awakens and "quenches our thirsty hearts" by resuscitating memories of our childhood landscape (*ibid.*).

For his photographic subjects, the photographer states that he picked places reminiscent of this "arche-landscape of the Japanese heart:" particularly mountain villages, fishing villages, fields and rice paddies, hamlets in the country, castle and temple towns, and villages where traditional architecture remains (Kiyonaga 4). Furthermore, he mentions that he excluded major metropolises or mid-sized cities from his photographs, even if they had areas that had preserved old architecture (*ibid.*).

This preface, though brief, reveals a number of important assumptions about how *furusato* is conceptualized. For one, it assumes that *furusato* is the arche-landscape for all Japanese people, even those who are born in Tokyo or other major metropolises. Another assumption, as revealed in the photographer's comment that he wanted to know "where the Japanese come from, and where they return to," is that *furusato* is not just the first landscape, but it is also the *final* landscape. The photographer also mentions that this arche-landscape is said to reside in every Japanese person's heart, bringing him or her comfort during times of hardship or sadness. This statement expresses a similar sentiment to the lyric in "*Furusato*," "*ame ni kaze ni tsukete mo / omoi izuru furusato*" (in rain or in wind / I remember my hometown), in which the singer reminisces about his or her home whenever life presents difficulties. Finally, the photographer's choice to eliminate mid- and large-

sized cities from his photographs shows that tradition, antiquity, rurality, and a natural setting are essential factors for a place to qualify as *furusato*.

2.2 The “Discovery” of Landscape

As evidenced by such photography collections as *The Beautiful Furusato of Japan*, *furusato* has increasingly shifted away from signifying an individual’s native place, and has instead come to represent the collective emotional “homescape” of the Japanese people. If the photographer’s aim had simply been to capture where most Japanese people were born, he would have had to include major cities in his pictures. Instead, what the photographer tried to capture was the archetype, or arche-landscape of the Japanese home. When used in the context of rural Japan, the association between “*furusato*” and “landscape” is so tenacious that the two have become virtually interchangeable terms. As we have seen, however, the same landscape that is touted as beautiful and idyllic in *The Beautiful Furusato of Japan* was regarded as unrefined and uncivilized in the pre-modern period. Moreover, at that time, the word *furusato* referred to an individual’s birthplace, not the landscape of the Japanese heart. What might have led to this connecting of *furusato* and landscape in the popular imagination?

According to philosopher Karatani Kōjin, the concept of landscape did not exist in Japan prior to the third decade of the Meiji period (Karatani 19). Landscapes have physically existed from the beginning of time, he says, but they were not “discovered” to be such until the 1890s. Karatani explains that this is because, in order to see a place as a landscape, there must first be a break between the observer and the observed. In other words, one must see the physical landscape as something outside of oneself, so that it may be depicted objectively and realistically (25). Pre-modern poets such as Buson and Bashō saw the physical landscape as a reflection of their inner selves, rather than something apart from it

(21). To describe nature as an objective landscape, one has to envision oneself as being apart from nature.

Prior to the “discovery” of landscape, the only “landscapes” recognized in Japan were *meisho*, famous places with historical or literary significance (Karatani 52). Travel literature about these famous places did not contain descriptions of the scenery, but were rather “a string of poems and lyrical essays” about the places (*ibid.*). The landscape of *furusato* greatly differs from that of the *meisho* on two points: one, while there is no description of nature in literature on *meisho*, description of the landscape of *furusato* abounds in songs, movies, and literature; two, whereas the *meisho* are highly embedded in a local and historical context, *furusato* is a nameless, decontextualized landscape.

The period in which Karatani believes landscape was “discovered” in Japan—the second or third decade of the Meiji period—coincides with the period that people began to leave the rural areas for the city. As *furusato* is not a home at present, but rather a home left behind, mass migration to the city triggered a general awareness of *furusato* as a separate space outside of the self. By becoming de-familiarized with the nature and lifestyle of rural areas, a space opened up between the individuals who had left home and their hometowns in the country. A landscape can only be “discovered” by people who are indifferent, or unattached, to their physical surroundings. This detachment from the home was what allowed people to objectively “discover” the landscape of *furusato*.

Yanagita Kunio once observed that farmers do not have many words that express the concept of landscape. They use words like “*nagame*” and “*miharashi*,” both of which mean “view,” but neither of these are truly synonymous with the Japanese word for landscape, “*fukei*.” Berque attributes this to the fact that, without learning how to view nature as a landscape, all we see is the physical environment around us (*Nihon* 49-50). To view the countryside as a landscape, it must first

be aestheticized. The kind of medium that teaches us how to see landscape is through pictures or poems. In other words, the gaze of a painter or a tourist is that which recognizes landscape, not that of a farmer. Indeed, farmers have a very deep knowledge of the environment around them, but to view that environment as a landscape requires a particular schema of perception. This schema was not produced by farmers in the country, but rather from people immersed in urban culture (112-3).

As an example of the kind of gaze that sees nature as “landscape,” Berque mentions city-dwellers who have residences in the countryside. Generally, city-dwellers view the rural environment in a completely different way than farmers. To them, the countryside is nothing more than a landscape. For this reason, they eagerly try to preserve symbols of the countryside, such as traditional architecture, old train stations, or quaint water wells with hand pumps. At the same time, they also oppose symbols of modernity, like power lines and billboards, which they believe tarnish the country landscape. Thus, while they are extremely faithful protectors of the rural landscape, they also take no part in the agricultural labor that sustains the community. As such, the local society usually adopts an equivocal attitude towards them, perhaps designating them as “new members” (*shinzanmono*) of the local society, but never anything more. However, since the tastes and preferences of those in the city have power over those living in rural areas, their assertions on how the rural landscape should look end up dominating. Hence, the idyllic country landscape that was discovered by city-dwellers has been pushed on those in rural areas, too, further prompted by the dwindling number of farmers (Berque, *Nihon* 126-7). In this way, the prevailing notion of landscape—and *furusato* is no exception—is ultimately intertwined with the changing preferences of the urban dwellers (49).

It is in this way that the inhabitants of the rustic *inaka* that Sonoda describes

came to form a part of the aestheticized rural landscape. In the transformation of rural Japan into a landscape—the non-rustic *inaka* as seen by city-dwellers—and the increasing gap between urban and rural lifestyles, inhabitants of Japan's countryside were released from discrimination by people in the city, but instead became subject to the city's curiosity and longing. In the photograph collection mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there is a noticeable absence of people from the majority of the photographs. When they are present, they are inseparable from the landscape they inhabit—a lone man tilling a rice paddy; old women with crinkly eyes, chatting as they scoop the meat out of sea urchin shells; a mother and her baby walking across an ancient stone bridge; local people going about their daily business beneath architecture reminiscent of the Edo period. In the landscape of *furusato*, the people are indistinguishable from the environment that surrounds them. Just as in the lyrics to “*Furusato*,” there are no real people, rather there are memories of them: fragments of parents and childhood friends who form a seamless brocade with the landscape of the home.

2.3 A National Landscape

The “discovery” of landscape was a necessary step in “discovering” the landscape of *furusato*. Once *furusato* was conceived of as being a landscape, the focus shifted from the individual home to a kind of archetypal place of origin—the home of the Japanese soul. Thus, the “discovery” of landscape helped to produce a generalized, abstracted *furusato*. After the notion of landscape was established, however, it was not difficult to link it to the concept of nation. In fact, the Meiji state “deliberately used the theme of landscape to base national unity on nature” (Berque, *Nature* 187). The method used was to forge “an imagery of rootedness common to all the Japanese, [and make] them perceive the specific according to the general, the topological according to the choretic,” and so images of specific environments

became the symbols of the entire community (*ibid.*).⁽³⁾

The characterization of *furusato* as the arche-landscape of the Japanese people might have been one way in which the Japanese people were instilled with a love for their native land and with an image of cultural homogeneity. By doing this, however, “everything that had gone before in the way of authentic rootedness” was sacrificed, thus leading to the national supplanting the local, in the name of the local itself (Berque, *Nature* 190). Consequently, there are photograph collections that depict *furusato* as a homogeneous, undifferentiated landscape, with little regional variety.

3.1 Furusato and the Nation

Despite the dilapidation of Japan’s countryside and the rising number of people born in urban areas since the Meiji period, the century-old notion of *furusato* as a quiet, idyllic village nestled in the countryside still persists. This presents a fundamental question: if the majority of Japanese no longer have access to this version of *furusato* in reality (much less call it home), how has this particular conceptualization of *furusato* been maintained for over one hundred years?

One possible way is through a genre of songs called “*shōka*” that formed a central part of national music education from the Meiji period onwards. *Shōka*, or “school songs,” is a genre of children’s music that was created in the Meiji period in order to cultivate an aesthetic sense in children and instill them with moral values. Though the original purpose of the songs was strictly educational, over the passage of time, these songs have lost their didactic associations in the popular imagination and instead have assumed the role as “the home of the Japanese heart” (*nihonjin no kokoro no furusato*) (Watanabe 38). In actuality, the songs have functioned, and continue to function, as a powerful tool for reinforcing national ideology. Relevant to the discussion of *furusato* are songs about nostalgia for the home (*bōkyōka*),

which form a separate subdivision within the *shōka* genre, and include songs like “*Furusato*.” Their lyrics sing about the kind of scenery and sentiments associated with *furusato* today: the beauty of the countryside, the pain of separation from home, the wistful longing to return to the golden days of one’s youth. Despite the absence of such scenery in the daily life of an average Japanese person, many still feel emotionally connected to and nostalgia for the kind of images presented in such lyrics, taking the scenery to represent the arche-landscape of Japan (*Nippon no genfūkei*) (Nishijima 433-5). If *shōka* has had a role in passing down the romanticized image of *furusato*, despite most people not having access to it in daily life, it is possible to say that the present conceptualization of *furusato* has not been *experienced*, so much as it has been *learned*.

3.2 The Birth of “*Furusato*”

At the time of the Meiji period, it had been decided that a new national music and a music education system would be required for the fledgling nation-state, and *shōka* would be the first step toward this goal. In November 1881, the government’s first attempt at an elementary school level songbook, “The First Collection of Songs for Elementary Schools” (*shōgaku shōka shū shōhen*), was published (Komiya 480). The purpose of *shōka* was beyond mere musical education, however; the songs were also used as a tool to help create a unified Japanese community. One of the ways to achieve this goal was by teaching songs that students could sing as a chorus. Consequently, *shōka* were written to be sung as a group, with a teacher accompanying on a piano or organ. Similar to how national or school anthems reinforce a person’s sense of belonging to that nation or institution, the act of singing as a group creates a sense of togetherness. Thus, having children sing *shōka* together was supposed to generate a sense of community and shared ideals among children as citizens of the Japanese nation (Watanabe 16).

The next *shōka* songbook, “Ordinary Elementary School Songs” (*jinjō shōgaku shōka*), was compiled by the Monbushō (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) from 1912 to 1915. A different songbook was issued for each grade level, six in total, with “*Furusato*” included in the sixth grade volume. This songbook, which includes many songs that continue to be sung today, such as “*Furusato*,” “*Kōyō*,” and “*Haru ga kita*,” would later be considered the most representative of all the *shōka* songbooks published by the Monbushō (Kindaichi 3).

At the time the “Ordinary Elementary School Songs” collection was published, the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War had ended, and the people were beginning to gain awareness of themselves as Japanese citizens, and the position of the Japanese nation-state in the international arena. As national awareness heightened, public education began to show signs of nationalist and militaristic ideology (Nishijima 448). In the “Ordinary Elementary School Songs” collection, several important changes differentiated it from the previous songbook. For one, the songs were written in a less formal style. Consequently, children were better able to understand what they were singing, stimulating the internalization of the song content (457). Second, songs about nature, the seasons, or daily life increased, and were mostly sung by those in lower grades, while songs with a patriotic or militaristic bent were taught to higher grades. Third, many songs in the “Ordinary Elementary School Songs” collection had some degree of anonymity in their lyrics. For example, the singer in “*Furusato*” is kept ageless and genderless, and the only other people who appear in the song lyrics are categories of people (parents, childhood friends) rather than individuals themselves. This enabled children to associate the imagery in the songs with the scenery of their daily lives, and subsequently enabled them to transfer their own emotions into the song lyrics (458).

Like other *shōka*, “*Furusato*” is not completely devoid of national ideology. For one, the emphasis on the “pureness” of the hometown landscape depicted in the

lyrics matches the rising trend of national-purist ideology that had already started by the end of the Meiji period. In addition, the line “*kokorozashi wo hatashite / itsu no hi ni ka kaeran*” (once I have achieved my goals / I shall return one day) reflects the “self-advancement” ideology that proliferated in the Meiji and Taisho periods. For Japan to achieve the status of a modern nation-state on par with the other developed nations, it needed people to come and work in its. Songs like “*Furusato*” helped to disseminate the “self-advancement” ideology that pushed young people to seek employment in cities, by appealing to their attachment to the home.

3.3 *Min'yō* versus *Shōka*

Before *shōka* were created and taught in schools, people who moved to the city would sing *min'yō*, or traditional folk songs, that originated in their hometowns or home regions. However, the characteristics of *shōka* and *min'yō*, and their respective depictions of home, are markedly different. Mita analyzes this difference by contrasting the lyrics of one of the most well-known *min'yō*, “*Yosakoi bushi*” and “*Furusato*” (Mita, *Kindai* 179). Portions of the lyrics of each song are referenced below:

Yosakoi Bushi (*Yosakoi Melody*) ⁽⁴⁾

<i>Tosa no Kōchi no Harimaya-bashi de</i>	At the Harimaya Bridge in Tosa of Kōchi
<i>Bōsan kanzashi kau wo mita</i>	I saw a monk buy a hairpin
<i>Mimase misemasho Urado wo akete</i>	Let's show Mimase, open the Urado [Bay]
<i>Tsuki no meisho wa Katsurahama</i>	The moon is beautiful at Katsurahama

Furusato

<i>Usagi oishi kano yama</i>	The mountain where I chased rabbits
<i>Kobuna tsurishi kano kawa</i>	The river where I fished carp
<i>Yume wa ima mo megurite</i>	I still dream of it, even now
<i>Wasuregataki furusato</i>	My hometown, I cannot forget you

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the two songs is the abundance of proper nouns in the “*Yosakoi bushi*” and the complete lack of them in “*Furusato*” (Mita, *Kindai* 179). While the *min'yō* lists a number of famous places or landmarks specific to this region in Kōchi prefecture, no place names or references to actual locations are to be found in *shōka*. Instead, we have “*kano yama*,” (that mountain) “*kano kawa*” (that river)—nostalgia for an abstract, universal *idea* of home, rather than a concrete *place*. This is precisely what Berque meant by the shift from the “topical” to the “choretic;” eithin the change from *min'yō* to *shōka*, we see the process of the local (regional) community being dissolved and reconstructed into a homogenous nation.

The song “*Furusato*” is not unique in its depiction of an abstract, nameless hometown landscape; none of the Monbushō *shōka* about the hometown describe regional qualities or mention specific places. Without any referents to an actual town or landscape, anyone can transfer their own memories of home onto the imagery presented in the songs. As Mita notes, this is partly due to urban demographics: by the middle of the Taisho period, people from all parts of the country had moved into the city. There was a necessity for songs that everyone—not just people from a certain part of the country—could sing together about their nostalgia for home in the country (*Kindai* 180). Additionally, there was a necessity for a universal image of *furusato* on the part of the Japanese government, in order to “create” citizens and a national ideology that they would all share. This ideology includes a common view on how the landscape is conceptualized. The purpose of *shōka* was to teach the Japanese that their language, culture, and landscape was the same. Indeed, emphasizing regionalism would be an obstacle to propagating the idea that the Japanese people share a common heritage, hence why it was avoided in songs about the home. By presenting the people with an empty framework over which they could superimpose their own memories and desires,

the conceptualization of *furusato* became unified on a national level. Through this process, *furusato* came to signify more than just a hometown—it became the representative landscape of the Japanese homeland.

4.1 Concluding Remarks

There are few concepts in modern Japanese society that carry as much ideological or emotional weight as *furusato*. Wrapped up in ideas about nature, cultural identity, and the nation, it is both a way to understand the social, political, and psychological changes that resulted from Japan's modernization, and a reflection of the Japanese people's deepest-held beliefs about the home.

Throughout this essay, I have attempted to trace the origins of the modern conceptualization of *furusato*. The three events ascribed as triggers to the birth of this image were mass migration to the city, the discovery of landscape, and the establishment of the modern nation-state. In mapping out the changes in how *furusato* has been envisioned in the pre-modern and modern eras, as a general trend, we can say that the image of *furusato* has become progressively abstract, growing more and more distant from its external referent in the countryside. The steady increase in the abstract, nameless depiction of the scenery of *furusato* has paralleled the decline of Japan's rural landscape, the dissolution of the traditional family structure, and the ensuing loss of cultural identity. Accompanying this shift is the movement of *furusato* from the dimension of the individual to that of the collective, and from a representation of localism to an emblem of the national. Consequently, *furusato* no longer belongs to a select few; it is now the possession of every Japanese.

The history of the conceptualization of *furusato* has shown that the effects of modernization were far-reaching, indeed. However, it has also shown that some things run too deep to be so readily discarded. Though the appearance of *furusato*

has changed over time, its essence has not. This is because the home that the Japanese sing of does not point to the home of yore, but rather the home of the heart—the desire to reunite with one's origins and return to one's original state, thus making the circle complete.

Notes

- (1) Throughout this paper, “modernity” is defined as the time period after the Meiji Restoration (1868).
- (2) Also translated as “proto-landscape.” However, as “arche-landscape” is the translation used in Berque’s book *Nature, Artifice, and Japanese Culture*, it will be adopted for use in this paper, as well.
- (3) In Berque’s theory, “topical” refers to a place in its singularity, while “choretic” qualifies a space in its universality.
- (4) Mori, Tadashi. “Yosakoi Bushi.” *Yosakoi Matsuri*. Web. 25 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.yosakoi.com/jp/yosakoibushi.html>>

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心のふるさと —日本近代における故郷観の起源史—

リンジー・モリソン

この論文の主な目的は、日本人の故郷観の起源史をたどることである。近代以降日本人が抱いてきた特定の故郷観を引き起こした原因を三章に分けて考察する。その原因とは、（一）地方から都市へと大量の人々が流入したこと、（二）風景の概念が「発見」されたこと、（三）国民国家が成立したことである。この三つの原因を軸にして、日本人の故郷意識の歴史的な変容を分析しながら、「ふるさと」に対する変わらない愛情と執着にも目を向けたい。

明治期に地方から大量の人が都会に流入したことにより、大勢の人々が故郷意識をもつようになった。その急速な近代化過程において、大きな推進力の一つは立身出世主義であった。しかし、都市が大きくなるにつれて田舎は徐々に荒れていった。その結果、心のふるさとは無事であっても、田舎にある実際のふるさとの美しさは次第に失われていった。そのため、ふるさとは特定の「場所」から、抽象的かつ普遍的な「概念」へと変わっていった。

ふるさとはしばしば「日本の原風景」と言われることがある。原風景とは、人の心の奥に潜在する最初の風景であり、懐かしさを伴うことが多い。しかし、柄谷行人によると、日本では「風景」の概念は明治三十年代まで存在しなかった。自然を「風景」として見るのには、特別な視線が必要となる。それは、自然を自分の外にある客体対象として見る視線なのである。風景が「発見」されたとき、人々は初めてふるさとを客観的な風景として見ることができた。

現在のふるさとイメージが代々受け継がれる理由の一つは、唱歌の教育である。国民国家の重要な教育道具として、唱歌は音楽教育の題材として国民教育に取り入れられた。唱歌を通して子供たちに道徳や国家イデオロギーを教えることがそ

の主な目的であった。唱歌である『故郷』も同じ役割をもっていた。『故郷』は、日本人の誰もがふるさとをもっていることと、その故郷が自然豊かで、ユートピアのような場所であることを教えた。

日本人の故郷観において近代化の影響は大であった。ただ、日本人のふるさとに対する執着だけは近代化や工業化があっても変わらなかった。時間の経過でふるさとの外見は確かに変化を見せたが、ふるさとの本質は未だに動じないのである『故郷』が作られてから百年が経とうとしている。『故郷』が今まで歌い続けられてきたのは、特定の場所よりも、心のふるさとを意味しているからなのであろう。