

# The Rhetoric of Pukch'on: The Making of a "New Old" Tradition

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Treasured for its geographic significance and physical beauty, Pukch'on, the area between Kyŏngbok and Ch'angdŏk Palaces, has been the object of a conflict between conservation and development since the late-1970s. The government has sought to retain the area's numerous *hanok* in their original form, while the owners have sought to develop their property according to their wishes. In the early 2000s, recognizing the failure of its past top-handed policy, the city of Seoul initiated a new conservation plan based on giving direct incentives to homeowners in return for maintaining their *hanok*. This paper examines the historical conflict focusing on the disparate understanding of heritage over the years, and analyzes the current turn in preservation strategy focusing on the rhetoric of "restoration." In the process, this paper will attempt to illuminate assumptions about tradition and built heritage. Finally, it will examine how this rhetoric is represented in preservation policies and examine a few individual cases of Pukch'on *hanok*.

**Keywords:** Pukch'on, *hanok*, heritage, preservation, restoration, historic landscape, Seoul

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