

Paradigm Shifts of Regions and Icons: The Aesthetic Significance of Kim Hong-do's Paintings

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Abstract

The most distinctive feature of Kim Hong-do's genre painting, shown in the composition, can be said to be the plane "dichotomous regions" of the motif. This composition is totally different from the cubic "multi-regions" of space that appear in the composition of earlier landscape painting. The dichotomous regions imply dividing the motif into two parts: "the main part" and "the concomitant part." The advent of the concomitant part implies a release from cultural chauvinism and cultural hegemony, signifying that Confucian monistic way of thinking had collapsed and that a pluralistic way of thinking had come into consideration.

Kim's landscape has two characteristics: One is that the dichotomous regions of the motif in genre painting changed into the multi-regions of space in landscape painting. Supposing that traditional multi-regions were general ones, then the spatial composition of his style uses simple and layered multi-regions. This simple composition implies that the key motif has been transferred from "symbols" to "impressions." The other characteristic lies in the fact that the paradigm of icons shifted from traditional to new ones. In other words, a significant change appeared as icons changed from traditionally established symbols to icons without established meanings, namely from icons-as-symbols to icons-as-impressions.

Keywords: paradigm shifts, dichotomous regions, multi-regions, symbolic icons, impressive icons, pseudo-literati, Confucian ideology, *mentalité*

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The Man

Kim Hong-do (1745-c.1806) was the most prominent painter among the court painters in the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910). Beginning at the age of around seven, he was trained by Kang Se-hwang (1712-1791), a great scholar-painter of the day, and by the age of twenty, Kim Hong-do was singled out to be the court painter of the Royal Painting Academy. An official portrait painter for the king was the most glorious position for court painters, and Kim Hong-do participated in the painting of the portraits of kings three times: in 1773, at the age of twenty-nine, he was one of the several artists who painted the portrait of King Yeongjo (r. 1724-1776) and also was one of the members who painted two portraits of King Jeongjo (r. 1776-1800), who appreciated Kim's genius for painting and was a reliable patron; the first of these works was painted when Kim Hong-do was thirty-seven (in 1781) and the second when he was forty-seven (in 1791).¹ These facts demonstrate Kim Hong-do's prominent talent in painting.

The paintings that he did in his thirties, for the most part, were genre paintings through which he represented aspects of life or social conditions, with a warm affection toward human beings and worldly affairs. In the works he did while in his forties, however, such genre pictures cannot be found. It is presumed that his view of art changed because at that time he was leading the life of a government official—Kim Hong-do served as a provincial government official through half of his forties. At that time, having the position of an official rather than of a professional painter, Kim Hong-do mixed with local high officials and so encountered the worldview of the literati. Under the influence of this experience, his view of painting changed and he became fascinated with landscape rather than with genre painting.² Kim Hong-do left his government office at the age of fifty-one, and returned to Hanyang (today's Seoul), the capital of the Joseon dynasty, to lead an active life as a court painter. From that time, he

1. See You (1993).

2. See Lee (1993).

practiced painting seriously and finally established his own unique style. Most of his works that have been handed down to posterity were created after that time.

Kim Hong-do's world of painting has two characteristics. One is that his paintings express pictorial depth, covering the four major styles of aesthetic categories: capability (*neung* 能), excellence (*myo* 妙), inspiration (*sin* 神), and effortlessness (*il* 逸). The other characteristic of his paintings is that they also show pictorial breadth, running across the gamut of genre painting, hermit painting, portrait painting, landscape painting, and so on.³ He displayed such artistic depth and breadth throughout diverse kinds of painting, however, that the most significant elements of his work can be said to be genre and landscape. For all that, these two kinds of painting imply more significant meaning for the history of painting as much as they do for the pictures themselves: on the one hand, his genre painting can be seen as an indicator that signals the "paradigm shifts" of society, culture, and thought in the late Joseon dynasty; on the other hand, his landscape painting shows that he fully understood the literati worldview although he was not a literatus at all. It is also very important that a series of his landscapes displays a shift in the traditional paradigm. The reason Kim Hong-do's painting is important for the sociology of art has to do with his relationship to the two kinds of painting, namely those of genre and landscape. This essay aims chiefly to analyze the two types of paradigm shifts, their expression in pictures, and their aesthetic significance. This analysis will be made from the angles of iconography⁴ or iconology,⁵ as well as from the sociology of art.⁶

3. For general information on Kim Hong-do's oeuvre, see Jeong et al. (1985); Yi (1996, 93-211).

4. The key subject of iconography is what properly connects artistic works with the mental situation of the times and tries to explicate the works within a larger context. See Kaemmerling (2003, 5).

5. Iconology is a school subject that examines art historically. It pursues an explication of the meanings of artistic works as well as verification and description of works. See Kaemmerling (2003, 17-18).

6. The sociology of art studies the social and historical production of art, the condi-

Paradigm Shift of Regions: From Cubic Multi-Regions of Space to Plane Dichotomous Regions of the Motif

In Kim Hong-do's time, genre painting was very popular in the world of art. The reasons for this may include, firstly the social, economic, and cultural development, as well as prosperity in the times of King Yeongjo and King Jeongjo; a second reason for the popularity can be found in the slow decline of Confucian ideology due to this cultural development and prosperity. In a turbulent age, the focus is on national and social ideology, which is, however, certain to lose power under the conditions of a long-term undisturbed peace. Thus, due to the fact that the circumstances creating this tension in rationality could not remain constant, Confucianism as rationalism came to the verge of collapse. In those days, genre painting was the pictorial expression of the times when was most stable, active, and prosperous in the late Joseon dynasty, in other words, the times when Confucian ideology was at its most disadvantageous for showing its persistent power.

Pungsok hwacheop (Album of Genre Painting), consisting of twenty-five pieces of genre painting that expressed various modes of ordinary folks' living, is one of Kim Hong-do's masterpieces. In the pictures of the *Album of Genre Painting*, only the motif is selectively described without description of any other parts.⁷ The most distinctive feature of his genre painting, shown in the composition, can be said to be the plane "dichotomous regions" of the motif. This composition is totally different from the cubic "multi-regions" of space that appear in the composition of earlier traditional landscape painting. The meaning of the two regions, however, is completely different. If the multi-regions of traditional landscape painting imply a multiple

tions of production and consumption of art, and the representative forms and codes through which art reproduces ideology. See Wolff (1994, 22).

7. For further information on Kim Hong-do's genre paintings, see Lee (1996, 205-228).

spatial composition, then the dichotomous regions imply dividing the motif into two parts, namely “the main part” and “the concomitant part.” If one takes the main part to be the one directly linked to the motif of a picture, then the concomitant part has no relation to the motif at all; however, by acting in concert with the main part, it plays the role of enhancing the artistic effect.

In traditional literati landscape painting, the concomitant part has a homogeneous relationship to the general or main part of the painting, which is called a “monistic composition.” Many more icons appear in traditional landscape painting than in Kim Hong-do’s genre painting; however, these icons do not play any role separate from the motif, nor do they produce any heterogeneous effects. For instance, in pictures such as *Gazing at a Waterfall* or *Looking for Plum Blossoms*, which often appear in traditional literati landscape painting, the icons related to such motifs as “gazing at a waterfall” and “looking for plum blossoms” are “gazer(s) and waterfall” and “a seeker and plum blossoms.” Yet other icons appear in addition to these: mountains, water, pavilions, and trees are mixed with the former, while snow, bridges, servants, and horses are mixed with the latter. Even so, these elements do not belong to the concomitant part, which is heterogeneous and separated from the main motif. Supposing “gazer(s) and waterfall” and “a seeker and plum blossoms” both define the main motif, then the rest of the icons could be called the concomitant motif. Therefore, we can assert that in traditional literati landscape painting, these all come to be included in the main or general part of the painting.

On the other hand, in Kim Hong-do’s genre painting, the heterogeneous concomitant part is established separately from the main part of the painting, such that together, the concomitant and main parts form a dualistic composition. Of Kim’s twenty-five total pieces of genre painting, approximately fourteen pieces of work could be said to be pictures in which a sharp line can be drawn between the main part and the concomitant part of the painting. In these respective pictures, the main part is made up of elements or persons performing acts related to the title or the motif; on the other hand, the

elements having no relation to the motif make up the concomitant part. The contents of the main part and the concomitant part in the respective pictures are as follows:

Table 1

Figure No.	Title (Motif)	Main Part	Concomitant Part
1	A Tavern	barmaids and a drinker	a child
2	At the Well	women drawing water and a man begging for water	a backbiting woman
3	Chopping Tobacco	people making tobacco	a spectator and a person reading a book
4	Fishing	fishermen	people in the boats passing by and birds
5	Fortunetelling	two male monks telling a fortune and a female customer	a young female servant
6	Jackstones	children playing a game	spectators and a child coming late
7	Korean Wrestling	players and spectators	a taffy seller
8	Lunch Time	persons having lunch	a dog
9	Shoeing a Horse	persons shoeing a horse	a water bowl on the table
10	Threshing Rice	threshing persons	a superintendent
11	Tiling the Roof	persons tiling the roof	a superintendent
12	Wash Place	women at a wash place	an aristocrat stealing a glance
13	Weaving by Hand	weaving women	an old woman and children seeing weaving
14	Weaving Mat	a couple weaving a mat	a son reading a book



Fig. 1. *A Tavern*. Kim Hong-do.
Ink and light colors on paper.
27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of
Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 2. *At the Well*. Kim Hong-do.
Ink and light colors on paper.
27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of
Korea, Seoul.

The point of Kim Hong-do's genre painting is that the concomitant part holds its own independent position. Although the status of the concomitant part of a picture is far removed from the main part that is related to the motif, it plays a role in enhancing the overall artistic effect of the piece. It could be said that the relative importance of the concomitant part's position is due to such simplicity as the plain composition of genre painting. The concomitant elements in Kim Hong-do's genre painting are not pregnant with any messages or symbols; however, they have their own special meaning and values. They are the manifest result of the fact that the painter unconsciously absorbed the deconstruction of ideology that was found in the late Joseon dynasty.



Fig. 3. *Chopping Tobacco*. Kim
Hong-do. Ink and light colors on
paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National
Museum of Korea, Seoul.

Fig. 4. *Fishing*. Kim Hong-do.
Ink and light colors on paper.
27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum
of Korea, Seoul.



Then what does such a formal shift mean? The advent of the concomitant part of the painting implies a release from cultural chauvinism⁸ and cultural hegemony,⁹ signifying that Confucian ideology's monistic way of thinking had collapsed and that a pluralistic way of thinking had come into consideration. The reason why "gazing at a waterfall" and "looking for plum blossoms" can be the motifs in a

8. James M. Polachek (1992) used the term "cultural chauvinism" in *The Inner Opium War*, meaning the Chinese gentry's group consciousness for cultural superiority. See He (1994).

9. Antonio Gramsci used the term "cultural hegemony." See Duara (1988, 247).

traditional literati landscape is that icons such as a waterfall and plum blossoms involve codes.¹⁰ In genre painting, however, there are no such codes, or they are purposely eliminated, so the power of the main



Fig. 6. *Jackstones*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

Fig. 5. *Fortunetelling*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 7. *Korean Wrestling*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

Fig. 8. *Lunch Time*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



part comes to be inferior to that of traditional literati landscape paintings, in which the motif is obvious. Therefore, in genre painting, the concomitant part was able to be independent and heterogeneous. And the concomitant part, free from the tension of its relation to the main part, finally came to establish the “aesthetics of *mentalité*,”¹¹ which, stated differently, means a release from ideology. In other words, if we say that existing Confucian painting exemplifies a “painting of meaning” that conveys political and educational symbols, then Kim Hong-

10. The most significant characteristic of Confucian aesthetics shown in formative arts is that value-laden information is much more important than formal information such as lines, colors, and composition. In the system of Confucian aesthetics, particular meanings and values are given to the individual icons that are repressed by formal information. An ideology is thereby produced out of the represented forms of pictures. Such an ideology can be called a “visual ideology,” and it is produced not by modes or styles but by items of composition. The present writer defines various kinds of visual ideology as “codes,” and items of composition as “icons” which imply codes. In the painting of Confucian aesthetics, codes are everything, and formal beauty is meaningless.

11. *Mentalité* is understood as group unconsciousness as the basis of sociocultural phenomena. See Cho (2000, 39).

do's genre painting could be said to be a "painting of impression" that conveys a glimpse of life.

The meaning of Kim Hong-do's genre painting, considered from the point of view of the sociology of art, is twofold: first, the advent of genre painting means the conversion of high-class to popular art; second, the prevalence of genre painting means clearing out the vestiges of unconsciousness,¹² which arose from the fact that people felt



Fig. 9. *Shoeing a Horse*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 10. *Threshing Rice*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

12. "As a highly talented and versatile court painter of a *jungin* ("middle people") background, he would have been more open to new artistic possibilities than would a more conservative Confucian literati painter of *yangban* background." Quoted from Chung (1999).



Fig. 11. *Tiling the Roof*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 12. *Wash Place*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

that they had to aim for the social center despite not being in the central culture—high-class or elite culture.¹³ The following statement by A. Hauser speaks to this point:

A serious and complicated high-class art causes people uneasiness and may even provide shocks and pain; on the other side, a popular art appeases their uneasiness, makes them escape the painful problems of harsh reality, and also leads them to fall into negative attitudes and self-intoxication.¹⁴

13. Real rural folk, when writing a poem, usually take pains to be not naturally but formally attired, linguistically as well as emotionally. See Morf (1911, 90); Quoted from Hauser (1983a, 295).

14. Quoted from Hauser (1983b, 237).



Fig. 13. *Weaving by Hand*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 14. *Weaving Mat*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 27 x 22.7 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

Paradigm Shift of Icons: From Symbolic Icons to Impressive Icons

From his forties, or the period in which he was working as a government official, Kim Hong-do had become “a pseudo-literatus.”¹⁵ As a

15. The present writer defines “literati” as follows: The term implies the combination of power, learning, morality, and art. The reason for this is that literati are *sa* (士 scholar-official) who hold posts in the government; Confucian scholars following Confucian doctrines; *gunja* (君子 superior man) who possess a perfect morality; as well as artists expressing their inner feelings through literature or formative arts.

general phenomenon in the late Joseon dynasty,¹⁶ Kim Hong-do, despite being a court painter, also frequently came in and out of the field of the literati. His position as a court painter meant that he was not a real literatus; however, he had experience keeping company with literati through his life as a government official, such that, under the influence of the literati art view, he produced traditional literati landscape works based on Confucian aesthetic standards. In particular, the greater portion of his paintings produced in his fifties and sixties were the ideological paintings that were completely different from the realistic genre paintings done during his thirties, and which showed a reclusive self-satisfaction or literati idealism. For example, such works as *High-minded Persons Gazing at a Stream* (fig. 15) or *Gazing at a Waterfall* (fig. 16) show the attitude of Confucian living. And such characteristic masterpieces as *Old Plum Tree* (fig. 17) and *Old Plum Tree Implying the Advent of Spring* (fig. 18), portraying “an equal blending of accomplishments and solid qualities” (*munjil binbin; wenzhi binbin*) through description of the harmony of gorgeous blossoms and unadorned boughs, also displayed the systematic character of Confucian aesthetics. We can find another example that reveals far better the extent to which Kim was a pseudo-literatus, from the fact that his name “Hong-do,” which means that the human being manifests moral doctrines, and one of his pen names “Sa-neung,” which held the meaning that a learned man can keep a steady mind without a steady livelihood, originated in the *Lunyu* (Analects of Confucius)¹⁷ and the *Mencius* (Works of Mengzi)¹⁸ respectively. Those meanings describe *gunja* (a superior man) very well. Even though he understood Confucianism or the Confucian classics to a certain extent, this was not the point anyway; this is because the positions of the so-called literati were determined not by

The present writer defines pseudo-literati as persons who imitate only the formal elements of literati art without the spirit of art based on the quality of the literati.

16. See Lim (2006, vol. 6).

17. *Analects* 15:28.

18. *Mencius* 1A:07.

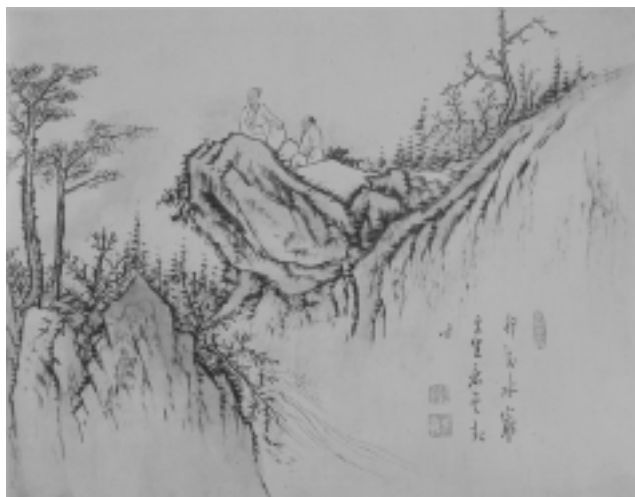


Fig. 15. *High-minded Persons Gazing at a Stream*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 29.5 x 37.9 cm. Personal possession.



Fig. 16. *Gazing at a Waterfall*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 29 x 42 cm. Personal possession.

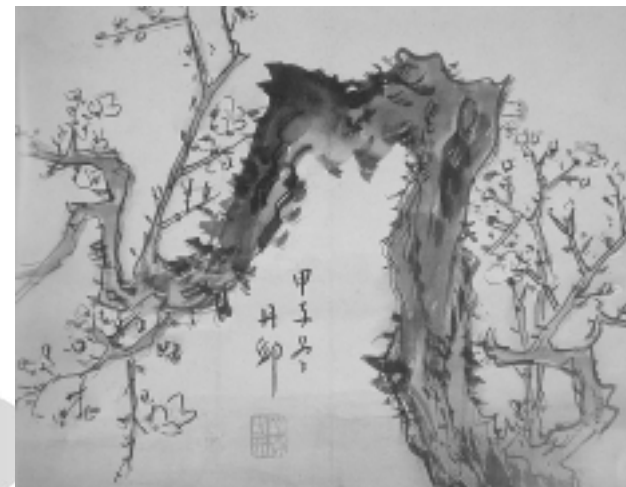


Fig. 17. *Old Plum Tree*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 17.6 x 22.3 cm. Personal possession.



Fig. 18. *Old Plum Tree Implying the Advent of Spring*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 36 x 23.5 cm. Personal possession.

classes or knowledge but ultimately by the cultural experiences of the inner school.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the significance of Kim Hong-do's ideological landscape painting is not less than that of his genre painting. The landscape is the very stage upon which Kim Hong-do as a pseudo-literatus is reunited with the Kim Hong-do who embodied a release from ideology in the concomitant part of genre painting. His literati landscape, however, was different from the traditional literati landscape. Kim Hong-do's landscape painting has the following two characteristics: One characteristic is that the dichotomous regions of the motif in genre painting have changed into the multi-regions of space in landscape painting. Here, however, the multi-regions of space are not traditional multi-regions but rather the multi-regions of Kim Hong-do's style. Supposing that traditional multi-regions were general ones, then it follows that the spatial composition of Kim Hong-do's style uses simple and layered multi-regions.

We can see typical examples of such multi-regions of Kim Hong-do's style in his two pictures: *Gazing at Plum Blossoms on the Boat* (fig. 19) and *Fishing in East River* (fig. 20). The aesthetic mechanism of the two pictures, which are exactly alike in terms of artistic sentiment, is to use empty spaces as pictorial realities. In the two pictures, four layers of such regions are heaped up one after another, so to speak: a real region, an empty region, a real region, and an empty region are stacked up in orderly fashion from the bottom of the painting to the top.

The "real" regions are the first and third regions from the bottom, which depict hills consisting of soil, trees, grass, and so on; the

19. "Scholars' painting was the art of an educated minority, practised only in a circle of intimates and appreciated by a chosen few." Quoted from Bush (1971, 181). On the other hand, one of the views of a new cultural history endorses the present writer's definition of the position of literati. Robert Darnton has said that the decisive factor of class was not class itself but rather class consciousness. In other words, what is important in the division of class is the difference of cultural experiences rather than the possession of the means of production, as Karl Marx has argued. See Cho (2000, 11).



Fig. 19. *Gazing at Plum Blossoms on the Boat*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 164 x 76 cm. Personal possession.



Fig. 20. *Fishing in East River*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 111.9 x 52.6 cm. Gansong Museum of Art, Seoul.

“empty” regions or blank spaces are the second and forth regions. However, each “real” region and “empty” region is not homogeneous. The first region, which depicts a land that the person is leaning on (in *Fishing in East River*) or leaning against (in *Gazing at Plum Blossoms on the Boat*), is “this shore” or this world; in the same way, the third region, which depicts a land that the person latently desires (in *Fishing in East River*) or longs for directly (in *Gazing at Plum Blossoms on the Boat*), signifies the “other shore” or a dreamland. The second and forth regions are empty space. However, these blank parts are an unrestricted magical region:²⁰ they at times represent water, the sky in some cases, and the heart on occasion. The blank portion of the second region acts as a substitute for water, and the blank portion of the fourth region stands for the sky. Such poetic space in which real regions and empty regions come into contact shows a perfect “unity of the empty and the real” (*heosil habil; xushi heyi*).

Such a simple and layered spatial composition of multi-regions demonstrated in Kim Hong-do’s landscape painting might be affected by the simple spatial composition of his genre painting. This simple composition implies that the key motif has been transferred from “symbols” to “impressions.” Supposing that the motif of traditional, literati-style, Confucian, and ideological painting was a symbolic one, then the meaning of such transforming into impressive motif could be said to be the release from traditional, literati-style, Confucian, and ideological motifs. Therefore, the perfect unity of the “emptiness” and “reality” shown in Kim Hong-do’s landscape paradoxically means breaking with a goal such as “correspondences between the virtues of the things of nature and human virtues” (*jeonggyeong habil; qingjing heyi*),²¹ as shown in other traditional landscape paintings.

20. “Qualitatively the void is here the symbol of ‘that non-existent in which the existent is,’ and quantitatively the voids have become more important than the solids.” Quoted from Rowley (1959, 72).

21. “As we know, the Chinese love to establish correspondences between the virtues of the things of nature and human virtues. For example, the status of *gunja* (superior man) is accorded to orchids, bamboos, pines, and plum trees because of their

The other characteristic of Kim Hong-do’s landscape is that the paradigm of icons shifted from traditional to new ones. Two important factors gave rise to the paradigm shift of icons: one was the experience of being a court painter and pseudo-literatus as a result of his status as a government official, the experiences of the new world through overseas travel, and so on; the other factor was affected by the social environment, such as material prosperity and social stability created by the peaceful reign, the weakening of the ideological concentration that followed as a consequence, and so on. Owing to these factors, the formality of icons in the traditional literati landscape, in which the meaning and function of established icons were quite well accounted for, came to be shaken. In other words, a significant change appeared as icons changed from having a traditionally established symbols to icons existing without established meanings, namely from icons as symbols to icons as impressions.

A Sound of Oaring (fig. 21) is a typical case in point. The key word of this picture, which has a remarkable character different from that of the established literati landscape, actually is “rhythmic vitality” (*giun saengdong; qiyun shengdong*). The present writer defines rhythmic vitality as “an impression shown with dynamic or static movement.” The point of appreciation of this picture is the “stream” moving slightly through the absentmindedness that fills in the whole picture. From the back of the rock wall, boats or persons abruptly appear in the picture, flowing along with the energy of the afterimage; the waning images of the line of the stream in the picture do not so easily disappear from sight. This part is the very “impression.” In the meanwhile, the most important point of rhythmic vitality is that both parts act in concert with one another. In *A Sound of Oaring*, in which the rhythmic vitality it comprehends is an impression shown with a “static” movement, the absentminded looks in the persons’ eyes act in

respective virtues of grace, rigor, youth, and noble beauty. This is not a mere matter of naturalistic symbols, for these correspondences aim at the communion through which man inverts the perspective of naturalistic symbols by interiorizing the external world.” Quoted from Cheng (1994, 84).

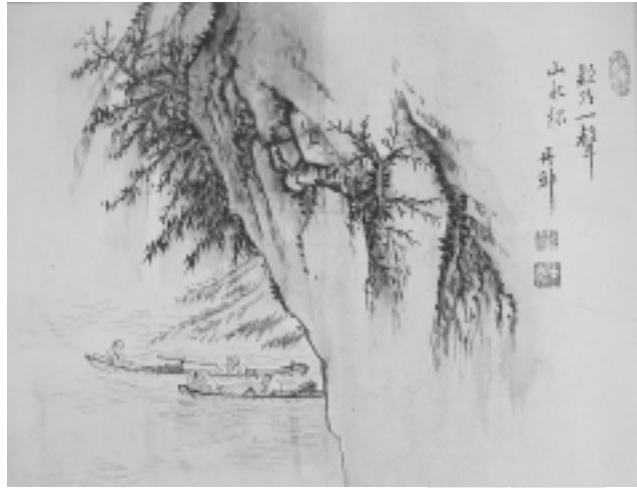


Fig. 21. *A Sound of Oaring*. Kim Hong-do. Ink and light colors on paper. 28.5 x 36.5 cm. Busan Museum, Busan.

concert with the soft stream of water, such that the condition of rhythmic vitality is achieved. This monumental work of artistic genius could be regarded as the mark signaling that the age of symbols was gone and the age of impression had come.

It might have been possible for Kim Hong-do to open the age of impression because he was not an orthodox literati. Had he been an orthodox literatus, he would not have been able to free himself from ideological self-suppression. However, Kim Hong-do was a court painter, so he was naturally able to experience the world of pure impressions, namely the world of genre painting, which was quite different from the world of symbols interspersed with Confucian ideology; having comprehended the artistic interest in the world of impression, he had finally come to create the landscape painting of impressions, contrary to the landscape of symbols.

Conclusion: Significant Paradigm Shifts

Owing to the material prosperity that came with a long peaceful reign without any troubles either at home or abroad during the eighteenth century, there appeared the “involution”²² phenomenon of Confucian ideology in the late Joseon dynasty. From a comprehensive point of view, such an involutory phenomenon in Confucian ideology can be said to have been mirrored by the stream of art history at those times. The present writer considers this stream of sociology of art in the late Joseon dynasty as the process of “deconstruction release degradation.”

The stage of deconstruction, which is applicable to the brush of Jeong Seon (1676-1759) and Sim Sa-jeong (1707-1769), points out that two factors caused Confucian rationalism to be deconstructed, these being namely the easing of social tensions that was followed by a long peaceful reign and the collapse of the relationship between master and servant due to an increase of material prosperity. Now the release from Confucian suppression²³ began to grow. The stage of release implies that Confucian ideology, the root and prime factor of cultural chauvinism and cultural hegemony, gradually had less influence, and thereafter a release was revealed in the way of thinking or expression.²⁴ Kim Hong-do has contributed much to the establishment of a relative cultural pluralism at this stage. Kim Hong-do's superiority is based on the fact that he did not follow in Sim Sa-jeong's footsteps as “the subsequent confusion after deconstruction.”²⁵ Kim Hong-do

22. “According to Geertz, involution is a process whereby a social or cultural pattern persists and fails to transform itself into a new pattern even after it has reached definitive form.” Quoted from Duara (1988, 74).

23. The point of Confucian aesthetics is that aesthetic values are changed into ethical and ideological values, that is, social and political values in the long run.

24. At the stage of degradation, the authority of ideological art or high-class art dwindled. Hereafter, following the advent of Kim Hong-do's genre painting, much more vulgar genre painting and even pornography appeared. Sin Yun-bok (b. 1758) could be mentioned as the leading painter of this stage. See Lim (2005).

25. The meaning of deconstruction in Sim Sa-jeong's painting is not “demolition” but “collapse.” In other words, he has not intentionally deconstructed Confucian ideol-

achieved the deconstruction, while at the same time also carrying out fundamental “paradigm shifts” in the artistic field. That is the essence of this very new tradition, namely the creation of new “icons” and new “regions.” Therefore, at the point of deconstruction, he fulfilled the true “demolition” that took quite a different shape from the “collapse” seen in the case of Sim Sa-jeong.

If so, the paradigm shifts mark “significant shifts,” and the forms changed by these shifts can be called “significant forms.” The meaning of the sociology of art in such formal change is the deconstruction of Confucianism as an ideology and the advent of post-Confucianism as *mentalité*. The paradigm shifts imply a change from art as ideology to an art free from politics and ethics, that is, an art speaking for *mentalité*. It could be said that Kim Hong-do, through painting, expressed the shift from the age of ideology to the age of *mentalité*. In other words, he established the world of the “painting of impressions” definitively distinguished from “painting of symbols” which was interspersed with meanings and functions.²⁶ Granted that he was not conscious of this point, we can still read the shift in thinking at the time, which is unconsciously represented in his pictures. This is the position and significance of Kim Hong-do’s world of painting from the social historical stream, from deconstruction through release to the degradation of Confucian ideology in the late Joseon dynasty.

ogy or the standards of Confucian aesthetics with a noble spirit; on the contrary, the spirit of the times or Confucian ideology collapsed due to the accumulated contradictions of the times and socioeconomic surplus prosperity. See Lim (2005).

26. James Cahill has mentioned three factors for understanding of painting. “Part one concerns the painting itself, its material existence, its style, and its subject in a simple sense. Part two concerns its meaning in the broadest sense; and for that we usually have to look beyond the painting proper. Part three is its function—how and in what circumstances it was made and what part it played in some social situation of its time.” Quoted from Cahill (1988, 37-38). However, the impression in genre painting or shown at *A Sound of Oaring* is a category definitely beyond explanation with the meanings or functions J. Cahill mentioned. It has to be considered as a new factor.

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GLOSSARY

<i>giun saengdong</i>	氣韻生動	<i>qingjing heyi</i> (Ch.)	<i>jeonggyeong habil</i>
Hanyang	漢陽	<i>qiyun shengdong</i> (Ch.)	<i>giun</i>
<i>heosil habil</i>	虛實合一	<i>saengdong</i>	
Hong-do	弘道	Saneung	士能
Jeong Seon	鄭澈	Sim Sa-jeong	沈師正
Jeongjo	正祖	Sim Yun-book	申潤福
<i>jeonggyeong habil</i>	情景合一	<i>wenzhi binbin</i> (Ch.)	<i>munjil binbin</i>
<i>jungin</i>	中人	<i>xushi heyi</i> (Ch.)	<i>heosil habil</i>
Kang Se-hwang	姜世晃	<i>yangban</i>	兩班
<i>munjil binbin</i>	文質彬彬	Yeongjo	英祖

(Ch.: Chinese)