Self-Reflection in the Portraits of Joseon Scholars

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Abstract

Portrait painting during the Joseon dynasty was developed in the context of Confucian social practice and was based on political enlightenment and ritualistic significance. However, because Joseon scholars emphasized introspection (*naeseong*) and self-cultivation (*jonyang*) as a preliminary phase of such social practice, their portraits were more than just pictures; many aspects of the portraits were fundamentally significant to the process of self-cultivation. For this reason, the portraits of Joseon scholars were not just externally very minimalist, modest, and strictly formalized, in keeping with Confucianism. Internally, they were also extremely simple, pure, and elegant. The portraits were considered a visual medium for the process of self-reflection. Instead of externally diverse portraits, through the process of self-inscription (*jachan*), Joseon scholars could include their own detailed thoughts about their portraits in the paintings themselves. This can be confirmed by reading the inscriptions. If the visual "image of figure" in the portraits of Joseon scholars was a representation of the person by the artist, the "image of mind," which was what the scholars wanted to portray, was represented by their self-inscriptions. Therefore, without understanding these self-inscriptions, it is difficult to understanding the meanings and images of the scholars' minds and self-reflection that they wanted to portray in these portraits clearly and in detail.

Key words

original and copy, image of figure and image of mind, script and legend, Neo-Confucianism and self-reflection

Introduction: Image of Form and Image of Mind in Portrait Paintings

A portrait is a painting that depicts a certain person and is recognized as a picture of that particular person. A portrait then is a copy, and it functions as a visual representation which can replace the original subject, due to its external and internal similarity with the person painted. In the Joseon period, portraits were usually conceptualized employing the idea of "the real" (*jin*), as in the case in which portraits were called "the depiction of the real" (*sajin*). This reflects the Joseon people's perspective that portraits represented and stood in for the person's true form.

Portraits most starkly reveal the shamanic aspect unique to pictorial representations in that copies are thought to represent and function like the original. These portraits also intensively reflect the ideas of "spirit resonance" (*giun*) and "transmission of the spirit" (*jeonsin*), which formed the core of traditional representation theory during this time, when all things were understood to be spiritual beings and expression of their internal life was sought. No matter how animated and personified the subject of a painting is, a natural object is generic and fixed in its spirit and significance, whereas the sitter for a portrait is individual, multiple, and fluid in their personality. Thus, the portrait can be defined as a pictorial representation that requires the most unique and difficult painting ~~practice~~skill.

Unlike other representational objects that exist merely as objects of representation, a portrait defines a particular situation in which the object of representation participates in the process and result of his or her own representation. Sol Geo's *Nosong* (Old Pine Tree) and Zeuxis's *Grapes,* which symbolize shamanic beliefs about pictorial representation, kept silent concerning their copies. However, Joseon scholars took part in the process of self-representation; they often asked for a revision of the representation, beginning with the initial sketch (*chobon*) to the finished product (*jeongbon*) ,[1] wrote an inscription on it, and finally evaluated the representation. In the process, they were being represented and even represented themselves, creating a state of simultaneous objectification and subjectification.

In this dual process in which the sitter, as the original, sees both the copy and the original, the sitter experiences the split of self-consciousness about his or her self-representation. However, the sitter soon heals the split so that he or she is able to discover a new meaning for the self-representation, which reveals the significance and context unique to the portrait. Not only that, but through writing the self-inscription, the sitter reflects upon and documents the process and significance of the portrait and further deepens their understanding.

While defining the sitter's inscription on the portrait as another "portrait" that is

[1] Existing documents and sketches (*chobon*) of the time show that the sketches were altered at the request of the sitter, at most ten times, until it was satisfactory. This shows that the sitter participated in the production of the portrait both directly and indirectly. An official in the 17th century had his sketch changed more than 30 times.

"drawn" by the sitter in his own words, this paper explores the existential meaning and function of portrait paintings through the review of the inscription, focusing on the relationship between the original and the copy. In other words, by peeking into the sitter's mind from outside the painted portrait, this paper hopes to peek into the internal aspects of the painted portrait, the examination of which has been difficult to do with only the simple "image of form" available in the portraits. From this, this paper analyzes the self-reflective meaning embedded in and function of the Joseon portraits. This will provide an opportunity through which we can have a new and more in-depth understanding of portraits of Joseon literati scholars, which until now have been approached only in a ritualistic context.[2]

"Image of Form" and Representational Fictitiousness in Portraits

The sitter looking at his portrait is most hurt by the fundamental fictitiousness in the pictorial representation of self via the painting. The fact that portraits were called the *jinyeong* (shadow of the real) by combining the Chinese characters *jin* (true or real, *zhen* in Chinese:) and *yeong* (shadow, *ying* in Chinese), or *yeongjeong* (painting of the shadow) reflects the linguistic traces of doubt concerning the portrait.

The concept of existential nihilism reemphasizes and reinforces a self-consciousness concerning the fundamental fictitiousness of the portrait. Yi Gyu-bo (1168-1241), who lived during the Goryeo dynasty prior to the establishment of Neo-Confucianism, the Buddhist Monk Beopjong (1670-1733), who lived at a time when Joseon dynasty philosophical worldview was at its peak, and Kim Jeong-hui (1786-1856), who lived during the fall of both Neo-Confucianism and the Joseon dynasty, all clearly show this split of self-consciousness.

The beard is rough and the lips thick and red.
Who is this person? He is similar to me, Yi Gyu-bo.
If this is truly me, is it a shadow or reality?
As the real is fictitious and like a dream,
The shadow is only a dream in a dream.[3]

In life you are my shadow.
But in death I am your shadow.

[2] Choe and Maeng (1972); Lee T. (1981); Cho (1983); Yi S. et al. (1997).
[3] 髯▉而髒 脣厚且▉. 此何人者 似若春卿. 果是春卿 影耶形耶. 形尙虛妄 惟夢之似. 何▉是影夢中夢爾. Yi Gyu-bo, "Joengiansayeojin, Jajakchanwal" 丁而安寫予眞 自作贊曰. *Dongguk isangguk hujip* 東國李相國後集 (Collected Works of Yi Gyu-bo, part 2), *gwon* 11.

As you and I are both apparitions,
I do not know which is real or a shadow.[4]

The real me is also me, the fictitious me is also me.
The real me is also right, the fictitious me is also right.
I cannot tell which of the two is me.
In the net of Indra at the palace of Sakra,
The jewels mount.
Who can decipher the real among the mani?
Ha ha.[5]

All three authors above viewed portraits as empty and fictitious, as a "dream in a dream." Looking at a portrait was likened to "a ghost body facing a ghost shadow."[6] With Buddhist insight, they even regarded human beings and the world as an illusion, thereby transcending the basic fictitiousness of portrait representation. When the original itself is falsified, the fictitiousness of the copy is not even worth a doubt. In this sense, it may be that the representational fictitiousness of the portrait, paradoxically, distinctly exposes the true form **of** being seen in a Buddhist way, with the portrait then coming to represent Buddhist truth.

Within the Neo-Confucian worldview, however, the daily life of the present is seen not as virtual but as real, with the mind and body defining the true form of a human being.[7] Therefore, only when the spirit and body are correctly transmitted can a portrait be established as a proper one and promoted as a valuable portrait. Considering the "transmission and painting of the spirit" an essential principle of the portrait and calling the portrait *jeonsin* (transmission of spirit) demonstrates the linguistic recognition of this process.

However, the minute we start believing the spirit and body to be the true form of the human being and the more we suppose that a portrait can deliver this form, we fall into contradiction. Heo Mok (1595-1682) (figure 1), of the mid-Joseon era, perceived this contradiction while looking at his own portrait.

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[4] 有神足畵我影 示我曰 此是眞影 遂批其背曰 生前渠於我之影 死後我於渠之影. 渠我元來幻化形 不知誰是其眞影. Monk Beopjong, "Imjonggye" 臨終揭 In *Heojeongjip* 虛靜集 (Collected Works of Buddhist Monk Beopjong), part one.

[5] 是我亦我 非我亦我. 是我亦可 非我亦可. 是非之間 無以爲我. 帝珠重重 誰能執相於大摩尼中. 呵呵. In Kim Jeong-hui, "Jaje sojo" 自題小照, in *Wandang seonsaeng jeonjip* 阮堂先生全集 (Collected Works of Wandang Kim Jeong-hui), *gwon* 6..

[6] Yi Gyu-bo, "Chaun ihaksa hwasajeongbigammukjukyeongja cheogngyeongi" 次韻李學士和謝丁秘監墨竹影子請見寄, in *Dongguk isangguk hujip, gwon* 5.

[7] Jeong Do-jeon's emphasis on Neo-Confucianism while criticizing and rejecting Buddhism at the beginning of Joseon proves this point. Han Y. (1989, 51-102).

A figure has a form but a spirit does not.
That with a form can be copied while the formless cannot.
That with a form is fixed while the formless is complete.[8]

A portrait can be defined as an expression of the sitter's essential characteristics through the depiction of an individual figure. If an intangible spirit cannot be copied into a tangible shape, the significance of a portrait is decreased from the onset and a true portrait cannot be produced. Heo Mok's self-consciousness while looking at his portrait is pained to the extent that he cannot but deny the essential significance of the portrait itself. However, this may also be an acute perception of the fundamental fictitiousness of the portrait, which cannot transcend the level of a mere representation of a physical figure.

Even if the portrait is a copy of the visible figure, it cannot be an identical copy, such as might be true with regard to human cloning. Cheng Yi, who established the basis of Neo-Confucianism, said, "people today conduct their rituals with portraits. It is however discomforting because if even a single strand of beard or hair in the portrait is different from the real, it is already another person we perform the ritual for,"[9] thus confining the ritualistic meaning of the portrait as something to which the spirit can return as its identical being.

Joseon dynasty portraits were important for ancestral worship, which was upheld by the notions of loyalty and filial piety in the Neo-Confucian belief system. Thus, both the philosophical principle recognized by Heo Mok and the ritualistic tasks suggested by Cheng Yi served to heavily suppress portrait painting in that era. It resembled an awareness of original sin in a philosophical-ritualistic sense that began with the fundamental fictitiousness of representation, an awareness with which portraits as copies were born.

Even if the portrait at a certain point is an exact copy of the visible figure, this figure represented by the portrait is immediately separated from the original and becomes falsified even in its appearance. Heo Mok had his portrait drawn in 1617 when he was 23 years old. It was in 1664, after 50 years, that he seriously recognized the fundamental fictitiousness of the portrait. He realized with pain and sorrow that "the body has grown old and the spirit weak, while life has changed and faded into the past." He also realized that he looked like a "different person."[10]

The inscription by Yi Man-yeong (1604-1672), who painted portraits in Beijing in

[8] 貌有形 神無形. 其有形者可模 其無形者不可摸. 有形者定 無形者完. Heo Mok. "Sayeong jachan" 寫影自贊, in *Gieon* 記言 (Record of Teachings) 9.
[9] 今人以影祭 或畫工所傳 一髭髮不當 則所祭已是別人 大不便. Zhu Xi, ed. *Ercheng yishu* 二程遺書 (Writings of the Two Cheongs), *juan* 6.
[10] Heo Mok. "Sayeong jachan" 寫影自贊, in *Gieon*, *gwon* 9.

1636, written upon seeing his portrait 18 years later in 1653 at Gangneung, clearly shows the process of such separation and the feeling of loss.

> In 1636 I went to Beijing as a *seojanggwan* (a records officer). I met by chance Hu Bing, a painter from Jiangnan, and had my portrait painted. Hu Bing was a professional portrait painter who, in order to receive a good price, painted with such care that everyone praised his work. When I saw the painting after looking at myself in the mirror, it was indeed identical to me. I thus cherished it and kept it in a case.
>
> In 1653 when I was ~~a~~ **the** magistrate of Gangneung, I opened the case and spread the portrait in front of me after finishing a day's work. As I compared myself in the mirror to the painting, many differences can be found. I was heavy in the painting, whereas now I am lean; while my face was dark, currently it is light; and my beard in the painting was black white, while it gets black. Alas, what was shaped by the touch of a brush and painted with imagined colors is bound to change. When the true form of human nature, given by heaven and parents, is not yet a hundred years old, how can a form painted by changing the real be altered so much?
> I am me and the painting is the painting. What can I do even if the painting does not resemble me? Having understood this, I offer the following praise:
>
> Are you who I am now? I am still young.
> Am I who you were then? I alone have aged.
> I have not known that you were my true self for eighteen years.
> Who will know in the later years that my shadow is your body?
> Let us each preserve our body and not serve one another.
> Find your dwelling in the depth of a great mountain.
> Living in modesty, I have no reason to envy you.[11]

Yi realized that even if the portrait was identical to the person, it was simultaneously separated from the original and falsified. A portrait of the represented "image of form" is merely a copy of a captured moment of fixity, while its original continuously changes and thus separates itself from the copy.

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[11] 崇禎丙子 余以書狀官赴京 適逢南方畵師胡炳 使寫眞. 炳能事者 利其潤筆資 盡誠貌得 見者莫不謂惟肖. 余臨鏡顧影 亦喜其髣髴 寶惜匣藏者久矣. 歲癸巳 出宰江陵 簿書之暇 披櫝展軸 攬鏡自照 則形之肥瘦異我 色之黧白異我 髮之玄素亦異我. 吁. 成形於筆端 假色於丹靑者 理當受變. 受天地 父母賦與之 人性理眞正 百年未滿 豈宜換眞形貌 若是之甚也. 然則我自我 畵自畵 畵之不似我 我何與焉. 仍感而自贊曰 爾今我歟 我尙少. 我昔爾歟 我獨老. 十八年間 我不知爾之爲我眞 後數十年 誰知我之影是爾身. 惟當各保身體髮膚 毋忝爲人而已. 藏之名山 爾得爾所. 敬身行世 吾何羨乎汝. Yi Man-yeong. "Hwasang chanbyeongseo gyesa" 畵像贊幷序 癸巳 (Legends on Portraits), in *Seolhejip* 雪海集 (Collected Works of Yi Man-yeong), *gwon* 2.

Furthermore, the original subject of the portrait not only changes in appearance, but also possesses a highly complex and flexible awareness of time. More concretely, he or she realizes that his or her true nature comprised of the actual state of the present, memories of the past, and expectations for the future. There is not a moment in which his or her true nature takes a fixed form, as he or she constantly moves and changes with such awareness of time. Therefore, the fictitiousness of the portrait sometimes displays double, triple, or even multiple levels of fictitiousness.

The Neo-Confucian obsession with purity, modesty and self-reflection further emphasizes this fictitiousness, and subsequently reinforces the split of self-consciousness. As a portrait is the recorded objectification of self, it fundamentally presupposes an affirmation and revelation of the existence of self. It also signifies the acceptance of cultural signs and the integration of the power structure in many aspects.

During the mid-Joseon era, when the Neo-Confucian worldview was at its strongest, one of the most representative rustic literati (*sallim*), Yun Jeung (1629-1714) (figure 2), firmly rejected his disciples' request for a portrait. The disciples then dressed painter Byeon Ryang as a scholar and made him pretend that he had come to study in the same place as Yun, so that he could paint Yun's portrait in secret.[12] That Song Jun-gil (1606-1672) also refused the production of his portrait, along with the fact that he was later more respected than Song Si-yeol who left behind many portraits, demonstrates the near mysophobic self-consciousness of Neo Confucianism. In other words, Neo-Confucians only wanted to remain in their existing state of mind and not harm themselves by stepping into the fundamental fictitiousness and division embedded in the materialistic aspect of the portrait.

Nam Yu-yong (1698-1773), a representative Neo-Confucian scholar of the late Joseon dynasty, also rejected others' logic that emphasized the social importance of a portrait, and refused persuasions to paint his portrait. This shows the multi-layered self-consciousness Neo-Confucian Joseon scholars had and their near mysophobic doubts concerning portraits.

> When there is life there is surely death, and both body and mind cease to exist. This is an immutable law in Confucianism. Buddhists teach that although the body dies the mind remains while Taoists teach that neither vanishes. Although neither of them is eternal truth, some who like to believe in strange things often choose to believe them. According to portrait painters, the body will remain while the mind becomes extinct, which is most mysterious.
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> However, I say, "If a portrait painter is indeed great in his skill, the eyes and ears will look as though they are seeing and listening, the mouth as if it is speaking, and the hair as though it is moving. It will seem as though the painting will be able to tell us what the person is like even after a

[12] Choe and Maeng (1972, 415).

hundred years. This might seem as though the portrait comprises the mystery of creation and can be upheld together with Buddhism and Taoism. However, what good is it to have the body remain while the mind is gone and how will this benefit our descendents?"

There is a person who takes Confucianism as his principle but who also holds both Taoism and Buddhism to be *tao* (*dao*). Can this be called *dao*? He will say, "Confucius teaches that both mind and body cease to exist and it is an eternal truth. However, if both spirit and body perish, how will the descendents know whether the King of Yao and the King of Shun were great and whether the King of Jie and Zhi were insane? It is thus that the study of recording words and affairs came into being, and thus the mind and sometimes the figure were transmitted through words and affairs. For example, the history of King Shun in *Shujing* (Book of Documents) says that the mind remains while the body perishes, and 'Xiangdang' in *Lunyu* (Analects) say that neither perishes."

Is this person not only abiding by Confucian principles, but also accepting both Buddhism and Taoism as *tao*? The value of a virtuous man lies in his mind – not in his form. Has his mind already been passed on to his descendents? If so, the body need not be passed on. Has he not a mind to pass on? Then his body will truly be alone. Therefore, the *tao* of portrait painters is practiced only by those painters and not followed by a virtuous man.

Bak Seon-haeng from Honam region is well-known in Seoul for his portraits. He offered to paint a portrait for me but I smiled and declined: "It may be a very insignificant matter to transmit my image. But you are undoubtedly a person who put emphasis on the form. What can I thus expect from you?" I can only write a few lines for his departure.[13]

Nam thought that the mind was of the utmost important to a virtuous man, and that if anything meaningful were to be transmitted, it would be his mind. However, since portraits attached a basic importance to the physical form, he refused to have his portrait painted. In Nam's time, however, portrait painting was so generalized and popular that his refusal seemed unusual. In this aspect, his attitude was a symbolic example of how fundamental and persistent self-consciousness had been regarding the representational fictitiousness of the portrait within the atmosphere of Neo-Confucianism, as well as how strongly and heavily it weighed on people's

[13] 有生必有死 而形與心俱滅. 此儒者之言 而理之常也. 佛者曰 形滅而心不滅 仙者曰 形與心俱不滅 二者雖非理之常 世之好怪者或信言. 寫眞者之言又曰 心滅而形不滅 其爲說尤神. 然吾謂 寫眞者極其藝 則耳目若視聽焉 口若言焉 毛髮若動焉 使百世之下 如見其爲人 其於道亦可謂奪造化之妙 而與仙佛者參矣. 雖然心滅而形不滅 果何益於其人 亦何補於後世哉. 今又有人焉 宗儒者而統仙佛以爲道 若是者 其可謂道乎. 其言曰 儒者曰 形與心俱滅 固理之常也. 然形與心旣滅矣 使後世之人 何以知堯舜之爲聖 桀[redacted]之爲狂乎. 於是乎 記言記事之學作焉 言與事傳 而其心傳 形或附而傳焉. 若書之二典三謨 非所謂形滅而心不滅者乎. 鄕黨非所謂形與心俱不滅者乎. 若是者 非所謂宗儒者而統仙佛以爲道乎. 君子之所貴者 在心不在形. 其心旣傳於後世歟. 其形傳之可也 不傳之亦可也. 其心無可傳於後世耶. 其形固不能獨傳也. 故寫眞者之道 惟寫眞者專之 君子不由也. 湖南人朴善行 以寫眞名於京師 請爲余寫眞 余笑而謝曰 使吾形可傳雖微 子必將有形之者矣 吾何待於子. 於其歸也 聊爲序以贈之. Nam Yu-yong. "Jeung sajinja Bak Seon-haeng seo" 贈寫眞者朴善行序 (A Writing Given to a Portrait Painter Bak Seon-haeng), in *Noeyeonjip* 雷淵集 (Collected Works of Noeyeon Nam Yu-yong), *gwon* 12.

minds.

"Image of Mind" and Self-Cultivation in Portraits

People mentioned in Nam's remark well reflected the diverse psychological conflict experienced by a divided Confucian scholar concerning the representational fictitiousness and realistic practicality of portraits. However, Nam later had his portrait painted left[14] and made a comment on his portrait, which shows another aspect of his consciousness that embraced the portrait.

> Uncaring of worldly affairs, tranquility is my basis.
> Distant from people, clumsiness is my use.
> Bright marble of the blue ocean came with nonchalance,
> Secret house in a stony chamber only a few would know.
> Tao lies in tasting its tastelessness,
> Body wanders between skilled and unskilled.
> Meeting a great painter as Gu Kaizhi in the early years,
> Forced on you a plain dress and a plain hat.[15]

While looking at his portrait, Nam read and affirmed his "mind-and-heart" as a Confucian scholar. It is this mind that made him decline the painting of his portrait, and emphasized that "as the value of a virtuous man lies not in his physical form but in his mind," it is important that "his mind be transmitted to the descendents." This is also why the actual practice of transmitting the spirit of a portrait is generally understood and conceptualized as the expression of the mind. By showing the plain clothing and hat that symbolized the Neo-Confucian goal of a virtuous man, the portrait of Nam Yu-yong displays a self-reflective aspect through self-examination and confirmation. The reason Nam was able to persuade himself to accept the portrait after a long period of doubt and hesitation was because the portrait held this self-reflective aspect based on self-examination, which is the very basic starting point of Neo Confucianism.

Portraits of the Joseon era developed in many different directions. The most important and essential foundation, however, was Confucian social practice based on loyalty and filial

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[14] Yu Han-jun, "Noeyeon namgong jinchan--gyeongin" 雷淵南公眞贊 庚寅, in *Jajeo* 自著 (Autography), *gwon* 11.

[15] 簡於世 仍以靜爲體. 淡於衆 仍以拙爲用. 滄海明珠 無心故獲. 石室秘宇 有緣者識. 道在味其無味處 身游才與不才間. 向遇長康好手 必將使汝野服而山冠. Nam Yu-yong, "Jaje hwasang chan" 自題畵像贊, in *Noeyeonjip, gwon* 27.

piety. As the Joseon dynasty was based on a bureaucratic system centering on *yangban* who were connected to the king by loyalty, portraits of the king, meritorious subjects, and elderly officials (*giro*), which were used for political enlightenment, continued to be painted. These portraits dominated those of the Joseon era. As Joseon was a patriarchal society led by official-scholars, a lineage society connected by family ties, and an academic sectionalist society, portraits of elders in official uniforms or everyday clothing that were to be placed in family shrines or private academies were widely painted. In fact, the reason portraits in the Joseon era became widespread was largely due to such Confucian social practice and function.

However, the social practice of painting portraits assumes more fundamentally the practice of self-cultivation in Neo-Confucianism. This was particularly so when official-scholars had their portraits painted for personal use. By overcoming the fundamental fictitiousness and impossibility of the portrait and affirming its positive meaning in a Neo-Confucian sense, they consented to and accepted it, and it was the aspect of self-cultivation found in these portraits that became the very basic foundation of this acceptance. In Neo-Confucianism, it was important to control oneself after self-cultivation. This was because the theory of "human nature" (*simseongnon*), through such paths as inner reflection and maintaining and cultivating a good nature, were the most fundamental basis of Neo Confucian belief.

The pursuit of self-cultivation was undertaken not only to affirm and accept the portrait, but was also directly related to existence and identity as a Neo-Confucian scholar. In this way, the significance of the portrait, which was initially viewed negatively from the Neo-Confucian perspective, could be affirmed from the same perspective, and this became a Neo-Confucian foundation for the development of the portrait. Sitter's poem on portraits could be interpreted as the process of such self-cultivation, the record of this process and a pledge and affirmation of its practice.

Consequently, portraits of literati scholars in the Joseon era found their significance in self-examination and reflection during their own lifetimes, as well as through the reflection of their descendents and disciples by placing the portrait in the family shrine or private academies postmortem. With time, the significance grew and expanded to include political enlightenment and ritualistic aspects. Such growth and expansion were already embedded in initial significance of self-cultivation, upon which they were recognized and expected, and subsequently formed a connecting cycle. These characteristics were reflected in the form, technique and style of portraits of Joseon literati scholars, such that portraits of this time were very simple in ritualistic form, marked by clear and elegant Neo-Confucian esthetics.

Such self-reflective significance in the Joseon portraits began to appear at the end of Goryeo and the beginning of Joseon. Prince Anpyeong (1418-1453) and Sin Suk-ju (1417-1475) remarked that portraits were tools of inner examination and a medium of "self-reflection and

improvement," which show how portraits were conceived in the early days.

> Prince Anpyeong showed his portrait to Suk-ju and said, "In 1442 when I was 25, I had An Gyeon paint my portrait. Only seven years have passed and my appearance is already different. Despite the change in my appearance my learning has not advanced. This is worthy of becoming a principle in later years."
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> Earlier, Suk-ju learned that Confucius had his mind bent on learning at fifteen, stood firm at thirty, had no doubts at forty, knew the decrees of Heaven at fifty, opened his ear to truth at sixty, and could follow what his heart desired without transgressing what was right at seventy. A virtuous man's education should justly follow this course and could not neglect any level nor abandon it; the responsibility becomes heavier with age.
>
> I thereby wish that if, after reaching advancement, accumulating virtue and maturing *tao* by reviewing his life and educating his mind, he can have his portrait painted once again with aged body and white beard, and have Sin Suk-ju write praises for virtue and *tao*. Will it not also be fortunate?[16]

As the understanding and practice of Neo-Confucianism was not yet so profound at the beginning of Joseon, and perhaps because Prince Anpyeong and Sin Suk-ju were still young, self-reflection through the learning process was considered important, and its significance was examined through portraits.

However, in the sixteenth century, when Confucian scholars began to appear and the understanding of Neo-Confucianism deepened, the self-reflective meaning of portraits came to be emphasized and reinforced. Yi U (1469-1517) (Portrait 3), who was the uncle of Yi Hwang (1501-1570), one of the leading Confucian scholars, considered his portrait a mirror that helped him be self-conscious and maintain his ethics when he was alone. This shows that the self-reflective meaning of portraits was becoming more introspective from the theory of human nature. In awe of the family shrine where his portrait was kept, Yi Wu made the following remarks:

> As I am here, so is the body, and the shadow and body have divided into two.
> *Ying* and *yang* appear in turn, movement and stillness do not exclude one another.

[16] 安平大君 以自眞示叔舟曰 曾於壬戌年 余年二十五 令安堅寫余眞 今七年于玆 其形貌已不同矣. 形貌已不同 而學問不日進 其爲我志之將以後日之規. 叔舟嘗聞 孔夫子有十五而志于學 三十而立 四十而不惑 五十而知天命 六十而耳順 七十而從心所欲不踰矩. 夫君子之學 當循其序 固不可躐等而進 亦不可半塗而廢 年愈高而責愈重. 庶幾反身自脩 日就月將 至于德成道熟 然後更作鮐背鶴髮之眞 而使叔舟得操贊德頌道之筆 不亦幸乎. Sin Suk-ju. "Bihaedangjinchan" 匪懈堂眞贊, in *Bohanjaejip* 保閑齋集 (Collected Works of Bohanjae Sin Suk-ju), *gwon* 16.

A hundred daily affairs, each one is received and followed.
When facing it, it is on each side; it cannot be deceived even behind closed doors.
Abstention is not only for when alone, every corner of the house is even brighter.
You make the heart become more apprehensive and introspective, cultivating human nature.
I speak but you know without words, I have a body but you are an illusion.
Living in the same house, I always look up to you.[17]

Yi said that as he was always looking at his other self even when he was alone, he ultimately became two. He saw that the portrait helped him become more self-conscious and abide by his ethics, thus regarding it as a partner of self-reflection that "examined his inner self and nurtured human nature."

After the Confucian scholars came the period of seventeenth-century rustic literati (*sallim*), when Neo Confucianism was established and practiced at a full scale. The self-reflective aspect of portraits was emphasized even more strictly during this period. The way Song Si-yeol (1607-1689) (figure 4), a representative scholar of Neo-Confucianism and rustic literati, was "cautious of himself" while facing his portrait was so strict and rigorous that it was almost frightening.

A rustic in the woods, living in a humble hut.
The window is lit, no one passes by, but reading continues despite hunger.
You are pallid and thin, while your learning is incomplete.
You have turned away from the King's truth and have defiled the words of the wise.
You are thus justly thrown, to a group of worms.[18]

Though he studies continuously despite hunger while living in a hut in the countryside, Song, a leading Neo-Confucian scholar and a politician, looks into his portrait and considers himself as trivial as a worm, as his learning is incomplete and he has rejected the King. By reproaching himself, he is maximizing the self-reflective aspect of the portrait. This is in fact an affirmation of the reflective self through the negation of reality by the practical self, and an emphasis and maximization of the self-reflective meaning of portraits. Given the climate at that time, when Song Jun-gil and Yun Jeung were adamantly opposed to the production of portraits, it could not

[17] 有我卽有形 影分形爲兩. 陰陽遞隱見 動靜不相放. 日用百爲多 一一輒效倣. 臨之在左右 凜然難可罔. 所愼豈止獨 屋漏猶朗晃. 願爾心惕若 內省而存養. 我語爾默識 我身爾虛象. 周旋一堂中終日吾所仰. Yi U, "Oeyeongdang" 畏影堂, in *Songjae sijip* 松齋詩集 (A Collection of Song Jae's Poems), *gwon* 2.
[18] 麋鹿之羣 蓬蒿之廬. 窓明人靜 忍飢看書. 爾形枯臞 爾學空疎. 帝衷爾負 聖言爾侮. 宜爾置之蠹魚之伍. Song Si-yeol, "Seo hwasang jagyeong" 書畵像自警 (Cautions on Self-Portraits), in *Songja*

have been easy for Song Si-yeol to accept his portrait without such strict negation of the self, even if Zhu Xi himself had painted him.

In general, the production of portraits is interpreted as an affirmation and manifestation of self. However, accepting portraits by emphasizing the self-reflective meaning of portraits based on such negative understanding was common among rigorous Neo-Confucian scholars around the time of Song Si-yeol.[19] In addition, that these rustic literati who represented Neo-Confucianism in the mid-Joseon era accepted, through self-negation, their portraits in scholar's robes, had great significance in the history of portraits in the latter half of the Joseon era.

In the eighteenth century, Neo-Confucianism was widely established throughout society, and the rustic literati came to lead both the ideology and politics of the time. By then, in a very sectarian sense, self-reflection at a personal level was directly related to the very practice of learning as well as social and political practice,[20] and portraits were considered a highly important visual medium that examined, confirmed and socialized their self-consciousness.

Yun Bong-gu (1681-1767) (figure 5), an exceptional disciple of Kwon Sang-ha (1641-1721), who was the head disciple of Song Si-yeol (Portrait 5), maintained "self-caution" while viewing his portrait. This reflected well the way portraits came to be regarded as an active means to help, confirm and assure self-reflection through positive contemplation and examination of the self in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, it shows how portraits became a means of power and how they were ritualized as symbols of such self-identity.

> Your head is round and feet pointed, receiving proper energy (*qi*) from heaven.
> Your life is righteous, given also by heaven.
> Be cautious and afraid yet do not reject defamation or fall.
> Always remember the clear and true teachings.
> Has not your master upheld the law early in his time?
> Do not ever say that I have become weak.
> I try to renew myself and stay assiduous every day.[21]

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daejeon 宋子大全 (Great Compendium of Song Si-yeol), *gwon* 150.

[19] Kim Gan (1646-1732), a disciple of Song Si-yeol, had similar views on portraits as his teacher. 爾形之藐 爾性之迂. 中而多病 老而益愚. 其心雖古 其學則疎. 然觀此七分之貌 或可謂山野之淸癯. Kim Gan. "Hwasang jachan" 畵像自贊 (Legend on Portraits), in *Hujaejip* 厚齋集 (Collected Works of Hujae Kim Gan), *gwon* 40.

[20] Yu B. (1986); U (1999).

[21] 爾頭圓足方 受天地之正氣. 爾之生也直 亦天地之所畀. 爾戰兢戒懼 敢或毁或墜. 爾無忘明誠之訓兮 曾奉規於先師. 爾毋曰吾衰之甚兮 惟日新而孜孜. Yun Bong-gu, "Seohwasang jagyeong" 書畵像自警 (Cautions on Self-Portraits), in *Byeonggyejip* 屛溪集 (Collected Works of Byeonggye Yun

As Neo-Confucianism was localized and came to be studied at a government level in the eighteenth century, great numbers of scholars and government officials entered the political sphere. Most bureaucrats of the time considered themselves to be half bureaucrats and half scholars, and this dual self-consciousness was reflected in their inscriptions. Those with stronger Neo-Confucian backgrounds and who belonged to this familial and academic faction preferred to remain out of power and dress in everyday clothing. However, those with less connection to Neo-Confucianism and who had been neglected in factional politics were more positive and had favorable tendencies toward their self.

Yun Bong-gu is a good example of the former group of scholars. A leading rustic literati of the Horon line who became a minister in the mid-eighteenth century, Yun had reached a high position. Yet, he had his portrait painted in his Confucian scholar's uniform and hat. Looking at himself in a portrait, sitting proudly and confidently, he reconfirmed his self-identity and duties to royal summons as a Confucian scholar and wrote a legend emphasizing this awareness.

On the other hand, Chae Je-gong (1720-1799) of the Namin faction, which had a weaker foundation in Neo-Confucianism, was neglected for a long time in politics until a "policy of impartiality" (*tangpyeong*) was established during King Yeongjo and Jeongjo's reign. Both kings favored Chae, who later became a prime minister. His inscription on his portrait clearly shows a positive awareness of himself as a successful bureaucrat, an example of the latter group of officials mentioned above.

Am I you or are you me?
I worry now that I have my body,
Yet how is it that you are again me?
With the sash of a high official hung from the waist and a mace properly held in hand,
What schemes have I approved?
The hair has turned white and the face has wrinkled,
What enterprise have I accomplished?
Living in peace from birth to death,
Are you as happy as me?

- Portrait in Court Uniform (figure 6)

It is only King Yeongjo who understood my heart in all eternity,
And my life I owe to the grace of King Jeongjo.
Though there is no neglect or hatred of the wicked,

Bong-gu), *gwon* 44.

Who will believe that I have served my King with virtue?
The image on silk will become ragged when time comes,
But some will remain that is not tattered.
If you wish to know the heart and traces of life,
Try reading the writing on the chest.
- Portrait in Black Official Uniform

Your figure and your heart, graces of your parents.
Your head and your legs, graces of your King.
The fan is His grace, and the incense pouch is also His grace.
Which that decorates your body is not of grace?
Shame is not being able to repay such grace after withdrawing from my post.
- 15th year of the reign of King Jeongjo. After painting the King's portrait in 1791, I had my portrait painted under the King's orders. I submitted one to the King and mounted a copy in 1792[22] (figure 7).

Chae had his portraits painted in three uniforms--court, official, and daily--through which he confirmed and took pride and satisfaction in his status and career as a high official. He was also proud of his loyalty as a high official and emphasized the benevolence of King Yeongjo and King Jeongjo. This is a completely new type of self-consciousness, very different from those scholars with strong Neo-Confucian backgrounds who, even when looking at their portraits in court uniforms, wanted to go back to the private realm of a scholar and who emphasized living in retirement from the government. Furthermore, in a portrait ordered by King Jeongjo in which Chae is wearing the king's gift, he praised the immense grace of the king, saying that everything he wore was due to it.

In this aspect, despite the fact that Neo-Confucianism was aimed at social practice, and that self-cultivation was required as a precondition of social practice, Chae's inscription on his portrait may have already been more than self-examination or self-reflection. This self-consciousness and perspective that went beyond self-critique, that affirmed and manifested the

서식 있음

[22] 我是君耶 君是我耶. 吾方患吾有吾身 君胡爲兮復我. 垂紳正笏. 所決者何策. 髮白顔皺. 所成者何業. 生老死太平 我樂而君亦樂否. 右朝服本.
千古知心之契 惟我英祖. 前後再生之恩 亦惟我聖主. 不有愧人之忌嫉 誰信我直道事君. 生綃有時而敝 其有不敝者存. 如欲考一生心跡 試閱篋中之文. 右黑團領本.
聖上十五年辛亥 御眞圖寫後 承命摸像內入 以其餘本 明年壬子粧. 爾形爾精 父母之恩. 爾頂爾踵 聖主之恩. 扇是君恩 香亦君恩. 粉飾一身 何物非恩. 所愧歇後 無計報恩. 樊翁自贊自書. Chae Je-gong, "Jajesajinchan" 自題寫眞贊, in *Beonamjip* 樊巖集 (Collected Works of Beonam Chae Je-gong), *gwon* 58.

sitter while being authoritative and ritualized, may be similar to Yun Bong-gu's efforts to overly conceptualize the consciousness of the Noron-centered rustic literati. In this regard, this may symbolically demonstrate the realistic philosophy that prevailed during the eighteenth-century Joseon dynasty.

The Representative Truth of the Portrait and the Existential Meaning of Self-reflection

Even if the fictitiousness and uselessness of portraits were put aside and they were accepted for literati scholars' moral cultivation, if they were unable to overcome the ritualistic task as pointed out by Cheng Yi or the philosophical proposition as recognized by Heo Mok, it might have been difficult for portraits to be fully accepted and developed, considering the strict Neo-Confucian climate of the Joseon dynasty. However, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, around the time of Song Si-yeol, Neo-Confucianism was reinforced and emphasis was placed upon affirming and accepting portraits as a means of self-cultivation and a ritualistic necessity. At the same time, a new and realistic logic appeared that was able to gradually overcome Cheng Yi and Heo Mok's feelings of oppression and psychological pain. This began to change people's perspective and response to portraits.

A new perspective on portraits and a discourse on the portraits and the "expression of spirit" (*hyeongsin)* raised in the early eighteenth century by such scholars as Bak Se-dang (1629-1703), Kim Chun-taek (1670-1717), Yi Seo (1662-1723) and Yi Ik (1681-1763) demonstrated this process of transition. Bak and Kim claimed that as Neo-Confucianism was localized, the Confucian ritualistic culture of enshrining portraits had become more firmly established and widespread. For such realistic necessity, portraits only needed to closely resemble the person, as it was logically and realistically impossible to paint the portrait exactly the same as the person. They argued that this could therefore not be a valid reason to deny the production of portraits, and with this argument, they overcame the ritualistic challenge raised by Cheng Yi.[23]

By understanding that the expression of the spirit and the depiction of the real were essentially achieved through form, brothers Yi Seo and Yi Ik transcended Heo Mok's philosophical argument that as the spirit is intangible, it could not be copied ~~in a~~over to a portrait, and that portraits ~~are~~ inevitably succumb to the fundamental limitations and impossibility of the portrait.~~[Michael, both "the spirit is intangible . . . " and "portraits are~~

[23] Bak Se-dang, "Gigajiltaesang" 寄家姪泰尙, in *Seogyejip* 西溪集 (Collected Works of Segyo Bak Se-dang), *gwon* 18; Kim Chun-taek. "Seon-go hwasangji" 先考畵像識, in *Bukjeonjip* 北軒集 (Collected Works of Bukhen Kim Chun-taek), *gwon* 18.

~~succumb . . . " are Heo Mok's argument.]~~ When Yi Seo saw the portrait of Sim Deuk-gyeong (1673-1710) painted by his friend Yun Du-seo (1668-1715), he described in detail the characteristics of Sim's features and the spiritual traits he saw and felt in the portrait. He then rhetorically asked, "who will know of your nature and feelings if not for your figure,"[24] emphasizing the ability of portraits to express the spirit through form. Yi Ik, on the other hand, said, "as the spirit is at the center of the form, how can it be expressed if the forms are not alike,"[25] overturning Heo Mok's position, and asserted philosophically the reality and truth of pictorial representation, in which everything is eventually realized through form.

Hence, although the essence of the portrait was the expression of spirit in the eighteenth century, a new awareness that spiritual traits were better rendered with a more detailed depiction of the figure became widespread. Sim Jeong-jin (1726-1795), from the mid-eighteenth century, noted the following as he recorded his thoughts on the portrait of his master Kim Won-haeng (1702-1772) (figure 8). As a representative Confucian scholar at the time, Kim directed the Naknon faction and their theory that the fundamental principle of the nature of humans and things were the same, and he had a major influence on the emergence of Bukhak (Northern Learning):

> The reason we paint his portrait is because he has virtue that is shown in his appearance. As a rule, virtue is the matter (*mul*) and form of the container. Where there is matter, there is a container, and when there is virtue, there is a form.[26]

Sim saw that if there is virtue, it is shown through appearance. Therefore, he remarked that virtue was like matter and form like a container that holds the matter, noting the close relationship between inner virtue and external features. Such perspective on the close relationship between body and mind was one of the basic ideas of Confucianism from ancient times.[27] This is a very new recognition comparable to that of Heo Mok's in the seventeenth century, who remarked that "a figure has a form but a spirit does not. That which has a form can be copied while the formless cannot. That which has a form is fixed while the formless is complete," emphasizing that there existed a fundamental and essential gap between the spirit

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[24] 匪子之容貌 孰知子之性情. Yi Seo. "Jeongjae cheosa simgong deukgyeong jinchan" 定齋處士沈公得經眞贊.

[25] 神在形中, 形已不似, 神可得以傳耶. Yi Ik. "Non hwahyeongsa" 論畫形似 (Discussion of Painting as the Similarity of Forms), in *Seongho saseol* 星湖僿說 (Collected Works of Seongho Yi Ik), *gwon* 5.

[26] 畫像之作 爲其有德而有貌也. 夫德則物也 貌則器也. 有其物 斯有其器, 有其德 斯有其貌. Sim Jeong-jin. "Miho Kimseonsaeng hwasanggi" 渼湖金先生畫像記 (On the Portrait of Master Kim), in *Jeheonjip* 霽軒集 (Collected Works of Jaeheon Sim Jeong-jin), *gwon* 2.

[27] Yi S. (1996).

and appearance, and thus also recognizing the significance of portraits in a rather passive way.

Following Sim's logic, in order to portray spiritual virtue, the figure, the essence of the portrait, needed to be painted well. Sim went further to say "portraits cannot be stopped nor can they be done without," emphasizing, unlike Heo Mok, the significance and function of portraits in a very positive way.[28]

Such dramatic change in the concept of the portrait was behind the spread of portrait painting in the mid to late eighteenth century, and also behind the development of very realistic portrait paintings. It is also based on this change that Western painting techniques of shading and perspective were accepted to develop new methods of depiction.[29] Such changes held a more important and new epochal meaning; it developed in close relation to the new worldview and concept on human nature such as Naknon in the Seoul area, and the theory that viewed the fundamental nature of humans and things as the same.[30] The latter concept had begun amongst the gentry but had been expanding throughout society to include socioeconomic practice.

Kang Se-hwang (1713-1791) (figure 9), who was dubbed the leader of the artistic circle in the late eighteenth century, painted his portrait wearing a unique combination of a gown and an official hat. This unified the two main lines of portrait painting, i.e. those in everyday clothing and those in official uniform, which symbolized a new trend. In his inscription, he remarked as follows:

> Who is that man? His beard and brows are white.
> With an official hat on his head and a gown on his body,
> His heart is in the mountains and his head is in the court.
> He hides thousands of books of *Eryou* in his heart and shakes *Wuyue* with his brush.
> But how will people know, it is only to please himself.
> The old man is seventy and his pen name is Nojuk.
> He painted his portrait and wrote the inscription by myself.
> The year was 1782.[31]

This inscription reflects the typical half-bureaucratic and half-scholarly consciousness of official-scholars in the eighteenth century. Kang, who came from the Sobuk faction of Giho Namin, was forced to remain a rustic literati all his life following the revolt of Yi In-jwa in

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[28] 然非像無以見其貌 非貌亦無以寓其所慕 像烏可以已乎. Sim Jeong-jin, "Miho Kimseonsaeng hwasanggi."
[29] Kang G. (1995; 1996).
[30] Yu B. (1995); Kim Y. (1994); Kim M. (1994).
[31] 彼何人斯 鬚眉皓白. 頂烏帽 披野服. 於以見心山林 而名朝籍. 胸藏二酉 筆搖五嶽. 人那得知我自爲樂. 翁年七十 翁號露竹. 其眞自寫 其贊自作. 歲在玄默攝提格. Kang Se-hwang. "Jahwasang jachan" 自畵像自贊 (Legend on Self-Portrait).

1728. He entered politics only in 1773 at the age of 61 through the "policy of impartiality" (*tangpyeongchaek*).[32] Therefore, his painting in a gown and official hat symbolizes his lonely and pained life as a rustic literati and the glory he only achieved as an official in his later years.

Kang is expressing figuratively his life and its inner world through external objects, such as the gown and the official hat. In Kang's portrait, the gown and hat therefore function as symbols of his inner, spiritual world, becoming figurative subjects by extension. In this regard, Kang's view was similar to and perhaps an even more positive, figurative method than that of Sim Jeong-jin's, who thought that a person's inner virtue could emerge through matter and tried to explain virtue and matter almost at a same level.

To summarize, Heo Mok's negative view of portraits, that spirit is intangible and therefore cannot be portrayed by a tangible figure in a portrait, was common in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, however, Sim and Kang claimed that even spirits could be understood at the same level as matter and through a realistic depiction of physical features and clothing. Between these differing perspectives, where and how then, does the truth of the portrait lie? What is the essence of pictorial representation, and what do the transmission of spirit and the depiction of the real mean as that essence? Finally, what does existential self-reflection in a portrait signify?

In the late eighteenth century, Kwon Heon (1713-1770) emphasized that portraits with "similarities of image and spiritual character" should be viewed with a transcendental perspective as "flowers reflected in the mirror and the moon reflected on water" (*gyeonghwa suwol*).[33] After seeing his portrait that "was like me and yet not like me" in his study, Yu Eon-ho (1730-1796) (figure 10) emphasized the self-consciousness of transcendental repose and the meaning of the existential self-reflection he felt within that repose. This seems to suggest an important fact about the truth of pictorial representation and the meaning of self-reflection. In particular, the self-consciousness of transcendental repose that appeared in Yu's inscription shows in a comprehensive way the complex process through which the scholars of the late Joseon era experienced the dissociation of self-consciousness on one hand and examined the significance of existential self-reflection on the other, all within the dualism of fictitiousness and truth.

> When the painting is similar to the person, it is enough as it is. If one expects the painting to be exact, it is no longer a painting. When the sun is setting in the mountains, I sit alone without a thought in my mind. I look between the walls and suddenly there I am. It is like

[32] Byeon Y. (1998, 8-49, 216-217).
[33] Kwon Heon, "Jeonsillon" 傳神論 (Discussion on the Transmission of the Spirit). In *Jinmyeongjip* 震溟集 (Collected Works of Jinmyeong Kwon Heon), *gwon* 9.

me yet not like me, but acceptable in both ways. If it is like me, why is it that the eyes do not move when I look, nor the mouth when I talk? If it is not like me, why is it that the head is so pointed, cheekbones so high, mind so gloomy, and the beard and brows so white? How am I to know that what is like me is not me and what is not like me is me? Let me stop here. It is not even necessary to compare. Only, between the real me and what resembles me is thought clean and pure. Loss and gain seem to be the same, and life and death seem to be one. These thoughts appear vague, and I smile without realizing it.

In looking at the clothing, the attachment is in black silk, a crouching eagle is embroidered on silk fabric around the waist, and the crown is studded with gold. His dignity is the nobility of age. In looking at his features, his height does not even reach the windowsill, his face so pale that it is overpowered by the clothing, and his loneliness is due to the destitution of a rustic. Is it the sudden happening of things? Is it an accidental encounter in time? A detached heart, like a piece of dry wood, is known only to those who know. How can I but return to the nature of hills and valleys?

Like a dream and a ghost, the body is loose as the sky. To hope that it lasts forever on silk is therefore to be truly deluded. To discuss its exactness or difference and its truth and fictitiousness also adds to the delusion. Then, if it is tied and mounted, exposed to orchid and musk, and decorated with beautiful phrases, is it not the same as writing on ice and painting with oil? Seen from the point of view of nothing, however, three thousand great worlds look as though they are flowering in empty space. Seen from existence, figure and shadow, truth and fictitiousness, all let us laugh and rejoice. Alas, you and I have met so late, but we are the same in age, in appearance and in heart. It is only natural that we cherish each other and stroll together in the country and in the beginning of the world, where nothing exists.[34]

Yu saw that the truth of pictorial representation imposed on a portrait did not mean that each

[34] 畵而得其疑似髣髴 斯可止矣. 一一求其眞 不可以語畵也. 山齋暮色 **嗒**爾淸坐 回視壁間 忽有一我 似是似非 皆可喜者. 以爲是也 我視而何不動目 我言而何爲結舌. 以爲非也 頂何以銳 顴何以卧 神何以不揚 鬚眉何以如雪. 焉知夫是者非我 而非者是我乎. 置之不足較也. 唯其疑似髣髴之間 冲然澹然 若有齊得喪一死生之意者 隱約可見 不覺迪然一笑.

觀其服 則烏紗鵰錦 黃金寶釘 儼然卿老之尊也. 觀其容 則大不及棣 嬴不勝衣 蕭然布衣之窮也. 物之儻來歟 時之偶逢歟. 若其一段槁木之心 惟知者知之 盖歸來兮 一丘一壑之中.

夫以如夢如幻之身 而又托於稀薄如空之絹 以圖其久存 固惑也. 又從而論其同異眞贋 不亦滋惑也歟. 而**況**粧之以組就 薰之以蘭麝 飾之以藻翰 則又不幾乎氷鏤而脂畵歟. 然自其無者而觀之 三千大界 猶空花之開落 自其有者而觀之 形影眞妄 皆有以資笑樂也. 噫. 吾與子晩始相看 其年同 其貌同 其心亦然 宜乎 愛之重之 與之同游乎無何之鄉太初之隣. Yu Eon-ho, "Je gyeonbon s

physical feature had to be rendered exactly; they had to stop at being similar. By looking at his portrait, which seemed similar to himself, he contemplated and accepted the essential issues in the representation of the portrait and in self-consciousness, such as similarity and difference, bureaucrat and rustic literati, life and death, nothingness and existence, figure and spirit, and truth and fictitiousnhood. Through this process, he examined from a distance the self-reflective meaning on a transcendental ground.

Conclusion

Portrait painting during the Joseon dynasty was developed in the context of Confucian social practice and was based on political enlightenment and ritualistic significance. However, because Joseon scholars emphasized introspection (*naeseong*) and self-cultivation (*jonyang*) as a preliminary phase of such social practice, their portraits were more than just pictures; many aspects of the portraits were fundamentally significant to the process of self-cultivation. In fact, what made it possible for scholars to accept and develop portraits beyond their essential fictitiousness and authority was this concept of self-reflection. Even when Neo-Confucianism became a national ideology and Neo-Confucian self-reflection itself entered a certain realm of power, these scholars were able to use the portraits for their own self-reflection and self-examination.

Therefore, by looking at their own portraits, the literati scholars of Joseon practiced self-contemplation, examined what was learned from that practice, and pledged self-cultivation. Through this process, they formed another image of self between the self that represents oneself and the self that is represented. Particularly, the culture of inscriptions developed by scholars reveals this process of reflective examination, and is a written record of this process. It is also another image of the self, painted through this reflective examination. In the history of pictorial representation, this is a unique aspect appearing only in portraits in which the original subject can examine its copied likeness. And this is also a characteristic found in the portraits of Joseon scholars who attached great importance to introspection.

Amid this dual process of communication, Joseon scholars experienced serious division and acute self-consciousness, with regards to basic character and the significance of pictorial representation. However, they were able to heal themselves and achieve a new recognition of existence, thereby discovering a new meaning of representation. In this aspect, portraits of Joseon scholars consisted of two layers--a social sign that intervened with the formation of views on human nature of the self and a cultural sign that intervened with the shaping of self-representation. Views on human nature and the shaping of self-representation

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osang" 題絹本小像 (Some Words about a Small Figure Painted on Silk). In *Yeonseok* 燕石, *gwon* 3.

were combined and related to each other very closely, always influencing one another. In this regard, portraits of scholars in the Joseon era were always connected to the history of arts on one hand, and to the history of humans on the other.

The portraits of Joseon scholars were externally very minimalist, modest and strictly formalized, as well as internally simple, pure and elegant. The reason for this is not only because they were determined under the influence of Confucian ritual, but also, and more fundamentally, because the scholars always emphasized the process of introspection and self-reflection; they saw portraits as a medium of this process. Therefore, rather than depicting themselves diversely, they chose to "paint" and thus reaffirm their hearts and minds through inscriptions written on simple, clear portraits.

If the image of figure in portraits of Joseon scholars were copied images painted by artists, image of mind in inscriptions were the real image scholars wanted to paint. Therefore, without understanding the inscriptions, it is difficult to understand the image of mind and self-reflection of the model as the original the scholars wanted to portray in the copy.

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References of Paintings

Fig. 1. Portrait of Heo Mok. Anonymous. Circ. 1676. Color on silk. 106×75cm. Micheonseowon. Naju, Jeollanamdo.

Fig. 2. Portrait of Yun Jeung. Byeon Ryang (presumed). Circ.1711. Color on silk. 58.5×36cm. Yubo Yeongdang. Nonsan, Chungcheongnam-do.

Fig. 3. Portrait of Yi U. Anonymous. Circ. Early 16th century. Color on silk. 170×104cm. Korean Studies Advancement Center. Andong, Gyeongsangbuk-do.

Fig. 4. Portrait of Song Si-yeol. Anonymous. Circ. Late 18th century. Presumed to be a copy of an original painting. Color on silk. 89.7×67.3cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

Fig. 5. Portrait of Yun Bong-gu. Byeon Sang-byeok (presumed). Circ. 1752. Color on silk. 106×80cm. Hwanggang Yeongdang. Jecheon. Chungcheongbuk-do.

Fig. 6. Portrait of Chae Je-gong in Court Uniform. Yi Myeong-gi. Circ. 1784. Color on silk. Possession of a descendent. Daejeon, Chungcheongnam-do.

Fig. 7. Portrait of Chae Je-gong in Daily Uniform. Yi Myeong-gi. 1791. Color on silk. 121×80.5cm. Possession of a descendent, Seoul.

Fig. 8. Portrait of Kim Won-haeng. Han Jong-yu (presumed). Circ. 1763. Color on silk.

95.5×56cm. Museum of Ehwa Womans University, Seoul.

Fig. 9. Self-portrait. Kang Se-hwang. 1782. Color on silk. 88.7×51cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

Fig. 10. Portrait of Yu Eon-ho. Yi Myeong-gi. 1787. Color on silk. 116.2×56.2cm. Kyujanggak, Seoul National University. Seoul.