Abstract

This article provides a detailed analysis of the screen painting, King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong, elucidating how King Jeongjo strategically used the screen’s aesthetics, production, and distribution to promote his political agenda. To emphasize the king’s intended meaning, the article divides the screen into two halves: panels 1–4, which feature traditional two-dimensional depictions of events, and panels 5–8, which employ less conventional viewpoints, including a bird’s-eye view and one-point perspective. These different perspectives directly reflect the intended themes of the respective panels: the Confucian concept of rulership (panels 1–4), and the art of innovative governance (panels 5–8). To highlight the political motivations involved in the production and distribution of the screen, the article outlines the specific process for painting the screen—from the king’s instructions to the artists’ execution—and describes the intended viewers and their reactions. In addition to the screen, the article also examines related visual materials that were produced and distributed within the same context.

Keywords: King Jeongjo, Joseon court painting, Hwaseong, Hwaseong wonhaengdo (King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong), uigwe (royal protocols), chabi daeryeong hwawon (painters-in-waiting)
Introduction

During the reign of King Jeongjo 正祖 (r. 1776–1800), the Joseon Dynasty enjoyed relative political stability and economic prosperity, which set the stage for various cultural and artistic achievements.¹ One of the most dynamic areas of this cultural movement was court art, as master court painters such as Kim Hong-do (b. 1745) rose to become the leading artists of the era, ushering in an exciting period of stylistic achievements and innovations, including the introduction of Western painting techniques, such as perspective and shading.²

Beyond such aesthetic developments, however, the court painting of the time is particularly significant for its political features. As patron, King Jeongjo adeptly used court paintings to enhance his political power and strengthen his rule. Moreover, in 1783, Jeongjo reformed the entire court-art system by creating chabi daeryeong hwawon (painters-in-waiting), a royal institution of skilled artists who fulfilled the king’s personal demands for paintings and illustrations (Kang 2001). In addition to the final copies of works that were officially kept by the royal court, Jeongjo often commissioned extra copies of works to be given to his subjects. Thus, he was heavily involved in the entire process, from the choice of topic to the final distribution.

A representative work that exemplifies the court paintings of Jeongjo’s reign is the folding screen King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong (Hwaseong

¹. For King Jeongjo’s reformation and political changes, see O. Jeong, et al. (1999), H. Park (2001), Yu (2001), and M. Kim (2007). For musical, performance, artistic, and culinary achievements in Jeongjo’s reign, see Song (2007) and J. Kim, et al. (2013). Recently, some historians have questioned the public perception that the economic growth of the 18th century can be attributed to the leadership of the kings Yeongjo and Jeongjo. The collaborative publications of the 2010s are the result of sharing this issue among the researchers. For revisionist views of Jeongjo’s reign in the context of world history and Joseon’s transition, see Yingeol Kim (2011), Yeoksa hakhoe (2013), and Yeoksa bipyeong (2017).
². For more on Kim Hong-do, see Jin (1999) and K. Kim (2016). For the influence of western painting during the Joseon Dynasty, see Ahn (1988a) and S. Yi (2003). For court painters in Joseon, see Ahn (1988b) and Jiyoung Kim (1994). For artistic changes in 18th-century Joseon, see J. P. Park (2018).
wonhaengdo, 華城園幸圖) (Fig. 1). The painters-in-waiting created 21 copies of this screen to be distributed to the various subjects who had accompanied Jeongjo on the eponymous journey. The screen features eight scenes from Jeongjo’s journey to visit his father’s tomb in Hwaseong in 1795, which was one of the major endeavors of his late reign. This was not Jeongjo’s first visit to Hwaseong, nor would it be his last. Jeongjo was the son of the disgraced Crown Prince Sado (1735–1762), who was infamously put to death by his own father (King Yeongjo, r. 1724–1776). After taking the throne, Jeongjo immediately began to rehabilitate his father’s legacy, with the concurrent goal of asserting the legitimacy of his own reign. Thus, in 1789, Jeongjo reconstructed his father’s mausoleum in Hwaseong, and he subsequently visited Hwaseong every year to pay his respects. During his reign, Jeongjo made a total of thirteen visits to Hwaseong, but the eighth visit in 1795 was especially significant, because that year marked the sixtieth birthday of

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both his parents (who were born in the same year), as well as the twentieth anniversary of his reign. Hence, Jeongjo’s journey to Hwaseong was a political event intended to attest his legitimacy and display his undiminished power.⁴

King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong has been the focus of a number of previous studies. In particular, Honglyeol Lee (1968) was the first to relate this screen to its historical events, while Jeong-hye Park (1991, 2000) carefully identified the specific scenes in the eight panels through historical reference. Gwansik Kang (1995) presented the screen as an example of a new style adopting “visual realism” that emerged in 18th-century Joseon, while Burglind Jungmann (2014) used the screen as an example for understanding court paintings in their historical context.⁵ Although all of these studies acknowledged the political importance of the screen to varying degrees, they primarily concentrated on identifying its themes or analyzing its style. Thus far, little attention has been paid to the relationship between the themes and styles and the political implications of the events.

This article provides a detailed analysis of how King Jeongjo promoted his political agenda through various visual strategies of the screen and via the system for producing and distributing the screen.⁶ For the purposes of the article, I divide the screen into two separate halves (i.e., panels 1–4 and panels 5–8) to explain how the overall message of the screen is developed. In order to show the inherent political motivations involved in the production and distribution of the screen, this article outlines the specific process for painting the screen—from the king’s instructions to the artists’ execution—and describes the intended viewers and their reactions. In addition to the screen itself, the article also examines related visual materials that were produced and distributed within the same context.

⁴ For further analysis of the meaning of King Jeongjo’s royal procession to Hwaseong in 1795, see M. Kim (1997) and Han (1998).
⁵ Other relevant studies include H. Kim (1993); Chang (2007); Jeong-hye Park (2011); Yoo (2011; 2013a; 2013b), and Min (2013).
⁶ In earlier studies, I described the individual scenes of this folding screen and explained the political significance of the depicted events (Yoo 2011; 2013b).
Confucian Concept of Rulership: Panels 1–4

The eight panels of this screen depict eight separate events from Jeongjo’s journey: (1) birthday celebration for Jeongjo’s mother; (2) banquet for elders; (3) visiting a Confucian shrine; (4) special civil service exam; (5) military exercises; (6) ceremonial archery event; (7) return procession; and (8) crossing a pontoon bridge. Notably, most of these events were not generally associated with the long tradition of royal processions to visit royal ancestral tombs. Thus, rather than simply documenting the procession, these events seem to have been chosen for their symbolic significance in representing Jeongjo’s political vision. This political symbolism is especially apparent in the first four panels of the screen, which depict banquets for the king’s mother and local senior citizens, a ritual to pay respect to Confucius, and a special exam to appoint new government officials. Collectively, these events serve to emphasize the foundational principles of Confucian rulership.

The first panel depicts the banquet for the king’s mother, Lady Hyegyeong (1735–1816), immediately establishing the celebration of her sixtieth birthday as one of the primary purposes of the procession (Fig. 2). Originally scheduled for the second day of Jeongjo’s visit, the birthday celebration was postponed until the fourth day due to his mother’s poor health (M. Kim 2011a, 103). Every detail of the ceremony was carefully arranged to accentuate and celebrate Lady Hyegyeong. For example, the king renamed the site of the banquet “Bongsu 奉壽, which means “wish for longevity.” Even more notably, in defiance of protocol, Lady Hyegyeong and her female relatives were given the place of honor at the banquet, with King Jeongjo seated in an adjacent area. This extraordinary hierarchy is represented in the painting, which shows the seating area for Jeongjo’s mother and her female relatives in the upper center, with the king’s throne

7. For more discussion on the sequence, see Jeong-hye Park (2000, 305–306); Min (2013, 252–254); and Yoo (2013a, 92–93).
8. Hwaseong seongyeok uigwe 華城城役儀軌 (Uigwe for the Construction of Hwaseong Fortress), Bupyeon 附編 1, Haenggung 行宮.
and palanquin off to the left. Interestingly, although the splendid ceremony is set directly in the center of the painting, the interior of the House of Bongsu is not shown, and red blinds block our view of Lady Hyegyeong herself. Thus, the focus of the scene lies not on Jeongjo’s mother, but on details of the celebration that the king had orchestrated for his mother.

Jeongjo personally selected the program for the banquet, which included 14 musical and dance performances. Four of these performances are depicted simultaneously in the painting, highlighted by the Boating Dance in the center (Chang 2007). In addition to the four performances that are actually depicted, other types of dance are implied by the props shown in the background of the painting, including swords, peaches, and lotus models. Significantly, this scene is the first known example of a court painting that depicts multiple dances at the same time. Rather than simply reflecting Jeongjo’s personal interest in music and dance, this exceptional stylistic choice was intended to convey the extravagance of the king’s ritual of reverence for his mother, which in

**Figure 2.** Birthday celebration (panel 1), *King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong*

*Note:*
1. The House of Bongsu
2. King’s seat
3. King’s seat for bowing to his mother
4. King’s anteroom
5. Performance
6. Male royal family members
7. Dragon flag and royal flag
8. High-ranking officials
turn demonstrates his filial piety (hyo 孝), one of the most crucial tenets of Confucianism.

Jeongjo’s decision to honor Lady Hyegyeong as the mother of a king was a political statement in and of itself. Two years after Sado’s death, at the behest of King Yeongjo, Jeongjo was adopted by his deceased uncle, Jinjong (1719–1728). The adoption was Yeongjo’s way of protecting Jeongjo from being castigated as the son of a criminal, while also discouraging Jeongjo from reversing Yeongjo’s demotion of Sado and attempting to restore his father’s status. Since Lady Hyegyeong was not Jeongjo’s legal mother, his decision to honor her as the mother of a king may have aroused some controversy. Jeongjo’s strong emphasis on filial piety served to justify his reverent treatment of Lady Hyegyeong, while also helping him to avoid any conflict with Yeongjo’s decision.

Another unique aspect of the first panel is the concurrent depiction of both the inner banquet (naejinchan) for women and the outer banquet (oejinchan) for men. According to Joseon tradition, separate banquets for rituals were held for men and women. Previous documentary paintings depicted only the outer banquet, since that was the banquet attended by the officials involved with producing the paintings. King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong is the first known work to depict the inner banquet. This special arrangement emphasizes the event as a celebration of both Lady Hyegyeong’s sixtieth birthday and the twentieth anniversary of Jeongjo’s accession. Notably, however, while the painting merely suggests the presence and identity of Lady Hyegyeong (behind the red curtain), Jeongjo’s dual identity as a filial son (inside the courtyard) and powerful ruler (outside the courtyard) is on full display.

The birthday celebration was followed by the yangnoyeon, a banquet

10. Yeongjo sillok (Veritable Records of King Yeongjo), gwon 103, 20th day, 2nd month, 40th year of King Yeongjo’s reign (1764).
11. By 1795, Jeongjo had apparently gained enough political clout to begin to restore the status of his biological parents, as evidenced by four events in which he granted posthumous titles to his parents. In the last event, held three weeks before the procession, Jeongjo granted Sado a title with eight characters, the likes of which were reserved for kings. See Jeongjo sillok (Veritable Records of King Jeongjo), gwon 42, 17th day, 1st month, 19th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1795).
for elders, which was held to honor 15 high-ranking senior officials who had accompanied the king from Seoul, as well as 385 local elderly subjects from Hwaseong (Fig. 3). This ceremony was held in a building called Nangnamheon 洛南軒, or building of the southern palace of Nagyang 洛陽 (Luoyang in Chinese), referencing the second capital of the Han Dynasty (ca. 200 BC–AD 220). Given that the revival of the Han Dynasty was associated with the establishment of Luoyang as the new capital, the name indicates Jeongjo’s desire for the city of Hwaseong to flourish under his reign. Jeongjo purposefully scheduled this banquet to follow his mother’s birthday ceremony to demonstrate how his filial piety extended into great respect for all the seniors of the community.

According to the ritual protocol of the banquet, the king sat in the palace building with senior officials on his left and right, while the local elderly lined up on the east and west sides of the courtyard (according to rank and age). In the painting,

Figure 3. Banquet for elders (panel 2), King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong

Note:
1. House of Nangnam
2. King’s seat
3. Local elderly citizens
4. Staff bringing food
5. Elderly from the crowd

however, the people in the courtyard are not lined up to the east and west, but rather grouped in the upper and lower areas. The people in the upper area have canes tied with yellow ribbons that were bestowed by the king during the ceremony, and are thus believed to represent the 385 local elderly. Those in the lower area, however, cannot be precisely identified from their representation. However, their identity can be gleaned from the records of the event, which state that a crowd of onlookers gathered around the courtyard to watch the royal feast. The record further states that Jeongjo invited all of the elders from the crowd into the courtyard, where they were given the leftover food from the previous day’s banquet. Based on this record, the people in the lower part of the painting are likely the onlookers who were spontaneously invited to join the ceremony. Supporting this interpretation, members of the staff can be seen bringing tables full of food to serve the people in the lower group (Fig. 4).

The inclusion of this detail was likely intended to demonstrate the king’s benevolence and to enrich the inherent meaning of the banquet for elders. The celebration that began with the banquet for Lady Hyegyeong was extended not only to the seniors of Hwaseong, but also to all of the elders from the crowd, who were actually fed with the food from Lady Hyegyeong’s banquet. Hence, the painting visually represents the proliferation of the celebration from the royal court to the local people of Hwaseong and by implication, to the entire country.

The third and fourth panels depict a memorial service to Confucius and a state exam for the local students (respectively), both of which took place on the eleventh day of the second month (Fig. 5). These events directly represent the veneration for Confucius and the Confucian concept of rulership. Each administrative region had a shrine to Confucius that

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functioned as a spiritual center and educational institute for locals. On his first day in Hwaseong, Jeongjo visited the local Confucian shrine and joined the students for a memorial service to Confucius.\(^{14}\) While it was rare for a sitting king to visit a local Confucian shrine, Jeongjo wished to emphasize that his government was firmly founded on the principles of Confucianism.

In the middle of the courtyard, Confucian students are taking part in the privileged ceremony, which is being conducted by the king himself, while the king’s royal subjects and guards stand outside. Echoing the arrangement of the birthday celebration in the first panel, the Confucian shrine (i.e., Daeseongjeon, or ‘Hall of Great Sageliness’) is situated in the upper center of the painting, with the king positioned to one side. Once again, with the honoree (in this case, Confucius) placed in the center, the king’s act of reverence becomes the focal point of the scene. This composition not only documents the arrangement of the ritual, but also reflects the dual status of the

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king as both a leader revered by his subjects and a humble follower of Confucius, just like the local students.

As depicted in the fourth panel, during his visit to Hwaseong, Jeongjo administered a special state examination and recruited those who passed the exam to become government officials (Fig. 6). The painting depicts the ceremony held after the exam, where those who passed the test were given certificates and paper flowers by the king. The successful candidates, recognizable by the paper flowers on their hats, are lined up in the center, with literati officials on the east and military officials on the west. Notably, the primary applicants for the exam were the same students who participated in the memorial service with the king in the previous scene. Typically, the state exam was held only once every three years in Seoul, so students living outside the capital had precious few chances to pass the exam. Thus, by administering a special test exclusively for the local people, Jeongjo was giving preferential treatment to the students of Hwaseong and surrounding communities.

Figure 6. Award ceremony for the passers of the State Exam (panel 4), King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong

Note:
1. House of Nangnam
2. King’s seat
3. Literati officials
4. Military officials
Confucianism is based on the idea that a person’s compassion for others extends directly from filial piety to one’s parents. This concept is evoked in the first and second panels, which show the ritualized forms of the birthday celebration for the king’s mother and a banquet for elders. The third and fourth panels emphasize Jeongjo’s reverence for Confucius and the Confucianist foundations of his government. These four scenes utilize a traditional two-dimensional composition, with the main building situated at the top and the ceremonies in the courtyard. However, the buildings are more than mere background. In the first and third panels, Bongsudang and Daeseongjeon respectively symbolize Jeongjo’s mother and Confucius, with Jeongjo placed off to the side as a reverent subject. In the second and fourth panels, Jeongjo takes the royal throne in the center of Nangnamheon, which embodies the prosperity of the new capital, exercising his benevolent dominion based on Confucianism.

**Innovative Art of Governance: Panels 5–8**

The last four panels of the screen respectively depict a military exercise, archery ritual and fireworks, a procession through the city of Siheung, and a river crossing via a pontoon bridge. Unlike the first four panels, which depict scenes taking place inside a building, the last four panels cover much wider areas, such as an entire fortress, an outdoor road, and a long bridge. Since these types of scenes were rarely depicted in documentary court paintings, new modes of depiction had to be developed. For instance, a bird’s-eye view and a dramatic one-point perspective were newly employed, clearly differentiating these scenes from the standard two-dimensional composition of the first four panels. But beyond their stylistic impact, these new perspectives also worked to reiterate certain political themes.

One of the primary reasons for King Jeongjo’s journey to Hwaseong in 1795 was to inspect the newly constructed Hwaseong Fortress, which he had recently ordered built to accommodate new military equipment, facilities, and troops. At the time of his visit, 5000 soldiers from the royal forces of Jangyongyeong were stationed in the new fortress. Jangyongyeong
was the elite royal guard that had been created by Jeongjo in 1785.\textsuperscript{15}

Two years before the procession, Jeongjo had significantly expanded the role of the Jangyongyeong, elevating them from king’s guard to the defense command of both Seoul and Hwaseong. As shown in the fifth panel, on the second night of his visit to Hwaseong, the king conducted and observed a series of military exercises with his troops, the Jangyongyeong, allowing him to show off his new military strength to the aristocrats of Seoul (Fig. 7).

The painting provides a detailed depiction of the full sequence of military exercises, as well as the geography and architecture of the new fortress. The scene simultaneously depicts all ten stages of the military exercises, as follows: the king ascends to the command post; the soldiers spread out to set up an ambush; the gates are closed; the torches are lit and taken down; the soldiers take an intermission; the lanterns are raised; a toll signals the time; the lanterns are lowered; the gates are opened; and the king descends from his post and returns to the palace.\textsuperscript{16}

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\textsuperscript{15} For Jangyongyeong, see Choi (2015) and T. Lee (1985).

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Wonhaeng eulmyo jeongni uigwe, gwon 2, Uiju 儀註, Yajosik 夜操式 (Military Exercise at Hwaseong): Aesthetics and Production of King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong}
to this unconventional composition, all of the torches and lanterns are lit, and some soldiers are assuming combat formation while others take a rest. Rather than focusing on one specific element of the exercises, the painting attempts to convey the overall features of the military rites in a single plane.

The scene also features a depiction of the entire fortress and the surrounding city, which is captured through a bird’s-eye perspective. While this drawing technique was commonly employed for maps, it was rarely used in documentary court paintings. Nevertheless, the innovative adoption of this style enables the painting to deliver detailed information about the facilities and geography of the fortress.

While the overall depiction of the exercises and the fortress is faithful, the painting does include some interesting modifications that help to emphasize the king’s authority and intentions. For example, the geographical orientation is rotated counter clockwise in order to situate the king’s throne in the Western Command Post at the top of the picture plane. While the actual Hwaseong Fortress has an oval shape that is longer north-south than east-west, the fortress is elongated from east to west in the painting, so that the full range of the fortress could be adjusted to accommodate the vertical frame of the panel. Both the enlargement of the fortress and the emphasis of the command position highlight the king’s military authority.

In reality, the construction of the fortress was not completed until the following year (i.e., 1796), but the painting includes most of the final facilities and installations. Since it took more than a year to produce all of the folding screen, it is estimated that some versions were updated to include the newly completed facilities. For example, although the construction of the southern and northeastern post had not yet been completed at the time of the king’s visit, those areas are depicted in some versions of the screen (such as the one now housed at Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art) (Fig. 8). As described in the *Uigwe for the Construction of Hwaseong Fortress*, the southern and northeastern posts were highly advanced forms of military architecture for the time, with two stories allowing for more effective defense and attacks (Jeong-hye Park 2002) (Fig. 9). Since these areas represented
the innovative architecture and technology of the fortress, the king obviously wished to include them in the painting. The comprehensive depiction of the highly trained troops engaging in military exercises and the progressive new fortress symbolizes the culmination of Jeongjo’s military program, thus fashioning him as a powerful military commander.

As shown in the sixth panel, on his final day in Hwaseong, Jeongjo performed an archery ceremony at Deukjungjeong, which roughly means “House of Hitting the Bull’s-eye.” (Fig. 10)\(^\text{17}\) In Eastern tradition, archery is more than just a military skill; it is an important means of self-development and improvement. Therefore, archery contests were regarded as the most honorable competitions, wherein the winner must overcome not only his opponent, but also his own shortcomings. In this sense, it was particularly significant that

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\(^{17}\) As explained in the *Uigwe for King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong* in 1795 (translation by Cheoulsu Chang [1996, 96–97]), the name “Deukjung” commemorates a perfect archery score (hitting all bull’s eyes), which King Jeongjo had achieved five years earlier.
the king joined his subjects for an archery contest, as it symbolized concord and unity, with each party fulfilling their proper duties as sovereign and subject.

In addition to the archery ceremony, the sixth panel also features a fireworks display, which was planned as a festive way to conclude the Hwaseong program on the final day of the king’s visit. The fireworks were originally scheduled to take place after the military exercise, as a way of demonstrating the explosive power of the military munitions.\(^\text{18}\) Due to Lady Hyegyeong’s illness, however, the fireworks had to be postponed until after the archery contest. In the scene, the two events are happening simultaneously, although they actually occurred in succession. Lady Hyegyeong’s palanquin and the king’s throne are visible in the building on the left, as if they are watching the fireworks, while the archery contest is suggested by the target and rows of torches in the middle. There is a red blaze near

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the army barracks in the lower part of the painting, where a crowd of spectators looks on in amazement as the soldiers prepare the next round of gunpowder for fireworks.

As mentioned, the archery ceremony and fireworks were conducted separately, as confirmed by the illustration in the *Uigwe for King Jeongjo's Visit to Hwaseong in 1795*, which shows only the archery ceremony (Fig. 11). In order to simultaneously depict the two events, the panel adopts an unusual and somewhat asymmetrical composition that combines two distinct viewpoints. While the top of the panel uses a standard two-dimensional architectural frame to depict Nangnamheon on the left and Deukjungjeong on the right, the bottom of the panel features a bird’s-eye view of the fortress, showing Hwaseomun Gate and the northwestern post. Why would the artists choose to rather awkwardly combine these two events in a single scene? In addition to their geographic proximity, the archery and fireworks also share a related meaning, in that both emphasize the affinity between the king and his subjects. While the king joins his fellow archers in ceremony, the fireworks are depicted as a jubilant event to be equally enjoyed by everyone, from the king to the ordinary subject.

This understanding is also relevant to the ordering of the panels on the folding screen. The panels are not arranged in chronological order, since the military exercises (panel 5) took place before the birthday ceremony (panel 1) and banquet for elders (panel 2). But rather than grouping the military exercise with these celebratory rituals, that panel was placed next to the depiction of the archery competition and fireworks, since those events also represent the military power and martial skill of the kingdom. Interestingly,
even though the military exercise, archery competition, and fireworks all have slightly different connotations, the screen presents them as ritualized spectacles for the king and his vassals.

The last two panels describe the royal procession passing first through the city of Siheung and then across a pontoon bridge (Figs. 12 and 13).
It is interesting to consider why these two specific spots were chosen to represent the twenty-mile return journey from Hwaseong to Seoul. Siheung was a satellite city that Jeongjo had actively developed to economically and militarily support Hwaseong, which he envisioned would serve as a secondary capital. As part of this development, Jeongjo had ordered the construction of a new road across the flatlands of Siheung, not only to accommodate the procession, but also to stimulate the local economy and improve military transport (K. Park 1988). Furthermore, he officially declared the new road to be the royal road, and even changed the name of the city from Geumcheon衿川 (silky stream) to Siheung始興 (beginning of prosperity). The wide expanse of the road and the splendid Siheung palace are conspicuously depicted in the painting, enabling the viewer to easily relate the royal procession with the “beginning of prosperity” that Siheung was meant to represent.

Similarly, Jeongjo had also ordered the construction of the pontoon bridge across the Han River. Whereas previous kings had usually crossed the river by boat, Jeongjo made the crossing over the new pontoon bridge, a method that had rarely been tried in the past because of difficulties with constructing the bridge and coordinating the king’s large procession. As part of his extensive reformations, Jeongjo set standard requirements for ships and convinced ship owners to form the Jugyosa (Office of the Pontoon Bridge), in part by granting them a monopoly on the transportation of rice that each region sent to the capital as a form of taxation (Hyeonjong Lee 1979; M. Kim 2011b). Thus, the final two panels of the screen both depict examples of technological advancements and effective state management, highlighting the infrastructure of Siheung and the scientific innovation of the pontoon bridge.

With about 1000 horses, 200 flags, and 100 bands with royal musical instruments, the royal procession itself was quite a spectacle,

19.  *Jeongjo sillok*, gwon 42, 1st day, 2nd month, 19th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1795).
20. Details about managing the pontoon bridge were published under King Jeongjo’s order in *Instructions on the Pontoon Bridge* (*Jugyo jinam* 舟橋指南; 1790) (Gyujanggak document no. 3172).
as demonstrated by the crowds that reportedly gathered to watch the crossing of the pontoon bridge.\textsuperscript{21} Jeongjo actively encouraged people to come watch the procession, even going so far as to lift the regular curfew if the procession should last into the night.\textsuperscript{22} Beyond the visual effect, the parade was an overwhelming experience for all five senses, with hundreds of drummers pounding out rhythms, colorful flags embroidering the sky, and the fragrance of incense filling the air. All of those sensations served to imbue the power of the royal authority in the minds of both the participants and spectators.\textsuperscript{23}

Interestingly, some of the sightseers appear to be enjoying the scene in a very casual manner, cheering and even drinking wine (Fig. 14).\textsuperscript{24} These festive scenes capture the shared jubilation of the king and his realm, who came together to celebrate the longevity of the royal family and Jeongjo’s benevolent reign. Jeongjo once likened a large crowd of joyous people to a golden field of fully ripened rice;\textsuperscript{25} like a bountiful harvest, a festive gathering of citizens was seen as a sign of successful governing and a blessing from Heaven. Thus, the scenes of the dazzling procession attended by jubilant crowds not only displayed the splendor of the royal court, but also symbolized an age of great peace and prosperity.

21. In 1791, the spectacle of the pontoon bridge was chosen as the theme for the nokchwijae (the exam for court artists). Naegak illeyok, 23rd day, 2nd month, 15th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1791).
22. Jeongjo sillok, gwon 34, 25th day, 2nd month, 16th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1792).
23. For more on the form and function of royal processions in the Joseon Dynasty, see Jiyoung Kim (2005; 2017).
24. The king himself called the crowd around the procession “sightseers” (gwangwang minin 觀光民人). See M. Kim (1997, 52) and Jiyoung Kim (2005, 211).
25. Ilseongnok (Record of Daily Reflections), 3rd day, 8th month, 16th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1792).
In order to enhance the spectacle, the court artists once again employed a creative perspective. In the seventh panel, the road narrows as it zig-zags into the distance, while the people get smaller and more vague. In the last panel, a one-point perspective was adopted, as the pontoon bridge cuts diagonally across the panel. As a result of this perspective, the people in the foreground appear larger than the king’s palanquin in the center of the bridge, a truly unprecedented hierarchy of size that had never been seen in court paintings. While the two-dimensional, symmetrical compositions of the first four panels emphasize the king’s authority and the tradition of state rituals, the diagonal composition and one-point perspective in the final panel introduces a revolutionary new visual order, which corresponds well to the intended theme of scientific innovation and reformative governance.

As mentioned, the screen King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong can be divided into two primary themes: the Confucian concept of rulership (panels 1–4) and the art of innovative governance (panels 5–8). Of course, these themes are not separate or contrary, but rather connected within the realization of Confucian concepts through Jeongjo’s governance. Hence, the sequence of the panels reflects the ideal development of a Confucian ruler: based on “self-cultivation,” the leader first learns to “manage his family,” then “rule the state,” and finally, “govern the world.” The filial piety on display in the first panel is not merely a depiction of Jeongjo’s love for his mother, but also a fundamental virtue for an ideal Confucian ruler. This progression—from filial piety to benevolent governance framed the program of events and ceremonies in Hwaseong, and it was purposefully reinforced by the visual representation of the screen.

From the King’s Mind to the Artists’ Hands: Production of the Screen Painting

Role and Duties of Court Artists

To further understand how King Jeongjo’s ideas were represented in *King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong*, it is necessary to examine the process by which the screen was produced. All of the court artists who helped to produce the screen were part of the *chabi daeryeong hwawon*, the organization of painters-in-waiting that Jeongjo had created in 1783. Prior to Jeongjo’s reign, all court paintings of the Joseon Dynasty had been produced by the Dohwaseo, the Royal Bureau of Painting. Notably, unlike the preceding system of the Goryeo Dynasty (Oh 2010; Sunpyo Hong 2012), wherein all painters served within the king’s secretarial department, in Joseon the Dohwaseo was affiliated with the Yejo (Ministry of Rites), one of the six ministries, as part of the larger government bureaucracy. As such, the king did not necessarily exercise complete control over this institution. In response to this situation, in 1783, Jeongjo chose ten of the top painters from the Dohwaseo and transferred them the Gyujanggak, the royal library in Changdeok Palace, to serve as painters-in-waiting.\(^{27}\)

The Gyujanggak was established in 1776 (the year of Jeongjo’s enthronement). It functioned as a type of think-tank that suggested and implemented various policies for Jeongjo’s extensive reformations, in addition to its role as a library, storing royal writings and portraits (M. Kim 2009). The painters-in-waiting received higher salaries than their colleagues in the Royal Bureau of Painting, but in order to receive the extra funds, they were regularly reviewed by Gyujanggak officials and the king himself (Kang 2001).

Jeongjo’s establishment of his own personal cadre of painters was a controversial decision that could have drawn criticism from his subjects as overly focused on the arts to the neglect of state affairs.\(^{28}\) Thus, to justify his

\(^{27}\). *Naegak illyeok* (Daily Record of the Gyujanggak), 20th day, 11th month, 17th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1793).

\(^{28}\). For more cases of conflict between kings and subjects on art production, see *Seongjong sillok*.
action, Jeongjo claimed that the painters were needed for the publication of royal writings. In reality, however, the painters’ only task insofar as publication projects was to draw fine red lines to demarcate the space for the text, a job that hardly required ten of the best court painters who were rigorously tested every month.

The actual duties of the painters-in-waiting can be discerned from historical texts, including uigwe, Naegak illyeok (Daily Record of the Gyujanggak), and Seungjeongwon ilgi (Diaries of the Royal Secretariat). According to those records, the painters-in-waiting were responsible for painting portraits of kings, preparing symbolic emblems of the royal court (e.g., royal seals and jade investiture books), and inscribing calligraphy on royal tombstones and steles). The painters-in-waiting also participated in producing illustrations for official publications (Yoo 2017). Thus, the painters-in-waiting were essentially responsible for visualizing the king’s body, words, and message.

The Gyujanggak had its own system for training painters-in-waiting how to perform these specific tasks. Initially, the Gyujanggak selected its painters (ten at a time) from the Dohwaseo, but over time, the Gyujanggak simply recruited its own pupils or apprentices whenever the institution had need of personnel, rather than taking them from the Dohwaseo. Twelve times per year the painters-in-waiting of the Gyujanggak were required to take a test called the nokchwijaes, in which they were asked to paint various specific themes. As described in previous research, these tests served not only to rank the painters, but also as a form of incentive, as the top two painters for each test received a bonus (Kang 2001). In addition to such

(Veritable Records of King Seongjong), gwon 94, 27th day, 7th month, 9th year of King Seongjong’s reign (1478) and Yeonsangun ilgi (Daily Records of the Yeonsangun), gwon 51, 17th day, 12th month, 9th year of Yeonsangun’s reign (1503).

29. One example is the publication of Muye dobo tongji (1790), an illustrated manual of martial arts. Although this text was officially compiled by the Jangyonjeong (the elite royal guard created by Jeongjo), some officials of the Gyujanggak were transferred to assist with its publication. In particular, three painters-in-waiting, including a promising young artist named Han Jong-il, were assigned to help create the illustrations for the text (Ilseongnok, 29th day, 4th month, 14th year of King Jeongjo’s reign [1790]).
functions, the tests were an important educational tool. They were written and reviewed by Gyujanggak officials, and the king was directly involved in choosing the themes and commenting on the painters’ submissions.

Whereas court artists had previously been tested on themes reflecting the tradition of literati painting (e.g., bamboo or plum blossoms), the painters-in-waiting were asked to portray themes related to documentary and historical paintings. As such, rather than a mere formality, the tests became an effective means for evaluating the capacities of the painters and educating them in specific painting tasks. The skills and techniques that the painters acquired from the tests are apparent in the vibrant genre scenes and the adept use of perspective in the background of King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong.

Further demonstrating that the nokchwijae tests were used as preliminary training for the production of the screen, one of the test themes—chosen by King Jeongjo himself—was “Appreciating the Flags of the Pontoon Bridge” (舟橋瞻旄). It was just a few months after the bridge had been completed in 1790 when King Jeongjo chose this theme. Beyond the technical aspects of the bridge itself, the theme calls for the artists to capture the overall visual spectacle. This intention of the examiner seems to be fully realized by the court artists in the eighth panel of the screen. In 1800, the theme “Award Ceremony for Those who Passed the State Exam” (放榜圖), which is depicted in the fourth panel of the screen, was chosen for the nokchwijae, attesting to Jeongjo’s ongoing interest in documentary paintings of state ceremonies.

**Process of the Screen’s Production**

Previous studies have often attributed the innovative style and outstanding quality of King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong to the individual capacity of the seven contributing artists, particularly the great Kim Hong-do. While the artists obviously played a key role in the production of these masterpieces,
it must also be noted that the paintings benefitted from ample financial resources and the highly organized system of artistic production under King Jeongjo. The office that oversaw the 1795 procession to Hwaseong was the Jeongniso 整理所, or Office for Arranging Accommodations and Processions.\(^{32}\) Unlike traditional royal ceremonies, the Hwaseong procession comprised a wide array of different events, including banquets, ceremonies, a state exam, and military exercises. As such, more officials with expertise in each area were required for the preparations. Whereas a typical dogam, a temporary government office organized to manage a special occasion such as a royal wedding or funeral, consisted of three ministerial administrators (called dojejo) and several middle managers (docheong), the Jeongniso included six ministerial administrators (jeongnisa) who communicated directly with the workers on the frontline, with no middle management.\(^{33}\) Providing a more direct line of communication from the king to the workers, this system offered greater efficiency for the complex events of the procession.

Because Jeongjo did not want to burden the populace with higher taxes to support a royal celebration, he secured independent funding for the Jeongniso to the amount of 100,000 nyang (approximately US$4.5 million in today’s currency).\(^{34}\) The systematic organization of the Jeongniso helped to ensure that the scenes depicted in the paintings were detailed and accurate, while the substantial private funding allowed for the production of an unusually high number of screens for the royal family and officials.\(^ {35}\) Most of the officials of the Gyujanggak served in the Jeongniso in some capacity, including an official named Yun Haeng-im (1762-1801), who was in charge

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\(^{32}\) Ilseongnok, 11th day, 2nd month, 20th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1796).

\(^{33}\) From the Korean translation by Cheoulsu Chang (1996, 4–5). For further details on dogam, see Na (2014). For lists of Jeongniso officials, see Wonhaeng eulmyo jeongni uigwe, geonsu, Joamok 座目.

\(^{34}\) According to Hunchang Lee (2005, 132), I calculated 1 nyang at this time to equal US$45. The funding of the Joengniso was composed of interest income derived from several different state enterprises. For details about fundraising, see Han (1998, 128–132) and Wonhaeng eulmyo jeongni uigwe, vol. 1, Yeonseol 館說. From the Korean translation by Cheoulsu Chang (1996, 75–76).

\(^{35}\) For more on fundraising for the royal procession of 1795, see Han (1998, 128–132).
of the paintings. A graduate of the Chogye munsin, an elite training course offered by Jeongjo, Yun Haeng-im was assigned the title of jeongni dangsang 整理堂上 which meant he was in charge of arranging the procession, including assigning the seats and scheduling the ceremonies. Records indicate that he was also placed in charge of the painters-in-waiting who created the “banquet screens,” which are believed to be the existing copies of King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong. After the event, Yun Haeng-im was also named to supervise the publication of the uigwe that comprehensively documented the procession. As the director of the uigwe office, he personally recommended Kim Hong-do to the king as the best choice to create the illustrations for the Uigwe for King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong in 1795.\textsuperscript{36}

It is no coincidence that Yun Haeng-im was in charge of both the uigwe illustrations and the screen. Separate records indicate that Kim Hong-do was responsible for the uigwe illustrations and that the painters-in-waiting participated in the folding screen, but it is certainly possible that both projects were collaborative. It seems highly probable that under Yun Haeng-im’s supervision, Kim Hong-do was placed in charge of the overall composition of the uigwe illustrations and folding screens, with the painters-in-waiting working together under his guidance to produce the images.

In conclusion, the overall plans for the folding screen King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong and the related illustrations were likely dictated by King Jeongjo to his officials at the Gyujanggak, who then relayed them to the team of painters-in-waiting, led by Kim Hong-do.\textsuperscript{37} Jeongjo produced political images in the same systematic way he conducted state affairs. Crucially, this efficient system was only made possible by the special financing that Jeongjo arranged for this event, which enabled the mass production and distribution of visual materials honoring the royal family without taxing the citizens.

\textsuperscript{36} Ilseongnok, 29th day, 2nd month, 19th year of King Jeongjo’s reign (1795).

\textsuperscript{37} Although not technically a member of the painters-in-waiting, Kim Hong-do used to receive private commissions from Jeongjo. As part of his special treatment, Kim was exempt from taking the required tests for painters-in-waiting. See Kang (2001, 64).
Distribution and Viewership

Distributing King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong

Copies of King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong were produced and distributed to many of the leading officials of the Jeongniso. The first Joseon ruler to directly participate in the production and distribution of documentary paintings of national events was King Yeongjo, who ordered the creation of paintings to document his river renovation project in Seoul. The resultant paintings show workers dredging the channel and celebrating the success of the project (Jeong-hye Park 2000, 280–295; Shin 2013). This is believed to be the first case of a ruler personally ordering the production of documentary paintings for his own purposes and possession.

Some 35 years later, Jeongjo initiated a much larger and more complex project to visualize his visit to Hwaseong. While Yeongjo only gave albums of the river project to the managing officials, Jeongjo distributed different sizes of folding screens and scrolls to many people who took part in the event, including the royal family, the supervising officials, and even the flag bearers, who were the lowest ranking participants. In particular, six large and mid-sized screens were given to the royal family, 15 screens to Jeongniso officials, and 126 paintings (possibly scrolls) to the lower-level workers of the Jeongniso (Jeong-hye Park 2000, 274–279). The production of these 147 works cost a total of 2574 nyang (about US$170,000 in today’s currency). As discussed, this sizable expenditure came out of the private funding that Jeongjo had raised for the project.

Along with the folding screen, participants also received a copy of the Uigwe for King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong in 1795. This is particularly significant given that the uigwe texts were typically reserved exclusively for the king and the official archives.38 Since very few copies were produced,
most previous uigwe were handwritten, but the *Uigwe for King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong in 1795* was printed in metal type (texts) and woodblocks (illustrations), with more than 100 copies distributed to various participants: 32 copies to the royal family (including Jeongjo and his mother), 38 copies to various offices in Seoul and Hwaseong, and 31 copies to other individuals.

A comparison of the people who received the *uigwe* and the folding screens respectively illuminates the different functions of these two types of media. While the screens were bestowed only to members of the Jeongniso office, the *uigwe* were distributed to leading officials and royal family members who attended the banquet. This discrepancy suggests that, while the folding screens were seen as a type of reward or memento for those who had helped prepare the procession, the *uigwe* served as both the official documentation of the event and as a promotional material for participants.

**Viewership of King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong**

Records show that 15 government officials received a copy of the folding screen, beginning with Chae Je-gong (1720–1799), the prime minister, and other high-ranking officials of the Jeongniso. One of the recipients was Hong Dae-yong (1731–1783), whose son Hong Seok-ju (1744–1842) later left a detailed inscription of the screen in his family’s possession. According to the inscription, three generations of the Hong family—Hong Nak-seong (1718–1789), Hong Dae-yong, and Hong Seok-ju—accompanied King Jeongjo’s procession to Hwaseong. In addition to helping prepare the procession as members of the Jeongniso, these men also personally attended many events as close relatives of Lady Hyegyeong.

After beginning his inscription with a summary and schedule of the events, Hong Seok-ju explains that the entire procession was intended to enable the king to express his love and gratitude to his parents and his

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people, stressing the fact that the king acquired private funding for the procession so as not to burden the people. This assessment of the meaning of the procession is a faithful summary of a speech that Jeongjo delivered at the banquet for elders in Hwaseong. Although Hong Seok-ju was simply a private citizen describing his personal collection, he directly conveys the official message of the procession. His clear recollection of the events, including the words of the king’s speech, is especially salient given that his family might not have received the screen until 18 months or so after the procession. Of course, Hong may have referred to a copy of the *uigwe*, which his family likely received for their service in the Jeongniso. In any case, Hong’s inscription is compelling evidence that, by distributing the screens and the *uigwe* to members of the ruling class, King Jeongjo achieved his goal of emphasizing and implanting his official message about his reign.

Hong ended the inscription on a personal note, describing his family’s involvement in the procession. In particular, he affirms the devotion of his grandfather as a prime minister and his father as a Jeongniso official. This part of the inscription may have been intended to help future descendants remember the family’s connection to the glorious events depicted on the screen. Looking at the screen, Hong recalls the joy and magnificence of the events, but he closes the inscription by stating that the true meaning of the screen does not lie in the painting itself, but rather in the eminence of the ceremony. While this sentiment seems a bit dismissive of the painting, such rhetoric reflects the tradition of the Joseon literati, who typically refrained from indulging in visual delights or precious antiquities. Through such discretion, Hong actually alludes to the true purpose of the screen, which was to help participants vividly recollect the original events. Thus, the inscription shows that the combination of the screen and the *uigwe* successfully evoked Hong’s personal experience, displayed the honor of his family, and internalized the king’s message within the minds of his subjects.

**Conclusion: Reconstruction of Memory**

The eight panels of the folding screen *King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong*
respectively depict six important rituals from the journey and two scenes from the return procession. Each scene is painted in great detail to emphasize the proper procedure and arrangement of the rituals, as well as to highlight the costumes, performances, architecture, and musical instruments. The entire screen resonates with informative details, recalling the meticulous nature of the uigwe, which documented all of the relevant data about ceremonies, down to the precise measurements of ingredients in hundreds of dishes and the names and wages of thousands of laborers. The strong tradition of documentation that was in place during the Joseon Dynasty was intended to maintain Confucian aristocracy and to prevent kings from abusing their authority. But the astonishing level of detail in the screen is emblematic of Jeongjo’s unique conception of sovereignty, which was based on the control of knowledge.

Such control is evident in the subtle modification of certain details according to Jeongjo’s intentions. As described, in order to effectively deliver the king’s political message, various artistic styles and perspectives were employed in the individual panels of the screen. While the first four panels use two-dimensional, symmetrical compositions to emphasize the king’s authority and the tradition of state rituals, the last four panels employ more innovative drawing techniques, such as a bird’s-eye view and one-point perspective, to aptly highlight Jeongjo’s scientific innovation and reformative government. As mentioned, the first four panels reflect the theme of the Confucian idea of sovereignty, while the last four represent the innovative art of governance. Rather than operating separately, these two themes intersect as the basis of Jeongjo’s attempts to enact a government that realized the ideals of Confucianism. Finally, there is one more curious detail about the screen that remains a mystery: why don’t any of the panels depict King Jeongjo’s actual visit to his father’s tomb? After all, that was supposedly the purpose of the entire procession to Hwaseong. Furthermore, records indicate that Jeongjo expressed his intense grief before the tomb, and repeatedly voiced his longing for his father throughout the journey. Thus, one would expect the visit to the tomb to be prominently represented in the screen. The absence of the scene will probably never be fully explained, though we can speculate that Jeongjo wanted the journey to be remembered
as a celebration of longevity and prosperity, rather than as a lamentation for his father’s tragic death. The screen contains no traces of historical conflicts or questions, instead glamorizing the ideal Confucian virtues that make Jeongjo a legitimate ruler.

These selective memories were meant to be imparted on the minds of the 15 officials upon whom the screens were bestowed by the king. In order to ensure that his messages would be effectively visualized by the painters-in-waiting, Jeongjo established an academy for court painters and secured ample funds to provide multiple screens to the participants. More importantly, he was the first Joseon king to adopt a system wherein the government took charge of producing and distributing visual records of royal ceremonies. King Jeongjo’s Visit to Hwaseong clearly conveys King Jeongjo’s wish to define and control how his great journey would be remembered.

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