

Pictorial Dictionary of Everyday Lives in the Joseon Period, Korea :

Source Materials and *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*

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The systematization of illustrated materials for the study of folk culture is one of the research topics for Group 1 in the 21st Century COE Program at Kanagawa University. The group's specific objective is the compilation of *ebiki*, pictorial dictionaries of folk culture, building on the work published in 1964 as *Emakimono ni yoru Nihon Jōmin Seikatsu Ebiki* (Pictorial Dictionary of Japanese Folk Culture compiled from Picture scrolls in the Medieval Period). The work reported here both carries on that research with a focus on the early modern era in Japan and expands it by developing *ebiki* for other areas of East Asia. I myself have been involved mostly in the compilation of *ebiki* on Korea, working on collecting and analyzing illustrated materials from the Joseon dynasty in Korea.

In this presentation, I would like to introduce the process of attempting to compile a pictorial dictionary of everyday lives in the Joseon period, Korea, and then examine one example from the illustrated material. The first section thus presents the characteristics of a series of genre paintings, comparable to the handscroll paintings of medieval Japan, that are a source material for compiling a pictorial dictionary of Joseon-period Korean folk culture. The second section presents observations about the city of Pyeongyang and its culture in the Joseon period through an examination of the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*, an example of a genre painting from the latter half of the eighteenth century. Together, these two sections will show how the compilation of a pictorial dictionary is implemented utilizing illustrated material.

Here, I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the National Museum of Korea in my study of the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*; the museum provided useful digital images of the painting and also gave me an opportunity to examine the work itself.

Sources for a Pictorial Dictionary of Everyday Lives in the Joseon Period, Korea

The members of the COE Group 1 have undertaken an extensive search for illustrated materials from which to compile pictorial dictionaries. In attempting to compile a pictorial dictionary of the Joseon period, Korea, we have paid special attention to the characteristics of the handscroll paintings produced up to the medieval period, Japan, which were the main source for the earlier *Pictorial Dictionary of Japanese Folk Culture Compiled from Picture Scrolls in the Medieval Period*, and have focused on collecting comparable illustrated materials from Joseon-dynasty Korea. Representations of daily lives from that period have proved, however, to be quite scarce; only few sources we have found are pictorial diaries, illustrated guidebooks, and technical books on, for example, agriculture. Documentary paintings such as *Royal Procession to the Hwaseong* or *Painting Album of the Gathering of Elder Statesmen* do exist, but are exegetical illustrations of events within the Joseon-dynasty aristocratic society. The most useful materials we have found, with an abundance of illustrations presenting the everyday lives of ordinary people and the living spaces are the genre paintings that were labeled "vulgar paintings" during that period. Court painters undertook the production of genre paintings about ordinary lives and

events to suit court and aristocratic tastes, and their work influenced the style of the painters who produced a plethora of lively genre paintings for the common people at the time.

Of the materials available from the Joseon dynasty, I am now focusing on the following five works, which realistically depict the everyday lives and occupations of ordinary people, to compile a pictorial dictionary of everyday lives in the Joseon period, Korea.

Genre Painting Album by Hye-won, by Shin Yun-bok. 30 album leaves. Kansong Art Museum

Genre Painting Album by Dan-won, by Kim Hong-do. 25 album leaves. National Museum of Korea

Genre Scenes of Cultivation and Sericulture Activities, anonymous. a pair of four-panel folding screen. Hanyang University Museum

Highlights of an Illustrious Life, anonymous. 8 panels (originally mounted as a folding screen). National Museum of Korea

Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang, attributed to Kim Hong-do. 3 panels. National Museum of Korea

These works date from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries and realistically depict details of folk culture in the Joseon period. The *Genre Painting Album by Hye-won* (Fig. 1) and *Genre Painting Album by Dan-won* (Fig. 2) are the most important of these materials, rich in vivid genre depictions comparable to those of the handscroll paintings produced in Medieval Japan. The *Genre Scenes of Cultivation and Sericulture Activities* (Fig. 3) is particularly worthy of attention, since it contains a great number of scenes related to agricultural activities and women's labor. *Highlights of an Illustrious Life* (Fig. 4) is also a fascinating work, for this narrative presentation of all the rites of passage from birth to death includes many scenes closely tied to daily life as well as illustrations of events. We have thus focused on all four as source materials for the pictorial dictionary. (See the illustrations of 1-1, 2-1, 3-1, 4-1 for examples of pictorial dictionary preparation.)

While these Joseon-period genre paintings are valuable sources, materials as rich in scenes from everyday life as the handscroll paintings produced in medieval Japan are, unfortunately, extremely rare. Of the five works listed above, two are albums (*Genre Painting Album by Hye-won* and *Genre Painting Album by Dan-won*) and two are large works mounted as folding screens (*Genre Scenes of Cultivation and Sericulture Activities* and *Highlights of an Illustrious Life*), but much less data can be extracted from them than from the medieval Japanese handscroll paintings executed during the medieval period of Japan. Moreover, compared with the Japanese handscrolls, with their narrative development and inclusion of many events and activities, including the origins of temples and shrines, biographies of famous priests, and legends, the record of life in Joseon-period Korea that they present is quite limited. In this circumstance, such Korean genre paintings are, nonetheless, the most valuable materials for considering folk culture and everyday lives.

Focusing on *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*

Following that brief explanation of the importance of such series of genre paintings created in the Joseon period for the pictorial dictionary of Korean folk culture, I would like now to move on to one of these works, *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*, in reporting one case of how we investigate and use these illustrated materials. *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang* is particularly important for developing the pictorial dictionary in what

it reveals about local culture of Pyeongyang, yet little detailed art-historical research had been reported about it, and much - from precisely when it was created, a detailed consideration of its motifs, or even to the explication of its title - remained obscure.

Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang is especially important because it presents cityscapes of this city and views of everyday life illustrative of local culture in Pyeongyang. The production of cityscape paintings such as *Qingming shanghe tu* (Going Up the River on the Qingming Festival) by Zhang Zeduan from the Northern Song period, China or the *Rakuchū rakugai zu* (Views In and Around the Capital) in early modern Japan was not widespread in Joseon-period Korea. *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang* is one of the very small group of extant cityscapes that also includes *Governor of Dongrae Greeting Japanese Envoys*, which depicts a procession of envoys marching into the castle of Dongrae and a banquet scene, and *Local Court of Gyeonggi Province*, which depicts the area outside the Great West Gate of the capital. *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*, then, is notable for representing street scenes from the city of Pyeongyang as well as its banquet scenes. I would like to use this work to illuminate the process of compiling our pictorial dictionary on Joseon-period folklore culture in Korea by focusing on several details.

Interpreting the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*

Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang, which is in the collection of the National Museum of Korea, consists of three panels: “Boating Excursion Under the Moon,” “Feast at Yeonguang Arbor,” and “Feast at Bubyek Arbor.” These panels show Pyeongyang Castle and two traditionally famous arbor sites with views of the Daedong River. The painting greatly enhances our understanding of Pyeongyang and its culture in that period, since it combines the qualities of an illuminated map and a genre painting. Comparing it with the *Pyeongyang kwanbu do* (Map of Pyeongyang Castle) confirms that the painting seems to depict the scenery in and around Pyeongyang accurately.

The three extant panels of the *Banquet* are color on paper and measure 71.2 by 196.6 centimeters. They appear to be part of a handscroll, but are now framed; it remains unclear whether the three panels were originally scroll mounted. The evenly drawn lines and vibrant palette of pigments interplay with the organic shapes of the architectural components and provide a direct visual reference to woodblock printed picture maps of Pyeongyang. Such picture maps, which present a bird’s-eye view of Pyeongyang, were mass produced and widely circulated among the nobility and also among the common people in the mid eighteenth century. In most, the outlines were printed, then color added.

In the *Banquet* panels, the even, consistent lines are extremely similar to the lines in the woodblock printed map that it almost suggests a printed map may have been copied with the brush. The landscape in the background of these panels, however, is, quite different in style from the lines, the precisely rendered architectural objects, and the depiction of human figures. Its brushwork reveals an artist whose style skillfully emphasizes landscape painting techniques.

What, then, can we say about the dating of the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*? Scenic spots in Pyeongyang had been pictorialized, poetized and praised since early in the Joseon dynasty. The city was completely destroyed, however, in the two invasions of Korea by Japan (1592-98) and a later invasion by Qing-dynasty China (1637-38). It then lay in ruins for about a century, with major restoration of the city only

beginning in the 1740s. The prevalence of depictions of the sights of Pyeongyang, with mass production of the extremely popular illustrated maps and paintings in the latter half of the eighteenth century, coincided with the reconstruction of the city. The brushwork in the *Banquet*, particularly the even, unvarying line and the precise drawing of architectural features suggests the *kaiga* style of rendering objects using a straight edge or compass. A comparison of it with extant illustrated maps of Pyeongyang, however, suggests it is less an example of the *kaiga* style than a copy, done with the brush, of a woodblock printed map.

Other clues to dating the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang* are the locations of the castle walls and buildings depicted in it. Pyeongyang Castle consisted of four areas, the inner, central, outer, and northern citadels. The northern citadel, which was the last to be added, was built in 1714 and was surrounded by a wall. Paintings and prints dating from the mid eighteenth century on clearly depict the wall around Pyeongyang Castle's northern citadel. The *Pyeongyang Kwanbu-do*, a map that dates from earlier than 1714, does not show the northern citadel wall, but the *Banquet* clearly does. Interestingly enough, the relative locations of the Bubyek Arbor, Peony Peak, the Yeongmyeong Temple, and the Five-storied Octagonal Pagoda in it are consistent with the *Pyeongyang Kwanbu-do*. In addition, the landscape portion at the top of the painting is in the Jeong Seon style, which was dominant in the 1770s and 1780s. Putting those indications together permits the inference that the *Banquet* dates from the latter half of the eighteenth century.

There are several points to be born in mind in reading this painting as reference material for regional culture. The *Banquet* is said to be a visual rendering of the *Kwanseoak-bu* or *Anthology of Kwanseo* recorded in 1774 in which Shin Gwangsoo admonishes his friend Che Jegong, who has been appointed the governor of Pyeongyang, a noted pleasure spot, to devote himself to governing and not fall into hedonistic ways. The content of the painting, however, contradicts the intent of the *Anthology of Kwanseo* by depicting an extremely lavish arrival by the new governor and welcoming banquet.

In interpreting the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*, which we date to the second half of the eighteenth century, I would particularly point to a number of motifs for portrayal of regional culture related to the costumes and banquet performances. The costumes and ornaments are strictly differentiated by social and official ranks. The costumes of the officials in the banquet scene provide a visual index of the period, from lower to higher ranking officials and military officers. There are also obvious differences in the costumes worn by boys, married men, maids, and other servants. A reference for the costumes of the officials, civil officialdoms, retainues, militaries and their ranks is the contemporaneous *Welcoming the Newly Appointed Governor of Anreung*, which depicts the arrival of a newly appointed local official to his post at Anreung in Hwang-hae Province.

In women's costume, woman of the *yangban* class wore *chima* or skirts that wrapped to the right and were closed with a cord, while women of the lower orders and the female servant-dancers called *ginyeo* wore their *chima* wrapped to the left. According to the *Chronicle of Pyeong-an Namdo*, however, in Pyeongyang, all women wore their *chima* wrapped to the right, regardless of rank. Whether the women depicted in the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang* are not differentiated by wrapping their *chima* to the left or right because the local custom was not to observe that rank distinction that was strictly enforced in the capital or because the artist omitted that detail remains open for discussion.

In the representation of women in the *Banquet*, the most striking aspect may be the depiction of the female servant-dancers called *ginyeo*, especially in connection with the banquet subject. In this painting, they are visually

recognizable by their *karima*, a black headgear-like-ornament. Their duty was to serve the aristocratic class with dancing and singing and to entertain military officers and provincial officials who went to the remote places without their family. The *ginyeo* belonged to the *Gyobang*, the government institutions in the capital and the provinces. According to the *Record of Pyeongyang*, there were almost 300 *ginyeo* in the Pyeongyang *Gyobang*, and some of them were often sent to perform at banquets for aristocrats in the capital. The performances depicted in this painting should be noted, for they include the boating dance, the sword dance and the lion dance. The “Feast at Yeongu Arboretum” panel shows the lion dance being performed to orchestra accompaniment, while the boat, crane, lotuses, and other props prepared for the boating dance and other performances are visible beside the stairs. A performance of the sword dance appears in the, “Feast at Bubyok Arboretum.”

While the *Pyeongyang Gazetteer* from the late sixteenth century records that the boating, sword, and lion dances were performed, the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang* is their first appearance in the illustrated materials. Documentary paintings suggest that none were part of the repertoire for performance at royal banquets until the late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. While most provincial performance repertoires were based on the royal banquet repertoire, those dances were first performed in Pyeongyang, then spread later to the capital, possibly introduced by *ginyeo* from Pyeongyang, who often were required to perform at banquets in the capital when performers were in short supply there. Thus, the boating, lion, and sword dances, which are first known from the last-sixteenth-century the *Pyeongyang Gazetteer*, are depicted in the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*, which is inferred to be from the latter half of the eighteenth century, and later was adopted as part of the royal banquet performance repertoire. Thus, we can observe the flow of banquet culture from a provincial city, Pyeongyang, to the capital.

The information on culture and lifestyles that can be acquired from a close reading of the *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang* is not confined to matters of costume and dance. The architectural styles in use in Pyeongyang, the types of boats—there are many other aspects of the painting that will require further study in preparing our pictorial dictionary.

Conclusion

One of the main tasks of our twenty-first century COE program is systematization of illustrated materials. Our main sources in compiling a pictorial dictionary or *ebiki* for Korea are genre paintings that vividly reveal the everyday lives and occupations of ordinary people during the Joseon dynasty. *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang*, the example I have presented here, provides useful data on costumes and regional performance culture and would be one important source for an *ebiki* on Korea. Careful analysis of the motifs enables us to reach conclusions drawn from the portrayal of the material, among which are included strict regulations on costumes and certain performing repertoires that are realistically depicted in the painting.

I believe that *Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang* reveals not only the welcome given to the newly arrived Governor of Pyeongyang, but also the spaces in which art performances were enjoyed by a many residents of the city. As far as the iconography of such paintings is concerned, the banquet is not only for welcoming a governor but also activities that are assembled and integrated by participation of residents in Pyeongyang. Understanding the societies and historical periods by interpreting the iconography in genre paintings from the Joseon dynasty is the most crucial task in compiling a pictorial dictionary on Korea. Through this work, our project will contribute

important research data for many fields related to the study of Korean culture.

<Illustrations>

- Fig.1 Genre Painting Album by *Hye-won*, by Sin Yun-bok. Kansong Art Museum.
- Fig.2 Genre Painting Album by *Dan-won*, by Kim Hong-do. National Museum of Korea.
- Fig.3 Genre Scenes of Cultivation and Sericulture Activities, Anonymous. Detail. Hanyang University Museum
- Fig.4 Highlights of an Illustrious Life, Anonymous. Detail. National Museum of Korea
- Fig.5 Boating Excursion Under the Moon, Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang, attributed to Kim Hong-do. National Museum of Korea
- Fig.6 Feast at Yeonguang Arbor, Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang, attributed to Kim Hong-do. National Museum of Korea
- Fig.7 Feast at Bubyok Arbor, Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang, attributed to Kim Hong-do. National Museum of Korea
- Fig.8 Detail of Fig.6, Feast at Yeonguang Arbor, Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang, attributed to Kim Hong-do. National Museum of Korea
- Fig.9 Detail of Fig.7, Feast at Bubyok Arbor, Banquet for the Governor of Pyeongyang, attributed to Kim Hong-do. National Museum of Korea.