



Songhomoehodo (A Tiger Under the Pine Tree), tiger by Kim Hong-do, pine tree by Yi In-mun; ink and color on silk; 90.4x43.8cm; Leseun, Samsung Museum of Art



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THE LIFE AND ART OF KIM HONG-DO

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I INTRODUCTION

Of all the masters in Korean painting, Kim Hong-do is the best known one to Koreans. Nevertheless, defining the artist and his art is not an easy task. What kind of person was he? What and how did he paint? What circumstances was he under? More specifically, what kind of life did he lead and what do

(Plate 1)

Gyujanggak Archives, 1776; Ink and color on silk; 144.4x115.6cm; National Museum of Korea

The first floor of Juhapnu Pavilion, the large, two-story building with a hipped-and-gabled roof at the center, is Gyujanggak. Immediately after his accession to the throne, King Jeongjo ordered the establishment of a research library and institute within the palace called Gyujanggak, a center of academic research and politics. The peak rising on the left is a mountain to the rear of Changdeokgung Palace, which reminds us of the landscape painting style of Jeong Seon, pen named Gyeongjae. The refinement of the original was almost entirely lost because of the major repair work done in later years.

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his paintings mean to us today? To complicate the matter more, there are serious misunderstandings in the already well-known facts about him. This paper is a summary of what has been discussed in my book, *Danwon, Kim Hong-do: Joseon, All Too Joseon* which was published in 1998 to shed some light on the artist.

II A PAINTER EXCLUSIVE TO THE KING

Kim Hong-do was born in 1745, the 21st year of King Yeongjo's reign, and died in 1806, the sixth year of King Sunjo's. His lifetime of 62 years was a time of serenity and economic abundance. Unaffected by any war, the period is often described as the renaissance of the latter half of Joseon. Such peace and affluence were attributable to two kings who made genuine efforts to care for their people: Yeongjo, the 21st king of the dynasty who reigned for 52 years from 1724 to 1776 and Jeongjo, the next king who ruled for 24 years from 1776 to 1800. Not surprisingly, his paintings are full of optimism and pride for Joseon culture. One should not overlook this historical background to truly understand Kim and his works.

Kim Hong-do was a court painter. The position was equivalent to a low-ranking government official of today. Neo-Confucianism was the governing principle of Joseon at the time and art was not of primary importance (albeit often considered as necessary) for high-class yangban (male Confucian scholars). The court painter position was a specialty occupation mostly filled by jungin ("middle people," a hereditary class of technical specialists) and the highest position a court painter could aspire to was just grade level six. However, Kim Hong-do was too brilliant to remain ordinary.

Under King Jeongjo, there were about thirty court painters. The ten who excelled the most were dispatched to Gyujanggak (a research library and institute of the court) and specially treated for their talents. Kim Hong-do never belonged to this elite group of court painters although he produced Gyujanggakdo (a painting of Gyujanggak that had just been established) for King Jeongjo (Plate 1). How was he able to create so many paintings for the court then? This author surmises that Kim Hong-do was a 'designated painter' invited to respond exclusively to the king's order. This would explain why he was frequently exempted from the typical duties of other court painters such as creating documentaries for Uigwe (Royal Protocols of the Joseon Dynasty) but produced special works on the king's direct behest while staying close to him. For the same reason, Kim's name was seldom found on the list of court painters whose duty was to illustrate court events and affairs except during the early years of his artistic career.

In fact, Kim Hong-do appeared in the album of King Jeongjo despite the fact that he was just a low-ranking government employee. In 1800, the last year of his reign, King Jeongjo said in retrospect, "I know the painter Kim Hong-do well and have let him do all the major paintings of the court for thirty years." The major works the king meant include: three portraits of the king; a drawing of Haesang Gunseondo (The Immortals on the Sea)—a huge painting on the wall of Changdeokgung Palace; a Buddhist painting of the main hall of Yongjusa Temple made in memory of Prince Sado, the father of King Jeongjo (Plate 2); the illustrations in such significant books as Wonhaeng Eulmyo Jeongni Uigwe (King Jeongjo's Royal Progress to Suwon in 1795) and Oryun Haengsildo (a book elaborating on the moral rules to govern the Five Human Relations of master and servant, father and son, husband and wife, siblings, and friends); and Jubujasiuido, a painting on *Daehak* (Great Learning) that the king had considered essential for a ruler to learn and had studied all his life (Plate 3).

Meanwhile, King Jeongjo once requested Kim Hong-do to journey to Mt. Geumgangsan as well as the eight beautiful scenes of Danyang on behalf (Plate 4 and 5) and considerably gave special orders to the



(Plate 2)
The Three Tathagatas (The Three Buddhas of Past, Present, and Future), 1790;
 Ink and color on silk; 440x350cm; Yongjusa Temple

With Sakyamuni at the center, Amitabha to the left, and Bhaisajyaguru to the right, the Three Tathagatas and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas are depicted in ovals. At each of four corners is one of the Four Divas. The canvas is densely filled with Tathagatas, Bodhisattvas, and other Buddhist images. It depicts the world of Buddha and suggests that this is a perfect space of law and wisdom.

villagers to serve Kim well during his sketching trip. The king also asked the artist to copy the portrait of General Im Gyeong-eop (1594~1646), whom he had respected greatly. With the king as his benefactor, Kim Hong-do served as a chalbang (a government position equivalent to that of a stationmaster today) and as a hyungam (a magistrate) of Yeonpung in Chungcheong-do Province. Both positions were the highest honor that a court painter could attain.

III BIRCH TREE GARDEN

Records clearly show that Kim Hong-do belonged to the jungin, "middle people" as he was a descendant of a low-ranking military officer. Considering the fact that court painter positions were hereditary, Kim must have displayed exceptional talent in painting for he was the first in his family to become a court painter. When he was only about seven years old he was brought to Gang Se-hwang (1713~1791), a noted art critic and learned painter. Kim Hong-do presumably spent his childhood not far from the house of Gang's wife because Gang Se-hwang then was staying with his in-laws in Ansan. Although not proven, it was Gang who recommended Kim for an admission into Dohwaseo (Royal Bureau of Painting). As Gang Se-hwang was assigned to a government post in his sixties and Kim Hong-do had already made his fame in his twenties in the art world, the recommendation by Gang was possibly made indirectly via some other authority in the

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(Plate 3)
The Full Moon and the Calm Water, fourth panel of Jubujasiuido painted on a folding screen, 1800;
 Ink and color on silk; 125x40.5cm; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art

This is the fourth panel of a folding screen. It depicts the 'Honest Mind'. The full moon rising in the dead of night shed lights evenly on the mountain, where nobody is. On the bottom is water flowing from the fall. It fills the valley with crystal clear water. This scene implies the condition of a man who has reached a state of proper will and complete honesty.

court. Another safe guess is that Kim Hong-do lived in Mapo, one of the ports of the Hangang River during his stay in Seoul because the artist used 'Seoho (West Lake)'—the name used to describe the beauty of Mapo—as his pen name. Kim Hong-do allegedly spent his later years in a secluded house built within the estate of Kim Han-tae, an aficionado of calligraphy and painting.

Kim Hong-do used a number of pen names and Danwon is the most well known one. Danwon literally means 'birch tree garden' and was originally used by Li Liufang, a literati painter of Ming Dynasty whom Kim tremendously respected for his noble grace and profound knowledge. At that time, Li was best known for his teaching materials—the main source material for Jieziyuan Huazhuan or Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden (a manual of Chinese Southern School painting compiled during the early-Qing Dynasty). Kim Hong-do also had several courtesy names and Saneung is the most frequently used one. The name signifies that 'only a man of virtue can behave properly all the time without being swayed by material things' and implies what kind of man Kim himself aspired to be (Plate 6). The pen name Danwon was first used in the summer of 1781 in an inscription by Seo Yu-gu on Kim Hong-do's painting 'Segeomjeong Ajipdo (Social Gathering at Segeomjeong).'

As suggested by the fact that he adopted the same pen name as Li Liufang, Kim Hong-do strived to grow into a cultivated scholar of high class with comparable knowledge that could not be easily achieved by a middle class painter. In fact, Kim seemed to endeavor to keep his social life rarified, being acquainted with then leading artists, scholars, and bureaucrats such as Yi Yong-hyu, Gang Se-hwang, Seong Dae-jung, and Yi Byeong-mo. Considering the fact that two of the most representative intellectuals of the time such as Sin Wi and Hong Hyeop-ju called the artist 'Danwon-ja' (a suffix that meant the same as dear in English to show some respect), the hearsay that the artist once drew obscene paintings is absurd and not worth an explanation.

Numerous records confirm that the artist was a tall, handsome man with a sturdy frame like a Taoist hermit. Therefore, it is not a farfetched assumption that his painting styles—subjects such as men, deer, and donkey are depicted slender and trees are illustrated straight with lower branches trimmed off—are closely related with his physical appearance and spiritual fortitude. Kim Hong-do was also famous for his wine drinking and love for humor, and the behavior can be found in his biography written by Jo Hui-ryong. One of his numerous pen names 'Chihwasa' is also indicative of this tendency of Kim as it means an artist who can enjoy wine and the pleasures it brings. In truth, Kim left several paintings created under the influence of alcohol. His excessive drinking, however, seemed to affect his health and made him suffer a minor but chronic disease in his later life.

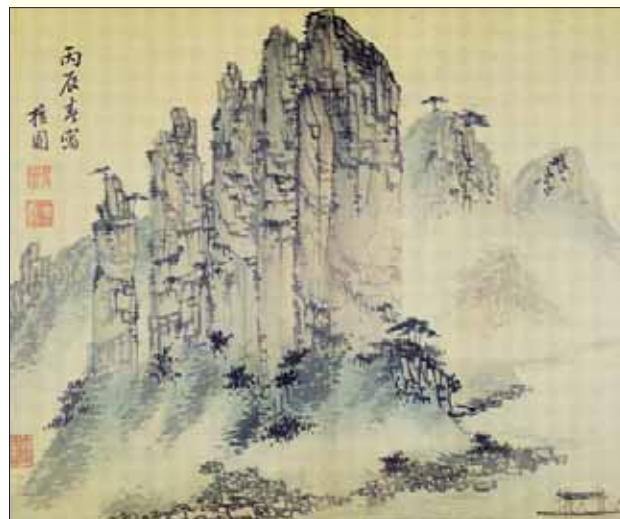
IV SPLENDOR OF YOUTH, EVANESCENCE OF OLD

There has been an assertion that Kim Hong-do pompously regarded himself as elite once he became a hyungam in 1971. Soon, the artist was disfavored and disintitiled by King Jeongjo and started leading



(Plate 4)
Guryongyeon Waterfall, a section from *Haesancheop*, an album of Mt. Geumgangsan paintings, 1778; Ink and color on silk; 30.4x43.7cm; Private collection

Haesancheop had long been known only through photographs until 1995, when the album was actually opened to the public. At the time of its release, the authenticity of the album was in dispute because of a fake seal stamped on each of its leaves and unidentifiable calligraphy on each page. Ironically, the seemingly fake seal and calligraphy make this album all the more authentic because works for the king did not bear seals of the painter, and when recording the name of the place, the name was written on a separate leaf outside of the painting. The seals and calligraphy were likely added when the genuine album was disassembled to be sold in parts. The writings of the original owner of the album are not seen.



(Plate 5)
Oksunbong Peak, a section from *Danwon Jeolsebocheop*, an album of Mt. Geumgangsan paintings, 1796; Ink and color on silk; 26.7x31.6cm; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art

The peaks rising along the river look like bamboo shoots after rain. Thus, these peaks are named Oksunbong, meaning peaks of bamboo. The highest peak is at the center, and the other peaks are leaning down on the left. On the right is a distant view of a mountain. The domineering appearance of the huge cliff and the sense of vast space are truly amazing. On the river at the bottom is a small boat in shade in which two gentlemen are enjoying leisure time.



(Plate 6)
Pouipungryudo (A Gentleman Chanting Poetry); Ink and color on silk; 27.9x37cm; Private collection

"I will chant poems until the day I die in this humble house with paper windows and clay walls," is what the inscription on this painting means. This inscription is a kind of autobiography, and the gentleman depicted seems to be Kim Hong-do himself. In other words, this piece is a self-portrait. Books, scrolls, a reed instrument, a flute, a gourd filled with rice wine, and a plantain leaf tell us what kind of person Kim Hong-do was. The gentleman is wearing a hat but is barefoot, evincing his disinterested attitude.

a hard life as a consequence. However, the assertions are serious misunderstandings based on mere guesses. As for the latter assumption, the author was recently able to confirm that Kim Hong-do was granted a royal pardon just ten days after his arrest for a trial at the State Tribunal. Meanwhile, some academics conclude that the artist suffered from financial straights in his later life because Kim was financially dependent on Kim

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Han-tae, a lowly merchant selling salt. However, considering the fact that the salter made a fortune as an interpreter and was influential enough to control even the ministers of Joseon as one of the richest men in Hanyang (the capital of Joseon), the conclusion is shortsighted.

On the contrary, the life of Kim Hong-do was affluent as he was the most famous painter in the country during the reign of King Jeongjo (Plate 6). A record that even Nam Gong-cheol, an aristocrat from a noble family, could not easily acquire a painting by Kim Hong-do clearly indicates that he had little time for any work other than for those ordered by the king. The paintings, which only the king could order and attain, must have been highly prized by the people, and the rarity must have made Kim's artistic style influential not only on his fellow artists of the 1800s but also on those of the first half of the 1900s.

Despite all these facts, however, a couple of absurd assertions about Kim Hong-do have recently surfaced: he went to Japan and engaged in espionage working as an unidentified Japanese painter and he had to return to Japan to relieve himself from the financial misery in his later years. It is truly deplorable that such ill-informed historical assertions have been irresponsibly distributed through newspapers, radio, and television. Kim at that time was working hard as the magistrate of Yeonpung, Chungcheong-do Province to relieve the starvation resulting from a three-year-long drought of the region and he was ordered to come to the capital for a trial to review his performance in regard to this duty to manage the drought in his jurisdiction.

It is true, however, that Kim Hong-do suffered poor health and lived in such poverty in his last years that he could not even afford tuition for his son, Yang-gi. He really seemed to be deeply depressed for some reason at that time. The author reasons that the suffering was due to the death of King Jeongjo in 1800 and the political as well as situational changes that occurred to the people whom the dead king had favored including Kim. The fact that Yang-gi, Kim's only son, was born around 1792 makes this author's reasoning probable

(Plate 7)
Chuseongbudo (The Sound of Autumn), 1805; Ink and color on silk; 56x214cm; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art

Old Ouyang Xiu, a Chinese poet, historian, and statesman, in the last days of his life, heard a strange sound while he was reading a book, and sent his servant to the courtyard to investigate it. The servant pointed to the sky and said, "Only stars and the moon are shining brightly and there are no human traces at all. The sound comes from between the trees." The trees shaking in the cold moonlight look like the sorrow of an old man.



because the aforementioned situation of Kim Hong-do, which Yang-gi might have delivered, happened after King Jeongjo's death.

In fact, Kim Hong-do was no longer exceptional and assigned to Gyujanggak in 1804 during the reign of King Sunjo. He had to undergo tests like any other court painters who were young enough to be his nephews. The old artist usually earned high scores but the very fact that he was put to a test was shameful enough for him. In fact, he sometimes disgracefully received the lowest scores of all. To make it worse, even the post of court painter did not last long as he had to quit due to his illness in 1805. At the end of that year, Kim Hong-do created Chuseongbudo (the Sound of Autumn), which illustrates the emptiness of his life that he must have felt at that time (Plate 7). The painting is the last work of Kim Hong-do.

Seen from the extant letters by Kim Hong-do, the artist was a man of good personality. He seemed not only very affectionate, affable, and sociable but also of playful humor and mischievous zest as he expressed in his genre paintings: the humorous facial expressions and interesting eye contacts in mix with complex composition of the people coming and going. Interestingly, Gang Se-hwang, the teacher of Kim Hong-do, was also a man with great sense of humor as portrayed in his self-portrait.

Kim Hong-do seemed to have been a true believer in Buddhism (Plate 12). The artist made a huge



offering to Sangamsa Temple near Yeonpung where he served as a magistrate. According to an epitaph, he had his only son after praying in this temple. Especially in his later years, he created a number of masterpieces that embody his sentiments about Buddhism like Gwanseeumbosal (Buddhist Goddess of Mercy). These works show the highest level of perfection that religious paintings could ever attain. More compelling evidence to show that Kim Hong-do was a true Buddhist can be found in Danwon Yumukcheop (Manuscripts left by Kim Hong-do) compiled by his son Yang-gi. The book is a collection of literary works by Kim Hong-do and its cover is decorated with densely filled tiny patterns of '卍'—the symbol of a temple.

V JOSEON, ALL TOO JOSEON

Kim Hong-do was a master painter in all types of paintings: landscapes, flowers, birds and animals, genre paintings, figures from ancient history, portraiture, and even Buddhist paintings and illustrations. He was undoubtedly, so to speak, the 'national painter, the

(Plate 9)
Samgongbulhwando (The Nature Better than the Official Ranks), 1801;
 Ink and color on silk; 133.7x418.4cm; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art

Samgongbulhwan is quoted from poetry by Dai Fugu of Southern Song China. It means that the pleasure of living countryside will not be foregone for any of the highest government posts, even one of the three ministerial posts. A huge house on the slope of a mountain above a big river and its surrounding fields are depicted on a folding screen. The bottom part of the first panel of the folding screen was damaged by fire.



(Plate 8)
Songhamaenghodo (A Tiger Under the Pine Tree), tiger by Kim Hong-do, pine tree by Yi In-mun;
 Ink and color on silk; 90.4x43.8cm; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art

The moment a tiger suddenly turned its head as if sensing something while walking slowly was captured in this piece. Thousands of thin brushstrokes were used to depict the hair and brindled body of the tiger, which look extremely natural. Although depicted hyper-realistically, the massive weight of the body is apparent, and the quick action of the tiger is true to nature.



(Plate 10)
Seondongchwijeokdo (Hermit Boy Playing a Flute), a panel from *Sinseondo (Hermits)* painted on a folding screen, 1779; Ink and color on silk; 130.7x57.6cm; National Museum of Korea

In the inscription on this painting, Gang Se-hwang wrote, "How wonderful is the technique to make nine holes into green jade to make this flute. People call the boy playing a flute by the name Okjagyo, but I don't think it is the right name." We don't know what the hermit boy's real name is. The boy has a flat face and broad forehead, and smart-looking eyes, and he is undoubtedly a Joseon boy. The contours of the folds of the boy's clothing rhythmically represent the tune of old Korean music the boy is playing. That is, the strong brushstrokes resemble the beating and rhythm of Korean music, and the lines flowing thick and thin are melodies of Korean music as they are.



(Plate 11)
Seonsangwanhaedo (Appreciating the Plum Blossoms); Ink and color on silk; 164x76cm; Private collection

Dimly through the haze in the distance is a steep cliff with a few blossoming trees. The center of the cliff and trees are well focused, but the scene gradually blurs to the left and right. The brushstrokes become less and less pronounced towards the end as if they are lingering around the boundary between existence and non-existence and finally disappear into a blank space. This is a subjective landscape seen from the eyes of an old man boating on the bottom, rather than objective landscape in the real world. That is, the viewers of this painting are seeing the hill and trees the old man is looking up at as they are. On the other hand, the viewers are also simultaneously looking at the old man. The empathy of Kim Hong-do towards the old man is so palpable that the boat is depicted as if it is looking up from the surface of the water.

best in Joseon! Kim Hong-do was also so talented in calligraphy and literature as to compose Chinese poetry impromptu. What is more, he was famous as a musician excellent at playing the daegeum (a large transverse bamboo flute) and geomungo (a traditional Korean musical instrument with six strings). Two Chinese poems by Kim that the author has recently verified the authorships of are the representative examples of his excellent connoisseurship in literature. Kim Hong-do was not only a versatile artist whose expertise covered almost every field of

fine arts ranging from poetry, calligraphy, and music to painting but also a man of fine appearance and good personality. It deserves a thought what these recently found facts about his talents signify.

King Jeongjo who favored Kim Hong-do was a great king comparable to King Sejong the Great. During his reign, King Jeongjo was a real practitioner who acted upon his devotion to the social good and his knowledge was profound enough to instruct his subjects in person. He was also a great calligrapher and artist who could even do seal carving as a hobby. He was no doubt a man of excellent artistic gifts. Examining historical documents in detail, King Jeongjo paid close attention to the small details of paintings that are otherwise likely to be overlooked as trivial matters and often provided creative solutions to the court painters. The king also had a great interest in maintaining the court painters' qualifications by promoting the outstanding and expelling the inattentive.

It was only natural that even the fairly good painters could hardly meet the standards set by the artistically talented king. Kim Hong-do was a painter with profound learning in every field of art (poetry, calligraphy, painting, and music) and a fine figure with an all-around, integrated personality. Kim's art must have met the exacting standards of King Jeongjo and the words of Jo Hui-ryeong (1789-1866)—a literati critic and painter—prove so: "Every painting submitted by Kim Hong-do immediately satisfied King Jeongjo." Kim Hong-do was much more than merely a talented painter. He



(Plate 12)
Yeombulseoseungdo (Old Buddhist Monk Praying to Buddha); Ink and color on silk; 20.8x28.7cm; Gansong Art Museum

The back of the old monk's head is so clean and transparent that it is shining to charm the viewers. We can almost feel the thin shoulder bone of the monk under his robe. The monk is flying on something into the east sky; perhaps a lotus flower, clouds, or lotus leaves. The bright light fills the fine ramie robe of the monk. We don't know whether the light is of a halo or the full moon. Art and religion are one. For most people, art is art and religion is religion, nothing more or nothing less, because they consider neither art nor religion to be truly genuine. However, when both religion and art become something truly lofty, art is religion and religion is art. When this state is attained, art and religion become life to you.

represented the Joseon Dynasty. The recent rumors—he produced pornographic paintings or that he went to Japan and worked in secret—are groundless fabrications in complete disregard of the historical facts.

Kim Hong-do is often considered to be a truly Joseon painter. As proven by the fact that he did three portraits of the king, he was recognized as the best painter of the time in realistic rendering. The hyper-realistically depicted tiger attests to his proficiency in realistic expression (Plate 8). The more important thing about him is, however, not the fact that he painted extremely well but that he embodied the sentiment of the Korean people in his paintings, regardless of the subject. Every painting ranging from real figures of ancient history to imaginary landscapes (the form that was originated in China) convey the very sentiments of Joseon that we can see in his genre paintings and landscapes of Korea and its people. For example, *Samgongbulhwando* (Pleasure of Rural Life) is based on a story of ancient China but is full of Korean sentiment (Plate 9). With the same title and theme of Chinese classical poetry, Kim was flawlessly able to illustrate the life of Joseon people.

On his famous *Seondongchwijeokdo* (Hermit Boy Playing a Bamboo Flute), the wimpling of the robe is depicted in thin and thick lines as if they are moving to the music. It seems that the tunes and melodies that the Korean boy is playing are visualized into the undulating lines of the boy's clothing (Plate 10). This was only possible with his combined aptitudes in both music and painting. Kim's paintings also have his unique poetic



(Plate 13)
Giroseyeongyedo (Social Gathering of the Elderly), 1804; Ink and color on silk; 137x53.3cm; Private collection

This clean canvas imparts the feeling of cleanness we have immediately after washing our faces. This piece depicts the scene of a social gathering of elderly gentlemen in Gaeseong in September 1804, following the example of Goryeo people who had gathered some two hundred years previously at Manwoldae at the foot of Mt. Songaksan, the site of a palace of the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392). Under the shade, each of the sixty-four old men is served at his own small dining table. At the center is one big table with a porcelain vase on it. The inscription on top states, "Gaeseong is an old city with a great reputation. The mountains and rivers are spectacular and splendid, and the people of Gaeseong are well-dressed. This is because the city still holds the elegance as an old capital of Goryeo." The writings on the bottom are names and indications of the family origins of the 64 gentlemen who participated in this meeting.

sentiment that only his literary sensitivity can invoke. Last but not least, Kim Hong-do is well versed in using blank space, generously applied but not without artistic sensibility. *Seonsanggwanhaedo* (Boating on the Waters) is a stellar example of his wide void space in which his literary sensitivity is delicately expressed (Plate 11). This author sees that such characteristics result from the generous and relaxed personality of Kim Hong-do himself.

VI A PAINTER WHO LOVED HIS TIME AND PEOPLE

Kim Hong-do was indeed the best painter in the latter half of Joseon to define Korean beauty. Mun Il-pyeong (1888~1939), a historian and critic, referred to the artist as a 'Painter Immortal.' Mun coined this name based on a quote of Jo Hui-ryeong who had described the appearance, character, and disinterested attitude of Kim Hong-do to be similar to those of an immortal, and the title implies the loftiness and the depth that he felt from Kim's art. The word immortal was also attached to the artist to indicate that he was a government employee who closely attended the king because, in Joseon, even the lowest-ranking officials were called immortals to respect the honor to serve the dynasty.

The paintings of Kim Hong-do reveal the artist's love for the time he lived. In his paintings exist a tall, good-looking, and big-hearted man with an intrepid spirit and a delicate nature; an erudite with deep knowledge in every field from poetry to calligraphy, painting, and music; and the ancestors who lived their time in the land of beauty and of peace (Plate 13). His paintings are imbued with the generous and humorous nature of the artist himself and his teacher, Gang Se-hwang and the keen connoisseurship of King Jeongjo, the absolute supporter of the artist and the powerful but caring ruler to his people.

Kim Hong-do illustrated in his art the attitude, the spirit, and the cultural pride of the times that he lived. There is no incompatible disharmony, no self-confliction, or no loss of self-identity, although his later paintings touch upon the evanescent nature of life that he felt as an old man and the depth of the religious spirit that the artist experienced as a devoted hermit (Plate 12). All these pictorial features are the epiphany of the life that Kim Hong-do lived as an artist and of the lives of people who lived in Joseon together with the artist. ≡