PARK, Ju-heon. The Adoption of Western Painting Techniques in Lee Hyong-nok's Chaekkado: Examining Linear Perspective and Chiaroscuro

Since the late eighteenth century, Joseon Dynasty painters earnestly adopted Western painting techniques in such genres as landscape painting, portraits, record painting, but also in chaekkado. According to previous studies, the influence of Western techniques in these three preceding types of painting was fairly common in the late eighteenth century, but decreased in the nineteenth century. However, the history of the incorporation of Western painting techniques in chaekkado, a genre of folding screen that is adorned with painted shelves (similar to a bookcase) with books, stationery, ceramics, flowers and fruit, is still unclear.

Park Bon-soo (2012) first explored the history of the incorporation of Western techniques in chaekkado by analyzing four paintings by Lee Hyong-nok (1808–1873?), a nineteenth-century court painter whose works were evaluated as the "most well-Developed, unique and dynamic" among the existing thirty-five chaekkado. Comparing them to the oldest chaekkado by Chang Han-jong (1768–1815?) in the eighteenth century, Park revealed that the execution of Western painting techniques in chaekkado was at a high level even in the nineteenth century, unlike other painting genres. But Park’s analysis does not fully explain why Lee Hyong-nok’s chaekkado is so outstanding.

In this context, this study aims to explain in detail the characteristics and development of linear perspective and chiaroscuro in Lee Hyung-nok’s chaekkado. For the purposes of this analysis, I compare Lee’s works with Chang’s, in relation to Park’s point of view.

Chapter 1 examines the form and motifs of Chang’s chaekkado and analyzes its linear perspective and chiaroscuro. Chapter 2 reviews the reputation of Lee’s chaekkado as it appeared in Ihyang kyŏnmun nok (Record of Village Observations). In addition, I analyze the linear perspective and chiaroscuro in a total of six of his chaekkado, including two that were not reviewed by Park. This is then divided into three time periods, as seen from Park’s point of view. The results show that Lee’s chaekkado establishes a vanishing line and a vanishing axis that clearly recognizes the height and location of points in perspective, unlike Chang’s chaekkado. Chiaroscuro also emphasizes the fact that the light sources on the left and right expressed light and shade. It is also notable that these characteristics did not change consistently during the mid-nineteenth century. Chapter 3 discusses what chaekkado were used for under certain circumstances, with reference to the book entitled Hongjaejeonseo (The Literary Collection of King Chŏngcho). Based on this, I conclude that the characteristic linear perspective and chiaroscuro in Lee Hyung-nok’s chaekkado were used to consider the location where the chaekkado was installed, namely the Royal Palace where the king and his subjects discussed politics. Such an expression was capable of producing the same trompe-l’œil effects as the actual bookcase in the room. This picturesque characteristic of chaekkado, which reflects high-level execution of Western painting techniques, were found to have remained in the mid-nineteenth century unlike other Joseon Dynasty paintings. Lastly, I examine the background of the unique phenomenon of chaekkado from the perspective of art history and social context.