Sin Yunbok's *Women on Tano Day* and the Iconography of Common Women Washing Clothes by a Stream

Saehyang P. Chung

The painting entitled *Women on Tano Day*, from an undated 30-leaf album by the late Chosŏn-dynasty (1392-1910) court artist Sin Yunbok (born *ca.* 1758), is undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary examples of traditional Korean genre painting (Fig. 1).[1] Even in the context of an oeuvre in which iconographic and formal elements are often daring, this painting is truly exceptional. In subject matter, the album leaf depicts activities associated with Tano Day, a major holiday of Chinese origin that falls on the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar year. Traditionally, Tano Day was a time to wish for an auspicious harvest, after planting in the rice paddies had been completed and other important agricultural work done in the fields. However, it gradually evolved into a distinctive Korean holiday, a day of festive relaxation for men and women, who took time off from the rigours of their daily labour to refresh themselves before the coming of sweltering summer weather. While men engaged in wrestling matches outdoors, women, attired in bright clothing, rode on swings or washed their hair with fragrant herbs in a clear, running stream.[2] In his painting, Sin Yunbok captured striking glimpses of this holiday by representing a group of beautiful courtesans relaxing, riding on a swing, and even bathing by a stream in a secluded mountain valley while two novice monks watch the semi-nude women from behind large boulders. Since such an unconventional theme had not been depicted before in Chosŏn Confucian society, this painting must have been deemed shocking when it was shown to conservative Confucian scholars at court. Perhaps it was work such as this that the early 20th-century scholar Mun Ilpyŏng (1888-1939) referred to when he commented that Sin Yunbok's predilection for erotica led to his expulsion from the court Painting Bureau.[3]

The notoriety that *Women on Tano Day* must have brought the artist can be readily imagined even from a quick glance at the style. Painted in ink and washes of colour, this album leaf features a highly original composition with the depiction of an authentic Korean landscape in the deep recesses of a wooded mountain, where a cool blue stream meanders along hills and ravines. Figures are assembled in an odd manner in all four parts of the painting, with women placed unusually close to the foreground. In particular, the representation of a group of women on a precariously sloped hill in the upper right, where a beguiling courtesan dominates the scene with the active energy of her pose on a swing, is one of the most exquisite scenes in

Fig. 1. Sin Yunbok (born *ca.* 1758). *Women on Tano Day.* Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), late 18th century-early 19th century. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper. Ht: 28.3 cm. Width: 35.2 cm. Kansong Art Museum, Seoul, Korea.

Fig. 2. Detail of Fig. 1.

Korean genre painting (Fig. 2). But even more striking is the provocative portrayal of semi-nude bathers in the lower left-hand corner, where a woman stands sensually, her face turned in the direction of the beholder. Equally daring is the inclusion of two young monks, who observe the bathers with unequivocally frank poses and facial expressions. The new stylistic features in this album leaf and its visual appeal, enhanced by the artist's elegant use of colours and fine ink lines, are clearly advanced for its time. Considering that even in the West, the female nude in a contemporary setting - devoid of classical or Biblical context (e.g. *Diana* or *Susanna in Her Bath*) - did not appear until the mid 19th century, the representation of bathing women in Sin Yunbok's painting is all the more remarkable.

In spite of its unusual degree of unorthodoxy, because of a lack of documentary sources on the artist and similar images by Sin Yunbok's predecessors, recent scholarship has not examined *Women on Tano Day* in great detail, and this unique genre painting remains a conundrum. Yet careful examination of Sin Yunbok's works and those of his predecessors reveals that *Women on Tano Day* evolved, in fact, from a distinctive group of late Chosŏn-dynasty paintings centered around the theme of common women washing clothes by a stream. With its focus on lower-class women at work, this theme occupied an important position in Korean genre painting and appeared in the works of such major artists as Kang Huion (1738-*ca.*1792), Kim Hongdo (1745-*ca.* 1808), and Sin Yunbok himself. In order to attain a better understanding of *Women on Tano Day*, it is essential to study it within the broader context of this native theme. At the same time, the presence of unconventional elements in the painting makes it necessary to look beyond the boundaries of the native tradition, and to explore possible visual precedents in foreign pictorial sources. This paper traces the origin and development of the "iconography" of lower-class women washing clothes by a stream, to shed new light on the special characteristics of this Korean genre theme, and to determine how Sin Yunbok assimilated and transformed this iconography within his own individualistic style.

The Iconography of Common Women Washing Clothes By a Stream

The theme of common women washing clothes by a stream, to judge by extant Korean paintings, originated sometime during the 18th century, as part of the body of newly emerging genre images depicting ordinary people's daily lives. Significantly, the artists inspired by this subject matter were all from a *chungin* (middle people) family background rather than from the *yangban* (upper class) elite. Their new choice of theme was clearly related to their lower social background and their progressive attitude toward painting. The emergence of this iconography and the very interest in the lives of common women may thus be regarded as part of a broader, pre-modernisation movement that took place during the long and peaceful reigns of the enlightened kings Yŏngjo (r.1724-76) and Chŏngjo (r.1776-1800). During their reigns, considerable efforts were made to improve agriculture and commerce for the betterment of ordinary people's lives. The appearance of lower-class women and their work-related activities in 18th century Korean genre painting reflects a new awareness of the lives of commoners, resulting from new social and economic trends.[4] To

Fig. 3. Kang Huion (1738-92). *Scholars Absorbed in Painting.* Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), 18th century. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper. Ht: 26 cm. Width: 21 cm. Private collection. After Ahn Hwijoon *et al.*, *P'ungsokhwa*, plate 89.

Fig. 4. Kang Huion (1738-1792). *Archery Practice*. Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), 18th century. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper. Ht: 26 cm. Width: 21 cm. Private collection. After Ahn Hwijoon *et al.*, *P'ungsokhwa*, plate 91.

better understand the relationship between this awareness and *Women on Tano Day*, it is necessary to examine the changing images of scenery and figures in a group of works by Kang Huion, Kim Hongdo, and Sin Yunbok.

The Origin of the Theme in Kang Huion's Work

The earliest representation of ordinary women working by a stream appears to have been painted by Kang Huion, a scholar-painter and low-ranking official from the *chungin* background. A painter of landscapes and genre images, he is well-known for his renderings of Chosŏn scholars involved in leisure activities, such as painting, reading books, and practising archery (Figs. 3, 4).[5] In these works, he painted scholar-gentlemen wearing native costumes in true Korean settings, and captured the distinctive appearance and pose of each individual in a naturalistic manner using ink and colours. However, in one of his album leaves entitled *Archery Practice*, he included lower-class women washing clothes by a stream, exhibiting an interest in ordinary Korean women and their daily activities that had not been seen before (Figs. 4, 5).

Organised in terms of deep spatial extension, Kang Huion's landscape depicts a common Korean scene, with a tall green pine tree growing in an ochre-colour valley near low rolling hills and a cool meandering stream winding along hilly terrain. Within the native landscape are three scholar-gentlemen preparing to practise archery in the foreground, and three ordinary women washing clothes in the background, creating a balance in the number of figures. The authenticity of the native scene is enhanced by the incorporation of the working women in the distance, since the sight of ordinary women washing clothes in a stream was commonplace in traditional Korea, especially during the warmer seasons. In many parts of the Korean peninsula, rounded mountains and hills abound, with clear, bluish streams that flow along valleys and ravines, providing an ample supply of clean water and areas suitable for washing clothes. Kang Huion's album leaf thus represents a carefully observed and constructed view of true native scenery, with motifs of two common outdoor activities blended harmoniously into the landscape.

In his approach to painting actual Korean scenery, Kang Huion was possibly influenced by his acquaintance, Chŏng Sŏn (1676-1759), the famous upper-class literati painter and founder of "True-View landscape" (*chinkyong sansu*) painting.[6] Like Chŏng Sŏn, Kang Huion was one of the important late Chosŏn-dynasty artists whose works were inspired by direct observations of his native land.

Fig. 5. Detail of Fig. 4.

He belonged to a group of progressive artists who contributed to the development of a new style of painting during the 18th century, rejecting the Chinese-style landscapes and figurative representations that had been favoured by both literati-painters and court artists for centuries. The rise of a new style of Korean painting, incorporating both native scenery and images of commoners, reflects the emergence of strong cultural consciousness that occurred during the stable reigns of kings Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo. During the 18th century, with China ruled by the foreign Manchus, Koreans regarded themselves as the last bastion of the great East Asian Confucian civilisation, and took a deep pride in their land and their native culture.[7] The new developments in painting were also closely related to the influence of the "Practical Learning" (*Sirhak*) philosophy, a native school of thought popular among progressive *chungin* scholars, who emphasised an empirical approach to analysing and solving problems in their efforts to bring about social and economic reform.[8] Aside from these factors, the use of spatial recession and a ground line, as well as the application of naturalistic colours in rendering the valley, stream, and tree suggest that Kang Huion had an indirect knowledge of Western pictorial elements via Chinese works.[9]

Kang Huion's close observation of his surroundings and his empirical approach to painting are reflected, to some degree, in his rendering of the way in which ordinary Korean women washed clothes in a stream (Fig. 5). In his composition, two of them sit or squat to pound the wet laundry against a hard boulder with a long wooden implement, to remove ingrained dirt. While doing so, the figures seem to turn toward each other to converse. The third figure, having already rinsed her laundry, stands on one of the large, flat boulders in the stream to wring out excess water from the long piece of cloth. For women of the lower class, washing clothes by a stream, like most of their other domestic and outdoor labour, was generally a shared group activitity, and while working they could converse about family life and various events of the village. Hence, washing clothes was not simply a physically strenuous chore, since this activity allowed for freedom from family responsibilities and other demanding domestic tasks and fieldwork. Working among themselves, the women thus sit or stand comfortably, their long skirts hitched up and their bare legs revealed so as not to get the clothes wet. In his painting, Kang Huion portrayed not only elements of the native landscape, but also ways in which Korean men and women lived, sharing various aspects of their daily lives within the framework of Chosŏn Confucian agrarian society. The image of men practising archery in the restful valley, with women washing clothes in the distance, conjures up the peaceful and idyllic atmosphere of the 18th-century Korean countryside.

In spite of Kang Huion's innovation in introducing lower-class women into his landscape, his album leaf reflects his underlying assumptions concerning the low status of common women in Chosŏn society. The men and women are clearly differentiated in terms of their location and scale, as well as in the nature of their activities, to conform to Confucian hierarchy. The three male scholars are portrayed in a relatively large scale in the lower-right hand corner of the foreground, and they are shown enjoying leisure activities in the shade of a luxuriant pine tree, indicating their high place in society. In comparison, the three common women are relegated to the distant background in the upper left-hand corner. Rendered in a dimunitive scale, they are shown labouring under the sun, suggestive of their lowly social status. Small and featureless in appearance, the women of the lower social stratum are portrayed as existing in a world very distant and markedly different from that of the scholar-gentlemen. This sense of hierarchical difference is heightened by a wide stretch of land and stream which separates the well-to-do scholars from the women. Yet in spite of their small size, the lower-class women occupy a clearly visible area in the painting, on an elevated location of the receding landscape, silhouetted against the hills and water. In addition, the tall pine tree rising exuberantly on the right side of the painting, its rich pine needles extending from the array of long braches, draws the observer toward the stream where the three women are working. It is significant that in *Archery Practice*, Kang Huion depicted the virtues of common women while also regarding their presence and activities as an attractive component of the native scenery.

Fig. 6. Kim Hongdo (1745-c.1806). *Women Washing Clothes by the Stream*. Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), 18th century. Ink and colours on paper. Height: 28 cm. Width: 24 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

New Developments of the Theme in Kim Hongdo's Painting

The artist who brought the theme of common women washing clothes by a stream to a new and significant level of development was Kim Hongdo, a highly versatile and prolific court painter from the *chungin* class. As King Chŏngjo's most cherished painter, he painted a wide variety of subject matter, including landscapes, portraits, Daoist immortals, and court ceremonies, as well as birds, flowers, and animals; however, he achieved his greatest fame for genre images of commoners done in a simple yet vivid style.[10] Among his genre paintings, there is an album leaf entitled *Women Washing Clothes By a Stream* which includes, in the foreground, three working women in an arrangement almost identical to that shown in Kang Huion's painting: two figures squatting on a boulder and one standing in water (Figs. 5, 6). In representing this group of lower-class women by a stream, Kim Hongdo was influenced by Kang Huion's *Archery Practice*. It is known that in 1780, when Kim Hongdo was 35 years old, he painted an eight-fold screen of genre images in Kang Huion's home; thus he was undoubtedly familiar

with the older scholar's work. Each of Kim's screens bore colophons by Kang Sehwang (1713-91), an upper-class literati-painter who recognised Kim Hongdo's talents at an early age and became his teacher.[11] In Kang Huion's home the budding artist must have had the opportunity to examine his predecessor's archery scene with the depiction of common women by a stream. Furthermore, Kim Hongdo probably came in contact with the works of Kang Huion's associates, including those of the progressive scholar-painters Chŏng Sŏn and Cho Yongsŏk (1686-1761). The latter, a low-ranking official and a literati-painter from the upper class, is well-known for his small, humble images of lower-class men and women engaged in various work-related activities (Fig. 14). It is quite conceivable that Kim Hongdo's own interest in genre painting flowered in the company of older literati-painters seeking to establish an independent style of Korean painting, free from strong Chinese influence.

Although *Women Washing Clothes by a Stream* reveals some indebtedness to *Archery Practice*, it is an entirely different work that gives considerable attention to the female figures, with landscape elements and male figures de-emphasised. Kim Hongdo's dramatic transformation of his predecessor's style is immediately apparent in the setting. Unlike Kang Huion's deep landscape that places the stream in the far distance, Kim Hongdo's setting is compactly organised, with a close-up view of a stream in a secluded mountainous region. The setting provides a glimpse of typical Korean scenery, featuring the deep recesses of a mountain, where a stream flows by low granite hills with boulders of variegated shapes and sizes. These boulders, particularly the large flat ones, were especially useful for women to wash clothes or rest upon, in comfort and privacy. To suggest the shape, volume and hardness of the boulders, the artist used darker ink lines, while thinner and lighter brushstrokes were applied to delineate the movements of the flowing water. Touches of light blue wash were also added to the boulders and water, to enhance their naturalistic appearance. Unlike Kang Huion's open, spacious valley, whose forms were conceived in ink and colours, Kim Hongdo's intimate and cozy setting is defined primarily through the use of simplified yet undulating ink brushstrokes.

Within this secluded setting, lower-class Korean women were represented with a new sense of importance, the essence of their appearance and behavior captured in ways not seen before in genre painting. Unlike Kang Huion's anonymous, featureless females, subordinate to the background scenery, Kim Hongdo's common women were rendered in a large scale and assembled close together in the foreground, with most of them shown frontally. As a result, some distinctive characteristics of 18th-century female peasantry are conveyed vividly, most notably the bright facial expressions on broad, ruddy faces with high cheekbones, and casual seated poses, with bare arms, legs, and feet revealed. The figures exude a sense of life and vitality because the artist's calligraphic brushwork, combined with touches of ochre wash, defines their forms, suggests their volume, and conveys something of their inner feelings. Working in the company of other village women, the rugged lower-class laundresses appear relaxed and jovial, in spite of the difficulty that their daily manual labour entails. In this work scene, the artist portrayed a special kind of beauty, warmth, and spirit that he recognised in the collective activities of these rural women. Kim Hongdo apparently had a fascination with lower-class working women, for in other album leaves he also depicted rugged, industrious female figures, archetypes derived from Chosŏn society's Confucian moral code. For example, in one album leaf, a woman with a child at her side takes full charge of a wayside inn by cooking and serving food and drinks to her customers (Fig. 7). In this painting, the woman appears resilient and stocky, with a pleased expression on her face in spite of the innumerable hardships she

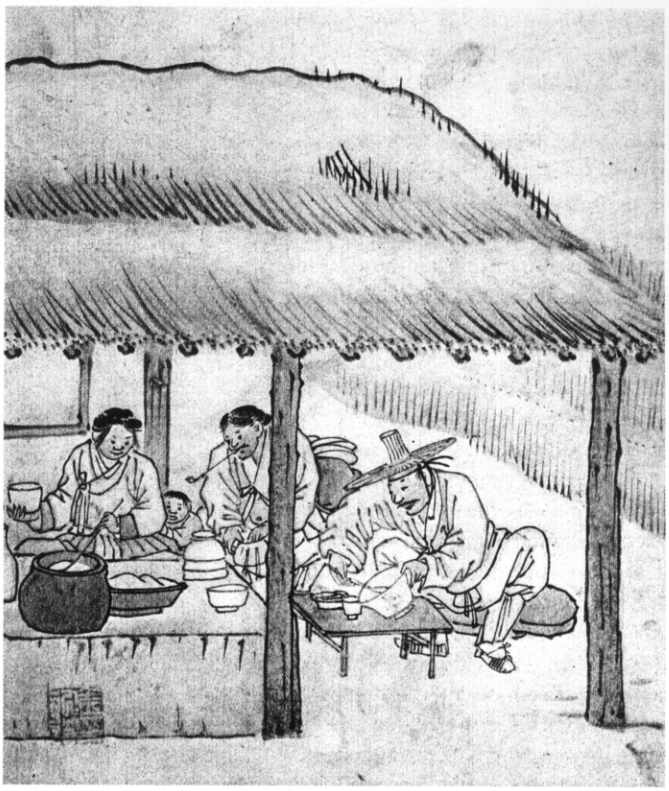

Fig. 7. Kim Hongdo (1745-c. 1806). *The Inn*. Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), 18th century. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper. Ht: 28 cm. Width: 24 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

invariably faces in her daily life. It can be concluded that Kim Hongdo endeavoured to capture positive images of common working women - depicting them as selfless, tolerant individuals balancing maternity, domestic work and other arduous responsibilities with strength, vitality and endurance despite their low place in society.[12]

Among Kim Hongdo's representations of lower-class women, one of the most charming examples is perhaps the young female figure seated behind the three working women in *Women Washing Clothes by a Stream*. A rugged beauty, she is shown relaxing while waiting for her freshly laundered clothes to dry in the sun. This figure must have washed her long hair in the cool stream, for she sits contentedly on a flat boulder braiding it, her legs folded casually. Next to her is her bare-bottom infant, who appears to have had a bath in the stream and is no doubt hungry, for he tries to catch his mother's attention by reaching for her breast. This informal yet touching depiction of a mother and child enlivens the authentic image of women from the lower class, making the scene by the stream appear truly warm and human. With the inclusion of this figure at rest, the stream area is also portrayed as a special domain where working women could enjoy rare freedom and respite from the rigours of their grinding labour in the conservative Chosŏn society so highly restrictive in terms of class and gender.

In contrast to the positive image of virtuous common women, a negative image of an idle upper-class man is conveyed in Kim Hongdo's scene by the stream. This man hides behind a diagonally projecting boulder on the upper right-hand side, to observe the women below. In the rigidly conservative atmosphere of Chosŏn Confucian society, a secluded area by a stream constituted one of the rare places where a man could catch a glimpse of common women washing themselves or working with their bare legs ex-

posed. Unlike upper-class women who were always covered to the feet and rarely went out, lower-class women paradoxically experienced much more freedom of movement in their daily lives. Hence, to men of the upper social stratum the rugged women sitting nonchalantly outdoors, to wash clothes or do their hair, must have appeared wholesome, sensual and provocative in ways that are lost to us today. Despite the man's inappropriate intrusion into the women's private territory, the voyeur is portrayed with some sense of propriety befitting an upper-class man. Divided between his Confucian decorum and his desire to view the women, he watches them stealthily, most of his face concealed behind a fan. Yet the pulsating thrill that the man experiences is suggested indirectly by the dark, wavy outline of the projecting boulder.

Through the incorporation of the upper-class man, the artist gave a touch of satire, tension, and light humour to what would otherwise be a simple and peaceful scene. In view of the fact that 18th-century Korean literature by some progressive scholars satirised the hypocrisy, apathy, and incompetence of upper-class men, it is quite plausible that Kim Hongdo intended the image of the man in his work to be both negative and critical.[13] A similarly negative image of an idle upper-class man appears in another album leaf by the artist, in which industrious barefoot workers of the lower class are busy threshing the hard-won fruits of their labour, while a wealthy man reclines lazily on a rectangular mat to watch them (Fig. 8). In these works, Kim Hongdo appears to criticise the upper-class who led unproductive lives while hereditary rights granted them immense status and privilege. Interestingly, in both the stream and threshing scenes, the well-to-do man is placed on the upper-right hand side, a new way of suggesting the difference in status between upper-class men and commoners in Chosŏn society. In each of these album leaves, athough the upper-class man is placed close to the lower-class people he is altitudinally separated from them; the privileged man is shown on a more elevated level, whereas the commoners are on lower ground. In this respect, Kim Hongdo's composition differs dramatically from that of Kang Huion in suggesting the nature of Chosŏn society's Confucian hierarchy.

Fig. 8. Kim Hongdo (1745-*ca.* 1806). *Threshing Scene.* Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), 18th century. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper. Ht: 28 cm. Width: 24 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

In *Women Washing Clothes by a Stream*, Kim Hongdo thus not only celebrated common women and their daily actitivities but also captured, complete with honest human emotion, the very real behavior of upper-class men. It is significant to note that Kim Hongdo was the first artist who painted and satirised the private activities of the wealthy class using an abbreviated yet vivid style. Through a creative transformation of Kang Huion's minor motif Kim Hongdo unveiled, with penetrating insight, the differing lifestyles of the lower and upper classes in late Chosŏn society.

Deeper Exploration of the Theme in Sin Yunbok's Album Leaves

The iconography of women washing clothes by a stream was brought to further development in the works of Sin Yunbok, a talented and progressive court painter from the *chungin* family background that produced court artists and low-ranking officials. Although Sin Yunbok's oeuvre encompasses a broad variety of subjects, including landscapes, figures, genre images, and birds and animals, his fame rests primarily on his exquisite renderings of courtesans, and satirical works disclosing the indulgences of wealthy men.[14] Among late Chosŏn-dynasty painters, Sin Yunbok apparently had the most interest in the iconography of women washing clothes by a stream, for he is known to have turned to this theme at least twice. In both cases he included a male intruder, reflecting the influence of Kim Hongdo, his predecessor at court. However, Sin Yunbok's works are stylistically different from those of Kim Hongdo, with stronger emphasis placed on landscape elements, and a greater audacity and realism manifested in the rendering of figures.

The album leaf entitled *Women by a Crystal Stream* displays Sin Yunbok's creative transformation of his predecessors' works (Fig. 9).[15] In this work, emphasis is placed on an area by a stream, but the surroundings, with both hilly terrain and level ground, suggest that the setting is located near hills and valleys rather than in the deep recesses of a mountain. Depicted in ink and colours, this scenery is painted as if the artist observed it from a higher elevation on a nearby hill, so that figures are assimilated into the landscape, and there is greater suggestion of spatial recession. In particular, the meandering stream on the left side of the painting, its water punctuated by many small boulders, gives an impression of greater openness and depth than the setting in Kim Hongdo's work. In this respect, the setting reflects Sin Yunbok's effort to capture authentic native scenery based on close and objective observations of the Korean landscape, an approach not unlike Kang Huion's in his *Archery Practice*. Interestingly, in Sin Yunbok's painting, the stream serves to both separate and connect the two geologically different areas. The right side of the stream, with large boulders and rich vegetation, is inclined and secluded, while the left side is relatively level and sparse. Yet the two different terrains are unified by the application of light green and blue wash on the land, stream, and distant area, the colours heightening the cool atmosphere. This setting, then, appears to be the first truly detailed and carefully constructed scene of an area by a stream in Korean painting.

Significantly, the stream in Sin Yunbok's painting also serves to separate and connect the contrasting activities of lower-class women and upper-class men. On the secluded side of the stream, three common women are portrayed, but there is greater variety and boldness in the rendering of the figures. Each figure is engaged in a different activity, with an even greater exposure of the body than in

Fig. 9. Sin Yunbok (born *ca.* 1758). *Women by a Crystal Stream.* Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), late 18th century-early 19th century. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper. Ht: 28. 3 cm. Width: 35.2 cm. Kansong Art Museum, Seoul.

Kim Hongdo's painting. One woman wearing a blue skirt, her hair adorned with a large braided hairpiece, squats near the water to wash clothes. Seated nearby is another young woman braiding her long hairpiece, her breasts revealed under the short top. Although these two frontally posed figures display some influences from Kim Hongdo's painting, they appear more refined in appearance, perhaps reflecting the fashion in vogue in the capital during Sin Yunbok's time. Behind these two seated figures is an image not seen before. This woman, much older in years and shown in striking semi-nudity with the upper part of her body completely revealed, may have just bathed in the stream, for she stoops to retrieve her upper garment from the grass. Thus, in his work Sin Yunbok incorporated a broader variety of women and painted them with greater candour, the naturalism of their daily activities enhanced by the inclusion of such domestic accoutrements as the bundle of laundry and the low bowl containing soaked clothes.

The common women in the crystal stream painting display other new elements that become more apparent upon closer scrutiny of their faces and poses. Unlike Kim Hongdo's cheerful women, the figures in Sin Yunbok's work convey no sense of relaxed conviviality or meaningful interaction. Instead, each figure seems to be absorbed in her own activity, showing little interest in sharing the events of her daily life with the others. In fact, there is an impression of muted isolation in the placement of the figures, emphasised by the way in which the women are turned away from each other. Furthermore, the figures appear quieter and more self-contained, their heads bent forward slightly. A close examination of the women reveals that all of them have hardened expressions on their faces, their facial features rendered in sharp, thin lines. In particular, the older woman on the grassy area appears weary and even sullen. The hard lines that define the women's facial features are echoed with even greater clarity in the somewhat angular lines of the women's bodily contours and the folds of their clothing, conveying an overall mood of subtle tension.

The reason for the absence of a warm, cheerful atmosphere in *Women by a Crystal Stream* is undoubtedly related to the disturbing intrusion of a male figure. Unlike the right side of the stream, the area where he appears is bright and open, devoid of boulders and rich vegetation, as if the artist intended to suggest the contrast between *yin* and *yang*. In the lighter realm, the male intruder, presumably an upper-class man idling away his time with archery, is shown glancing at the half-nude woman in a surprisingly unConfucian manner. Interestingly, the pose of this man is almost identical to that of one of the scholars, who stands with his back turned to the viewer in *Archery Practice* (Figs. 10, 11). By creatively transforming two completely different representations of male figures in the works of Kang Huion and Kim Hongdo, Sin Yunbok has developed an even more critical image of an upper-class man by a stream. Because of this man's intrusion, the common women must no doubt experience feelings of discomfort, embarrassment and even indignation. The women's subtly hardened facial expressions and their stiff poses indicate that they are clearly annoyed by the man's presence. Thus, through a daring portrayal of a voyeuristic gentleman and subtle renderings of the women's facial expressions and poses, Sin Yunbok has made an explicit statement regarding the private indulgences of the idle wealthy class.

Sin Yunbok's low regard for the idle upper-class is also reflected in the artist's indifference to pictorial conventions relating to social hierarchy. In fact, by placing the well-to-do man and the common women on virtually the same spatial level of the foreground, with dominant space bestowed upon the female figures, Sin Yunbok established the stream area as the women's territory. Despite the absence of a conventional treatment of social hierarchy, some sense of Confucian propriety is apparent in this painting, for the intruder is depicted from the back, his face hidden from the viewer. In addition, the old lady is placed furthest from the spectator, and she stands with her back to the man, creating a barrier between the semi-clothed woman and the male intruder. The audacious elements in this painting are made suggestive and indirect through the subtle arrangement and poses of the figures.

Fig. 10. Detail of Fig. 9.

Fig. 11. Detail of Fig. 4.

Sin Yunbok's satire was not restricted to the upper-class men, for in his *Episode at the Stream of Water* the artist created a negative image of the idle religious sector of late Chosŏn society by including new scenes by a stream, set within a powerfully dominating, secluded landscape (Fig. 12). The setting, its background filled by a large, rounded mountain painted in swift calligraphic lines combined with deep blue and green wash, offers a dramatic view of native scenery. In the foreground, a narrow blue stream flows by a level area rich with vegetation. With its lush green trees and plants, the setting evokes a cool, dim atmosphere deep in the summery mountains, where refreshing breezes blow above the sound of the cold running stream, and romantic feelings could be aroused in the hearts of passersby. The lushness and darkness of the scenery differs considerably from the bright, open setting in the crystal stream painting.

In the foreground of this dramatic mountainous setting Sin Yunbok depicted not only a common woman but also figures shown in a highly unconventional manner, with a vivid expression of their feelings and gestures. Although the woman depicted in the lower left side resembles the figure washing clothes in *Women by a Crystal Stream*, she is portrayed working alone. Furthermore, instead of washing clothes in a relaxed manner, she pauses from work, with an irritated expression on her face, to see the commotion on the right side. The right side of the composition contrasts strongly with the serenity of the stream area; there, a male figure has invaded the woman's work area. The intruder is not an idle upper-class man, but rather an idle monk from a local Buddhist temple. This young monk, so enamoured by the sight of a young woman washing clothes, makes an attempt to approach her. However, an old lady, who could be the woman's mother or relative, clutches the intruder's arm and even tries to beat him with her wooden implement, to restrain him from making any advances toward her. The monk has managed to grip the old woman's implement, rendering her helpless to defend the young woman. In this painting, the artist depicted the figures in an unusually straightforward manner, capturing each individual's appearance, gestures, and facial expression. In particular, the detailed rendering of the excited movements of the smiling young monk and the aged women's concerned, wrinkled face have no parallels in the works of Sin Yunbok's predecessors.

Such a frank, narrative-like portrayal of an incident by a stream, with an explicit rendering of a young monk's amorous interest, suggests that the artist made keen observations of human behavior. More importantly, the episode depicted here is a bold disclosure of the sometimes all-too-human behavior of Buddhist monks, as well as a satirical and negative comment on the changing mores of Chosŏn-dynasty society - a time when Buddhism lost its vital force and Confucianism dominated the thoughts of the Korean people as the official state philosophy. In view of the Chosŏn court's anti-Buddhist policy and the appearance of anti-Buddhist elements in Chosŏn literature,[16] it is not surprising that a progressive artist like Sin Yunbok would express a similarly critical attitude toward the hypocrisy of the Buddhist clergy. Through a candid rendering of the monk's ignoble behavior and the women's reactions to it, Sin Yunbok has taken the iconography of women washing clothes by a stream to a deeper level and brought this theme to a mature development.

Examination of paintings depicting the theme of women washing clothes by a stream indicates the late-Chosŏn dynasty development of a distinctive native iconography dealing with aspects of contemporary life by a stream. Painted by highly creative artists of lower social background, these vivid genre images depict the daily lives of Korean people in outdoor settings, utilising a

Fig. 12. Sin Yunbok (born *ca.* 1758). *Episode by a Stream.* Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), late 18th century-early 19th century. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper. Ht: 28.3 cm. Width: 35.2 cm. Kansong Art Museum, Seoul.

directness not seen in genre images by 18th-century literati painters from the upper class. In this respect, these works differ vastly from earlier representations of common women by scholar painters such as Yun Tusŏ (1668-1715) and Cho Yongsŏk (1686-1761).[17] In Yun Tusŏ's painting entitled *Women Picking Vegetables*, for instance, two common women climb a steep hill to pick freshly sprouted potherbs on a spring day (Fig. 13). The idyllic setting is reminiscent of the background in Ming Chinese paintings of the Che School, particularly in the shape of the mountain and the use of moist ink wash. Furthermore, the women are shown in either profile or back view, so that they do not establish close contact with the beholder. In Cho Yongsŏk's *Woman Pounding a Pestle*, a lower-class working woman is depicted in an authentic native setting, the yard of a humble thatched cottage, yet she too is distanced from the viewer, shown working alone in a subdued manner, her profile view devoid of much life or vitality (Fig. 14). The paintings of women washing clothes by a stream by *chungin* painters portray everyday scenes with greater truth and realism, revealing the artists' sensitivity to the lives of the common people.

In summation, careful study of the paintings on the theme of common women washing clothes by a stream reveals that *Women on Tano Day* evolved from late Chosŏn-dynasty works portraying this singular native scene, including earlier works of Sin Yunbok himself. In particular, the setting, with its emphasis on native landscape in a secluded area by a stream deep in the mountains, has origins in Kim Hongdo's work. However, the lushness of the mountain setting, with the clear blue stream, variegated boulders, and green vegetation, is more reminiscent of the background in Sin Yunbok's *Episode at the Stream*. Furthermore, the shape of the meandering blue stream, a "V" form inverted sideways, as well as its location on the left side of the painting, is reminiscent of streams depicted in the works of Sin Yunbok's predecessors. It is most similar to the stream depicted in *Women by a Crystal Stream*, especially in such details as the grassy vegetation and small boulders found along the stream. The setting of *Women on Tano Day* reveals Sin Yunbok's careful observation of actual Korean scenery, with details defined in both ink and colours.

Aside from the setting, some of the figures in *Women on Tano Day* display affinities with figures in the works of the artist's predecessors and Sin Yunbok himself. The placing of frontally posed women in the foreground in a close-up view by a stream can be traced back to Kim Hongdo. The inclusion of voyeurs also has

Fig. 13. Yun Tusŏ (1668-1715). *Two Women Picking Potherbs.* Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), late 17th century-18th century. Album leaf, ink on silk. Ht: 30.2 cm. Width: 25 cm. Yun Yongson Collection, Haenam, Korea. After Ahn Hwijoon *et al.*, *P'ungsokhwa*, plate 64.

Fig. 14. Cho Yongsŏk (1686-1761). *A Woman Pounding a Pestle*, Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), 18th century. Album leaf, ink on paper. Ht: 23.5 cm. Width: 24. 4 cm. Kansong Art Museum, Seoul, Korea.

its origins in Kim Hongdo's work. In other aspects, however, there are affinities with figures in Sin Yunbok's own paintings representing women washing clothes by a stream. For instance, the seated woman with her long braided hairpiece loosened in front of her closely resembles the figure sitting on the right side of the crystal stream painting. Moreover, the rendering of semi-nude bathing women, particularly the standing figure, displays affinities with the half-clothed elderly woman in the crystal stream painting. The frank portrayal of the amorous interest of the smiling monks in *Women on Tano Day* is a feature that appeared in a slightly different form, in the artist's *Episode at the Clear Stream*. Thus, it is evident that, despite the absence of women washing clothes, *Women on Tano Day* cannot be read apart from the broad context of native iconography dealing with various human activities by a stream.

Some Possible Influences from Book Illustrations of Chinese Vernacular Literature

Although *Women on Tano Day* clearly evolved from 18th-century paintings depicting common women washing clothes by a stream, it also features some arcane pictorial elements that cannot be accounted for within the native pictorial tradition alone. They include the unusual placement of female figures in the upper right-hand corner of the painting, the woman on a swing, the standing female nude facing the viewer, and the two candidly smiling monks peering at the women. While these unconventional elements could very well have been inspired by Sin Yunbok's own personal observations of activities on Tano Day, it is also possible that these features owe something to the artist's contact with foreign pictorial sources. These could include woodblock engravings in various illustrated Chinese books, available in Korea during Sin Yunbok's time, which have not been examined by modern scholarship, because they were either lost or destroyed. In a recent article dealing with Sin Yunbok's amorous themes, I speculated that Sin Yunbok may have been familiar with Adam Schall's von Bell's (1591-1666) illustrated devotional book entitled *Jincheng Shuxiang* (Images for Dedication), because this important volume was in the Chosŏn court collection during the artist's time.[18] In this article, I also pointed to some parallels between *Women on Tano Day* and the engraving depicting the anointing of Christ, particularly in the placement of the women in the upper-right hand corner, the representation of semi-nudity, and the poses of smiling spectators in the background (Fig. 15).[19] Indeed, the pose of the standing courtesan, despite her profile view, resembles that of Christ in the way his right arm is placed behind his back (Figs. 16, 17). Furthermore, the monks resemble the foreshortened disciples, who stand behind a wall interacting with one another (Figs. 18, 19). Judging from these similarities, it is possible that the anointing scene, with the tree on a hill in the background and various male and female figures outdoors, reminded Sin Yunbok of festive activities by a stream on Tano Day, including bathing scenes.

In rendering some of the figures, it is also plausible that Sin Yunbok received fresh artistic stimuli from figurative representations in woodblock-print illustrations to well-known Chinese vernacular literature. According to recent research by Chŏng Pyŏngmo, Sin Yunbok may have been familiar with illustrations in Ming and Qing editions of popular Chinese literature, since many examples of famous Chinese literary works were in Korea during the 17th and 18th centuries. They include such works as Wang Shifu's (ca. 1250-1300) *Xixiang ji* (The Story of the Western Wing) and the anonymous 16th-century novel *Jin Ping Mei* (The Plum in the Golden Vase).[20] Aside from these works, it is conceivable that Li Yu's (1611-1680) *Rou putuan* (The Prayer Mat of Flesh) may have been available during Sin Yunbok's time. Yi Taeho suggests that sensual elements in Sin Yunbok's genre paintings could be related to Li Yu's book, as this volume was then one of the most popular erotic novels in China and Japan.[21] Despite these intriguing speculations, no study has yet been done to identify specific engravings in Chinese vernacular literature which may have influenced Sin Yunbok's genre images.

Careful examination by the author of several editions of *Jin Ping Mei*, *Xixiang ji* and *Rou putuan* reveals that there may indeed be a relationship between Sin Yunbok's *Women on Tano Day* and genre-like images in illustrations to these popular Chinese works. In the 1644 edition of *Jin Ping Mei*, for example, there is a scene depicting two women riding on a swing, with other female figures in the lower left-hand corner (Fig. 20).[22] Such illustrations could have reminded Sin Yunbok of women's activities on Tano Day and encouraged him

Fig. 15. *Anointment of Christ after the Descent from the Cross.* Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1641. Woodblock print. After Adam Schall von Bell (1591-1666). *Jincheng Shuxiang*, pl. 45b. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 16. Detail of Fig. 1.

to portray a young woman on a swing. Furthermore, in one of the engravings from a 17th-century edition of *Xixiang ji*, two Buddhist monks gaze at two young women in a temple with seemingly amorous interest (Fig. 21).[23] The placement of these two smiling monks on the left side, their heads turned in the direction of Yingying and her attendant, Hongniang, is somewhat reminiscent of the two young monks in Sin Yunbok's painting. The unorthodox representations of monks in *Xixiang ji* could therefore have given the artist a new perspective on the secularizing tendencies of Buddhist monks in late Chosŏn society, inspiring him to satirise their behavior in his works.

Among the figures represented in Chinese vernacular literature, a striking parallel to Sin Yunbok's standing female nude appears in a 1705 edition of *Rou putuan*. In one of the engravings depicting a love scene a nude young woman stands in the lower left-hand corner, with other figures near by (Fig. 22).[24] This female nude, posed in profile with her face turned in the direction of the viewer and most of her upper body and legs revealed, is strongly reminiscent of the standing courtesan in *Women on Tano Day* (Fig. 16). Moreover, the two voyeurs peeking at the love scene through the open window in the upper part of the illustration, their facial expressions suggesting curiosity are similar to the two monks behind boulders in Sin Yunbok's painting. Whether these specific engravings were available to Sin Yunbok is of course debatable, and more research is required to corroborate Sin Yunbok's uses of book

Fig. 17. Detail of Fig. 15.

Fig. 18. Detail of Fig. 1.

illustrations from Chinese vernacular literature.[25] Nevertheless, the Chinese book illustrations examined above do suggest the possibility that the artist had access to well-known Chinese vernacular literature. Considering that Sin Yunbok came from a *chungin* family that produced many low-ranking officials - some of whom accompanied envoys to China on annual diplomatic missions - there must have been ample opportunity for the artist to view 17th and 18th-century editions of popular Chinese literature.[26] Indeed, the sudden appearance of sensual and unorthodox elements in Sin Yunbok's genre images suggests that there could certainly be a close relationship between his unconventional images in *Women on Tano Day* and Chinese book illustrations, particularly those with romantic or erotic elements.

Fig. 19. Detail of Fig. 15.

Fig. 20. Woodblock print from *Jin Ping Mei*. Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1644. After Xiao Xiesheng, *Jin Ping Mei zihua*, vol. 4, plate 25a.

Women on Tano Day: A Closer Look at Its Form and Content

Although *Women on Tano Day* appears to incorporate influences from a wide variety of pictorial sources, both native and foreign, it is a truly original work with no visible trace of imitative borrowing. In this painting, the pictorial precedents were transformed creatively to enrich the Korean theme of activities by a stream.

Without a doubt, *Women on Tano Day* is notable for conveying the festive mood of Tano day through new stylistic features in both the setting and figural representations. The lively atmosphere of this traditional holiday is enhanced by the artist's careful selection of native landscape forms, brought very close to the beholder and arranged to complement the human activities. In particular, the sense of life and movement in the painting is heightened by a variety of diagonal lines, large and small, formed by the strongly sloping

Fig. 21. Woodblock print from *Xixiang ji*. Ming - Qing dynasties, mid 17th century. After Jin Shengtan, *Jin Shengtan piben Xixiang ji*, plate 4.

Fig. 22. Woodblock print from the *Xiechunyuan* edition of *Rou putuan*. Qing dynasty (1644-1912), 1705. After Chin Qingjie and Wang Qiugui, ed., *Siwuxie huibao*, vol. 15, juan 4, pl. 6.

hills, the two large trees growing on a hill, the sharply meandering stream, and the softly flowing movements of the water. Yet the diagonally oriented setting is prevented from appearing overly precarious or unbalanced by the upward movement of the two trees, which add a sense of stability. The trees are essential elements in the painting, for their early summer foliage helps to create an impression of seclusion and privacy by shading the upper part of the painting. This setting provides the most intimate and vivid view of native scenery, reflecting the artist's careful observation of the shapes and colors of Korea's hilly landscape by a stream.

Within this unique setting, the assemblage of eight female figures in two separate groups enlivens the festive mood. Nowhere in Korean painting have so many courtesans (*Kisaeng*) dominated the foreground, with male figures relegated to the background in a smaller scale, revealing the artist's total disregard for Confucian hierarchy in painting. In particular, the artist's lack of interest in differentiating the status of men and women is markedly evident in the placement of the women on the upper right-hand side. In the works of Kim Hongdo, this area was often set aside for male figures of higher social rank, such as upper-class gentlemen or scholars (Figs. 6, 8). However, in Sin Yunbok's painting courtesans occupy both the upper right-hand area and the lower left-hand side, creating a non-hierarchical composition that gives unprecedented space and prestige to women of the lower social stratum.

The highly unconventional arrangement of the women may relate to the artist's conscious effort to convey a clearer notion of the courtesans' unusual position in society. The position of the *Kisaeng* in Chosŏn society was one of dialectical contradiction. Although they came from the lowest class, their beauty, intelligence, and talents in the arts (e.g., music, poetry, and dance) enabled them to mingle with men of the upper class and act as companions to scholars, officials, and envoys.[27] The special liberties that these talented women of low social origin enjoyed appear to be reflected in their placement within both upper and lower parts of the painting. It is as if the artist envisioned these women freely moving about from the lower to the upper social stratum, leading relatively mobile yet precariously unsettled lives.

The courtesans' special position in society is also reflected in the rendering of their individualised appearances and poses. Indeed, in no Korean painting before Sin Yunbok's time have common women been represented in such a wide variety of poses, and depicted in such a way as to encourage a gradual entrance into the painting. Beginning from the upper right-hand side and ending in the lower left-hand corner, the viewer is given the opportunity of glimpsing many women in the forbidden territory of the stream area. Among the women, the figure who draws the viewer into the landscape and gives the work its compelling beauty is no doubt the alluring young courtesan poised to push the swing into full motion (Fig. 2). Attired brightly in a yellow top and reddish orange skirt and occupying the most prominent position in the painting, she stands out dramatically against the mountainous setting dominated by green and blue colours. This courtesan is a highly tantalising figure, for her face appears utterly calm and collected, in stark contrast to the aggressive energy of her concentrated pose.

Fig. 23. Detail of Fig. 1.

After viewing the enticing woman on a swing, the spectator becomes aware of her two companions who sit behind her in the shade of a tree (Fig. 23). These two women, although beautiful in appearance, differ greatly from the woman on the swing; they sit placidly and relaxedly enjoying the warmth of the early summer day. The stable poses of these two women help to anchor them solidly on the sloping hill. Walking toward the courtesans is an ordinary working woman with a large bundle of laundry on her head. This rugged woman, her full breasts revealed under the short upper garment, displays an earthy, maternal appearance, offering a striking contrast to the refined beauty of the courtesans. Matronly in appearance and voluminous in shape, this woman helps to create a solid vertical prop in the right side of the painting, giving some sense of stability to the hill that would otherwise appear overly steep.

Following the downward movement of the woman on a swing, which is reinforced by the diagonal line of the hill, the viewer's eyes are drawn to the boldest part of the painting, in the lower left-hand corner, where women are bathing by the stream. Like the group of figures on the right side, there are four women, one of them standing and three squatting. In particular, the standing nude, who offsets the standing common worker on the right and serves as a solid vertical prop on the left, is portrayed in an inviting pose, her long skirt lifted high to unveil much of her body. No female figure as provocative as this woman existed in Korean painting prior to Sin Yunbok's time (Fig. 16). Painted much earlier than the nude women in Manet's famous *Luncheon on the Grass* and his equally celebrated work, *Olympia*, this courtesan, like her European counterparts, displays no hint of shyness as she looks toward the viewer. Her three companions squat nonchalently to wash themselves, their upper garments removed completely. One of them washes her face, while another tries to remove dirt on her arm; the figure seated with her back to the viewer fixes her hair. In rendering the courtesans, Sin Yunbok captured highly naturalistic poses of women in their private moments, surpassing the works of his predecessors and his own earlier endeavours. The broad variety of the women's bold poses suggests that courtesans enjoyed considerable freedom and independence, which enabled them to develop their own distinctive personalities in a Confucian society where most women had no sense of self or individualism. In Sin Yunbok's painting, each courtesan appears to have her own special character quite different from those of her companions.

In spite of the audacious elements in *Women on Tano Day*, the artist employed a number of features to prevent the work from appearing overtly erotic. For instance, the standing female nude is shown in profile, so that much of her body is actually hidden from the viewer. Similarly, her half-nude companions are portrayed with some sense of Confucian decorum in that only one is shown in frontal view, and even her body is mostly covered by her arms, placed carefully in front of her chest (Fig. 24). These strategic poses, along with the subdued colours of their skirts, and their placement in the lower left-hand corner of the painting, prevent the bathers from standing out glaringly against the background. Sensual and erotic elements are handled with subtlety and suggestiveness, as in Sin Yunbok's other paintings.

In depicting the two Buddhist monks too, some effort was made to minimise any vulgar effect, without sacrificing satirical intention. This was achieved by placing the monks in the background, most of their bodies hidden behind the large boulders. Furthermore, two boyish monks rather than older male figures were represented, so that their voyeuristic act seems almost playful, giving a sense of spontaneity and frankness to the bathing scene (Fig. 18). At the same time, the two monks were clearly intended to stand out, for the angular and jagged boulders in front of them form a strong contrast with the softer, more rounded hill on the right. In addition, the branches and the foliage of the large tree in the centre of the painting lead the viewer's eyes to the intruders, who are shown in frontal view with gleeful and inquisitive expressions on their faces. The dark mass of foliage over their heads helps to enhance the monks' surreptitious behavior, but may also imply the darkening moral climate of Sin Yunbok's time.

In contrast to the monks' explicit facial expressions, those of the courtesans are characterised by greater ambiguity. Careful examination of the women's faces suggests that Tano Day was not an entirely festive holiday for the courtesans. Like Sin Yunbok's other paintings, this work reveals neither joy nor warmth, and facial features are rendered in thin ink lines to convey restrained feelings. Although the obvious reason for the lack of cheer would of course

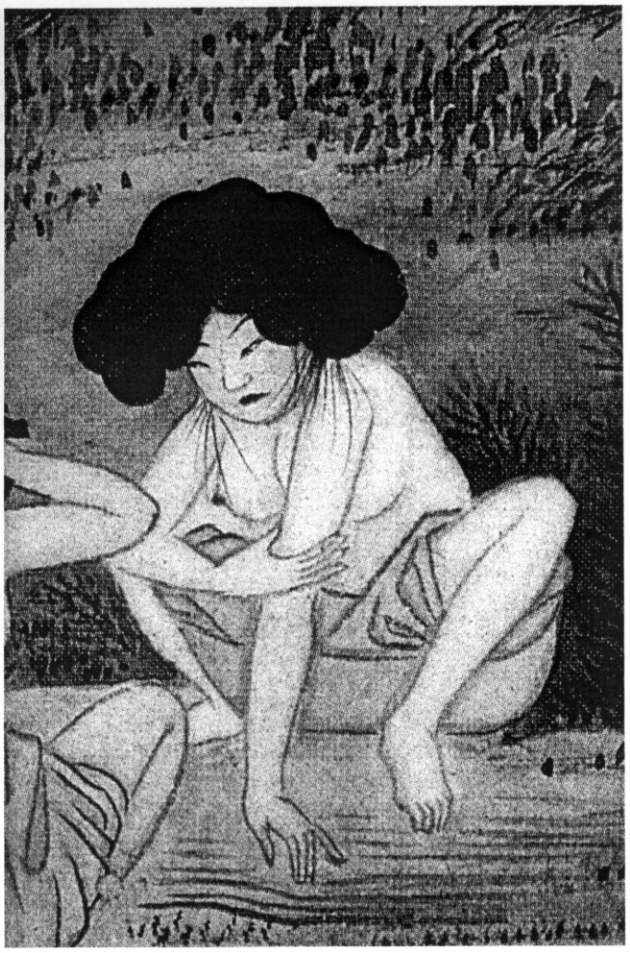

Fig. 24. Detail of Fig. 1.

be the intrusion of the two monks, another and perhaps less obvious reason may be related to the courtesans' tragic and insecure lives in late Chosŏn society. Beautiful and talented, these women of the low class enjoyed special freedom and privilege through association with upper-class men. Yet in reality, the courtesans led highly artificial and degrading lives, which became increasingly difficult in their later years, as most were denied matrimonial partnership and motherhood. Hence, during their leisure time among themselves, courtesans appear to betray traces of their inner feelings, albeit in subtle ways. One may even read a certain touch of sadness, emptiness, and weariness in their faces beneath the veneer of their beautiful, restrained appearances, feelings realised even more poignantly on what should be a joyful holiday shared with close family members, relatives, or loved ones (Figs. 23, 24). In light of the fact that poems by Chosŏn-dynasty courtesans abound in expressions of sadness, loneliness, and bitterness, with deep yearning for their lovers,[28] it is quite conceivable that *Women on Tano Day* was not painted merely as object of delectation for a powerful royal patron. Rather, Sin Yunbok's painting may very well have been intended to capture a glimpse of the courtesans' tragic lot through a variety of contrasting forms and features in this scene of a traditional Korean holiday.

Conclusion

Close examination of Sin Yunbok's *Women on Tano Day* and paintings representing common women washing clothes by a stream reveals that during the late Chosŏn dynasty vivid genre images were created to capture naturalistic views of true native scenery and real-life human behavior. Painted by socially conscious artists of *chungin* background, these works celebrate the special value and meaning that the painters recognised in the daily lives of the common people, painting subjects that conservative literati-painters from the upper class would have considered insignificant and even lowly. Beginning as a minor motif in Kang Huion's painting, the earliest representation of this particular theme depicted the virtues of common women within a larger landscape. In Kim Hongdo's album leaf, it evolved into an entirely independent theme, with emphasis placed on the warm camaraderie of lower-class women as they worked and relaxed in a secluded part of the mountains. In Kim Hongdo's work, this theme was broadened to include satirical views of idle upper-class men, to whom common women had become objects of desire. These new elements were incorporated into Sin Yunbok's works, but were developed to greater heights by the arrangement of figures within a deeper, more spacious landscape, with bolder renderings of figures that explicitly satirize not only upper-class men but Buddhist monks. These paintings capture the artists' deep understanding of changes in contemporary life, with truth, objectivity and social realism extraordinary in a Confucian society. In light of the fact that such socially oriented genre images did not appear in contemporary Chinese or Japanese paintings, 18th-century representations of everyday life by a stream occupy a highly important place in the history of Korean painting. Even in European art, the daily lives of common women were not explored extensively until the middle of the 19th century. Portrayals of the everyday activities of lower-class women in works of late Chosŏn-dynasty *chungin* painters were truly modern for their time.

Among the paintings that feature scenes by a stream, *Women on Tano Day*, with its large number of figures in a secluded yet dynamic setting, was undoubtedly the most difficult and audacious undertaking. The innovative representation of courtesans and monks in landscape suggests that Sin Yunbok may have created this distinctive work in his mature years, after having become familiar with a large variety of native and foreign artistic sources. Although this work offers multiple interpretations in terms of form and content, it is undeniable that the Tano Day painting places a strong emphasis on the courtesans' private lives. By depicting the courtesans during their unguarded moments, Sin Yunbok captured aspects of their lives that were fleeting, evanescent, and contradictory. Careful analysis of *Women on Tano Day* thus demonstrates that Sin Yunbok was a bold and uncompromising artist of strong conviction, an artist who was willing to accept his expulsion from the court Bureau of Painting for expressing what he perceived and recognised to be real and true. Through this work, therefore, we derive some of our most vivid images and conceptions of the late Chosŏn dynasty: activities by a stream on Tano Day, the position of courtesans in society, visions of feminine beauty and sensuality, and even the loosening morality of Buddhist monks. By virtue of these innovative features, *Women on Tano Day* can be regarded as a highly original culmination in the development of native themes, specifically that of common women washing clothes by a stream.

Saehyang P. Chung is Associate Professor of Art History in the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pohang University of Science and Technology, Pohang, Korea.

NOTES

1. Sin Yunbok's sobriquet was Hyewon, and like his father, the court painter Sin Hanpyong (*ca.* 1735- 1809), he held the rank of *chomsa* (a middle-ranking military official). *Women on Tano Day* is included in Sin Yunbok's 30-leaf album in the collection of the Kansong Art Museum in Seoul, Korea. For a colour reproduction of this album, see Hanguk minchok misul yŏn'guso (Korean Art Institute) ed., *Hyewon chonsin ch'op* (Hyewon's Album Leaves) (Seoul: Tamkudang, 1972).
2. For a description of Tano Day, see Ahn Hwijoon's entry in Roger Goepper and Roderick Whitfield *et al.*, *Treasures from Korea* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1984), p. 184.
3. For a short apocryphal text by Mun Ilpyong, see Yi Yangchae, "Hyewon Sin Yunbok ŭl cha'jasŏ" (In Search of Sin Yunbok), *Misul sege* (Art World) (1993), vol. 12, p. 124.
4. For more information on 18th-century Korean culture, see Hongnam Kim, ed., *Korean Arts of the Eighteenth Century: Splendor and Simplicity* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1993); Choi Wansu *et al.*, *Uri munhwa ui hwangkumki jinkyong sidae* (Korean Culture of the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries) (Seoul: Dolpeke, 1998).
5. For additional information on Kang Huion, see Ahn Hwijoon *et al.*, *P'ungsok hwa* (Genre Painting) (Seoul: Chung'ang ilbosa, 1985), pp. 223-24; Lee Soon-mi, "Damjol Kang Huion ŭi hoehwa yŏn'gu" (Research on Kang Huion's Painting) M.A. thesis (Hongik University, 1995).
6. For more information on Chŏng Sŏn and his "True-View Landscape" in English see Lena Kim, "Chŏng sŏn: A Korean Landscape Painter", *Apollo* (August, 1968), pp. 85-93; Kumja P. Kim, "Chong Son (1676-1759): His Life and Career", *Artibus Asiae* (1992), vol. 52, no. 3/4, pp. 329-43; Yi Songmi, "Artistic Tradition and the Depiction of Reality: True-View Landscape Painting of the Chosŏn Dynasty", in Chung Yangmo, Ahn Hwijoon *et al.*, *Arts of Korea* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art), pp. 330-65. For more information on Chŏng Sŏn in Korean, seeYi Taeho, *Chosŏn hugi hoehwa ŭi sasil chŏngsin* (Realism in Late Chosŏn Dynasty Painting) (Seoul: Hakkojae, 1996), pp. 44-55; Choi Wansu, "Kyomjae Chŏng Sŏn kwa jinkyong sansupung", in Choi Wansu *et al.*, *Uri munhwa ui hwangkumki jinkyong sidae*, pp. 51-108.
7. See JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Rescoring the Universal in a Korean Mode: Eighteenth-Century Korean Culture", in Hongnam Kim, ed., *Korean Arts of the Eighteenth Century: Splendor and Simplicity* (New York: Asia Society Galleries), pp. 23-33.
8. For further information on Sirhak, see JaHyun Kim Haboush, "The Sirhak Movement of the Late Yi Dynasty", *Korean Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Summer, 1987), pp. 20-7.
9. For possible Western influences on Kang Huion's landscapes, see Lee Soon-mi, "Damjol Kang Huion ui hoehwa yŏn'gu", pp. 35-6, 41; Yi Songmi, *Chosŏn sidae kurimsok ŭi sŏyanghwapup* (Western Influence on Korean Painting of the Late Chosŏn Period) (Seoul: Daewonsa, 2000), pp. 154-56.
10. For more information on Kim Hongdo's paintings in English, see Kumja P. Kim's two articles, "Tanwon and the Development of Korean Genre Painting", *Korean Culture*, vol. 4, no. 2 (June 1983), pp. 32-45 and "A Yi Dynasty Court Painter, Kim Hong-do (1745-before 1818): Seen Through the *Tanwon yumuk* and His Landscape Paintings", *Oriental Art* (Spring 1986) vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 34-47. For publications in Korean, see Choi Wansu, Ŏ Chusŏk *et al.*, *Tanwon Kim Hongdo* (Seoul: National Museum of Korea, 1995); Ŏ Chusŏk, *Tanwon Kim Hongdo* (Seoul: Irhwadang, 1998).
11. Yi Taeho, *Chosŏn hugi hoehwa ŭi sasil chŏngsin* p. 193. For a colour reproduction of this screen, see Choi Wansu, Ŏ Chusŏk *et al.*, *Tanwon Kim Hongdo*, pp. 80-4. For the English translation of Kang Sehwang's colophons, see Kumja P. Kim, "Tanwon and the Development of Korean Genre Painting", pp. 40-1.
12. For another painting depicting a common woman, see Saehyang P. Chung, "New Findings on Some Possible Artistic Antecedents of Kim Hongdo's Lunch", *Acta Koreana*, vol. 2 (July1999), pp. 67-89.
13. For a good example of Chosŏn-dynasy literature that satirises upper-class men, see Pak Chiwon's (1737-1805) "The Story of Yangban", in Peter H. Lee, compiled and edited., *Anthology of Korean Literature From Early Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1990), pp. 213-21. For more information on satires about upper-class men, see Cho Dongil, "Yangban and the Common People in Korean Literature of the Eighteenth Century", *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 31-38; Pak Noch'un, "Pak Chi-won, Satirist of the Aristocratic Society", *Korea Journal* (March, 1974), vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 48-54.
14. For information on Sin Yunbok, see Choi Sunu, "Ijo hoehwa e nat'anan erŏt'issijm" (Eroticism in Yi dynasty Painting), *Konggan* (1968), vol. 3, pp. 47-53; Ahn Hwijoon *et al.*, *P'ungsokhwa* (Genre painting) (Seoul: Chung'ang ilbosa, 1985), pp. 232-34; Yi Taeho, *Chosŏn hugi hoehwa ŭi sasil chŏngsin*, 243-60.
15. For a brief description of this painting, see Cho Sunmi's entry in Hongnam Kim ed., *Korean Arts of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 226.
16. I am deeply indebted to Professor Peter H. Lee of UCLA for giving me this valuable information. He also kindly provided the following reference materials that can be considered to be anti-Buddhist or satires of Buddhist monks. For the official anti-Buddhist policy of the Chosŏn dynasty, see canto 107 in Peter H. Lee's *Songs of Flying Dragons: A Critical Reading* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 254. The hero of Ho Kyun's (1569-1618) "The Tale of Hong Kiltong" was anti-Buddhist in his raid of the Haein Temple. For "The Tale of Hong Kiltong", see Peter H. Lee's translation in *Anthology of Korean Literature: From Early Times to the Nineteenth Century*, rev. ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 119-47. For an episode which can be read as a satire of Buddhist monks, see also Peter H. Lee's *A Korean Storyteller's Miscellany: The P'aegwan chapki of Ŏ Sukkwŏn* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 103.
17. For information on the paintings of Yun Tusŏ and Cho Yongsŏk, see Yi Taeho, *Chosŏn hugi hoehwa ŭi sasil chŏngsin*, pp. 152-80.
18. See Saehyang P. Chung, "Sin Yunbok's Amorous Themes and their Possible Relationship to Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian Engravings". *Oriental Art* (2000), vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 31-42.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 36-7.
20. Chŏng Pyŏngmo, *Chosŏn sidae huban'gi P'ungsokhwa ŭi yŏn'gu* (Research on Late Chosŏn Dynasty Genre Painting), Ph.D. dissertation, Dongguk University, Seoul, 1991, pp. 137-39.
21. Yi Taeho, *Misullo bon han'guk ŭi erŏt'issijm* (Korea's eroticism seen through her arts) (Seoul: Yosŏng sinmunsa, 1998), p. 120. According to R. H. Van Gulik, *Rou putuan* was very popular in both China and Japan all through the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. See his *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (Barnes & Nobles, Inc: New York, 1996), p. 302.
22. For reprints of the illustrations in 1644 edition of *Jin Ping Mei*, see Xiao Xiaosheng, *Jin Ping Mei zihua* (Hong Kong: Xinhai wenhua chuban yu xiankung si, 1987), vol. 4.
23. Jin Shengtan's (1608-1661) edition of *Xixiang ji* is reprinted in Jin Shengtan, *Jin shengtan piben Xixiang ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji qubanshe, 1986).
24. For illustrations of the Xiechunyuan edition of *Roupu tuan*, see Chen Qingjie and Wang Qiugui, ed., *Siwuxie huibao* (Taibei: Hezhuo chuban, 1994), vol. 15.
25. The author is currently doing research on the relationship between Sin Yunbok's genre paintings and illustrations in Chinese vernacular literature.
26. For new studies on Sin Yunbok's geneology, see Yi Yangjae, "Hyewon Sin Yunbok ŭl ch'jasŏ" and Yi Wonbok, "Hyewon Sin Yunbok ŭi karyŏjin silche" (Sin Yunbok's Hidden Identity), *Kana Art* (1997), pp. 66-70.
27. For background information on courtesans, see Chang Sa-hun, "Women entertaininers of the Yi Dynasty", in Park Younghai, ed., *Women of the Yi Dynasty*, Studies on Korean Women Series 1 (Seoul: Research Center for Asian Women, Sookmyung Women's University, 1986); Reta Rentner, "Women and the Portrayal of Women in Classical Korean Literature", Papers of the 5th International Conference on Korean Studies (Songnam: Han'guk Chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1988), pp. 917-31; Constantine Contogenis and Wolhee Choe, *Songs of the Kisaeng* (Boa Editions, Ltd: Rochester, 1997), pp. 11-20.
28. For poems by Chosŏn-dynasty courtesans, see Constantine Contogenis and Wolhee Choe, *Songs of the Kisaeng: Courtesan Poetry of the Last Korean Dynasty*; Junghee Mun, *Kisaeng sijip* (Anthology of Poems by Courtesans) (Seoul: Haenam, 2000).

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Publishing Manager
LAURE LAU

Design & Production
SARES KANAPATHY

All correspondence for subscriptions, editorial and production:
90 Park Avenue, Suite 1700, PMB #106
New York, NY 10016, USA

Level 25, Bank of China Tower,
1 Garden Road, Central,
Hong Kong

268 Orchard Road, #10-01
Singapore 238856

Email: orientalart@orientalartmag.com
Tel: 65-7379931/7375189
Fax: 65-7373190

Advertising: USA East Coast
FRED STERN
44 Paulin Blvd,Leonia
New Jersey 07605, USA
Tel: 1-201-947-2674
Fax: 1-201-947-9420

Advertising: Benelux Countries & Germany
DIANNE BIEDERBERG
Buyskade 39b
1051 HT Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Tel: 31-20-684-7777
Fax: 31-20-688-1374

Advertising: United Kingdom
CHARLES FINCH
23 Farm Road
Morden, Surrey SM4 6RA, United Kingdom
Tel: 44-208-648-8852
Fax: 44-208-687-1741

USA/Canada Trade/Distribution Enquiries:
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Scene by a wayside chapel, oil on canvas, folding screen panel mounted as hanging scroll. 17th century. 162 x 42 cm. Manuel Castilho Collection, Lisbon.

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