

## ON THE MEANING OF THE TERM CHINGYONGSANSUHWA

### (眞景山水畫)

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The *Chingyongsansuhwa* (眞景山水畫) landscape began to form in Korea in the late XVII century, and it was evolving during the XVIII century, altering in the works of successive artists. H.J. Ahn's (2011) definition of *chingyongsansuhwa* is the most common one used in the South Korean art history: *chingyongsansuhwa* are paintings of actual and the most beautiful Korean landscapes executed in technique and manner developed by Korean artists in the XVIII century based on traditions of Chinese South School. The term *chingyongsansuhwa* is generally translated into Russian as “the images of the real views”, O.N. Glukhareva (1982) called the movement “Korean national realistic landscape”, realistic depiction of nature is recognized to be its main characteristic. However *chingyongsansuhwa* is more complex phenomenon than just a realistic depiction of actual nature's views. In this article we will make an attempt to understand what the term means and suggest possible options for its translation into Russian.

#### Keywords:

chingyongsansuhwa, noron, chingyong, Joseon, Kim Changheup, Chong Son.

### 진경산수화(眞景山水畫)의 의미에 대한 검토

진경산수화(眞景山水畫)는 17세기 말에 형성되기 시작했고, 18세기 동안 여러 화가들에 의해 발전되고 있었다. 안휘준 교수가 내린 진경산수화의 정의는 한국에서 가장 널리 통용되고 있다. 이에 따르면 “진경산수화는 한국에 실제로 존재하는 명산승경을 소재로 하여, 중국의 남종화법에 토대를 두고 18세기 한국에서 새로 개발된 한국적 화풍으로 그려낸 것이다.” 러시아에서는 진경산수화를 “the images of the real views (изображение реальных видов)”라고 번역하고, 러시아의 한국 미술 전문가인 글루하레바 (는 자연의 사실적인 묘사가 진경산수화의 주요 특징이라고 하면서 진경산수화를 “한국의 민족적인 사실주의적인 산수화”라고 하였다. 하지만 진경산수화는 자연을 사실적으로 묘사하는 것 이상의 훨씬 더 복잡한 현상이다. 본 논문은 진경산수화의 의미를 파악하고자 한다. 그 의미를 분석한 후, 러시아어로 진경산수화를 어떻게 번역하면 좋을지에 대한 고찰을 시도한다.

#### 키워드:

진경산수화, 노론, 진경, 김창협, 정선.

The *Chingyongsansuhwa* (眞景山水畫) landscape began to form in Korea in the late XVII century, and it was evolving during the XVIII century,

altering in the works of successive artists. H.J. Ahn's (2011) definition of *chingyongsansuhwa* is the most common one used in the South Korean art history: *chingyongsansuhwa* are paintings of actual and the most beautiful Korean landscapes executed in technique and manner developed by Korean artists in the XVIII century based on traditions of Chinese South School. The term *chingyongsansuhwa* is generally translated into Russian as “the images of the real views”, O.N. Glukhareva (1982) called the movement “Korean national realistic landscape”, realistic depiction of nature is recognized to be its main characteristic. However *chingyongsansuhwa* is more complex phenomenon than just a realistic depiction of actual nature's views.

Since the reign of the Goryeo Dynasty landscapes with depiction of Korean nature were called *silgyongnsansuhwa* (山水畫實景), where 實 means “real”, 景 – “view” and *sansuhwa* “landscape”, i.e. the term could be literally translated as “the images of real landscapes”. It is well-known that Korean artists had been painting mostly Chinese nature sceneries for centuries. That is why the term *silgyongnsansuhwa* was introduced to distinguish the paintings of Korean nature. The *chingyongsansuhwa* concept became widespread at the turn of XVII–XVIII centuries. It was applied to landscapes, which in the realistic manner depicted famous beautiful Korean landscapes, but the ultimate goal of which was to reproduce the *chongi* (“the work of heaven”) principle (天機), described below. The difference between the *silgyongnsansuhwa* and the *chingyongsansuhwa* terms is reflected in English translation of these two words: *chingyongsansuhwa* is translated as “true-view landscape” and *silgyongnsansuhwa* as “real-view landscapes”. In Russia, as far as we know, until now there was no elevated attempt to understand the meaning of the *chingyongsansuhwa* term and to offer a translation, which would correspond to its original meaning. In this article we will make an attempt to understand what the term means and suggest possible options for its translation into Russian.

The *chingyongsansuhwa* term consists of two parts: *chingyon* and *sansuhwa*, the second part – *sansuhwa* – does not seem particularly difficult for understanding and translation into Russian. *Sansuhwa* (山水畫) literally means “the painting of mountains and waters”, i.e., “the image of a natural landscape”. The first part of the *chingyon* term is more complex and ambiguous. The character *chin* (眞) means “true, real, genuine”, and *kyung* (景) means “view, landscape”. Thus, *chingyon* can be translated as “genuine (true) view”, and the whole *chingyongsansuhwa* term as “the image of genuine (true) views of mountains and waters” or, in a simpler

way, “the image of genuine (true) landscape”. In order to understand what “the image of genuine (true) landscape” means and to find out which version of the translation expresses the essence of the phenomenon more accurately, it is necessary to understand what Joseon artists meant by it in XVIII century when *chingyongsansuhwa* was formed and developed.

Until the middle of the XVIII century, the term was written as a combination of the following characters: *chin* (眞) – “genuine (true)”, and *gyon* (境) – “border, region”. This combination had the same meaning as *shingyon* (仙境) – “celestial + border, region”, i.e. a place inhabited by celestial beings. Later, in the middle of the XVIII century character *gyon* (境), “border, region”, was replaced by (*gyon*) 景 “view” and the *chingyon* concept – “genuine (true) border” – began to mean “genuine (true) view”. Such substitution of characters supposedly occurred alongside with changes in the understanding of the goal of landscape painting.

As we mentioned above, in early Joseon *chingyon* was used as “genuine (true) border, region” meaning a place inhabited by gods, a perfect world. This place had a precise geographic location – Kumgang Mountains, known as one of the most picturesque places on the Korean peninsula. Beginning with the reign of the Goryeo Dynasty intellectuals travelled to the mountains hoping to understand the Tao 道. E.S.Park discovered (1997) that a trip to Kumgang was called *simchin* 尋眞 “the search for truth”. Until the end of the XVII century travels to Kumgang had not been a frequent phenomenon. But in the XVIII century, they proliferated among intellectuals, and became almost mandatory. Travels to Kumgang were popularized by the *noron* group led by two brothers Kim Changheup (金昌翁, 1653–1722) and Kim Changhyup (金昌協, 1651–1708). The *norons* formed a new type of literature, called *chinmun*. It was the *norons* who gave birth to the *chingyongsansuhwa* and influenced the artistic development of Chong Son (1676–1758), the pioneer and the leader of the trend.

Since trips to Kumgang Mountains gave “spiritual liberation” and served as a way to forget about everyday life and the bustle of rapidly growing cities, many of the *norons* would repeat such trips several times, despite the fact that they were costly and unsafe. Standing at the famous Kuryon waterfalls (“The Nine Dragons Waterfalls”) Kim Changheup wrote: “Suddenly my ears hear and my eyes see something strange and wonderful and magnificent, soul trembles and feels not what it felt yesterday. Now I know that the human soul changes depending on the atmosphere”. The *norons* described the impressions they got during their trips in verses that were called *chingyonsi* (眞詩) “the genuine (true) poetry”, and also in

paintings, which they called *chinhwa* (眞畫) “the genuine (true) painting”. A great number of poems were dedicated to Kumgang, and the mountains were the main theme of Chon Son’s oeuvre.

While in the mountains the *norons* tried to fell and capture *chongi* (天機) “lit. celestial mechanism”, the driving force of nature. V. Malyavin (1995) translated *chongi* as “heavenly spring”, explaining that “in the Taoist literature it indicates an internal impulse of self-life, symbolically completed existence, the power of “the suchness” of things correlated with “the Heavenly” dimension of existence (i.e. anticipating all its forms)”. Korean researchers explain *chongi* as 자연의 기밀 “mystery of nature”, 모든 조화를 꾸미는 하늘의 기밀 “heavenly secret that creates harmony”, 하늘의 기밀 또는造化(造化)의 신비 “heavenly secrets and mysteries of harmony”, 자연 운행 속의 숨어 있는 기밀 “secret hidden in the movement of nature”. *Chongi* is a kind of primordial, absolute harmony, free from the human passions. The following explanation is very depictive: “*Chongi* is a fish swimming in the water. Do not throw the bait”. *Chongi* is everywhere, as Kim Chanhyp explained, it can be felt during calm contemplation of nature, when one is free from any human desires and passions. *Chongi* cannot be understood while studying a book, it can be felt while being one on one with nature. Y.H. Ko (2007) cited Kim Chanhyp: “How can the greatness and the mystery (the true essence) of mountains and water (nature) be understood, if one does not go deep into the mountains in spite of danger?”

The *chongi* concepts with the character 眞 is explained in the chapter of “Zhuangzi”, titled “The supreme teacher”. It is said that *chinin* (眞人) “the true man” lives by the heavenly action, rather than by that of a human; the “ordinary people”, as opposed to “the true ones”, are deeply penetrated by their desires, while the source of heavenly life (天機) lies on the surface. A true human being “does not harm the way by theorizing, does not substitute the heavenly for human”, he lives according to the true heavenly knowledge following “the four seasons in his feelings”. Thus, *chin* (眞) is only what is “similar to everything heavenly (*chongi*), but not to that of human”.

The *norons* were convinced that only poetry and painting, which are *chongi*, can be called true poetry and painting, because only *chongi* is true: “*chin* can’t be not *chongi*” (“진(眞)은 어찌 천기(天機)라고 하지 않을 수 있겠는가”). As Y.H. Ko mentioned (2007) brothers Kim Changheup and Kim Chanhyp, who were the main preachers of *chinsi* (眞詩) “the genuine (true) poetry”, thought that *chongi* should serve as the main guide in art and “only after discovering *chongi* one can write good poetry”,

because “poetry is a movement of *chongi*”. In *chinsi* as S.M. Yi explained (1999) everything “flows out of *chongi*, a poet must create in the same manner the heaven does, this meant to illustrate the instinctive artist’s work in the state of inspiration”. Depiction of *chongi* as mentioned in S.P. Hong’s book (1999) was the purpose of the true act of creation, and in order to achieve this the artist by studying an object had to understand *chongi* with his soul and express it in his work. The Kim Brothers and their supporters stressed the importance of direct contemplation, personal experience of communication with nature for chanting its beauty. In their poetry the noron’s poetry frequently suggest that contemplation of the mountains and the felling of *chongi* changes the human soul and that the person feels so called *heung* (興), excitement: “through coming into contact with the energy of the mountains and the water a man feels refreshed ...”, “the soul trembles and feels something it didn’t feel yesterday”. In their poetry they wanted to reliably describe the state of excitement, emotions and feelings experienced during contemplation of nature.

From the few documented arguments by the norons about the issues of painting, which survived till our days, it is clear that the main task of the painting as well as that of the poetry was the depiction of *chongi*. The *norons* wrote that *chongi* must be sensed in the painting, that is why the main prerequisite for the painting was the artist’s knowledge of *chongi* and his love for it, “The learned man must draw because of his love for *chongi*”. A true work of art can only be created in a state close to *chongi*, state of inspiration when the consciousness of the artist operates freely. It should be noted that the understanding of creativity as a revelation, and understanding of the artist as a tool, through which “the self-creation” of art is a characteristic feature of the entire painting of intellectuals as Y.V. Zavadskaya explained (1975), and not exclusively that of the noron’s. What differs the *norons* from the other schools is their conviction of the necessity of personal experience of communication with nature. The author’s personality was highly regarded in painting as well as his ability to express *chongi*. For this reason the *norons* insisted on the need to stop copying landscapes painted by masters of the past. “Through copying the works of the ancient ones it is impossible to express ... *chongi*, the appearance is expressed weakly, and the spirit is devoid of sensuality ... if one does not copy the works of the ancient ones, the spirit comes to life naturally, and the appearance and the essence combine in the painting”. A member of the noron group, Lee Hagon, as E.S. Park mentioned (1997) wrote about one of Chong Son’s paintings: “Kim Changheup says that a

poet, who writes today, stands much higher above even the best of those who wrote before, I think the same is equally right for the artists”.

The *norons* believed that accurate reproduction of an object’s appearance is not a purpose of the art. An artist had to create realistic picture. However the accuracy was realised not by copying the object’s appearance, but by expressing its essence (전신) through reproduction of the main feature of the object, which embodied its essence. Kim Changhyup wrote that the landscape did not have to be realistic, and a picture could be more beautiful than a real landscape, because the meaning of painting was the transmission of the feelings of admiration and the delight that the author experienced during the contemplation of beautiful landscapes. This emotional delight helped to express *chongi*.

Chong Son’s landscapes of famous beautiful views of the Kungang Mountains and other famous landscapes were created under the influence of such understanding of the tasks of painting and of the art in general. Chong Son was considered to be the best artists of the *noron* group. He painted albums with pictures of landscapes that inspired the Kim brothers and many others. It is well-know that Korean artists for centuries had been drawing inspiration from the Chinese paintings and had been creating so-called conceptual landscapes of imaginary views. Chong Son painted what he saw. It is obvious that his paintings are rather transformed depictions of the real landscapes. The artist manipulated the nature freely re-shaping it in accordance with his task to embody *chongi* in his work. Chong Son, wrote that the artist must create freely in unison with the Heaven: “If you intrust your brush to the movements of your soul, the landscape naturally becomes the sense of the Heaven (天趣) and there is nothing in it resembling the work of human hands, it is a living brush (活筆)”. Resemblance was not the main purpose of the artist, he sought to express the emotional state of a person who contemplated a particular landscape. This may explain the expressiveness of Chong Son’s landscapes, which is a striking hallmark of his works.

Thus, *chingyongsansuhwa*, developed by Chong Son, are the landscapes of Korean nature views famous for their exceptional beauty of created in a state of emotional excitement, in which the artist worked freely in unison with *chongi*. The purpose of these landscapes is expression of *chongi*. *Chingyongsansuhwa* was developed as a new type of painting, free from imitation and reproduction of the earlier paintings; the importance was given to the author’s personal experience and his emotions. Though *chingyongsansuhwa* was undoubtedly developed by the *noron* group they

didn't use the term *chingyongsansuhwa*, as we mentioned above, they called the paintings of the new type *chinhwa*.

Under the influence of the *sirhak* movement and Western pictorial tradition in the first half of the XVIII century a different understanding of landscape painting was formed. Artists tried to create more realistic landscapes and in order to achieve this they began to explore the western painting technique. *Chingyon*, meaning “the genuine (true) view” as E.S. Park discovered (1997) first appeared in the works of Lee Ik (李穡, 1681–1763), who was a representative of the *sirhak* movement. He applied the term *chingyon* to the paintings of Korean nature executed in the realistic manner. Lee Ik's worldview was formed under the influence of his knowledge of the Western civilization, and his understanding of the painting's task was formed after he had studied the European painting tradition. The pictures by Korean artists seemed “false” to him, as the landscapes depicted in them had nothing to do with the real nature: “When I look at the pictures created in the past and today, I'm amazed by their strangeness and fallacy. I am sure that such landscapes do not exist. They were painted exclusively for the viewer's pleasure... These strange paintings can be compared to people who lie and embellish to deceive the interlocutor”. Lee Ik insisted that to create *chingyon* and to reveal the essence of an object (진신) it is necessary to maximally reproduce its appearance, since “the spirit is inside the form; if the form is not depicted correctly how can it illustrate the spirit?” Previously, the expression of the essence was also considered to be the necessary characteristic of the landscape painting, but resemblance was not the ultimate goal and was not the guarantee of the essence expression. Lee Ik and other members of *sirhak* stressed the necessity of accurate reproduction of the appearance of an object. “How can you say that the essence was conveyed, if the image does not look like the original”, they asked. Such understanding of the task of painting and the urge for realism spread among amateur and professional artists in the second half of XVIII – early XIX centuries.

E.H. Ko (2007) mentioned that many artists of the second half of the XVIII century, believed that they “should draw only what their eyes sees”, as one of the supporters of realistic painting, an artist-intellectual Jong Suën Jong (1743–1831), wrote on his Kumgang Mountain landscape. Kang Sehwang (姜世晃, 1713–1791), the main promoter of the realistic landscape was also influenced by Lee Ik. He stressed the importance of the accurate, objective depiction of real landscapes and compared *chingyongsansuhwa* with painting a portrait: “Just as people want to have their portraits to be

exact replicas of their appearance, the spirit of the mountain, if it exists, would like to be portrayed as it is, in accordance with reality”. Kang Sehwang sharply criticised the Kim brothers’s lyrics and Chong Son’s paintings for being not realistic. He called Kim Hongdo (金弘道, 1745–1806) the ideal artist. Kim Hongdo, who served as a court painter, created several albums of the Kumgang mountains’ views ordered by the king. The comparison of Kim Hongdo’s works with those of Chong Son clearly demonstrates that the former sought to depict realistic landscape, using linear perspective to create the effect of depth and chiaroscuro to create volume. There are opinions that the artist even used the camera obscura to capture views of nature more accurately.

The representatives of the *noron* group, who used the first term – *chinhwa*, believed that the landscape has to express the emotional state of the author at the time of contemplation of nature, in which he works in unison with *chongi*. Exact reproduction of the appearance of the object was not the purpose of the art. The authors, who were influenced by the *sirhak* ideas sought to capture landscape accurately because they were convinced that the essence could be expressed only by exact depiction of an object appearance. They called their landscape paintings *chingyongsansuhwa*, “the images of genuine (true) view”. It is important that both schools wanted to depict an essence of a landscape in paintings, even striving for maximum resemblance was explained by desire to convey the essence of the subject.

Thus, we have established that *chingyongsansuhwa* is inhomogeneous phenomenon, and that it can even be divided into two stages: the late XVII – early XVIII century (Chong Son) and the second half of the XVIII century – beginning of the XIX century (Kang Sehwang, Kim Hongdo). We can offer two definitions. The first stage of *chingyongsansuhwa* is characterized by images of exceptionally beautiful real views of Korean nature, seen directly by the author, the purpose of these images is the embodiment and expression of emotions author experienced at the moment of contemplation of nature. The second stage is characterized by the image of real views of Korean nature, exceptional in their beauty, seen directly by the author, depicted in a realistic manner with the purpose to reveal the essence of the depicted object.

It is possible to select the following adjectives to translate into Russian the concept of *chingen*: genuine (настоящий), true (истинный) or real (реальный) landscapes. The translation of the term as “real”, in our opinion, does not fully reveal the meaning of the term *chingyon*, since it has the meaning of “really existing, not imaginary” and to a lesser extent



“true”. Since it is important to reflect in the Russian translation the desire of the artists to capture the essence of the subject, it is possible to offer to use the adjective “true” and translate *chingyongsansuhwa* as “depiction of true views”. However, in this case, another underlying meaning, which is “the best”, would be omitted, and it plays an important part in the *chingyongsansuhwa* conception, because artists drew exceptionally beautiful landscapes. It is not easy, if not impossible, to reflect all components and shades of the term in one Russian adjective. For this reason, it seems appropriate to offer not to translate the term *chingyongsansuhwa* in full, but to introduce the concept of “landscape *chingyon*”, which would mean a picture of real views of Korean nature, exceptional in their beauty, seen directly by the author, made in the realistic manner, the ultimate goal of which is to reveal the essence of the depicted object.

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