

Mt. Geumgangsán and its Literary Figuration: An Analysis on Yi Sangsu's Travelogue in the Late-Joseon Period

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Geumgangsán, one of the most famous mountains on the Korean peninsula, has been constantly beloved by Korean people. Many writers have written poems, *gasa* (song texts), and travelogues after visiting Geumgangsán. Yi Sangsu, a writer in the late Joseon period, has also left both "Donghaesansu gi" (The Travelogue of Geumgangsán) and "Eodang geumgang byeolgok" (Yi Sangsu's Song Text of Geumgangsán). This essay fully analyzes literary characteristics of "Dong-haengsansu gi". I examined what Geumgangsán meant to the author, what the author's attitude was toward traveling to Geumgangsán, and what the author stressed in terms of descriptions in the narrative.

Geumgangsán is the source of national pride to Yi Sangsu. Thus, he stresses that Geumgangsán is one of the most beautiful mountains in the world. He fully exercises his power of imagination to represent nature freely in the form of literature by observing Geumgangsán's diverse scenes. Yi thinks that autonomous and active observation is necessary to any traveler who wants to appreciate the real beauty of Geumgangsán. For this reason, travelers need to be free from any desire of possessing natural beauty of Geumgangsán. Yi expresses more interest in Oegeumgang (Outer Geumgang) and Haegeumgang (Costal Geumgang) on purpose, which are often neglected by travelers, than Naegeumgang (Inner Geumgang). The author does not only focus on the description of the famous scenery but also other things he observes and experiences during the journey, including his mistakes.

"Dong-haengsansu gi" consists of twenty-two independent works concerning travels to Geumgangsán. Some of the works contain predicates in their titles. This demonstrates the author's interest in describing the journey itself. Yi does not pay much attention to people, anecdotes, or cultural objects such as temples. Instead, he concentrates on natural objects and his impressions of them. This distinguishes "Dong-haengsansu gi" from his *gasa*

“Eodang geumgang byeolgok” and other people’s travel records of Geumgangsan. Thus, he introduces his travels full of creative descriptions and detailed narratives.

Keywords: “Donghaesansu gi,” *Yi Sangsu, Geumgangsan, attitude toward traveling mountains, writing style, “Eodang Geumgangbyeolgok,” Kim Chang-hyeop, “Dong-yu gi”*.

Introduction

Geumgangsan is a mountain located near the border dividing the Korean Peninsular into two. It acts as a place allowing the people from the two Koreas to meet and make peace with each other. Since the two independent governments were established in the late 1940’s, it was forbidden for people from the South to visit the North until Geumgangsan, the region in North Korea, was opened to South Korean tourist groups. Geumgangsan is not only the symbol for the hope of Korean reunification today but has also acted as the motivation of writers and poets throughout Korean literary history.

Since the 1990’s, in the atmosphere of reconciliation between the two Koreas, research on literature about Geumgangsan has been even more popular in South Korea. Scholars studying Korean classical literature have put more emphasis on the travelogues and poems in classical Chinese and gasa (song texts) in old style Korean language created along the theme of Geumgangsan than before.¹ Diverse research has revealed both the significance of traveling to Geumgangsan and characteristics of travel literature about Geumgangsan in pre-modern society of Korea. As Yi Jongmuk describes, it can be said that during the Goryeo (918-1392) and the early Joseon (Joseon: 1392-1910) periods Geumgangsan was widely recognized as one of the symbols of an ideal Buddhist world. Geumgangsan’s fame in those days can be proven by a record that Indian Buddhist monk Jigong pursued his cultivation at the mountain when he traveled to Goryeo dynasty. Since the establishment of the Joseon dynasty,

1. Some examples include Yi Hye-sun (1991), Kang Hye-seon (1992), Choi Gang-hyeon (1992), Yi Hye-sun et. al. (1997), Jo Dong-il (1988), Min Byeong-su (1998), Yi Jong-muk (1998), Sim Gyeong-ho (1998), Gang Hye-seon (1998) and Kim Gi-yeong (1999).

Chinese envoys were also attracted by Geumgangsan's beauty and wanted to experience an ideal world of Buddhism. Kings of early Joseon such as Taejo (r. 1392-1398), Sejong (r. 1418-1450), and Sejo (r. 1455-1468) also showed their interest in Geumgangsan. For instance, King Sejo showed his impression of Geumgangsan with the expression that mysterious and spectacular scenes of the mountain were created by Buddha's divine power.² However, during the late Joseon period, travel literature on Geumgangsan showed different trends from works of the Goryeo and the early Joseon periods. Buddhist significance of Geumgangsan became weakened in late Joseon, and travelers and writers mainly sought after the real beauty of Geumgangsan. In particular, Joseon writers such as Kim Chang-hyeop (1651-1708) and Kim Chang-heup (1653-1722) described Geumgangsan with their realistic view, which was based on the influence of the Gong-an school's travel writings in the Ming dynasty of China (Koh 1999: 247-248). During the 18th century, the literature of Geumgangsan also had a strong link with Geumgangsan paintings. Kim Chang-hyeop's literature had influence on the realistic Geumgangsan paintings of Jeong Seon (1676-1759), Sim Sajeong (1707-1769), Kang Sehwang (1712-1791), and Kim Hongdo (1745-?), whose paintings in turn led literary men to a realistic criticism on works of art (Kang Hyeseon 1998: 90-91). This realistic trend of literature and art related to Geumgangsan still survived in the 19th century of Joseon to some extent.³

This essay focuses on Yi Sangsu (1820-1882; pen name, Eodang)'s travelogue written after his visit to Geumgangsan in the 19th century. His work demonstrates the characteristics of travelogue in the late Joseon dynasty. Among his writings, "Dong-haengsansu gi" (Travelogue of a Visit to Nature of the East) is particularly worth looking at since it is one of the most outstanding writings about Geumgangsan in terms of its detailed descriptions, narratives, and expressions of his feelings of each moment while traveling there. 'Travelogue of Mountain' (yusan gi) is regarded as an independent genre of writing in the East Asian tradition of literature. The major contents of 'Travelogue of Mountains' include descriptions of scenery, narratives of experience, personal feelings and

2. See Yi Jongmuk (1998: 23-29) for more about characteristics of journeys to Geumgangsan and literature written about Geumgangsan during the late Goryeo and the early Joseon periods.

3. Jeong Min (2001: 95) also shows a characteristic of travel literature in the 18th century. He emphasizes that interests in journeys to mountains in the 18th century were ignited by both concerns about everyday affairs and the amusement-seeking atmosphere of Joseon society.

other episodes. Various writing styles are also found. And the writer reveals his/her writing style by emphasizing certain elements while omitting others.

Yi Sangsu wrote several works with independent titles, each of which indicates a particular place or course in Geumgangsán. Apart from “Dong-haengsansu gi”, the titles are “Yu cheoriryeong gi”, “Ji jang-ansa gi”, “Jang-an dong myeonggyeongdae gi”, “Jang-an dong yeong-wondong gi”, “Osím baektap gi”, “Suk yeong-wonam gi”, “Jang-an seobuk jeo pyohunsa gi”, “Pyohunsa heolseongnu deungdo gi”, “Pyohunsa bukseo sumitap gi”, “Pyohun buk manpokpaldam gi”, “Jung-hyangseong gi”, “Yujeomsa seo eunseondae gi”, “Yujeomsa gumun gi”, “Sin-gyesa seo guryong-yeon gi”, “Sin-gye seobuk manmulcho gi”, “Goseong seo mang geumgang oesan gi”, “Goseong dong haegeumgang gi”, “Goseong buk samilpo gi”, “Byeong-hae bukhaeng gi”, “Tongcheon buk chongseok gi”, and “Jujicheondo gi”. All of these twenty-two works are the travelogue of Yi’s visit to Geumgangsán in the third month in 1856 according to the lunar calendar.⁴ The first title, “Dong-haengsansu gi”, meaning ‘Travelogue of a Visit to Nature of the East,’ i.e. Geumgangsán, is the prologue of the whole series. For this reason, “Dong-haengsansu gi”, which is originally the title of the first work of the series, is often used as the comprehensive title of the twenty-two pieces.

Since scholars studying Korean traditional literature recently recognized the significance of Yi Sangsu’s achievements in literature, research on his travelogue of Geumgangsán has yet to be speculated on more. Kim Jumi (1994) included “Dong-haengsansu gi” into her research for the purpose of examining the common characteristics of travelogue written in the late Joseon Dynasty. Kim Hyeoljo (1999) briefly mentioned it in order to demonstrate the significance of Geumgangsán in the tradition of Korean literature. Although some researchers, such as Kim Chaesik (2001), make comprehensive approaches to “Dong-haengsansu gi”, more researchers equipped with analytical concepts and critical viewpoints are still needed.

This essay mainly focuses on “Dong-haengsansu gi”. The characteristics of Yi’s writing style in terms of his description of Geumgangsán will be discussed in three parts. First, the significance of Geumgangsán will be examined from Yi

4. “Eodang geumgang byeol gok”, Yi Sangsu’s gasa work in old style Korean language, of travel to Geumgangsán, shows the date when he visited Geumgangsán. For the work of “Eodang geumgang byeolgok”, see Kang Jeonseop (1978) and Kim Gi-yeong (1999).

Sangsu's point of view. In other words, the question can be summarized as what Geumgangsán means to Yi. Second, Yi's view and attitude on traveling to Geumgangsán will be investigated. Last, Yi's writing style will be analyzed in terms of the objects of his descriptions.⁵

Geumgangsán as a Source of Pride and Imagination

What is the significance of Geumgangsán to Yi Sangsu, a writer living in the late Joseon dynasty? What aspect of Geumgangsán attracts Yi and makes him travel there to produce tremendous pieces of work? The most probable answer is that Geumgangsán is the source of Yi's pride of his nation and at the same time it is an unlimited source of imagination.

Yi Sangsu admires Geumgangsán as a source of national pride. This is why Yi writes that a famous Chinese writer in the Ming Dynasty, Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610) who was fascinated by Mount Zhaoling in China, "would have screamed like a crazy man with full of joy" if he had seen Geumgangsán. Moreover, Yi suggests that Du Mu, another writer in the Ming Dynasty, fails to fully appreciate the real beauty of Geumgangsán in his record "Xishan ji" (A Record of Xishan). These two statements tell us how much Yi Sangsu loves and takes pride in Geumgangsán. Yi strongly believes that Geumgangsán is more beautiful than famous mountains in China, which are commonly regarded to be superior to mountains in Korea. He is proud of Geumgangsán not only for the beauty they give Korea but also for the beauty they give the world.⁶ His pride in Geumgangsán provides motivation for him to travel around that mountain and produce the memoir "Dong-haengsansu gi".

Geumgangsán also provides Yi Sangsu a place to observe nature and to exercise his power of imagination. According to "Dong-haengsansu gi", Yi has the ability to capture the nature at its moment and to describe what he observes. Geumgangsán is famous for having various ways of observing it. In other words, depending on the angle and the direction of how one person is observing it, the same scene may look different. Yi's ability shines when he describes

5. The main text for this essay is "Dong-haengsansu gi" in *Eodangjip* (EDJ), the collection of Yi Sangsu's works in classical Chinese, held at the Academy of Korean Studies.

6. EDJ, 13: 31b.

splendid scenery such as the rocks catching his eyes on the way to Manggundae.

Rocks appear endlessly with unique shapes and picturesque scenery just like books piled up to the ceiling, boxes attached together, or a well made but unfinished staircase. They sometimes look as they are lining up and flapping their wings and flying up to the sky with hustle and bustle.⁷

Yi Sangsu acknowledges that the observer's mind and the ability of imagination make a great influence on his/her description of nature. According to these two factors, a glass of water can be described as roaring waterfall and a stone can be experienced as a splendid rock.⁸ Yi freely exercises his power of imagination on Geumgangsan, although it is believed to be impossible for a writer with limited talent to describe and express his/her thought. Yi certainly enjoys the opportunity to test his creativeness and unconventional views on objects and to recharge his power of imagination. Even though a person can be trained to improve his/her skills for a better observation and imagination in everyday routines, according to Yi Sangsu, experiencing extraordinary beauty such as Geumgangsan offers often provides a better chance for a writer to observe and to imagine broadly.

Author's Attitudes toward Mountain Travel in "Dong-haengsansu gi"

1. Observation Free from Desire

Yi Sangsu pays attention to the question of the relationship between subject and object in terms of desire. According to Yi, a subject ought to observe an object without any desire in his/her mind. This attitude plays the major role in Yi's trip to Geumgangsan. Most people often want to stay as long as possible when they see beautiful scenery. There are also others who regard nature as a means rather than as it is. Yi criticizes these people as projecting their desire onto an object. When a person projects his/her desire onto nature such as Geumgangsan and wants to possess it, he/she probably thinks in the same way as "a man with con-

7. *EDJ*, 13: 26b.

8. *EDJ*, 13: 27a.

cubines next to him listening to music being played in the mountain and eating fat meat.”⁹ According to Yi, the right attitude to observe the famous mountain is with simplicity. A person ought to have the simple mind “of feeling simply the joy of refreshment”¹⁰ to enjoy beautiful nature like Geumgangsan.

Yi Sangsu’s philosophy of observation free from desire leads him to make criticism against his contemporaries traveling mountains and writing travelogue about journeys to mountains. One of the criticisms he makes targets those who habitually imitate what their ancestors used to do regarding Geumgangsan. Especially, Yi makes a strong criticism against those who inscribe words onto the rocks all over Geumgangsan in their personal desire to possess nature.

“When people of old days feel moved, they used to do something without special purpose. However, nowadays people are superficially imitating what people in the past did everywhere in countless times, which is odious. Although Han Changli (Tang China, 768-824) left inscriptions in Chongshan and Su Dongpo (Song China, 1036-1101) did in Xianyou, they did not always do so when they traveled. Nevertheless, Geumgangsan is now fully covered with inscriptions starting from the East Gate of the Jang-ansa temple, increasing in number in Myoenggyoengdae and culminating in Manpokdong so that there is no room even on a hand-sized stone. Yuan Hongdao says: ‘A person robbing a mountain or even taking away a stone from it should be legally punished. However, why is it not forbidden by law that morally corrupted man damages and pollutes the auspicious mountains? Why do people inscribe words onto the faces of innocent green mountains and white stones and tear their flesh? Alas! They do not have benevolence’.”¹¹

In spite of certain exaggerations, Yi’s statement demonstrates how the inscriptions damage the nature he saw on his journey from Jang-ansa temple through Myoenggyoengdae to Manpokdong. Referring Yuan Hongdao’s words, Yi strongly criticizes morally corrupted mandarins for inscribing their words everywhere on Geumgangsan.

9. *EDJ*, 13: 33b.

10. *EDJ*, 13: 33b.

11. *EDJ*, 13: 35b-36a.

2. Traveler's Active Observation

Yi Sangsu expresses his own judgments based on critical thinking throughout his travelogue. Even though he refers to his guide explaining objects, he always makes his final decision in understanding what he sees. Yi's critical thinking makes his experience unique and his writing special. Rather than simply following a monk guiding him to Geumgangsan, he sometimes doubts what the guide says. On the way to Baektabdong (Valley with One Hundred Pagodas of Pebbles), the monk guiding the route reaches a spot and tells Yi that spot is Baektabdong. However, Yi himself does not believe the guide because there is not any sign or inscription saying that this is Baektabdong. He is sure that there must be such a sign according to travelogues he read of before.¹²

Yi's independent judgment on what he observes is based on his critical thinking. While Yi is passing a spot called Manmulcho, a guide exaggerates the mysterious scenery by comparing the shapes of rocks with "an old man, a hawk, a dog, a lion, a tiger, a horse, a bull, a sage, an angel, a bird, a crane, a bamboo shoot and a calyx". Criticizing the guide, Yi stresses the importance of the traveler's own observation, which is independent of any bias imposed by a guide. He says, "Since I have my own eyes, why should I depend on the guide's mouth?"¹³ While he is visiting Haegeumgang (Costal Geumgang) where Geumgangsan meets the East Sea, he also remains believing that it is more than enough to observe nature by the guidance of the traveler's own mind. Quoting one of the sayings in Buddhism "In the East Sea, there are eight Geumgangsans. One of them emerged from the sea with dust and lotus flowers accompanying when Buddha was born. The others are still waiting for the future Buddha coming from under the sea", Yi poses a question in a sarcastic tone of how it can be possible.¹⁴

Yi Sangsu does not hesitate to express his criticism against the mystification of Geumgangsan. Referring to myths, fairy tales and other stories relevant to a certain object he hears, he attaches his own judgment separate from the references. For example, after introducing many different stories about the Yujeomsa temple without editing, he adds his criticism against Buddhist monks' beliefs of

12. EDJ, 13: 27b.

13. EDJ, 13: 42a.

14. EDJ, 13: 43a-43b.

mysticism in the end. He says, “Regarding famous mountains, Buddhist monks always distort and exaggerate the fact with beautiful expression to mystify the main object (or the mountain).”¹⁵

Yi thinks that the objects of observation should be appreciated without any prejudice created by names and more importantly, the beauty of nature itself includes that of nameless objects and is what people have to enjoy. He believes that names of Buddhist pagodas and the names of places prevent people from understanding and appreciating the real beauty of Geumgangsan accurately. He even argues that “names recklessly given by those who like making stories misguide the travelers”.¹⁶

The author’s independent observation free from any presupposition of objects such as names of objects is the reason why the descriptions of objects in “Dong-haengsansu gi” are so unique. The descriptions such as “its (Sumibong Peak) bottom is so sharp as if it were a sword made of jade fallen from the sky” and “a piece of rock (on that peak) looks like hair-up in a topknot” are products of Yi’s creative and unique way of observation.¹⁷ Seeing Seokseong (Stone Castle) from the south of Sumitap Pagoda, Yi describes the scene with pleasant surprise.

“An old Buddhist monk suddenly appears sitting on the floor with the legs folded when I turn around and look over Seokseong. About to bend over to continue climbing, I am wondering ‘how did he manage to go up there?’ When I look at it carefully, it is a rock.”¹⁸

This passage well illustrates the moment that Yi mistakes a rock for an old monk. It is an example showing how striking the experiences are for the writer.

His active observation reflects his way of appreciating surprisingly beautiful scenery with an open heart. Seeing the members of his tour group’s reaction to the first observation of Geumgangsan from a distance in the very beginning of the journey, Yi Sangsu realizes as follows.

15. *EDJ*, 13: 39a.

16. *EDJ*, 13: 29a.

17. *EDJ*, 13: 34a.

18. *EDJ*, 13: 34a.

The peaks are covered with a little snow on their tops. It looks like hundreds of old hermits wearing parasols with beads dangling, lining up shoulder-to-shoulder and bowing holding both hands together before the chest. Everyone, no matter whether one is a butcher or an ordinary old man in a village, does not know what to do except to kneel down and bow. This must be the moment when everyone's mind is defeated. If there is a person whose mind is still standing among them, it is not because he/she has such a transcendent point of view but because he/she has a mind as black as ebony.¹⁹

Yi Sangsu thinks that an observer opens his/her mind to the object and lets his/her mind feel the beauty in order to appreciate nature. This belief enables Yi as an author of travelogue to observe nature from an autonomous and active position.

Yi also criticizes the travelers and authors of travelogues visiting Geumgangsan for their narrow scope limited to conventionally popular spots and places. Thinking that people should overcome the limit of convention and acknowledge the real beauty of Geumgangsan, he makes an attempt to turn people's eyes to a new direction. Based on that idea, he describes a famous spot, Jung-hyangseong, with full interest. Furthermore, he tries to draw people's attention to the beauty of the less popular regions such as Oegeumgang (Outer Geumgang) and Haegeumgang as well as that of Naegeumgang (Inner Geumgang) which was introduced many times in other travelogues of Geumgangsan.

Yi Sangsu, who is so proud of himself for describing the real value of Jung-hyangseong better than any other authors' travelogues of Geumgangsan, admires Jung-hyangseong with the best expressions he can make.

“The reason that Jucho, a kind of precious herb, grows in the forest is that the cosmic energy growing it must be accumulated there. The reason that jade grows in mountains is that the cosmic energy producing it must be accumulated there. In the case of Jung-hyangseong, isn't it that the cosmic energy is accumulated and mysterious rocks are gathered? Not until I reach Mahayeon, have I realized that the route I passed is merely the area

19. *EDJ*, 13: 24b-25a.

close to the gate and now I am just beginning to see deep inside the house.”²⁰

This quotation is about Yi’s impression of observing Jung-hyangseong from Mahayeon. Looking over Jung-hyangseong from Baegundae as well, he says that “the creator of the world loves something strange”²¹ and therefore makes this scene. He depicts the scene of the rocks of Jung-hyangseong; “from the summit to the valley”, “the outstanding peaks have neither any little amount of soil nor any single tree”. He evaluates Junghyaengseong as “pure gold” as if Geumgangsán were being compared to a huge gold mine. He feels unsatisfied with other authors’ writings about Geumgangsán for missing the real value of Junghyaengseong that it deserves.²²

Yi Sangsu put more emphasis on the beauty of Oegeumgang and Haegeumgang than that of Naegeumgang because the visitors to Geumgangsán rather neglect Oegeumgang and Haegeumgang whereas they are interested in Naegeumgang. He feels so sorry for Oegeumgang, which “is so grand from a distance and its standing figure so elaborate in many folds that Naegeumgang cannot even compete with it”. He analyzes the reason for the underestimation of Oegeumgang. According to him, because of the learned gentlemen traveling Geumgangsán and exhausting their whole minds and energy in the Naegeumgang area and passing by Oegeumgang without paying attention to it, there are not many documents mentioning the places worth visiting in the region of Oegeumgang.

From a boat, Yi’s observation of Haegeumgang results in the description as good as those of Naegeumgang and Oegeumgang.

“Short and standing head to head are the pupils, sitting with his legs folded is the Buddha, majestic and full of dignity are the kings of the heaven, and trying to snatch with fierce anger in the front is the devil.”²³

Going forward on board, Yi describes jagged rocks by employing Buddhist terms. He believes that the mysterious scenery of rocks spreading out over the

20. *EDJ*, 13: 36b.

21. *EDJ*, 13: 37a.

22. *EDJ*, 13: 37a.

23. *EDJ*, 13: 43b.

sea completes the beauty of Geumgangsan. He is proud of himself for having the opportunity to look at Geumgangsan from sea level.²⁴

The Characteristics of Yi Sangsu's Writing Style

1. Realistic and Detailed Description focusing on the Journey Route

Yi Sangsu makes an attempt to describe Geumgangsan in realistic manner for the purpose of grasping its real beauty. This realistic approach is linked to his objective observation. Yi prefers keeping a distance from an object to projecting himself into an object. This attitude leads him to discover the real beauty of nature and enables him to describe Geumgangsan and his journey in a most realistic and detailed manner.

Yi illustrates the memorable things that happen during his journey in detail. Even the process of trial and error he experiences on his way to a certain destination is included in his travelogue in the form of fine description. The description of his experience on his way to Baektapdong valley is one of the examples demonstrating not only his writing style of providing detailed description but also his will to discover evidence confirming the given information.

“After walking for a while, we reach a strange rock. We cannot but be struck with admiration before the scene of the huge and splendid rock, which is five times bigger than the rock made of bead-shaped small stones piled up, which we have seen before. I quickly ask the guide whether this is Baektap or not. But I find the nameplate “Dabotap” below it. I speak to myself, ‘I was looking for Baektap but found out Dabotap instead. Is what I saw before (Dabotap) the wrong one?’ We continue the journey.... The valley stream’s source is close by. However, we have not met the Baektap. Some people stop searching for Baektap due to hunger. But others, including me, return to the rock similar to Dabotap Passing the rock of piled bead-shaped stones and walking little further, we discover the large inscription “Baektap dongcheon” on a rock.²⁵

24. *EDJ*, 13: 43b-44a.

25. *EDJ*, 13: 28a-28b.

Yi's approach is firmly based on evidence. Although he is fascinated by the beautiful and strange scenes, he does not stop searching for the names of objects and evidence giving those names to objects. Yi's realistic and detailed descriptions even about the mistakes he makes during his identifying the famous spots demonstrate how much the travel to Geumgangsán means to him.

Yi Sangsu's travelogue on Geumgangsán is composed of twenty-two independent pieces of work including "Dong-haengsansu gi", which is the first work of the series. Each work contains detailed descriptions not only about the spots and objects, which the author is interested in, but also about the route and the schedule the author follows. Readers can see that the title of each piece represents the work's actual content related to routes. The relationship between the title and the actual contents also reflects Yi's interest in describing the travel route in particular.

Titles are categorized into three: the first category is the name of a place such as "Jung-hyangseong gi" (Travelogue of Jung-hyangseong); the second is the combination of the name of a place with a location such as "Jang-an dong myeonggyeongdae gi" (Travelogue of Myeonggyeongdae to the East of the Jangansa Temple)²⁶; the titles in the third category contain predicates in their titles like "Dong-haengsansu gi" (Travelogue of a Visit to Nature of the East)²⁷. In this case, 'haeng' in the title is a predicate meaning 'to visit' or 'to go'.

"Jung-hyangseong gi", which belongs to the first category, is composed of the sketch of Jung-hyangseong's outstanding beauty. Although there is partial description of Mahayeon and Baegwundae, it also supports the major object of this piece, i.e. Jung-hyangseong. Unlike the work in the first category such as "Jung-hyangseong gi", in the pieces in the second and the third categories, which are the majority of the whole series of Yi's travelogue, the description of the journey itself, such as information of the routes and what to see during the

26. This category has more examples like "Jang-an dong yeong-wondong gi", "Pyohunsa bukseo sumitap gi", "Pyohun buk manpokpaldam gi", "Yujeomsa seo eunseondae gi", "Sin-gyesa seo guryong-yeon gi", "Sin-gye seobuk manmulcho gi", "Goseong dong haegeumgang gi", "Goseong buk samilho gi", and "Tongcheon buk chongseok gi".

27. From "Ji jang-ansa gi", "Osím baektap gi", "Suk yeong-wonam gi", "Jang-an seobuk jeo pyohunsa gi", "Pyohunsa heolseongnu deungdo gi", "Yujeomsa gumun gi", "Goseong seo mang geumgang oesan gi", "Byeong-hae bukhaeng gi", and "Jujicheondo gi", we can also see predicates such as 'yu' (踰; to go over), 'ji' (至; to reach), 'osím' (誤尋; to find wrong), 'suk' (宿; to stay overnight), 'jeo' (抵; to reach), 'deungdo' (登睹; to look over on a high place), 'gumun' (舊聞; to hear of an old story), and 'mang' (望; to see from a distance).

journey, plays the major role.

The characteristic of the works in the second category is the detailed description of the environment of an object and how to get there, and the description of the object itself. For example, in the case of “Jang-an dong myeonggyeongdae gi”, as ‘Jang-an dong’ or ‘the East of the Jang-ansa temple’ in the title implies, the route from the east of the Jang-ansa temple to Myeonggyeongdae and the scenery observed during the journey are described in the beginning. Then, the description of the object Myeonggyeongdae follows. However, the description of the Jang-ansa temple is not part of this work because the Jang-ansa merely plays the role of indicator telling the direction to Myeonggyeongdae. In short, the works in the second category are characterized in containing descriptions of the object appearing at the end of the title like ‘Myeonggyeongdae’ in “Jang-an dong myeonggyeongdae gi”, the way to reach the object, and sometimes the author’s feeling and impression.

The works in the third category, which include the predicate indicating the subject’s behavior of travel, i.e. the author’s action, have the description of what can be seen during the journey to the destination while showing the significance of actions related to predicates. However, in this case, the description of a place or an object appearing in the title is weaker than that of those works in the first and second categories. For example, “Yu cheol-yiryong gi” (The Travelogue of Going over Cheol-yiryong Ridge) focuses on demonstrating that ‘going over’ (yu) Cheol-yiryong is the actual start of the travel to Geumgangsan because Geumgangsan appears before the author’s eyes from a distance while going over Cheol-yiryong. The author does not pay much attention to Cheol-yiryong itself.

Although Yi Sangsu’s “Dong-haengsansu gi” consists of separate works whose titles are composed of the names of places or objects, each work does not only focus on the description of a specific object or a place as the work of the first category does but also describes other topics as well. A description of journey to destination is the general characteristic found in all the individual works of “Dong-haengsansu gi”. How to reach the destination, which appears at the end of the work’s title, is the major topic in the works of the second category. The works of the third category stress a subject’s action of the travel by the predicate in the title, which forms the major part of the journey.

2. Descriptions focusing on Natural Objects

For descriptions, Yi Sangsu focuses on the natural scenes which can be observed

during the journey in Geumgangsan. In the description of the journey, Yi expresses his interest in nature, and rules out people he meets and the anecdotes of them. Even the descriptions of cultural heritage sites such as famous temples are hardly found. In short, except his feeling and impression on his journeys, he only writes about the natural objects in “Dong-haengsansu gi”.

“Ji jang-ansa gi” (Travelogue of Reaching the Jang-ansa Temple), one of the works in the third category, is about the scenery that Yi observes on his way to the Jang-ansa temple. This work does not contain any particular description of the temple itself but rather concerns the description of the several peaks of Geumgangsan seen from a pavilion in the temple.²⁸ This writing style is different from that of Yi’s *gasa* work, “Eodang geumgang byeolgok” based on the same journey as in “Dong-haengsansu gi”. In “Eodang geumgang byeolgok”, Yi Sangsu writes the same journey differently. He describes the inside scenes of the temple, the characteristics of its structure, and the shape of the statue of Buddha.²⁹

In “Pyohunsa heolseongnu deungdo gi”, another work in “Dong-haengsansu gi”, Yi is not interested in describing the architecture of the temple. He only puts emphasis on the location of the Jeong-yangsa temple, which is important to get a nice view of Geumgangsan, and expresses how magnificent Geumgangsan looks from there. However, in “Eodang geumgang byeolgok”, apart from the scene observed from a pavilion called Heolseongnu, he writes about the unique structure of Yaksajeon, a building in the Jeong-yangsa temple, the praying Buddhist monks, and other scenes he observes inside the temple.³⁰ Kim Chang-hyeop, a writer of 17th century of Joseon, also writes of travels to Geumgangsan called “Dong-yu gi” (Travelogue of Journeys to the East). In “Dong-yu gi”, Kim also describes the scene observed from Heolseongnu. Moreover, he shows the shape of Palgakjeon, an octagonal building in the temple precincts, and the interpretation of a poem written on a plate hung in Heolseongnu, which are the kinds of topics that cannot be found in Yi’s travelogue.³¹

In short, in “Dong-haengsansu gi” as an East Asia’s traditional prose style in classical Chinese, the writer Yi Sangsu focuses on descriptions and illustrations of natural objects around Geumgangsan and sometimes his impressions during

28. *EDJ*, 13: 25a.

29. “Eodang geumgang byeolgok”, vol. 1 (Text based on the material in Kim Gi-yeong (1999: 279)).

30. “Eodang geumgang byeolgok”, vol. 2 (Text based on the material in Kim Gi-yeong (1999: 284)).

31. *NAJ*, 23:12a (Based on *Hanguk munjip chonggan* reprinted by the Minjok munhwa chujinhoe).

the journey, whereas his gasa (song text) of the same Geumgangsan travel in old style Korean language contains emotional feelings in the form of verse. In his gasa work “Eodang geumgang byeolgok”, we can find some additional situations related to main objects of the journey. However, “Dong-haengsansu gi” noticeably rules out additional elements and focuses on the natural scenes of Geumgangsan.

Conclusion

The travelogue of mountain, one of the traditional literary genres in East Asia, is a writing of the descriptions of what a traveler observes, including the detailed illustrations of the objects and what he/she feels during a journey in the mountains. Because the travelogue of mountain does not have any fixed style of writing, it reveals the author’s personality more than other genres of literature. This essay examined the writer Yi Sangsu in the late Joseon period and his travelogue of Geumgangsan. The main focus is on what Geumgangsan means to him and how he observes and writes about the objects he sees. The conclusion can be summarized as follows.

In this essay, there was an analysis on Yi Sangsu’s idea of Geumgangsan as a source of national pride and a source of a rich imagination. Yi thinks that Geumgangsan is as beautiful as any other mountains, including the mountains in China, which gives him pride. He also finds out the ecological value of Geumgangsan, which lies in real beauty from the shape of the mountains and from characteristics of rocks, peaks, and waterfalls providing travelers and authors of travelogue with the power of imagination.

I showed Yi’s attitude toward Geumgangsan during his journey in two aspects. The first one is observation free from any desire. Yi stresses that Geumgangsan should be observed with a simple mind free from any desire from a distance rather than with a mind full of desire to possess the beautiful scenery. In this sense, he criticizes the inscriptions found everywhere in Geumgangsan as the expression of personal desire for possession. The second is his observation in an autonomous and active manner. According to Yi, the information given by the guide or names of objects are not necessary for travelers to observe nature. What matters is to have an open mind to interpret an object through free imagination. From this point of view, he comes to a conclusion that Jung-hyangseong is a most outstanding scene, and also suggests that travelers should be able to

discover various kinds of beauty in Oegeumgang and Haegeumgang, which most travelers pass by without noticing.

The characteristics of Yi's writing style found in "Dong-haengsansu gi" boil down to two things. One is that Yi's description is realistic and detailed. He includes the story of his mistake made on the way to Baetapdong into his description, which demonstrates how much Geumgangsan means to him. I also analyzed the relationship between the title and the contents of each work of "Dong-haengsansu gi" and came to the conclusion that Yi has much interest in descriptions of the route of his journey. Yi's description is not limited to the place or the object that appear in the title. Yi rather expands his scope to diverse scenes observed along the different routes of his journey. The other characteristic is that Yi concentrates on natural objects. Compared with his *gasa* (song text) "Eodang geumgang byeolgok" and Kim Chang-hyeop's travelogue of Geumgangsan, the major contents of "Dong-haengsansu gi" are relatively limited to natural scenery and it excludes descriptions of the temples, information about the persons participating in the travel, and anecdotes related to the journey.

This essay focuses on Yi Sangsu's view on Guemgangsan, his attitude of traveling, and his writing style in a prose genre of travelogue in classical Chinese. This essay is expected to play a role of prologue in examining distinctions as well as general characteristics found in traditional travelogue of Geumgangsan written in the late Joseon period. Yi Sangsu divided the story of his journey to Geumgangsan into several pieces under different titles, which was based on the tradition of the former century. To some extent, it can also be said that Yi Sangsu's travelogue of Geumgangsan followed the tradition of Geumgangsan travelogue of the 18th century when both detailed description and frank expression of the writer's feeling began to take part in this category of literature.³² Therefore, compared to contemporary travelogue of Geumgangsan such as Seo Yeongbo (1759-1816)'s "Pung-ak gi", Yi Sangsu's travelogue show concrete descriptions of objects and routes of journeys.³³ In addition, as men-

32. For new trends of travelogue about mountain journeys in the 18th century, see Jeong Min (2001: 104-105).

33. Jeong Min points out that, unlike travel literature in the 18th century, the degree of concrete descriptions was weakened in the 19th century. (*Ibid.*: 122) In "Pung-ak gi", the writer just focuses on describing geographical locations of main places in Geumgangsan, and it is not easy to find detailed descriptions of Geumgangsan's beauty. The "Pung-ak gi" text for this article is based on the collection of the National Library of Korea.

tioned above, Yi Sangsu's travelogue focusing on describing natural objects in Geumgangsán has a specialty different from travelogue like "Dong-yu gi" in the 18th century. In short, "Dong-haengsansu gi" accepted literary characteristics of the former century while showing its own individuality.

If more research of the travelogue of mountains during this period are accumulated, it could be possible to examine comprehensively the travelogues of mountains written continuously even during the period of the Japanese Annexation (1910-1945). A comparative study with travel literature of western societies is also needed to define the identity of Korean travel literature, which could provide a chance to examine differences of intellectual traditions between countries.³⁴

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Pung-akgi (Travelogue of Mt. Geumgangsán)

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34. The Korean Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies has recently shown interest in Europeans' journeys to the East. For this, Min Eun-gyeong's research can be an example (Min Eun-gyeong 2001).

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Glossary

* Titles of Travelogues in “Dong-haengsansu gi”

Dong-haengsansu gi (東行山水記, Travelogue of a Visit to Nature of the East)

Yu cheol-iryeong gi (踰鐵嶺記, Travelogue of Going over Cheol-iryeong Ridge)

Ji jang-ansa gi (至長安寺記, Travelogue of Reaching Jang-ansa Temple)

Jang-an dong myeonggyeongdae gi (長安東 明鏡臺記, Travelogue of Myeonggyeongdae to the East of Jang-ansa Temple)

Jang-an dong yeong-wondong gi (長安東 靈源洞記, Travelogue of Yeong-won-

- dong to the East of Jang-ansa Temple)
- Osim baektap gi (誤尋百塔記, Travelogue of Finding the Mistaken Baektap)
- Suk yeong-wonam gi (宿靈源庵記, Travelogue of Staying Overnight at Yeong-wonam Hermitage)
- Jang-an seobuk jeo pyohunsa gi (長安北西 抵表訓寺記, Travelogue of Reaching Pyohunsa Temple to the Northwest of Jang-ansa Temple)
- Pyohunsa heolseongnu deungdo gi (表訓寺 歇惺樓 登眺記, Travelogue of Going up to Heolseongnu Pavilion Viewing Scenery Broadly)
- Pyohunsa bukseo sumitapgi (表訓寺北西 須彌塔記, Travelogue of Sumitap to the Northwest of Pyohunsa Temple)
- Pyohun buk manpokpaldam gi (表訓北 萬瀑八潭記, Travelogue of Manpok and Paldam to the North of Pyohunsa Temple)
- Jung-hyangseong gi (衆香城記, Travelogue of Jung-hyangseong)
- Yujeomsa seo eunseondaeg gi (楡店寺西 隱仙臺記, Travelogue of Eunseondaeg to the West of Yujeomsa Temple)
- Yujeomsa gumun gi (楡店寺舊聞記, Hearing of an Old Story about Yujeomsa Temple)
- Sin-gyesa seo guryong-yeon gi (神溪寺西 九龍淵記, Travelogue of Guryong-yeon Pond to the West of Sin-gyesa Temple)
- Sin-gye seobuk manmulcho gi (神溪西北 萬物草記, Travelogue of Manmulcho to the Northwest of Sin-gyesa Temple)
- Goseong seo manggeumgangsangoisan gi (高城西 望金剛外山記, Travelogue of Observing Outer Geumgang from a distance to the West of Goseong)
- Goseong dong haegeumgang gi (高城東 海金剛記, Travelogue of Coastal Geumgang to the East of Goseong)
- Goseong buk samilho gi (高城北 三日湖記, Travelogue of Samilho Lake to the North of Goseong)
- Byeong-hae bukhaeng gi (竝海北行記, Travelogue of Going North following the Coast Line)
- Tongcheon buk chongseok gi (通川北 叢石記, Travelogue of Chongseok to the North of Tongcheon)
- Jujicheondo gi (舟至穿島記, Travelogue of Reaching Cheondo by Boat)

* Terms

Baegundae	백운대 (白雲臺)
Baektapdong	백담동 (百塔洞)

Chongshan (Ch.)	嵩山
Dabotap	다보탑 (多寶塔)
deungdo	등도 (登睹)
dongcheon	동천 (洞天)
Dong-yu gi	동유기 (東遊記)
Du Mu (Ch.)	都穆
<i>Eodang geumgang byeolgok</i>	어당 금강별곡 (晤堂 金剛別曲) (abbr. <i>EGB</i>)
Eodangjip	어당집 (晤堂集) (abbr. <i>EDJ</i>)
gasa	가사 (歌辭)
Geumgangsán	금강산 (金剛山)
Gong-an (Ch.)	公案
Goryeo	고려 (高麗)
gumun	구문 (舊聞)
Haegeumgang	해금강 (海金剛)
haeng	행 (行)
Han Changli (Ch.)	韓昌黎
Jang-ansa	장안사 (長安寺)
jeo	저 (抵)
Jeong Seon	정선 (鄭勳)
Jeong-yangsa	정양사 (正陽寺)
ji	지 (至)
Jigong	지공 (指空)
Joseon	조선 (朝鮮)
Jung-hyangseong	중향성 (衆香城)
Kang Sehwang	강세황 (姜世晁)
Kim Chang-heup	김창흡 (金昌翕)
Kim Chang-hyeop	김창협 (金昌協)
Kim Hongdo	김홍도 (金弘道)
Mahayeon	마하연 (摩訶衍)
mang	망 (望)
Manggundae	망군대 (望軍臺)
Manmulcho	만물초 (萬物草)
Manpokdong	만폭동 (萬瀑洞)
Ming (Ch.)	明
Myeonggyeongdae	명경대 (明鏡臺)
Naegeumgang	내금강 (內金剛)
<i>Nong-amjip</i>	농암집 (農巖集) (abbr. <i>NAJ</i>)

Oegeumgang	외금강 (外金剛)
osim	오심 (誤尋)
Palgakjeon	팔각전 (八角殿)
Pung-ak gi	풍악기 (楓嶽記)
Sejo	세조 (世祖)
Sejong	세종 (世宗)
Seokseong	석성 (石城)
Seo Yeongbo	서영보 (徐榮輔)
Sim Sajeong	심사정 (沈師正)
Song (Ch.)	宋
Su Dongpo (Ch.)	蘇東坡
suk	숙 (宿)
Sumibong	수미봉 (須彌峯)
Sumitap	수미탑 (須彌塔)
Tang (Ch.)	唐
Taejo	태조 (太祖)
Xianyou? (Ch.)	仙游
Xishan ji (Ch.)	西山記
Yi Sangsu	이상수 (李象秀)
yu 유 (踰)	
Yuan Hongdao (Ch.)	袁宏道
Yujeomsa	유점사 (楡店寺)
yusan gi	유산기 (遊山記)?
Zhaoling (Ch.)	昭陵

(Ch.=Chinese)

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