

Collecting Culture, Representing the Self: Chosŏn Portraits of Collectors of Chinese Antiquities*

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This article examines the representation of Chinese bronzes in Chosŏn portraits to understand how a trend in collecting and appreciating Chinese bronzes impacted the artistic developments of the late Chosŏn Dynasty. Focusing on *Portrait of Yun Tongsŏm* and *Portrait of Yi Haŏng*, collectors are identified as a critical force in shaping aesthetic principles that promoted new styles of painting. By investigating possible pictorial sources, modified visual elements, and cultural transmission, it becomes apparent how collectors perceived Chinese bronzes as symbols of culture and how portraits of collectors of Chinese antiques reflect the enthusiasm for certain types of Chinese bronzes.

Chosŏn Confucian scholars sought to portray themselves in a scholarly setting with antiques, as they accumulated and appreciated them as a way of expressing their veneration of the past, thereby enhancing their social prestige. While Yun Tongsŏm emphasizes his cultural identity as a scholar through the depiction of the Xuande-type censer, Yi Haŏng reinforces his authority through the rendition of the square cauldron for King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty. Portraits of collectors not only represented their desire for self-fashioning among the elite, they also functioned as a means of showcasing their knowledge of Chinese history and culture as part of their cultivation and high character.

Keywords: Chosŏn portraits, *Portrait of Yun Tongsŏm*, *Portrait of Yi Haŏng*, collectors of Chinese antiques, Chinese bronzes

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