
Subject: FW: Korean Tea Ceremony and other wonders
Posted by [Werner Sasse](#) on Thu, 16 Aug 2012 10:36:15 GMT
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From: werner_sasse@hotmail.com
To: hoffmann@koreaweb.ws
Subject: RE: [KS] Korean Tea Ceremony and other wonders
Date: Wed, 15 Aug 2012 10:58:32 +0000

Dear all in this wonderful thread
I am sorry, I should have sent this earlier, although it does not refer to Frank's main arguments ...

by him .

By the way, the MyOnang-jeong ground plan is like many pavillions in Damyang a board of 3 by 2 identically sized areas, the middle one in the back row is an ondol room For more I am waiting until I see Franks reply to my last posting.. Best,Werner

> Date: Tue, 14 Aug 2012 23:40:19 -0700
> From: hoffmann@koreaweb.ws
> To: koreanstudies@koreaweb.ws
> Subject: Re: [KS] Korean Tea Ceremony and other wonders
>
> -----
> In this re-written version, I am trying to summarize some minor issues,
> but also get to the essential issues later in this posting. For
> whatever reason the first version did not get posted. / FH
> -----
>
> Quick question:
>
> Professor Kim, the link you provide to the "original" of the poem shows
> it is written in Hanja, not mixed script?

> That changes the grammar (no -porira ending), makes even Richard Rutt's

> for example, are being rebuild (please, Prof. Best help me out here),
> was it every 80 years? Or every 200, I forgot. But they ARE being
> rebuild on a regular basis, and they do change their looks with every
> rebuild, most certainly so, as the "taste" changes, the needs change,
> building construction techniques and economics change, and so on and so
> forth. In Japan that is perfectly in line with Buddhist concepts of
> life, of course (everything is always perfect in Japan). Maybe that's
> why today's centuries old Japanese temples get us the feel of black
> concrete castles modeled after construction plans from The Cabinet of
> Dr. Caligari and German Autobahn bridges.

>

> Prof. Kim wrote:

> > [I] do not want to (...) make any comment whether there was any

> > unique garden culture in Choson

>

> What kind of question would such a comment have to precede, a

> whether-or-not question? All that points into a strange direction then.

> That should not be the issue. The EMPHASIS should really not be on

> "unique" (yes, of course were Korean gardens unique!) One of the main

> questions is rather how important or how marginal gardens were in

> relationship to whatever else was going on in Korea and what "garden

> culture" meant in neighboring China, Japan, and also in the West.

> "Garden culture" as we talk about it for these other cultures is not

> about just gardens! Garden culture is, as pointed out before, as a huge

> package of cultural production, in the arts, literature, and political

> and social life. In Europe and Japan and in early China it could have

> that role because it constituted 'high culture' and not 'low culture,'

> came from the top of the power base or, in the Japanese case, was

> instrumentalized to represent a new upwards moving merchant class. Now,

> in Korea (this is a question, not the final answer), if indeed as

> stated by Professor Sasse, garden design and architecture was informed

> by ('low culture') geomancy and not by (as in old China or in early

> modern Japan) Buddhist philosophy and related culture, and also not by

> neo-Confucian ideas, then we would already have a very major difference

> there to the neighboring settings. That is also expected, of course.

> But my doubts are that in a neo-Confucian state low culture geomantic

> practices can lead to a whole culture. See, again, this is not just

> about gardens ... you would then see literature, philosophical

> discourses, you would see lots of ceramic wares and other handicraft

> production, changes of social life etc. all circling around the garden,

> and being reflected in garden designs. I have NOT seen that in Korea.

> And it makes NO sense to me, would not expect that with any low culture

> anywhere, not until the 20th century (or maybe the French Revolution,

> if we talk about Europe). In that context it then also makes sense that

> the few treatises by Korean scholars we do have come from early

> bound into philosophical concepts and were they still represented

> aristocratic culture, both in China and Korea. So, my second set of
> doubts is with all these over and over emphasized "geomantic"
> principles etc. when it comes to later period gardens in Korea. What
> that indicates that to me is that, all over, representatives of the
> upper class, scholars, etc., did not anymore care much about gardens,
> and that there was not much of a related culture left. Gardens could
> NOT s easily be bind into neo-Confucian concepts of thought (quite
> opposite to Buddhist societies, and also opposite to the European case
> where power structures and resulting aesthetics were represented in
> very direct ways ... as e.g. in North Korea today). Bamboo and the
> flowers mentioned before ... yes, scholars may have discussed those, BUT
> NOT within the context of garden, garden planning, garden architecture,
> etc., just the way that they do play symbolic roles and the way they
> appear e.g. in painting. Gardens themselves where, as compared to other

> period, and if today you interpret their layout as geomantically
> influenced than that is an indication of exactly -- we do see no
> reflection of the ideologies of the state there, nor (!) was whatever
> was done in gardens handed down from the aristocracy to a wider
> population to again (a) propagate state ideology or ideologies of
> important power brokers, (b) and there was no imitation of upper-class
> culture either. The way I read Werner's description then rather means
> lower and upper class culture were the same when it comes to gardens
> (geomantic principles). That is an overly clear indication there there
> was no importance put to gardens whatsoever. I would, however, further
> extend my doubts to the "geomantic influences" part--it sounds too
> 20th century Western 'esoteric.' Aren't geomantic practices always (a)
> very concrete? And (b) this is never an entire philosophy either, but
> the grand master plan such as Buddhist or Confucian models, but rather
> limited in that sense. That again means, when it comes to gardens, then
> there is no such "concept" of how to construct a garden, is there?
> Rules may have been applied, mostly rules of what NOT to do. But
> geomancy, although we use that term, was never anything like ONE school
> (or religion) that would provide a whole toolset (like Buddhism,
> Christianity) of symbolism; there are no grand master narratives that
> someone could have taken up, it cannot be utilized for the grand
> planning of gardens (for scholars and the upper class).

>

> A last note--let me come back to the issue of the "uniqueness" of
> gardens (or garden culture, which I would not use). Uniqueness is out!
> And right so, we should really stop talking about and thinking in terms
> of uniqueness when we discuss, describe, talk about national or local
> culture, even when we talk about individual cultural production. I know
> that there are still people out there at anthropology museums and
> museums that have East Asian art collections, and other such places,
> where efforts are put into providing proof of national uniqueness of
> this or that, but well, I think it has been at least two decades that
> adjectives such as 'unique' started to get disqualified and to be

> please. That will likely take you a full semester of intense
> brain-washing to communicate. But museum folks and other institutional
> representatives are usually really skilled at turning all these

> their coffee table book for your art and culture class, they might get
> you a free Samsung Galaxy S3 in unique Korean design right on top of
> it.
>
>
> I come to the modern Tamyang gardens later (maybe tomorrow) ... and to
> the various very interesting points Werner made. But seriously, I think
> the main disagreements are not about the actual gardens but about how
> and where to situate the discourse.
>
>
> Best,
> Frank
>
> -----
> Frank Hoffmann
> <http://koreaweb.ws>

Subject: Re: FW: Korean Tea Ceremony and other wonders
Posted by [Frank_Hoffmann](#) on Thu, 16 Aug 2012 12:00:09 GMT
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Apologies to everyone! I looked around at the mentioned source website
Prof. Kim had given (<http://db.itkc.or.kr/>), located the right poem,
later wrote my reply, and then again went back to that website (using
the link) to copy/paste the Hanja lines and obviously forgot the
link was the one to the other poem (and didn't even notice after
reworking the whole posting later).
S o r r y about the confusion.

The Korean version of the "wrong" poem posted by accident, on the same
that much:

level -- going through a bulk of publications (and also photos, have

been there last 12 years ago), so Werner does not slice me up so easily when I reply in more depth))::: Some serious stuff, and some, well Really, this is much fun -- learning all kinds of new garden esoteric words every hour.

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9... materialize!
Cosma Shiva! Galaxina!

We'll get there.

Frank

On Thu, 16 Aug 2012 10:36:15 +0000, Werner Sasse wrote:

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>> culture, even when we talk about individual cultural production. I know
>> that there are still people out there at anthropology museums and
>> museums that have East Asian art collections, and other such places,
>> where efforts are put into providing proof of national uniqueness of
>> this or that, but well, I think it has been at least two decades that
>> adjectives such as 'unique' started to get disqualified and to be
>> ignored at international contemporary art exhibitions. Although these
>> mummy terms in wheelchairs were never declared dead and replaced by
>> something else (but that's seldom the case with any cultural models and
>> belief systems, they do not get replaced, they co-exist until everyone
>> has forgotten), they were just disregarded and left alone in their
>> isolated chambers to dream of the olden days when they had received so
>> much attention. I see no reason why there should be any difference in
>> how we discuss traditional art and how modern and contemporary art and
>> art objects. Objects may have been produced under very different
>> circumstances, but we do evaluate them and their meaning to us today.
>> OUR concept of uniqueness and the still mainstream understanding that
>> 'good art' has to be 'unique,' that is basically a left-over from the
>> early and mid-20th century art scene and the way modern art, and more
>> specifically abstract painting and Informal, took care of propagating
>> themselves through pamphlets and declarations, and how it was later
>> advertised as the final and last stage of human art development by
>> entire governments, as the final (or at least strongest) legitimate
>> expression of individualism in the arts. All of that is yesterday's
>> talk now, all that has been dropped. Uniqueness and originality, as
>> concepts, are not even meaningful anymore for designers, as was still
>> the case in the 1980s and maybe up until into the 1990s. Then we had a
>> new emphasis coming in on "authenticity" and "the local" as a result of
>> and parallel to postmodern movements. But now that's gone also, and not
>> even corporate advertisement companies work with such concepts anymore.
>> When we see Apple vs. Samsung in court over a cell phone design, then
>> that is an expression of how far behind the court system is, not an
>> expression where our society and artists are. Neither designers nor
>> artists would care about "originality" and "uniqueness" much anymore,
>> and if they are soon out. The very obscure part comes in when we remind
>> ourselves that those engaged in East Asian art and culture have for
>> decades tried so hard to explain that "uniqueness" and "originality"
>> are modern Western concepts that traditional cultures in Asia did not
>> go by. Look e.g. through all the literature from or about Japanese art
>> of the 1970s, no matter if traditional or modern art. It's full of

