

Garden Thought in Ancient East Asia

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The purpose of this paper is to examine ancient Chinese garden thought and its development, and to consider its ideological influence on Baekje and Silla and on the Japanese state.

While “garden” is a cultivated area for fruit trees (and later vegetables), and is the true meaning of a farm, “garden,” which expanded and developed from “囿” with its surrounding fences, is interpreted as a courtly facility for keeping poultry and animals, i.e., animals. The relationship between the metropolitan castle system and parks and forests began during the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, with the separation of the vast outer gardens, which were separated from the castle, and the ornamental inner gardens, which were located within the castle. Thereafter, the outer garden was reduced in size and became more closely connected to the castle and homogeneous with the inner garden. Second, the inner garden was established as a forbidden garden located north of the Daigoku Palace, with the garden forest located along the north-south axis of the capital city.

The garden forest developed as an ornamental collection of xiangzui-like animals or as an indication of the vast territoriality of the empire. Both Qin Shi Huangdi and the former Han Emperor Wu built towers to invite hermits to seek the elixir of long life and immortality. The consciousness of inheriting Luoyang’s Hualin Garden, with its pond and mountains as its center, was also strong in the Southern Dynasty, but it changed to a format in which loonguan and halls were placed around a built-up mountain. In the Southern Court, abstraction was promoted, with small ponds as seas and stones as mountains.

It was during the Sui and Tang dynasties that large-scale garden forests were once again rebuilt in Chang’an and Luoyang. The garden forests of the Sui and Tang dynasties reflected the character of the unified state and clearly combined elements of the Shanglin Garden, which had existed since the Qin and Han dynasties, with those of the Northern and Southern dynasties.

It was assumed that Baekje, Silla, and Japan adopted the garden culture of the Chinese Southern Dynasty as their garden culture in the period of their establishment. This is an introduction of an idea that is closely related to the establishment of capital cities in East Asian countries.

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