

# The Coloring and its Symbolic Meaning In Korean Traditional Palace Architectures

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## 1. Background

(1) The Characteristic Features of the Coloring, especially Painted Colors : To understand the coloring features of the architecture, it is necessary to scrutinize its painted colors as well as the material colors, such as wood colors, stones, bricks, and roof-tiles. The painted colors

(picture 1)

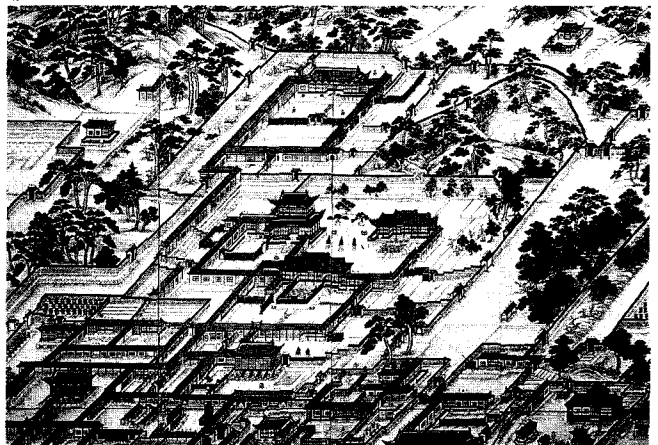


are very important and essential to the coloring system in Korean Architectures.

An academic approach to the painted colors is essential to the understanding of Korean traditional architectures.

(picture 1): Remaining Buildings in the Palaces; Some buildings were regarded spiritually significant in the Ko-

(picture 2)



## 5. Phases of Studying

(1) Phase 1: Explains the objective and methods of this study

(2) Phase 2: Surveys the remaining buildings and Archaic Texts

In this phase, colors were researched by their historical names. It is found that the colors were used with certain symbolic meanings. The buildings in the major palaces were surveyed and their colorings are listed in a tablet form. The surveyed colors were verified by the records in the archaic texts. When the current name of the color differed from the old, the color tablet indicated both terms. Next to the current name, the original is in parenthesis.

(3) Phase 3: Analysis of the Surveyed Data

The coloring reflects the characteristics of palaces, buildings, and the time period.

(3-1) The coloring differed by palaces, indicating the appropriate hierarchy.

(3-2) The Coloring in Palaces, also indicated the position of the user and the appropriate importance of the building in the palace.

(3-3) The coloring differed partly by the time of construction. This study also shows how the coloring feature changed with time.

〈picture 6〉 Architectural coloring in Kyung Bok Palace

〈picture 7〉 Architectural coloring in Chang Deok Palace

〈picture 8〉 Architectural coloring in Chang Kyung Palace

〈picture 9〉 Architectural coloring in Kyung Woon Palace

(4) Phase 4: Summary and Conclusion

3 major conclusions were derived from the results of the study.

(4-1) Hierarchy

(4-2) Shape Expression

(4-3) Structural Expression

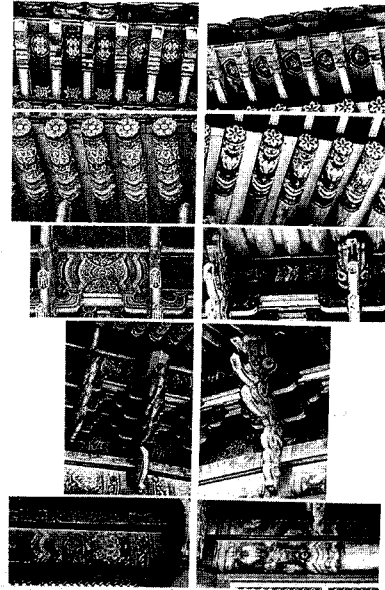
## 6. Conclusion

(1) The Hierarchy

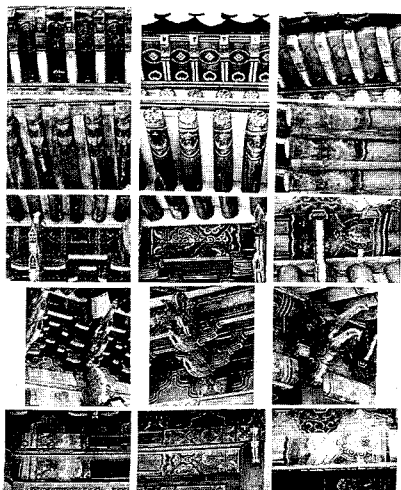
The coloring system of Palaces of the Chosun Dynasty is, first, characterized by its hierarchical system. It symbolizes the dignity of the Royal Palace, expressed exclusively in the Dan Cheong system.

(1-1) Hierarchy Among the Palaces

The ideal lifestyle of the society during the Dynasty was that of a frugal scholar. Thus, simple and not luxurious coloring were used in this time period. Nevertheless, the hierarchy is seen clearly among the palaces, representing the functional and symbolic importance of (picture 6)

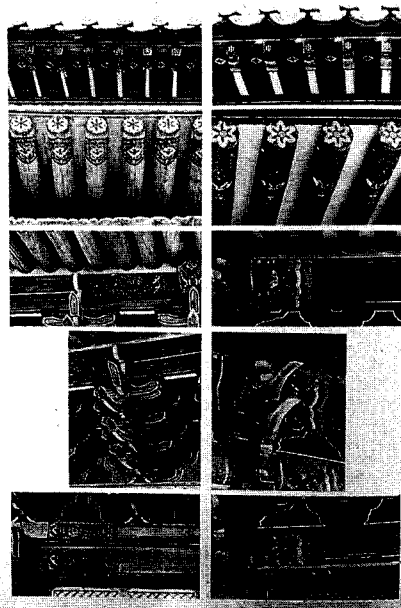


〈picture 7〉

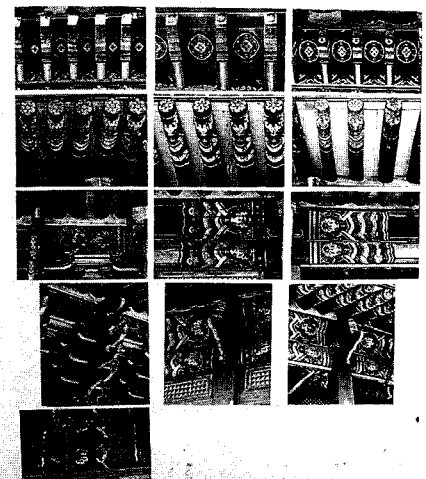


(사진 4-3) 창덕궁 전각의 주요 부위 색채 현황 비교  
좌: 인평전(경원), 동: 인평전(선원), 우: 태묘전(경원)  
이부주위 부연, 서비대, 도리, 문루, 장방의 벽장

〈picture 8〉



〈picture 9〉



(사진 4-7) 경운궁 전각의 주요 부위 색채 현황 비교  
좌: 봉화전(경원), 중: 봉화전(선원), 우: 인평전(경원)  
이부주위 부연, 서비대, 도리, 문루, 장방의 벽장

them. The prime palaces, Kyeon Bok Koong and Kyeong Woon Koong, are higher in hierarchy than Chang Deok Koong and Chang Kyeong Koong.

(1-2) Hierarchy of Buildings in Palaces

Generally the Royal Audience Chamber, the King's Prime, Office for ceremony, is the highest in hierarchy following by the King's Office and King's Residence.

(1-3) Colors in Hierarchy

Colors had their place in hierarchy. Red was the highest, followed by blue, and by green. Chroma Saturation was also an important factor in hierarchy. The Dan cheong (color pattern) had 4 different system in hierarchy. Silk Pattern>Side Pattern>linear Pattern>Simple Pattern

(2) Shape Expression

There was a certain rule in coloring pattern to compensate or emphasize the shape of elements in a building.

(2-1) Emphasis

(picture 10) The red stripes in cornice members emphasize the curve of cornice.

(picture 11) The colored stripes of extension rafter emphasize the shape of the cornice.

(picture 12) The colored stripes of Eave Supporter emphasize the vertical shape of members.

(2-2) Compensation of Shape

(picture 13) The length of a head-penetrating-tie is visually compensated and balanced, as they are divided

(picture 11)



(picture 13)



into different coloring patterns.

(2-3) Corresponding to Shape

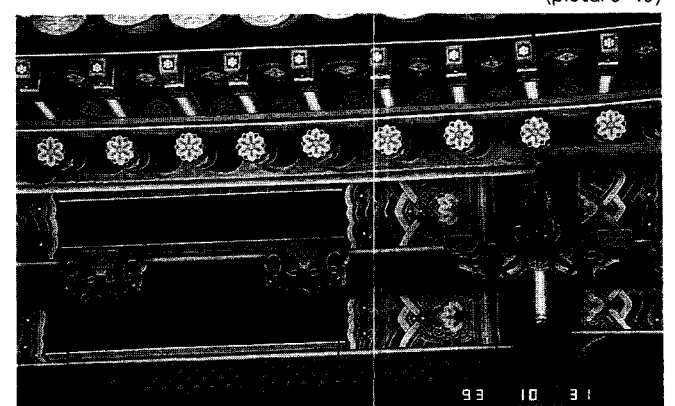
Certain elements, such as small wood blocks, on the column share the same coloring pattern, although structurally they have different function.

(3) Structural Expression

(3-1) Color Language of Structural Members— This is one the most important and unique features of the Korean traditional coloring. Each structural member, such as columns, tie beams, eave-supporters, has its unique coloring pattern.

(3-2) Emphasis on the Structural Members

(picture 14) Linear structural members, such as columns, beams, girders, much more red, compared to non-structural members, such as windows, doors, walls. (picture 10)



(picture 12)



(picture 14)

