

The Meaning and Use of Housing for Entertaining, and Preparing and Eating Foods in Korean Culture

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Purpose

Housing design is the process of seeking out the congruence between activities and settings. For a good housing design, it is necessary to get information about who will live there and what they want. That is to say, it is necessary to find out what kind of ideas and values the residents have for their housing. Thus, housing design can be defined not only as a building plan, but as the planning of "space fitted into daily activities" or of "space fitted into dwelling needs" (Kim, 1983).

Residents' diverse dwelling needs come from their household's structure, status, or life styles, which are based on their culture and expressed by their daily activities with respect to roles, routines, and rituals. Houses are the material expression of a matrix of cultural and social variables. Houses and human behavior can be interpreted on four interrelated levels: culture, community, groups such as household, and the individual (Lawrence, 1987). Particularly, culture as expressed in human behavior, has a primary influence upon the design and use of houses. Also, a historical and ethnographical approach to understand culture in the specific context becomes important when dealing with variations in the meaning and use of houses in a given society.

From this perspective, this study focuses on interpreting the meaning and use of housing based on culture. The results of this study will be valuable for the development of space organization and layouts.

Methods

In order to find the development of meaning and use of housing, it is necessary to consider the design, the meaning and use of domestic space in cultural and historical context. From this point of view, we attempted to understand the meaning and use of Korean housing through analyzing the data about the *environment and behavior studies in the historical and cross-sectional perspectives*.

Therefore, we reviewed the results of documents (Choi, 1983, Kim, K., 1988; Lee, 1990 etc.) and papers (Cho, 1988; Zchang, 1994; Youn, 1999 etc.), which are concerned with the meaning of activities, settings and the residents' space use of the traditional Korean housing of the upper class in the Chosŏn Dynasty and the modern Korean apartment as one of the main housing types in Korea. The housing of the upper class in the Chosŏn Dynasty is one of the representatives of traditional Korean housing and affects modern Korean housing in many ways. Apartments have been considered one of the major housing types in Korea for only the past 35 years and have continued to grow in popularity as a preferred housing

type¹⁾.

Particularly, we concentrated on the interrelations between the activities for entertaining visitors and preparing and eating foods. We focused on these activities because they are largely related to the ideas and values upheld by residents in Korea, such as the imperative of upholding family lineage, the separateness in functions of males and females, and so forth (Choi, 1983; Kim and Lee, 1997; Youn, 1999 etc.). We also considered four aspects of said activities (Rapoport, 1990) to analyze these activities more specifically: (1) instrumental aspects which are the most manifest (the nature of the activities), (2) how activities are carried out, (3) how they are associated with the systems, and (4) their meaning. The residents' use of domestic space within the meaning of activities was examined as the major mechanism which links settings with people and their activities.

Results and Discussion

The major findings are as follows:

1. The meaning and use of traditional Korean housing for entertainment and the preparation and eating of food:

(1) Entertaining visitors was one of main affairs for the imperatives of upholding family lineage and keeping ancestral worship rituals (Kim and Lee, 1997; Youn, 1999). Households ought to give a cordial reception to their visitors not only to entertain the visitors hospitably, but also to preserve the household dignity and to establish a proper and correct family traditions (Youn, 1999).

Preparing and serving food were fundamental in arranging and preparing for activities, including entertainment and ancestral worship rituals.

(2). As the Confucian idea of the separateness in functions of males and females emerged as a primary design concern, the traditional Korean housing was divided into two main domains. One was a male's domain and the other was a female's domain.

Thus, the male's domain served for entertaining visitors, and embodied the concept of "out," and the women's domain served for preparing food, and embodied the concept of "in." This demarcation resulted from an influence of patriarchy and primogeniture, the basis for the institution of family, and confinement of the female. In this situation, most visitors were guests coming to see the head of the household (Youn, 1999), and only a few were relatives dropping in and visiting the lady of the household.

In the *sarang-ch'ae* (men's quarters), the *sarangbang* and the *taech'ong* (a wood floored main hall) functioned as a living room where visitors were entertained (Park et al., 1998; Kim and Lee, 1997; Youn, 1999). The *anbang* and *an-ch'ae* (women's quarters) served for preparing food and other women's activities such as sewing clothes (Park et al., 1998). Additionally, some kitchen furniture and tools

1) Residents' preference for the type of housing (%)

1987			1992			1997		
Apartment	Detached House	Others	Apartment	Detached House	Others	Apartment	Detached House	Others
18.3	79.3	2.4	34.2	63.3	2.5	35.2	61.4	3.4

National Statistical Office (1998)

were kept in the *an-taech'ong* (the hall in the women's quarters) because the ceremonies such as ancestral worship rituals and wedding were held in that location (Park et al., 1998).

The Confucian idea of the separateness in functions of males and females also affected the family eating customs. The head of the household usually took his meals in the *sarangbang* and other family members took their meals in the *anbang*. Also, there was an eating order, for example, women ate after men and the younger generation after the elder generation (Cho, J., 1995).

(3) Traditional Korean housing composed of two types of indivisible spaces: inner spaces such as *an-ch'ae*, *sarang-ch'ae*, and private outdoor spaces such as *an-madang*, *sarang-madang*. Private outdoor spaces were surrounded by inner space, *ch'ae*, which is different from public open space as presented in other cultures (Cho S., 1995). The meaning and use of inner spaces was related to private outdoor spaces. Thus, it produced the result that each inner space, *ch'ae*, had larger outdoor service areas.

In practice, *an-madang* is close to the kitchen and heating unit in the women's quarters or in the servants' quarters. It functioned as an extended area for activities which were associated with preparing meals, and even for activities which could not be carried out in the kitchen (Park et al., 1998). On the other hand, *sarang-madang* as a male's quarter served for activities such as entertainment and reception by pitching a tent, especially for wedding ceremonies and other ritual activities (Park et al., 1998; Youn, 1999).

2. The meaning and use (transformation) of the modern Korean apartment for entertainment and preparation and eating foods:

(1) Increasing nuclear family and diminishing rigid patriarchy and primogeniture have changed the meaning of entertaining visitors from the formal and frequent imperatives of household, to the formal and informal or the recreational activities of all the family members.

The types of visitors have been divided by their host into categories such as guests of the head, the lady, and the children (Kim, 1988; Lee, 1991), or by the level of intimacy such as close friends and honorable guests (Cho, 1988; Park, 1994 etc.). During the Chosŏn Dynasty, the types of visitors were divided by their social status, and this also had an effect on space usage for their entertainment (Kim and Lee, 1997; Youn, 1999).

(2) As a result of the disappearing of *Sarang-ch'ae*, the male's domain and the space of entertainment, the activities of entertaining visitors take place in the same space for the other activities such as family recreation, family meals, and other daily family activities (Cho, 1988; Lee, 1991; Park, 1994 etc.).

Many environment-behavior studies concerning modern Korean apartments have reported the living room, the dining room or a dining space, and in some cases, even the master bedroom (*an-bang*), served for activities including entertainment and eating food. Particularly, family meals and meals with visitors most frequently take place in the dining room or a dining space (Cho, 1988; Park, 1994 etc.).

Considering the time spent eating foods during entertainment and family recreation, and the interrelations of these activities with the preparation of foods, it

can be assumed that the dining room would gradually have a more weighty responsibility as an inner public space in modern Korean apartments.

(3) In modern Korean apartments, there is not enough space for a wide range of extant facilities for entertaining visitors and eating food compared with traditional Korean housing composed of both indivisible inner space and private outdoor space, because all kinds of spaces are concentrated in a compact inner space (Zhang, 1994), and extra service areas occupy extremely narrow spaces.

Adding to this, the apartment residents tend to have formal entertainment or receptions in public facilities, according to the change of ideas and values for entertainment. Other functions such as family recreation, would be reinforced in modern Korean apartments as the ritual meaning of entertainment becomes weaker in modern Korean housing.

Conclusion

In the preceding section, we developed and illustrated a comparative approach for the study of meanings and uses of housing particularly for the entertaining and the preparation and eating food in the traditional Korean housing and the modern Korean apartment.

The traditional meaning of entertainment, the imperatives of upholding family lineage, has weakened and the meaning of preparation of food has changed from the basic arrangements for entertaining, as well as managing daily life, to the activities associated with family recreation. According to these changes of the meaning of activities, it is no longer necessary to provide separate spaces for those activities. More over, sometimes these activities occur in the same place.

The concept of separateness between a female's domain and a male's domain in the traditional house has faded out. While, the concept of demarcation between inner space and outer space has been modified and still remain in the modern Korean apartment, which was shown in the use of spaces for formal entertainment and for informal entertainment. Also, the meaning of family recreation would be reinforced in the modern Korean apartment.

These findings show that the meaning and use of housing has been applied to housing design with an association and a demarcation. That is to say, the meaning and use are the principal mechanism that links activities and settings (Rapoport, 1990). These results from historical and ethnographic perspectives contribute to establish the design criteria for the future housing design that would be more appropriate for the specific context.

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