Blue Rooster Pagoda as an Introduction to Traditional East Asian Cosmology within Daesoon Jinrihoe

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Abstract

This research considers the Korean new religious movement, Daesoon Jinrihoe (大巡眞理會), in the larger context of East Asian thought, by outlining the religious symbology of the Blue Rooster Pagoda (青鷄塔 *Kr cheonggyetap*) at Yeoju Headquarters Temple Complex. From the time of ancient civilizations into the present, metaphysical thinkers have drawn an array of paradigms from the natural world, to detect correspondences between material and spiritual realities and maximize their benefits. In both the East and West, systems such as geomancy, astrology, and different organic taxonomies have offered intricate understandings of the cosmic order. Completed in April of 1988, Blue Rooster Pagoda at Yeoju Headquarters Temple Complex has become an iconic image closely associated with Daesoon Jinrihoe. Aside from its clear aesthetic beauty, Blue Rooster Pagoda is also useful in introducing the East Asian Natural Philosophy contained within Daesoon Theology and highlighting how this Korean religion has developed novel symbols of its own. Some of the subject matter depicted on the pagoda is similar to content found across many Chinese traditions. Examples would include the second and third layers of the pedestal (座臺, *jwadae*) and the upper and lower sections of the body (塔身部, *tapshinbu*) which correspond to the four symbolic celestial animals (四神 *Kr sa-shin*), the twelve deities of the Chinese Zodiac (十二神將 *Kr shibi-shinjang*), the twenty-four deities in charge of the seasonal divisions (二十四節候 *Kr ishipsa-jeolhu*), and the twenty-eight deities in charge of the constellations (二十八宿 *Kr ishibpal-su*). However, the Ox-Seeking Pictures (尋牛圖 *Kr shimudo*) on the first layer of the pedestal and the symbolism of the nine-round-stone finial (相輪部, *sangnyunbu*) both require special care as their significance differs considerably from even their nearest counterparts in Chinese Natural Philosophy. This exploration of religious symbology will use Blue Rooster Pagoda as a springboard to explain the meaning of East Asian Natural Philosophy in Daesoon Jinrihoe.

Keywords: Blue Rooster Pagoda; Daesoon Jinrihoe; Yeoju Headquarter Temple Complex; East Asian Natural Philosophy

Introduction

In his schema of religious "dimensions," the scholar Ninian Smart identified the "aesthetic" as a major element. Aesthetics vary among traditions as some place high value on simplicity in worship and artistic expression. Walking into a meetinghouse of the Religious Society of Friends (perhaps more commonly known as Quakers) to attend unprogrammed worship, one might silently enter into a plain building, sit on a bench wherein there is no wrong place to sit, and remain in silent prayer for roughly an hour, in an experience sometimes described as "waiting worship." Quaker facilities contain no iconography (Abbott 2012, 352). On the other end of the spectrum of religious experience, a first-time visitor to the Yeoju Headquarters Temple Complex of the Korean new religious movement, Daesoon Jinrihoe, will be thrust into a highly ornate sacred space replete with symbols on top of symbols on top of symbols. How intricate is the symbology of Daesoon Jinrihoe's temple complexes? It is internally acknowledged as so sophisticated that newly initiated members are encouraged to attend temple acclimation (參拜 *Kr* [1] *chambae*) sessions wherein they will receive guided tours of the temple to be provided with explanations of the temple structures, statues, wall murals, and fixtures as the guide instructs them on temple etiquette. If that is what is deemed best for Korean initiates, who presumably have some cultural exposure to certain basic symbols, one can only imagine how much more daunting the task of religious cultural literacy can be for non-Korean temple visitors or initiates.

Fortunately, there is one structure at Daesoon Jinrihoe's Yeoju Headquarters Temple Complex that is so dense with key symbols that it can serve as a sort of Rosetta's Stone to inform outsiders of many key themes for understanding both Daesoon Jinrihoe's use of traditional East Asian natural philosophy and the novel visual representation of teachings unique to the movement. The aforementioned structure is known as *Cheonggye*-tap (青鷄塔) or 'Blue Rooster Pagoda' as it is known in English. Although built in April of 1988, relatively late in the early history of Daesoon Jinrihoe (which was founded in 1969), Blue Rooster Pagoda went on to become one of Daesoon Jinrihoe's most iconic images. At the order's headquarters in Yeoju, images of Blue Rooster Pagoda appear on many items that are given out as souvenirs to visitors such as journals, business card holders, and usb drives. It is easily within the top five images that Daesoon Jinrihoe uses on posters or book covers when tasked with visually representing their religious order to the outside world.

The Origin of East Asian Pagoda

East Asian pagodas originate from Buddhist stupas, monumental structures that served as repositories for sacred relics and focal points for Buddhist devotional practice. Most historians working in the field of Buddhist architecture and art history agree that stupas were first introduced to China via the remarkably talented Nepalese architect,

Araniko (1245–1306), a figure whose influence on East Asian Buddhist architecture cannot be overstated. Araniko's transformative mission to Yuan China lasted from his late teenage years, when he first arrived as a promising young craftsman, until his death at the age of sixty-two, during which time he fundamentally shaped the architectural vocabulary that would define Buddhist sacred structures throughout East Asia for centuries to come. His long tenure in China allowed him not only to design and oversee the construction of numerous significant Buddhist structures but also to train generations of Chinese craftsmen in the sophisticated architectural techniques he brought from Nepal, ensuring that his architectural innovations would be preserved and developed long after his death.

As for the eventual appearance and development of these architectural forms on the Korean peninsula, a region that would develop its own distinctive stupa traditions, the earliest stupas likely appeared alongside the introduction of Buddhism itself during the fourth century, a pivotal period in Korean religious and cultural history. Buddhism's arrival marked a fundamental transformation in Korean spiritual life, and the construction of stupas represented tangible, physical manifestations of this new religious tradition taking root in Korean soil. However, since those earliest stupas would necessarily have been constructed primarily of wood, the most readily available and easily worked building material in the heavily forested Korean peninsula, none from that early time period are left remaining today. The perishable nature of wooden construction, combined with the destructive forces of fire, warfare, and simple decay over the passage of sixteen centuries, means that scholars must rely on textual descriptions, archaeological evidence, and comparative analysis with later structures to understand what these earliest Korean stupas might have looked like.

As for the earliest examples among those Korean stupas that do in fact remain[2] and can be studied directly today, several remarkable structures survive to provide tangible connections to Korea's early Buddhist architectural heritage. The Nine-story Wooden Pagoda (九層木塔誌 *Kr gucheung moktapji*), constructed in 645 CE at the historically significant Hwangnyong-sa Temple (皇龍寺) in Gyeongju, the ancient capital of the Silla Kingdom, represents the earliest surviving wooden pagoda structure(Encyclopedia of Korean Culture n.d.b) on the Korean peninsula. This impressive multi-story structure, with its nine ascending levels symbolizing Buddhist cosmological concepts, demonstrates the sophisticated woodworking techniques and architectural understanding that Korean craftsmen had achieved by the mid-seventh century. The pagoda's survival for nearly fourteen centuries stands as testament both to the quality of its original construction and to the care with which successive generations have maintained and preserved this irreplaceable cultural treasure.

Whereas the Nine-story Wooden Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa represents the earliest wooden example, Korea also possesses remarkably early stone stupas that have survived the intervening centuries with less need for extensive restoration and maintenance. The Mireuksaji Stone Pagoda (彌勒寺址石塔 *Kr mireuk-saji seoktap*), constructed in 639

CE in Iksan(Go and Yi 2017, 290), predates even the wooden pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa by six years, making it one of the very oldest surviving Buddhist structures on the Korean peninsula. This stone pagoda, dedicated to Maitreya Buddha (the future Buddha), represents an early Korean attempt to translate wooden architectural forms into the more permanent medium of stone, creating a structure that could endure for millennia rather than mere centuries. The technical challenges involved in carving and stacking massive stone blocks to create a stable, aesthetically pleasing multi-story structure should not be underestimated, as they required sophisticated understanding of structural engineering, stone-working techniques, and aesthetic principles.

Alongside the Mireuksaji Stone Pagoda as one of Korea's earliest stone stupas stands the Imitation Brick Pagoda (模塼石塔, *Kr mojeon seok-tap*) at Bunhwang-sa Temple (芬皇寺), constructed in 634 CE(Encyclopedia of Korean Culture n.d.c) in Gyeongju, making it five years older than the Mireuksaji pagoda and thus the very oldest surviving stone stupa in Korea. The name "Imitation Brick Pagoda" reflects the structure's fascinating design, which uses carefully carved stone blocks to mimic the appearance of fired brick construction, a building technique that was known in Korea through contact with Chinese architectural traditions but was not commonly employed in Korean construction. This architectural choice represents a sophisticated attempt to reference Chinese Buddhist architectural precedents while adapting those foreign forms to Korean materials, techniques, and aesthetic sensibilities. Together, these three surviving seventh-century pagodas—one wooden and two stone—provide invaluable evidence for understanding how Buddhist architectural traditions were received, adapted, and transformed on the Korean peninsula during the crucial formative period of Korean Buddhist culture.

The original function of Buddhist stupas, dating back to the earliest periods of Buddhist history in ancient India, was to serve as repositories that would house the carefully enshrined relics of the historical buddha, Śākyamuni, known as *śarīra* (舍利, *Kr sari*) in Sanskrit. These physical remains, recovered from the Buddha's cremation following his death and entry into final *nirvana* (*parinirvāṇa*), were considered supremely sacred objects that maintained a direct physical connection to the enlightened teacher who had walked the earth. According to traditional accounts preserved in early Buddhist texts, these precious relics were initially divided among eight different kingdoms and communities, each of which constructed stupas to house their portion of the Buddha's remains, creating pilgrimage sites where devotees could pay homage and accumulate spiritual merit through acts of reverence and devotion. The physical presence of these relics within the stupas transformed these architectural structures into something far more than mere monuments—they became living presences of the Buddha himself, focal points for devotional practice and tangible connections to the historical founder of the Buddhist tradition.

Later in Buddhist history, as the religion spread geographically and developed institutionally over the centuries following the Buddha's death, the remains of arhats

(enlightened disciples who had achieved liberation from the cycle of rebirth) and other similarly regarded Buddhist figures of exceptional spiritual accomplishment also received this same reverential treatment. This expansion of relic veneration reflected the growing complexity of Buddhist communities and their recognition that spiritual attainment and worthiness of veneration extended beyond the historical Buddha alone. Accomplished meditation masters, renowned scholars who had preserved and transmitted the dharma, and exemplary monastics who had embodied Buddhist ideals in their lives all came to be seen as deserving of the honor of having their remains enshrined in stupas. This development represented a natural evolution in Buddhist practice, as expanding communities sought to honor their own spiritual lineages and create local pilgrimage sites connected to teachers and masters who had directly impacted their particular regions and traditions.

Later still, demonstrating the remarkable theological creativity and adaptability of Buddhist thought, this practice of enshrinement was extended conceptually to encompass other sacred 'bodies' in a more abstract and metaphorical sense. This expansion moved beyond the literal, physical remains of enlightened beings to include spiritual and textual embodiments of Buddhist truth and wisdom. For example, sophisticated theological terms such as 'relics of the dharma body (法身舍利 *Kr beopshin sari*)' emerged within Buddhist discourse, representing a fundamental reconceptualization of what could constitute a relic worthy of enshrinement. This term drew upon the important Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of the three bodies (trikāya) of the Buddha—the physical manifestation body (nirmāṇakāya), the enjoyment body (saṃbhogakāya), and the truth or dharma body (dharmakāya)—with the dharma body representing the eternal, unchanging essence of Buddhist truth that transcends any particular physical manifestation.

The phrase 'relics of the dharma body' was most often and most characteristically an allusion applied to sacred Buddhist scriptures (sūtras) or powerful sacred incantations (*Skt* mantra, dhāraṇī, etc.) that were ritually enshrined within the stupa structure(Ko and Yi 2017, 74), typically deposited in specially prepared chambers or cavities designed to hold these precious spiritual treasures. This practice reflected the mature Buddhist understanding that the Buddha's true essence was not ultimately located in physical bone fragments or cremated remains but rather in the eternal dharma—the teachings, practices, and realizations that constituted the path to enlightenment. Sacred texts, particularly important sūtras like the Lotus Sūtra or Heart Sūtra, came to be regarded as equally valid—or even superior—manifestations of the Buddha's enlightened presence. Similarly, powerful dhāraṇī (extended mantric formulas believed to contain concentrated spiritual power) or shorter mantras could be inscribed on paper, silk, or even thin metal sheets and deposited within stupas, transforming these architectural structures into repositories of living spiritual power and presence. This theological development had profound practical implications, as it meant that stupas could be constructed and consecrated anywhere, without requiring the increasingly rare and

precious physical relics of the Buddha or accomplished masters. Communities could now create their own sacred sites by enshrining copies of scriptures or written mantras, democratizing access to stupa veneration and allowing Buddhist sacred architecture to spread far beyond the limited sites where actual bodily relics existed.

Stupas vary in form greatly even within individual countries let alone large regions. To briefly explain the common structure and symbolism that will be useful for the ultimate goal of appreciating Daesoon Jinrihoe's Blue Rooster Pagoda, attention will be given to Korean Buddhist stupas. Generally speaking, Korean stupas, and hence, pagodas by extension, are composed of three sections: the foundation (基壇部 *Kr gidanbu*), the body (塔身部 *Kr tapshinbu*), and the finial (相輪部 *Kr sangnyunbu*). The description below will prioritize discussion of Korean stone stupas as these are the most common; however, some notes will include wooden and brick stupas as structural differences are worth highlighting. The basic features commonly found in each section will be detailed below:

1) The foundation:

① Base stone (址臺石 *Kr jidaeseok*)

Naturally, stupas are built systematically from the bottom up following well-established architectural principles, and the first critical step in any stupa construction project is to carefully flatten the land through extensive site preparation and then lay down the base stone with precision. This foundational work represents the most labor-intensive phase of initial construction, often requiring teams of workers to excavate, level, and compact the earth to create a stable platform capable of supporting the immense weight of the structure that will rise above it. The base stone itself is a substantial stone element, often consisting of multiple large stone blocks carefully fitted together, that is placed at the very bottom of the stupa to keep the ground flat and stable and to prevent it from becoming concave, convex, or otherwise uneven over time due to settling, erosion, or the natural shifting of soil and subsoil layers beneath the structure.

In terms of structural soundness and long-term architectural stability, this foundational element is unquestionably the most crucial part of the entire stupa structure, given that these monuments are specifically designed and expected to endure century after century, standing firm despite continual and relentless exposure to the destructive forces of nature. These natural forces include not only the obvious threats of wind, rain, and temperature fluctuations but also the more insidious dangers of frost heaving, soil erosion, groundwater movement, seismic activity, and the gradual settling of foundations under the constant downward pressure of the structure's own massive weight. A base stone that is improperly sized, inadequately positioned, or constructed from inferior materials will inevitably lead to structural failure, sometimes within decades rather than the intended centuries or millennia of service.

Archaeological evidence from numerous sites throughout East Asia demonstrates the fundamental importance of this structural element. Some sites of stupa-ruins,

particularly those where the superstructure was destroyed by fire, warfare, or deliberate demolition, feature a mostly intact base stone and little else remaining that would indicate the presence of the once-standing stupa that formerly occupied the site. This archaeological pattern speaks volumes about the differential durability of stupa components and the engineering wisdom of ancient builders who understood that the foundation must outlast all other elements. This survival pattern occurs primarily because base stones are deliberately made to be exceptionally strong, extremely heavy, remarkably dense, and usually not particularly ornamental or decorative in nature. Unlike the more elaborate carved stones used in upper portions of stupas, which might attract the attention of looters or be repurposed for other construction projects, base stones possess little aesthetic appeal and are too massive to be easily moved or removed from their original positions.

The lack of ornamentation on base stones reflects a purely functional design philosophy focused entirely on structural performance rather than visual aesthetics. While upper portions of stupas might feature intricate carvings, decorative moldings, or inscribed texts meant to inspire devotion and communicate religious meaning, the base stone operates invisibly, buried or partially buried beneath the visible structure, performing its essential load-bearing function without need for decoration. This utilitarian approach to foundation design demonstrates the practical engineering knowledge possessed by ancient Buddhist architects and master builders, who understood intuitively what modern structural engineering has confirmed mathematically: that foundations must be overbuilt, conservative in design, and focused exclusively on stability and load distribution.

Modern building construction techniques employ concrete-paved floors, massive reinforced concrete footings, and sometimes deep pile foundations driven into bedrock to ensure structural integrity and prevent differential settling that could crack walls or cause buildings to lean or collapse. These contemporary methods represent the application of advanced materials science and structural engineering principles to achieve the same fundamental goal that ancient stupa builders pursued. But in the past, long before the invention of Portland cement and the development of reinforced concrete technology, carefully selected and precisely placed base stones served that essential foundational purpose, distributing the enormous weight of multi-story stone structures across a sufficiently large area of earth to prevent dangerous concentrations of pressure that could cause the ground to fail. The principles remain constant across the centuries—only the materials and techniques have evolved to meet the same timeless architectural challenge of creating stable, enduring foundations for monumental structures.

② Foundation-supporting Stone (基壇괴[3]石 *Kr gidangoem seok*)

The foundation-supporting stone is a stone that serves the same purpose as base stone, but it was designed to fortify wooden stupas. These are less common in Korea

because many wooden stupas were burnt down throughout history.

③ Foundation

As for the foundation, this section consists of the foundation's face stones (基壇面石 *Kr gidan myeonseok*), corner pillars (隅柱 *Kr uju*), and, in some cases, the enlightened being pillars (撐[4]柱 *Kr* taengju) which support the middle areas.

Face stones are placed on the foundation-supporting stone. At each corner of the foundation-supporting stone, pillar-shaped stones called 'corner pillars are erected to support the load. In some cases, additional pillars are also erected in the middle, between corner pillars to better distribute the weight. Those extra pillars are known as enlightened pillars (Baek 2011).

④ Cover Stone (甲石 *Kr gapseok*)

This is a stone that covers the foundation like a lid or cap. It is fixed on top of the foundation, and the pressure it supplies presses the stones that make up the foundation and base together firmly to secure the structure. The cover stone also maintains a flat surface for the body of the stupa.

2) The Body (塔身部 *Kr tapshinbu*)

This portion of the stupa is composed of roof stones (屋蓋石 *Kr okgaeseok*). The body of the stupa itself is the section wherein a hollow reliquary (舍利孔 *Kr sarigong*) is dug and relics are enshrined. As previously described, the stones that cover the body are called roof stones, and as might be imagined, once pieced together, they form the shape of a roof. The number of stories in a stupa is equivalent to its number of roofs. A roof support is placed on the eaves of the roof stone to reduce the damage caused by rainfall, snowfall, and similar weather conditions. Stupa-naming tends to relate to the body of the given stupa. As such, the name and the body usually provide information regarding the purpose of the stupa (Baek 2011).

3) The Finial (相輪部 *Kr* sangnyunbu)

The filial refers to the upper part of the stupa, and the most important component of the finial is the treasure wheel (寶輪 *Kr boryun*). Due to its position at the top, it is also called the top wheel (上輪 *Kr sangnyun*) or the sign of the wheel (相輪, *Kr sangnyun*).

The reason why the word *ryun* (輪), meaning wheel, is used in so many of the words for components of the finial is that the wheel is an analogy for movements that were observable in the sky such as the cyclical 'turning' of morning, daytime, evening, and night or the four seasons of each year. Consequently, the wheel became a symbol for the dharma which means not only 'religious teachings' but also 'truth' or 'law' in contexts such as the laws (and patterns) of nature. Some versions of the dharma wheel feature twenty-four spokes, and although this number has numerous meanings in Buddhism, it

can allude to the 24 hours in a day or the 24 seasonal divisions that were observed by many of the ancient societies in their practice of agriculture and general timekeeping.

From bottom to top, the finial consists of a dew-receiver (露盤 *Kr nopan*), an inverted bowl (覆鉢 *Kr bokbal*), an upturned blooming flower (仰花 *Kr anghwa*), a treasure wheel, and a treasure canopy (寶蓋 *Kr bogae*).

The dew receiver is a pedestal at the bottom of the finial. The inverted bowl is an East Asian term to describe a hemispherical dome. That was the shape of early Nepali-Indic stupas. The upturned flower is an allusion to how lotus flowers bloom toward the sky. The treasure wheel, the most important part of the finial, symbolizes the dharma wheel and those who turn the dharma wheel (buddhas, and in some cases, kings). The treasure canopy is a roof that covers the treasure wheel, and that symbolizes the authority of the ruler (historically, Buddhism was frequently supported via royal patronage) and the sanctity of the stone stupa itself (Baek 2011).

Now that the basic features of Buddhist style stupas (and pagodas by extension) have been presented, Blue Rooster Pagoda can be introduced and appreciated for its various innovations.

The Structure of Blue Rooster Pagoda

Like Korean Buddhist stupas, the Blue Rooster Pagoda is composed of foundation (pedestal), body, and finial. Surrounding the pagoda is an octagonal stone fence that represents the eight trigrams: Geon (heaven 乾 ☰, *Chn* qián), Tae (marsh 兌 ☱, *Chn* duì), Yi (fire 離 ☲, *Chn* lí), Jin (thunder 震 ☳, *Chn* zhèn), Son (wind 巽 ☴, *Chn* xùn), Gam (water 坎 ☵, *Chn* kǎn), Gan (mountain 艮 ☶, *Chn* gěn), and Gon (earth 坤 ☷, *Chn* kūn). Atop the ground inside the gate, are pebbles which represent the beings of the three realms that cry out in agony (Daesoon.org. n.d.) In the middle of those gated pebbles stands the pagoda itself. The absolute bottom section of the pagoda is a ground stone (地底石 *Kr* jijiseok) detailed to look like a lotus flower. In the Buddhist context, the growth of a lotus flower is an analogy for humans achieving buddhahood because the lotus, which is unsullied by its surroundings, grows out of muddy waters, just as enlightenment, a state beyond defilement and suffering, is nevertheless achieved from within a world characterized by defilement and suffering. Above the ground stone, is the first section of the pedestal (座臺 *Kr jwadae*) which is embossed with the Ox-Seeking Pictures (尋牛圖 *Kr shimudo*).

Daesoon Jinrihoe's Ox-seeking Pictures share a fair amount of content in common with various versions of the famous Ox Herding Pictures (牛圖 *Kr udo*) of Zen Buddhism. Thoroughly explaining the differences between the two would be outside the scope of this article; however, some examples can be highlighted here in brief. Daesoon Jinrihoe's Ox-seeking Pictures, a series of six paintings, consists of Deep Contemplation Leading to Awakening (深深有悟 *Kr shimshimyouo*), Finding and Following Heavenly Teachings (奉得神敎 *Kr bongdeukshingyo*), Diligently Practicing the Dao and Overcoming

Hardships (勉而修之 *Kr myeonisuji*), Unremitting Devotion of Oneself to Dao (誠之又誠 *Kr seongjiuseong*), Perfected Unification with Dao (道通眞境 *Kr dotongjingyeong*), and the World Enlightened by the Dao (道之通明 *Kr dojitongmyeong*). Deep Contemplation Leading to Awakening is a preliminary stage frequently described in indigenous Korean religions[5] wherein the practitioner inwardly ponders spiritual and philosophical questions thereby demonstrating their interest in pursuing spiritual cultivation. The visual depiction and written descriptions (not the aforementioned Sino-Korean titles of the paintings but additional paragraph-long passages written in modern vernacular Korean) of the next several stages, Finding and Following Heavenly Teachings, Diligently Practicing the Dao and Overcoming Hardships, and Unremitting Devotion of Oneself to Dao, correspond rather closely with the stages of Discovering Hoofprints (見跡 *Chn* jiàn jī), Glimpsing the Ox (見牛 *Chn* jiàn niú), and Taming the Ox (牧牛 *Chn* mù niú) as depicted in the Zen Ox-herding Picture series by Chan Master Kuo'an Shiyuan (廓庵師遠 *Chn Kuòān Shīyuǎn*). Daesoon Jinrihoe's Ox-seeking Picture titled, Perfected Unification with Dao, visually matches with the Zen Ox-herding Picture, Riding the Ox to Return Home (騎牛歸家 *Chn* qíniú guījiā); however, the written description of Perfected Unification with Dao touches upon aspects not only that picture but the remaining four Zen Ox-herding pictures as well (pictures 7, 8, 9, and 10 in Kuo'an Shiyuan's version). Like the first painting in the series though, the last painting in Daesoon Jinrihoe's Ox-seeking Pictures, The World Enlightened by the Dao, is also an original and novel composition. Visually, the World Enlightened by the Dao, shows the ox-seeker is no longer a child but has grown into an immortal who blissfully enjoys the fruits of his attainment and the serenity of a transformed world. The written description of this painting is not specifically about the individual spiritual cultivator and their progress, but has instead shifted into being about the future world wherein the Earthly Paradise of the Later World (後天 *Kr hucheon*) has emerged.

The second section of the pedestal displays intricate carved reliefs depicting the four symbolic celestial animals (四神 *Kr sa-shin*), a quartet of mythological creatures that hold profound significance throughout East Asian cosmology and religious iconography. These four creatures consist of the green dragon (青龍 *Kr cheongnyong*), white tiger (白虎 *Kr baekho*), vermillion bird (朱雀 *Kr jujak*), and black tortoise (玄武 *Kr hyeonmu*), each rendered with distinctive iconographic features that make them immediately recognizable to viewers familiar with East Asian religious and cultural traditions. The inclusion of these four celestial guardians on Buddhist stupas represents a fascinating synthesis of indigenous East Asian cosmological concepts with imported Indian Buddhist architectural and symbolic traditions, demonstrating how Buddhism adapted itself to local cultural frameworks as it spread throughout East Asia.

These four creatures are symbolic animals that are believed throughout East Asian traditions to protect and maintain the fundamental order of the universe, serving as cosmic guardians who ensure that the proper relationships between heaven, earth, and all beings remain in harmonious balance. Their protective function extends beyond mere

physical guardianship to encompass the preservation of cosmic order itself, making them appropriate symbols for inclusion on stupas, which were themselves understood as microcosmic representations of the Buddhist universe. They represent simultaneously the four cardinal directions of east, west, south, and north, creating a complete spatial orientation that encompasses all of horizontal space, and the four seasons of spring, autumn, summer, and winter, which together complete the annual cycle of temporal change and renewal. The green dragon specifically corresponds to the east and spring, symbolizing renewal and growth; the white tiger corresponds to the west and autumn, representing strength and the harvest; the vermillion bird corresponds to the south and summer, embodying heat and vitality; while the black tortoise corresponds to the north and winter, signifying endurance and rest. This comprehensive symbolic system integrates spatial, temporal, and elemental associations into a unified cosmological framework that would have been immediately comprehensible to sufficiently learned viewers in traditional East Asian societies.

Third section of the pedestal depicts the twelve deities of the Chinese Zodiac (十二神將 *Kr shibi-shinjang*). In the Korean context, the East Asian zodiac is a tradition that is closely related to the Medicine Buddha faith and the esoteric school of Korean Buddhism known as *Shininjong* (神印宗). Specific dating of the phenomenon has proved elusive, but at some point, these traditions developed a Buddhist appropriation of the twelve zodiac animals who were merged with the Twelve Yakṣa Generals (十二藥叉大將 *Kr shibi yakcha daejang*) mentioned in the Sutra of the Medicine Buddha (藥師經 *Kr* yaksa-gyeong) in order to make them properly 'Buddhist'. Thereupon, the Sanskrit name-bearing Yakṣa Generals, Kumbhīra (金毘羅/宮毘羅 *Kr gungbira*), Vajra (伐折羅 *Kr beoljeolla*), Mihira (迷企羅 *Kr migira*), Aṇḍīra (安底羅 *Kr anjeora*), Anila (頞儞羅 *Kr alnira*), Śaṇḍila (珊底羅 *Kr sanjeora*), Indra (因陀羅 *Kr indalla*), Pajra (波夷羅 *Kr paira*), Mahoraga (摩虎羅 *Kr mahora*), Kinnara (眞達羅 *Kr jindalla*), Catura (招杜羅 *Kr chodura*), and Vikarāla (毘羯羅 *Kr bigalla*), became associated with the zodiac animals the pig, dog, rooster, monkey, sheep, horse, snake, dragon, rabbit, tiger, ox, and rat(National Museum of Korea n.d)(in that respective order, which differs from their associations in the Shingon and Tendai orders of Japanese Buddhism- for example, in the Korean scheme, Kumbhīra was associated with the pig whereas, in Japan, his association is with the rat). This became so influential in the Korean usage of the East Asian zodiac animals that the Twelve Spirit-Generals (十二神將 *Kr shibi shinjang*, literally 'the Twelve Spirit-Generals') has become a more common standard of reference than the typical Chinese nomenclature of (十二生肖 *Chn* shí'èr shēngxiào *Kr* shibi saengso).

After the historic reunification of the Korean peninsula (668 CE), achieved when the Korean kingdom of Silla successfully conquered and absorbed the rival kingdoms of Baekje and Goguryeo with the military assistance of Tang China, the now-unified Silla kingdom adopted and standardized a distinctive architectural style of erecting stone stupas as matching pairs of east and west two stupas positioned symmetrically on either

side of temple main halls. This twin-pagoda arrangement represented a significant departure from earlier Korean Buddhist architectural practices and reflected both indigenous Korean aesthetic preferences for bilateral symmetry and Chinese Tang dynasty influences on Korean temple layout and design principles. The practice of constructing paired stupas rather than single central stupas created a visual balance within temple complexes and may have carried symbolic meaning related to Buddhist concepts of duality, complementarity, or the pairing of wisdom and compassion as twin aspects of enlightenment.

At that time in Unified Silla period temple construction, it became customary and widely practiced throughout the kingdom to engrave elaborate carved reliefs on the foundation stones of the stupa or alternatively on the stone body of the first floor level depicting the retinue of the Medicine Buddha (Bhaiṣajyaguru), the healing buddha who became enormously popular in East Asian Buddhism (Encyclopedia of Korean Culture n.d.a). These carved reliefs typically showed the Medicine Buddha accompanied by his two principal bodhisattva attendants—Sunlight Bodhisattva (Sūryaprabha) and Moonlight Bodhisattva (Candraprabha)—along with the Twelve Heavenly Generals who served as the Medicine Buddha's protective guardians and divine warriors. The prominence given to Medicine Buddha imagery in Unified Silla stupa decoration reflects the widespread popularity of Medicine Buddha worship during this period in Korean Buddhist history, as devotees sought healing from physical ailments, protection from disease and disaster, and the spiritual medicine of dharma teachings that could cure the afflictions of ignorance, attachment, and aversion. The careful positioning of these reliefs at the foundation or first-floor level ensured that worshippers circumambulating the stupas would encounter these powerful healing images at eye level, making them accessible focal points for devotional practice and meditation.

The lower body, the twenty-four deities in charge of the seasonal divisions (二十四節候 *Kr ishipsa-jeolhu*). The Twenty-Four Seasonal Divisions could also be called the twenty-four solar terms. The seasonal divisions refer to the ecliptic path of the celestial sphere, the annual orbit around the sun, which is divided into intervals every 15 degrees. Namely, one year is divided into twenty-four parts. Those are the seasonal divisions that are known in Korean as *jeolhu* (節候). *Jeol* (節), typically suggestive of a season, usually refers to a 15-day period while *hu* (候) refers to a 5-day period. Grouping three *hu* is thereby equivalent to one *jeol*. Accordingly, *jeol* system is commonly called *jeolhu*.[6] This style of terminology first appeared in Chinese classic the *Huainanzi* (淮南子) which was written in the 2nd century BCE. In those days, the Twenty-Four Seasonal Divisions became the official calendrical system. Henceforth, this calendrical system spread throughout East Asia and became applied to various productive activities such as farming. Furthermore, it was utilized in various fields including geography and human affairs and formed many cultural traditions. The Twenty-Four Seasonal Divisions reflect the meteorological changes caused by the movement of the sun.

As for why the twenty-four seasonal divisions are referred to as the twenty-four deities

in charge of the seasonal divisions, this is because "... Daesoon Jinrihoe holds that the Twenty-Four Generals who helped Emperor Taizong of Tang (李世民 *Chn Li Shimin*, 599–649) found the Tang Dynasty were incarnations of the Divine Generals of the Twenty-Four Seasonal Divisions" (DIRC 2020, 369–370).

The upper body of the pagoda displays the twenty-eight deities in charge of the constellations (二十八宿 *Kr ishibpal-su*). Similar to seasonal divisions and the deities in charge of those divisions, the number of deities in charge of the constellations also corresponds to the total number of constellations represented; in this case, twenty-eight. Likewise similar is how the deities in charge of the pagodas are also associated with historical Chinese generals. The twenty-eight constellations can be separated into the four directions as represented by the four symbolic celestial animals: the green dragon (east), white tiger (west), vermillion bird (south), and black tortoise (north). Each direction contains seven constellations (reaching the total of twenty-eight).

As for the apotheosized generals, the twenty-eight were "... meritorious subjects of Liu Xiu (劉秀, 6 BCE–57 CE), Emperor Guangwu of Later Han. In 60 CE, Emperor Ming of the Later Han dynasty honored 28 founding generals of the dynasty by painting their portraits on the Cloud Terrace (雲臺 *Chn* Yuntai) of the South Palace in the capital Luoyang. They became known as The Twenty-Eight Generals of the Cloud Terrace (or Yuntai). The Twenty-eight Generals aided Liu Xiu, of fallen royal blood, to found the Later Han" (DIRC 2020, 367–368).

Lastly, there is the finial. The finial of Daesoon Jinrihoe's Blue Rooster Pagoda has features that make it appear similar to the previously described finials of Korean Buddhist stupas. Both share an upturned blooming flower and a treasure canopy. Blue Rooster Pagoda's finial contains nine treasure disks which appear as spheres. Naturally, this is an allusion to the highest heaven, the Ninth Heaven, where the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven (九天上帝 *Kr gucheon sangje*) exercises authority over the Three Realms (三界 *Kr samgye*) of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity (天地人 *Kr cheon, ji, in*).

It is often asked why there are believed to be nine heavens of which the ninth is highest. In East Asian numerology, nine is known as the ultimate yang number (陽數之極, *Chn.* yángshù zhī jí *Kr yangsu ji geuk*). There are many possible origins for the association of 'nine' as the 'ultimate yang number.' One possibility from great antiquity is that of 'nine' being the numerical way to indicate Yang lines (陽爻 *Chn* yángyáo / *Kr yangbyo*) in Zhou dynasty divination via *The Book of Changes* (易經, *yijing* or *juyeok*(周易) as is more common in the Korean context).[7] Another reasonably ancient possibility is that 'nine' (九 *Chn* Jiǔ/ *Kr* gu) is a homophone with 'long-lasting' (久 *Chn* jiǔ / *Kr gu*). This is not only true of modern Mandarin and Sino-Korean, but it is also true in numerous other dialects and in Middle Chinese.[8] In Middle Chinese, both characters would have been pronounced as '/kɨuX/'. Perhaps due to those and other similar associations, nine became the number associated with the emperor, heaven, and the Supreme God.

Moreover, in the 'Heavenly Questions' section of *Songs of Chu* it was asked, "The

spheres of heaven are said to be ninefold, who carried out that measurement?"[9] And in one of his commentaries, the famous Neo-Confucian historian, philosopher, and poet Zhu Xi answered, "With regards to the spheres, it is said that heaven's shape is circular. Hence, (the spheres) follow (that shape). Nine is the ultimate yang number. That is why it is said that there are nine heavens."

For Daesoon Jinrihoe, when Doju Jo Jeongsan (1895–1958) enshrined Kang Jeungsan (姜甑山, 1871–1909) as *Gucheon Eungwon Nwebseong Bohwa Cheonjon Sangje* (九天應元雷聲普化天尊上帝, the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven, Celestial Worthy of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt, the Originator with Whom All Beings Resonate), this connected Kang with a specific Daoist deity who notably is associated with a retinue of divine generals (*Kr shinjang* 신장 / 神將) as detailed in a 12th or 13th century scripture, *The Scripture of the Jade Pivot*(Pregadio 2009) (玉樞寶經 *Kr* okchu bogyeong / *Ch* yù shū bǎo jīng). The version of this scripture that most influenced the shrines and iconography of Daesoon Jinrihoe appears to be the Mount Gyeryong (鷄龍山 *Kr gyeryong san*) version from 1888 as this version has 48 divine generals, the same number enshrined by Daesoon Jinrihoe(Yin 2014). In most representations of the Daoist pantheon of deities, the Jade Emperor (玉皇, *Chn* yù huáng, *Kr* okhwang) is considered to be the highest; however, as was mentioned above, there were some minority Daoist schools, such as some of those who used *The Scripture of the Jade Pivot* as liturgy who instead regarded the Celestial Worthy of the Ninth Heaven, Performer of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt, and the Originator with Whom All Beings Resonate (九天應元雷聲普化天尊 *Chn* jiǔtiān yìngyuán léishēng pǔhuà tiānzūn) as supreme. Although newer in origin, Daesoon Jinrihoe are also in this camp, but the additional bit of nuance would be that, for them, the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven incarnated as the historical figure, Kang Jeungsan, as an act of divine intervention to secure the salvation of all beings and the eventual emergence of an earthly paradise.

Although there are other allusions to this identity, the clearest statements of this particular identity come from the word *gucheon* (九天, the Ninth Heaven) when it appears in the earliest strata of Jeungsanist literature. *Gucheon* appears numerous times in Daesoon Jinrihoe's *The Canonical Scripture*. One especially noteworthy and representative example of the celestial location of the Supreme God being identified in this manner can be found in Chapter 1 Verse Nine of Progress of the Order from *The Canonical Scripture*. An abridged version of this verse appears as follows:

> One day, Sangje said to Kim Hyeong-Ryeol, "The western priest, Matteo Ricci (Yimadu), came to the East to build an earthly paradise, but he failed to achieve his goal because he could not reform the East due to the deplorable practices that Confucianism had amassed over a long time...
> As a result, the Dao of Heaven and the constant Dao of human affairs had been violated, and the Three Realms had been thrown into disorder. As the root of the Dao was finally exterminated, all the divine sages, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, who

> had existed since the dawn of time, gathered and petitioned Me in the Ninth Heaven to save the realm of humans and the realm of gods from the catastrophes that they were facing. Thus, I descended to the Tower of Heavenly Revelation in the Kingdom of the Great Law (Daebeopguk 大法國) in the West, and on My Great Itineration (Daesoon 大巡) throughout the whole world, at last I reached this land in the East…
>
> Then I revealed to Choe Je-u (Choi Suwun) that the great Dao is to redeem the world. Yet, he could not bring the true meaning of the great Dao to light beyond the framework of Confucianism. Therefore, in the Gapja Year (1864), I withdrew the heavenly mandate and power of divine law from him and finally came as a man in the Shinmi Year (1871)." (*Dhama* 1:9)[10]

Lastly, some explanation of the origin and significance of the name *Cheonggye*, Blue Rooster, will be useful in rounding off this exploration of Blue Rooster Pagoda as a means of understanding fundamental concepts from East Asian Natural Philosophy as they exist in Daesoon Jinrihoe.

In Daesoon Thought, the Chinese character, *cheong* (青 *Chn* qīng), meaning both blue and green (though blue is more accurate in the Daesoon Jinrihoe context), is an allusion to the Dao and also to the twelfth month (as this represents the twelve months and completion of year's worth of seasonal changes). The twelfth month alludes to the Dao because within a year's time, living beings can be observed in harmony with the seasons as they develop via states of birth, growth, maturity, and the bearing of fruit. Blue and green have ancient associations in East Asia as being colors of birth, life, and immortality. Consider for example the definition of *cheong* from the 'Interpreting Materials and Textiles (釋采帛 *Chn* shì cǎi bó)' chapter of the Eastern Han dictionary, *Interpreting Terminology* (釋名 *Chn* shì míng): "Blue (and Green), is the color of birth and all things during their time of birth."[11] In the Five Phases (五行 *Chn* wǔ xíng *Kr* ohaeng), the color of the wood phase (木 *Chn* mù *Kr* mok) is *cheong*, and *cheong* is thereby associated with spring (春 *Chn* chūn *Kr. chun*) and the East (東 *Chn* dōng *Kr dong*).

As for the rooster (鷄, *Chn.* jī *Kr gye*), it is the 10th animal among the 12 in the East Asian Zodiac.[12] In terms of time-keeping and calendrical, the hours of the rooster are from 5:00 to 6:59 PM, it marks the 8th lunar month, and also the two solar terms of that month: White Dew (白露 *Chn* Báilù, *Kr baekro*) and the Autumn Equinox (秋分 *Chn* Qiūfēn, *Kr chubun*). In complementary contrast to the color blue (associated with the East), the rooster is associated with the West.

The are other positive connotations to the rooster such as the extended analogy from *The Outer Commentary to the Book of Songs by Master Han* (韓詩外傳 *Chn.* hán shī wài zhuàn) wherein the rooster is used to symbolize the five virtues of literary refinement (文 *Chn* wén), martial aptitude (武 *Chn* wǔ), bravery (勇 *Chn* yǒng), benevolence (仁 *Chn* rén), and trustworthiness (信 *Chn* xìn). In the twenty-third verse of the second scroll of *The Outer Commentary to the Book of Songs by Master Han* it is stated:

> "On their heads, they wear a cockscomb to signify literary refinement. They have spurs on their shanks to demonstrate martial aptitude. When an enemy is before them, they are ever willing to attack, and this shows bravery. When they have gained feed, they alert one another, and this indicates their benevolence. They stand guard at night yet never fail to crow at the proper hour. Therein, they are trustworthy. Roosters embody these five virtues, and yet, you cook and eat them! Why is that?"[13]

Lastly, examining the rooster's place within the sophisticated cosmological system of the Eight Trigrams (八卦 *Chn* bā guà), one of the most ancient and foundational symbolic frameworks in Chinese philosophy and divination, the rooster corresponds specifically to the trigram *xun* (☴ 巽 *Chn* xùn) in the *Book of Changes*, one of the Five Classics of ancient Chinese literature. This trigram *xun*, composed of two solid yang lines above a broken yin line at the base, carries profound symbolic associations with wind, wood, gentleness, and penetration—qualities that resonate with the rooster's nature as a creature that heralds change and whose clarion call penetrates the darkness of night to announce the coming transformation of dawn.

This correspondence between the rooster and the *xun* trigram gives the rooster an important additional directional association beyond its primary connection to the western direction typically assigned to this creature in standard Chinese zodiacal systems. Specifically, through the *xun* trigram, the rooster gains association with the southeast, the precise direction from where dawn gradually begins its daily emergence, as the sun rises slightly south of due east during most of the year in the northern hemisphere where Chinese civilization developed. This southeastern directional correspondence carries profound symbolic significance because it connects the rooster not merely to the abstract concept of morning but to the specific geographic and astronomical reality of where light first appears on the horizon, where the daily renewal of yang energy physically manifests in the natural world.

The southeastern direction itself holds special meaning within Chinese cosmological thought as a liminal space, a threshold region where the pure yang energy of the south meets the balanced energy of the east, creating a zone of transition and transformation particularly associated with growth, development, and the early stages of manifestation. By associating the rooster with this southeastern direction, the symbolic system acknowledges the bird's role as a herald of transitions, a creature that stands at the boundary between darkness and light, between night and day, between yin and yang phases of the cosmic cycle.

This complex web of directional, seasonal, and elemental associations rounds off and completes the key symbolic logic depicted by the potent image of the 'blue rooster,' a seemingly paradoxical combination that actually represents a sophisticated synthesis of complementary meanings. The full symbolic meaning of this image can be summarized as representing an auspicious marriage or harmonious union between two seemingly

opposed but actually complementary concepts: first, the completeness, wholeness, and perfect unity of the Dao as well as the eternal vital flourishing, renewal, and generative power of spring (all powerfully alluded to and evoked by the color blue, which in East Asian color symbolism connects to the eastern direction, the wood element, and springtime growth); and second, the maturity, fullness of development, and successful bearing of fruits characteristic of autumn, combined with the virtuous excellence, moral perfection, and refined achievement that comes only with time and careful cultivation (all qualities traditionally associated with the rooster, particularly the mature rooster whose crow announces mastery and completion).

This symbolic fusion creates a powerful image of perfect balance and complete fulfillment, suggesting a state where the vigorous creative potential of spring and the realized achievements of autumn exist simultaneously, where youthful vitality and mature wisdom complement rather than contradict each other. The blue rooster thus becomes an emblem of ideal completion, representing not merely one phase of development but the harmonious integration of all phases, the successful navigation of the entire cycle from beginning to fruition. Such multi-layered symbolism demonstrates the sophisticated nature of traditional East Asian symbolic systems, where colors, animals, directions, seasons, and philosophical concepts interweave to create meanings far richer and more nuanced than any single element could convey independently. The blue rooster stands as a testament to this symbolic richness, embodying in a single compact image a complex philosophy of balance, completion, and the harmonious union of complementary opposites that is observable in part in both Daoist and broader East Asian thought; however, this notion is most directly pronounced in Daesoon Thought.

Conclusion

As a whole, when examined comprehensively and appreciated in its full complexity, the Blue Rooster Pagoda can be observed to exalt and honor many essential facets of the traditional and orthodoxical cosmology of Chinese Natural Philosophy, drawing upon centuries of accumulated wisdom and symbolic frameworks that have structured East Asian understanding of the cosmos and humanity's place within it. The pagoda's elaborate symbolic program incorporates numerous classical cosmological systems including the eight trigrams of the *Book of Changes*, which provide a fundamental framework for understanding the dynamic interplay of yin and yang forces throughout all phenomena. Additionally, the structure honors the four symbolic celestial animals that guard the cardinal directions and maintain cosmic order, the twelve deities of the Chinese Zodiac who preside over the cycle of years and embody distinct character types and energies, the twenty-four deities who are traditionally understood to be in charge of the seasonal divisions that structure agricultural and ritual calendars throughout East Asia, and the twenty-eight deities who maintain jurisdiction over the constellations that track the moon's passage through the heavens and provide celestial guidance for timing

earthly activities.

This comprehensive incorporation of traditional cosmological frameworks demonstrates that Daesoon Jinrihoe, despite being classified as a new religious movement, maintains deep respect for and continuity with the inherited wisdom of East Asian religious and philosophical traditions. The pagoda serves as a visual testament to this continuity, embedding innovative Daesoon theological concepts within familiar cosmological structures that would be recognizable to anyone educated in traditional East Asian thought. This strategic combination of traditional and novel elements allows the pagoda to speak simultaneously to those versed in classical cosmology and to those seeking new religious insights and salvific hope.

Even Daesoon Jinrihoe's conception of the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven, subtly alluded to by the pagoda's distinctive finial crowning its uppermost point, corresponds in many respects to a traditional Daoist deity found in classical Chinese religious cosmology, specifically the Celestial Worthy of the Ninth Heaven, Performer of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt, and the Originator with Whom All Beings Resonate, a deity depicted in *The Scripture of the Jade Pivot*. In Daesoon Jinrihoe's distinctive theological framework, the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven is understood and proclaimed to have descended from the heavens and taken human form as Kang Jeungsan, the religion's central divine figure, in order to salvifically conduct the monumental Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth（天地公事 *Kr cheonji gongsa*). These cosmic restructuring activities, performed by Kang Jeungsan during his earthly ministry, were necessary to resolve the accumulated grievances and imbalances that had developed throughout human history and to ensure the coming of the earthly paradise known as the Later World, a transformed era of universal peace, abundance, and spiritual fulfillment.

While the Blue Rooster Pagoda thus incorporates and honors numerous traditional cosmological elements, it simultaneously introduces novel symbols and innovative imagery that specifically express Daesoon Jinrihoe's unique theological vision and eschatological hopes. These novel symbols, which distinguish the pagoda from purely traditional Buddhist or Daoist stupas, include the poignant and emotionally powerful image of denizens representing the three realms of desire, form, and formlessness pleading desperately for divine intervention to alleviate their sufferings and resolve the cosmic disorders that plague existence. This imagery powerfully conveys the urgent need for salvific action that motivated the Supreme God's incarnation as Kang Jeungsan.

Additionally, the pagoda features innovative Ox-Seeking Pictures that creatively adapt and transform the classical Zen Buddhist ten ox-herding pictures by depicting scenes of the Earthly Paradise of the Later World rather than following the traditional Buddhist progression toward personal enlightenment and return to ordinary life. These modified ox-herding images shift the focus from individual spiritual cultivation to collective cosmic transformation, from personal liberation to universal salvation, reflecting Daesoon Jinrihoe's emphasis on the coming transformation of the entire world rather than merely

the enlightenment of individual practitioners.

Most prominently and symbolically central to the entire structure stands the Blue Rooster itself, the pagoda's namesake image, which occupies a position of honor and stands perpetually ready and alert to crow triumphantly at the first dawn of the Later World when the long-awaited Earthly Paradise finally manifests and successfully marries together the excellent and complementary qualities of spring and autumn which combines the vital energy, renewal, and flourishing growth characteristic of spring with the maturity, fulfillment, and perfected achievement characteristic of autumn. This blue rooster serves as both herald and symbol of the transformed age, standing watch at the threshold between the present world of suffering and conflict and the future world of harmony and abundance, ready to announce through its clarion call that the cosmic transformation has been accomplished and humanity may enter into the paradise that Kang Jeungsan's Reordering Works have prepared.

Conflict of Interest

Jason Greenberger has been Managing Editor since July 2021 but had no role in the decision to publish this article. No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

[1] Words glossed in non-English languages throughout this article will be indicated via abbreviation as follows to avoid confusion: *Kr* = Korean, *Chn* = Chinese, *Skt* = Sanskrit.

[2] Incomplete and non-restored stupas remnants such as base layers have not been included for consideration. Naturally, their inclusion would push the dates back even further.

[3] *Goem* is a pure Korean word which is the nominalized form of the verb *goeda* (괴다) meaning 'to support.' That is why no Chinese character was provided.

[4] Taeng (탱) can also be written as 幀 when represented as a Chinese character. It means a relief (or engraved image) of a 'buddha', 'bodhisattva', or 'sage'.

[5] In terms of a specific example, this is quite similar to the Image of Perplexity Arising While Gazing at the Sky (觀天起疑相 *Kr* gwancheon giui-sang) from Won Buddhism's Ten Images from the Life of the Founding Master (大宗師十相 *Kr* daejongsa shibsang).

[6] Entry 'Seasonal Divisions (jeolhu)' from a draft version of the yet-to-be-published expanded edition of the 'Literary Companion Dictionary for *The Canonical Scripture*' produced by the Daesoon Institute of Religion and Culture.

[7] Yin lines (陰爻) could be indicated via the number six. For example, the broken yin lines and the solid yang lines of the hexagram ䷇ (蒙 *Chn* méng, 'enveloping') would be indicated from bottom to top as "Initial- 6, second- 9, third- 6, fourth- 6, fifth- 6, and top- 9 (初六、九二、六三、六四、六五、 上九)."

[8] As established by the *Qieyun* 《切韻》 Chinese rhyme dictionary which dates back to 601 CE.

[9] 《楚辭・天問》: "圜則九重, 孰營度之?"

[10] Ellipses indicate additional lines omitted due to length and limited relevance to the main point (the Ninth Heaven).

[11] 青，生也，象物生時色也。

[12] In the zodiac, it is represented through the Chinese character 酉 (*Chn* yǒu, *Kr* yu).

[13] 首戴冠者，文也，足搏距者，武也，敢在前敢鬥者、勇也，得食相告，仁也，守夜不失時，信也。雞有此五德，君猶日瀹而食之者，何也？

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