

“How Much Difference is There Between Japan and China in Terms of Aesthetics?”

Abstract:

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It is time that we should distinguish more fully the difference between Japanese culture and Chinese culture. There still exists a misunderstanding that Japanese culture should be regarded as a derivative of Chinese culture under the influence of Confucianism. However, those who are familiar with some characteristics of Japanese people will know that Zen Buddhism and Shintoism have been main factors promoting culture and aesthetics in Japan. We can enumerate several comparisons to discern distinctions: for basic texts toward children's education, the Nine Chinese classics for education in China vs Ki-Ki-Manyo (Kojiki, Nihonshoki, and Manyoshu) in Japan; the good command of rhetoric and verbal discourses vs less talkativeness and belief in the miraculous power of language; evasion of stories of any monster as harmful to elite education vs passionate attachment to the supernatural of monsters, ghosts or phantoms which compose folklore; many theoretical treatises bridging cosmology, natural spirits and landscape paintings through the concept of <chi> vs exclusive pictorial mind detached from a literary mind, leading eventually to contemporary Manga and Anime culture in Japan, etc. Those topics mentioned above may be interrelated and integrated to produce the unique visual and VR (virtual reality) culture of Manga and Anime in postmodern Japan.

Masahiro Hamashita

Professor Masahiro Hamashita is a distinguished scholar of comparative aesthetics and women's education at Kobe College. His English language publications include: “Frontiers of Transculturality in Contemporary Aesthetics”, (ed. by Grazia Marchiano and Raffaele Milani, Torino: Trauben, 2001); “The Book: A World Transformed”, UNESCO Publishing, 2001; “Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation”, (ed. by Michael F. Marra, University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); “Contemporary Philosophy, A New Survey”, (ed. by Guttorm Fløistad, Vol. 9: Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art, Springer, 2007); “New Essays in Contemporary Aesthetics”, (ed. by Robert Wilkinson, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007).



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