defended by Clunas as necessary to his purpose, are bewildering. He talks of unpacking (p. 23) and unbinding (p. 49)—synonyms for deconstructing?—his subject matter, and introduces ideas in rapid fire, adding even in the concluding five pages the topics of Mao Zedong’s Hundred Flowers campaign, women’s gardens, shamanistic beliefs, and gardens in dreams. The result is a complex, provocative book, but one whose contents are difficult to summarize—or repack—neatly in the space of a review.

One source of confusion, for this reader at least, is Clunas’s treatment of that broad area that has variously been called culture, heritage, or tradition. Inspired by James Clifford and Edward Said, Clunas desires to break away from “the presumption of the essential alterity of something called ‘Chinese culture’” and wishes to correct the tendency of past scholars to maximize “the differences between historical practices in western Europe and China” (p. 13). Accordingly he makes easy comparisons between sixteenth-century China and Europe, as when stating that “Ming gardens . . . played very much the same social role as did conspicuous expenditure on building in Italy at the same period” (p. 97); or that exotic flowers “played the same role in the great sixteenth-century gardens of China as they did in those of contemporary Europe” (p. 73; see also pp. 49-50, 55, 59). Other than conveying Clifford’s and Said’s mandate, Clunas offers no justification for these comparisons, which seem to assume that European and Chinese societies ran through similar stages of development and that cultural traditions are simply glosses. The cross-cultural comparisons also seem to run counter to Clunas’s own call that one understand the variety of gardens in terms of specific social and economic contexts.

Rightly, Clunas abandons “the idea of an authentic culture as an inherently coherent, self-sufficient affair of essence” (p. 13), and the great merit of his book is that he draws attention to the numerous features of late-Ming society and economy (social status and concepts of property, for example) that may have shaped (or were “imbricated in”) gardens. But does Clunas go too far in downplaying the role of cultural traditions in shaping practice? As Clunas himself notes, the name of the Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician stuck for centuries, and Ming garden owners modeled themselves on the ancient reclusive Tao Yuanming (365-427), even though they operated in a socio-economic world (sociable and urbanized) that was entirely different from Tao’s and even when they actually deviated far from Tao’s practice. Were such appeals to past authorities merely ornamental? Did they in no way inform the conventions of garden use in China? And, if not, why did garden owners persist in paying head to Tao’s example of reclusion or to Li Gefei’s moralistic warning that the state rises and falls in relation to the luxuriousness of its gardens? Did not these traditions, though altered and reinterpreted over time, in some way differentiate Chinese from European garden usage? Clunas has thus defined a territory and sown seeds for fruitful debate.

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There is no doubt that in the collective consciousness of the imagined community of modern Korea shamanism and Confucianism figure more prominently than Buddhism. Yet, for a millennium and a half Buddhism has been a vital element of Korean society and culture. Either as the main religion or as a strong undercurrent, it has been tightly interwoven with Korean history and social structure, ever since its introduction in the fourth century A.D. The attraction it still holds for many Koreans is considerable and may surface in unexpected cor-
ners. One might think of the frequent allusions to Buddhism in the poems of the Catholic poet Ku Sang.

That the importance of Buddhism in Korean culture is often underrated may in part be explained by the fact that loss of government support in the fifteenth century, when the newly established Chošön dynasty made Neo-Confucianism the dominant ideology, signalled a significant decline in the social status of Buddhism and a substantial weakening of its institutions. In the twentieth century, again, Korean Buddhism has found itself confronted with a growing number of Korean Christians, some of whom aggressively reject Buddhism. All this stands in the way of a dispassionate assessment of the part Buddhism has played in Korean history. As Lewis Lancaster notes in his introduction to Buddhism in Koryō, the study of Korean Buddhism has been rather neglected, even in Korea itself. In the West only a handful of scholars devote attention to it and the total number of serious publications on the subject in Western languages is extremely small. 1) The initiative to make Korean Buddhism more accessible to the West through the translation of important articles by Koreans and Japanese should therefore be warmly welcomed.

Buddhism in Koryō: A Royal Religion and Buddhism in the Early Chošön take up where two earlier compilations edited by Lewis Lancaster and C.S. Yu, which dealt with the period of the Three Kingdoms and Unified Shilla, left off. 2) In his introduction to Buddhism in Koryō, Lancaster singles out two aspects of Buddhism in the Koryō period (936-1392). First of all, he emphasizes how greatly Korean Buddhism was indebted to patterns taken over from the non-Han states of Northern China, from where Buddhism was introduced to the Korean peninsula, and how the resulting configuration—a king part of whose authority derived from his position as a protector of the Dharma, and senior ecclesiastics (with the title of “National Preceptor”) acting as the king’s advisers—remained in place until the end of the Koryō period. Second, Lancaster stresses the “royal” character of Buddhism in Koryō, so different from the “gentry Buddhism” of southern China. Although king and state undeniably were very much involved with Buddhism, to put it this way seems somewhat of an exaggeration. The provincial aristocracy of Koryō (the nearest equivalent to the Chinese gentry) and the military officials, who for a century usurped power (as did the shogun in Japan) favoured Buddhism no less than the royal court, be it that they tended to prefer different schools. Only at a relatively late date, did local Neo-Confucian scholars emerge who were critical of Buddhism. The common people, too, came increasingly under the influence of Buddhism as, in fact, one of the essays translated in the same volume suggests.

In his sometimes rather speculative, but stimulating “Buddhism and Koryō Society,” Hō Hūng-sik provides an overview of the social history of Buddhism in this period, describing the role of Buddhism in national ideology and in social life. Hō argues that over time the relationship between Buddhism and the various social classes shifted: when first accepted, it was almost exclusively supported by the court. In late Shilla and early Koryō the common people were “its main allies,” and in the middle and late Koryō period it became closely associated with aristocratic interests and the ruling elite. He also notes that elements of native, pre-Buddhist culture were not rejected by Buddhism but absorbed or assimilated. In a fuller version of the article than the one translated here, Hō makes it clear that he regards this as one of Buddhism’s merits, as against Neo-Confucianism, which showed itself much more intolerant of indigenous cultural traditions.

“Buddhism During Koryō” by Kamata Shigeo focuses attention on the relationship between successive kings and Buddhism and is largely a digest of the relevant records in the official history of Koryō. This has the drawback that the records are lifted out of their historical context, but on the other hand, it does draw attention to the practical aspects of Buddhism as a living reality, to its pilgrimages, prayer services, and pious projects, and to the numerous rituals performed to feed hungry spirits, pacify rebellious peasants, influence the weather et cetera.

An Kye-hyŏn’s “The Historical Accounts of Buddhism” first highlights the importance of the Samguk yusa (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), compiled in 1285 by the monk Iryŏn