The First Symposium of the Korean Society for Plants, People and Environment

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ADDITIONAL INDEX WORDS. human issues in horticulture, human-horticulture relationships, people-plant interaction, sociohorticulture, benefits of plants, human well-being, horticultural therapy

SUMMARY. The Korean Society for Plants, People and Environment held its first International Symposium on Plant and People Interactions in Human Health and Quality of Life in May 1998. Three speakers, invited from abroad, were among those who made presentations. A summary is presented.

The Korean Society for Plants, People, and Environment was founded on 9 May 1998 at Korea University in Seoul for the purpose of promoting research on the relationships of plants to people and the environment. In commemoration of the society's foundation, the first International Symposium on Plant and People Interactions in Human Health and Quality of Life was held at Korea University on 9 May 1998. Three keynote speakers, invited from abroad, were among those who made presentations.

In "The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-being and Quality of Life," D. Relf (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg) emphasized people's physical dependency on plants, psychophysiological responses to plants, the nurturing of life in plants, and social interaction related to plants. She stated that horticulture plays a role, not only in our ability to be alive and to exist as corporal beings, but also in helping us to experience and understand the reasons for this existence as we observe, nurture, and share the life around us.

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E. Matsuo (Kyushu University, Fukuoka-shi, Japan) spoke on "Up-to-Date Trends in Horticultural Therapy in Japan." He discussed the growth of interest in horticultural therapy in Japan and the diversity in understanding what is horticultural therapy. He stated that horticultural therapy is placed in plant therapy and includes phytotherapy, flower therapy, some parts of aromatherapy, and art therapeutic activities such as flower arranging, painting flowers, making potpourri, cooking and so on, so far as the products from the horticultural therapy program are used for these therapies.

R. Wood (University of Technology, Sydney) lectured on "Living Plants to Improve Indoor Air Quality." There is increasing evidence that plants may be able to metabolize many potentially toxic environmental chemicals as part of their normal physiology. Work to date has shown that kentia palm [*Howea fosterana* (C. Moore & F. Muell.) Becc.], as a model indoor system, has the capacity to remove several times the maximum occupational exposure levels of volatile organic compounds in indoor air.

In "Influence of Horticultural Plants on Human Health Functionality," B. Kwack, (Korea University, Seoul) said that horticulture is not only useful for mentally and physically ill persons, but also is necessary for those needing to reinvigorate and upgrade their quality of life. Horticulture then provides natural benefits and freshness to human life and society.

The author spoke on "Moral Education with Plant Symbolism." In Korean traditional culture, some plants, such as oriental apricot (*Prunus mume*), oriental orchid (*Cymbidium* sp.) chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*), bamboo (*Phyllostachys* sp.), red pine (*Pinus densiflora*), and lotus (*Nelumbo mucifera*), were planted in gardens, painted on paintings or porcelains, and carved on furniture, not only for beautification and practical purposes, but also as a motif of moral education (such as building civic responsibility) in the living environment. The adoption of this kind of traditional culture could be

developed to augment moral education and quality of life.

"Influence of Native Plants on Korean Traits" (C. Lee, Chungbuk National University, Chungbuk, Korea) showed that native plants are closely correlated with Korean society. Koreans demonstrate considerable cultural and artist attention to plants, because of the importance of native plants in their lives and culture. As a result, Koreans have an elaborate vocabulary for plant names, with special words indicating subtle distinctions in the types and characteristics of plants.

S. Chung (Korea University, Seoul) presented "Effect of Horticultural Therapy and Design of Therapeutic Gardens for the Disabled." In Korea, the recognition of horticultural therapy, even among organizations with needs for healing gardens, such as healthcare facilities, is low. Researchers are attempting to contribute to the application of healing gardens and heighten the recognition of horticultural therapy among the hospital authorities.

Other Korean presentations included "Landscape Experience: Process and Impacts" (Y. Yi, Dongguk University, Kyongju, Korea), "The Influence of Forest Experience on Self-Actualization: Literature Review" (W. Shin, Chungbuk National University, Chungju, Korea), "Comparison of Sight-Psychological Effects of Open and Closed Landscapes on Open Spaces" (E. Kim, Chonnam National University, Kwangju, Korea), and "The Visual Effect of Plants Using the Measurement of Galvanic Skin Response for the Reduction of Stress" (J. Lee, Sangmyung University, Seoul, Korea).

The Korean Society for Plants, People and Environment will hold two conferences each year and publish a quarterly journal, which welcomes articles from abroad. The society promotes interdisciplinary collaboration in research on plants and psychological health, plants and physical health, plants and the environment, plants and therapeutic gardens, plants and culture, plants and education, and plants and the economy. For more information, contact: Korean Society for Plants, People and Environment, c/o the author.