

From: Wung, Lihuang
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2011 8:09 PM
To: (Contact List)
Subject: Fuzhou Ting Status Report 2-11-11
Attachments: Photos 1-24-11 to 2-11-11.pdf

Fuzhou Ting Status Report of February 11, 2011:

First of all – Happy New Year (Chinese New Year, that is) to you all. The Year of the Rabbit began on February 3. Traditionally, the new year celebration would go on for 15 days, until the Lanterns Festival, which falls on February 17 this year. So, my greetings and best wishes to you are still in order.

Scott Beard, who had dressed up the Fuzhou Ting for Christmas and the New Year (see my report of January 7, 2011), thought about doing it again – this time, with Chinese lanterns, firecrackers going off, and a whole bunch of bunnies bouncing around the Ting. But he kind of talked himself out of it, because he was not sure how the 56 dragons and 3 lions would react to the fresh and delicious bunch.

As to the construction, it has progressed slowly but steadily in the past three weeks. The roof ridges received a second coating of cement-soot, like darkening the eyebrows of a beautiful lady. And, ah, “beautiful ladies” – the Beautiful Ladies’ Benches were installed, finally.

Have I ever mentioned that the benches have been dedicated to the four beautiful ladies involved in the project? They are Olivia Han, the Chinese interpreter; Debbie Bingham, Tacoma’s Sister Cities Program manager; Lisa Oestreich, one of the City’s on-site supervisors; and Valerie Clements, the general contractor. Besides making great contributions to the project, they have one thing in common – none of them wears beard (see my report of October 15, 2010).

Mike McKinlay, the painter, has been working on the touch-up and coating on the wood components with the Chinese lacquer paint. Mike was interviewed by Stacia Glenn, The News Tribune, and appeared on the front page on February 9, 2011. In her report, Stacia also provided some great information about the Chinese lacquer and how it is applied. I have also done some research and consulted with the Fuzhou delegation, and would like to just add a few notes.

In China, lacquer is called 生漆 (pronounced as “Sheng Qi”, where “Qi” pronounces more like “Chi”), which means “Raw Lacquer”. It’s also called 天然漆 (“Tian Ran Qi”), which means “Natural Paint”. Lacquer is taken from a type of trees called Rhus Vernicitera, that are found in central and eastern Asia, including Vietnam, Korea, Japan, Myanmar, and China. But China produces the largest quantity of lacquer, with the best quality. Therefore, the Chinese proudly call lacquer 国漆 (“Guo Qi”), which means “National Lacquer of China.”

Lacquer consists of such ingredients as urushiol (60-80%), laccase and nitrogenous matters (10% or less), chicle (3-6%), water (10-30%), and small amount of other organic substance. Lacquer is known to be very resistant to decay, wear and tear, acid, solvents, heat, and water/moisture, with great insulation and shining appearance. It makes great paint or coating for such objects

as military and industrial equipment, agricultural machinery, artifacts and handicrafts, plates and bowls, furniture, and building materials.

The Chinese lacquer used on the Fuzhou Ting is not lead-based paint. The paint, along with all other materials shipped from Fuzhou, passed the inspection at the Customs. After the paint is set (on the Fuzhou Ting), it is safe to touch, and smell, if you'd like to, as I have been told. In fact, we see lacquer applied on dining sets all the time; for example, in Japanese restaurants, the plates, boxes and bowls they serve sushi, bento and miso soup with.

Let's change the subject here – I have also been asked lately about the value of the Fuzhou Ting – “How much does that T(h)ing cost?”

According to the Fuzhou delegation, if this project were to be built by a private contractor in China, the cost (including design, construction, materials, equipment, and labor) would be estimated at about \$950,000 RMB (or Renminbi 人民币, the Chinese currency), which is equivalent to approximately \$150,000 (US dollars).

Well, our common sense tells us that you can't build a project here like this at only \$150,000. It would be at least several times more expensive. In China, you can buy a deck of playing cards for \$1 RMB, which is about 15 cents here. But how in the world would you be able to get a get a deck of cards for 15 cents here? eBay? In fact, the Fuzhou delegation once spent \$4 for a deck of cards at the Tacoma Mall (see my report of September 24, 2010), which was 25 times as expensive!

So, I don't really have a good answer at this time. Why don't we enjoy some of the photos that I have taken lately? Until next time, please be advised again that this report is posted online at www.cityoftacoma.org/Planning > “Chinese Reconciliation Park”.

Lihuang Wung

Community and Economic Development Department
747 Market Street, Room 1036
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 591-5682



















