



The  
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**The Hong merchant's Gardens during the Canton System and the  
aftermath of the Opium Wars**

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to **Valery Garrett**,  
who kindly guided my first steps in researching Guangzhou gardens

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## **Author's translation and photographs**

### **Translation**

This thesis adopts the *pinyin* transcription system for Mandarin. Classical Chinese quotes have been transcribed into Simplified Chinese.

When no other source is given, the translations from Chinese are the work of the author with the help of my second supervisor Alison Hardie, my Mandarin tutor Crystal Cheng, my previous MA teacher at the University of Leeds, Wang Youxuan (now at University of Portsmouth), and in the Landscape department at the University of Sheffield, my BA colleague Feng Lishen, and my PhD colleagues Rachael Wen, Ren Youcao, Gu Liyuan, and Tang Jie.

### **Photographs**

When no other source is given, photographs are the work of the author and were taken during fieldwork.

Some of my initial fieldworks in China (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012) were funded prior to this PhD thesis by the Regional council of Ile de France and Sorbonne Paris IV University.

## ABSTRACT

The increase in revenue related to the Sino-Western and Junk Trade has been an important factor in the development of Guangzhou as a cultural hub during the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. After 1759, all Western trade was restricted to Guangzhou and left in the hands of the Hong merchants, inaugurating the Canton System period (1757-1842). If they avoided bankruptcy, the Hong merchants could acquire a fortune in the China Trade, which was partly spent in the construction of splendid gardens.

The Hong merchants were not only trade intermediaries, but also strived to maintain cordial relationships with their foreign counterparts. For this reason, the Hong merchants allowed their Western trade partners to visit various sites around Guangzhou, including their own residences with gardens. Therefore, numerous Western descriptions of the period focused on the gardens of Hong merchants and the nearby plant nurseries. Chinese export paintings representing those gardens were also produced to satisfy Western demand for souvenirs. As a result, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Hong merchants' gardens are exceptionally well documented.

This thesis constitutes the first in-depth attempt to research the Hong merchants' gardens in a Western language. The thesis starts by explaining how these gardens came to be understudied in both Chinese and Western publications. Then two case studies are used to showcase the importance of the topic: more specifically, the gardens owned in Panyu County by the two most important Hong merchant's families, the Wu and the Pan. By comparing contemporary Western descriptions and Chinese sources, these gardens' functions can be analysed from both point of views. The thesis shows how the gardens are the ideal reflection of their owners' social ambitions, and of Guangzhou's urban history. The deterioration of the Sino-Western relations had a direct impact on the fortune of garden owners, through the demise of the Canton System after the first Opium War and the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. The gardens' appearance at the time is visualised by analysing systematically, while reflecting on the differences with other Chinese gardens.



## FOREWORD

To start with, the research pursued in this thesis takes its origin in my three MA dissertations. In order to write my first MA's dissertation about boat-shaped buildings in Chinese gardens in 2009, I visited numerous Chinese historical gardens open to the public. It appeared that most of these gardens were located near the capital Beijing or in the area near previous capitals. Moreover, I noticed that the current state of gardens in China was not necessarily representative of their ancient origins, and that some have been heavily restored. Surveying boat-shaped buildings in Chinese gardens led me from north to south-east of the mainland China: in and near Beijing, then Suzhou, Yangzhou, Hangzhou, and Nanjing mid-way to the south, and finally all the way to southern Guangzhou. While evaluating the difference in the boat-shaped buildings across China, I uncovered more questions than answers.<sup>1</sup> After that dissertation I was convinced that there was a problematic lack of research into regional variations and trends in Chinese garden history, at least in publications written in Western languages.

For my second dissertation in 2010, I focused on a botanical garden in Guangzhou, the Orchid garden or Lanpu built in the 1960s. Delving into the topic of botanical gardens in China reinforced my awareness of the large differences between different regions of the country, simply in terms of weather and botany. The methods of orchid cultivation displayed in the Lanpu appeared very much entrenched in a local tradition of cultivating flowers in pots. By contrast, the buildings inside the Lanpu adopted a 'traditional' shape but mostly made of concrete. After researching the history of local landscape designers, I read the work of local architect Mo Bozhi. His concept of 'Lingnan gardens' constituted an attempt to account for regional garden history in Guangdong and neighbouring provinces.<sup>2</sup> This dissertation convinced me that there was a gap in current research about gardens built in Guangdong, and more specifically located around Guangzhou.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Josepha Richard, 'Le Bateau Sec Dans Le Jardin Chinois (Boat-Shaped Buildings in Chinese Gardens)' (unpublished M.A., Université Paris Sorbonne IV, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Bozhi Mo, Changshi Xia, and Zhaofen Zeng, 岭南庭园 (*The Garden Courtyards of Lingnan*) (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Josepha Richard, 'Le Jardin Des Orchidées à Canton (The Orchid Garden 兰圃 in Guangzhou)' (unpublished M.A., Université Paris Sorbonne IV, 2010).

It was the object of my third dissertation to demonstrate that there was a regional gap in Western languages publications on Chinese gardens.<sup>4</sup> Reading critically the Western side of the research since the early twentieth century, my dissertation showed how, at first, Western scholars were necessarily limited to the gardens they could visit, as well as the most famous historical examples. As a result, most publications in Western languages focused on northern imperial gardens as well as gardens located in the region of Suzhou. Very few mentioned the existence of other regional gardening practices. Towards the end of the twentieth century as China opened, there were increasing calls for widening the field of enquiry to diverse periods and other geographical locations. One of the most eye-opening result of this academic development was an article by Jerome Silbergeld on gardens of Sichuan province, where he called for scholars to stop using the term ‘Chinese garden’ and instead use the term ‘Gardens of China’.<sup>5</sup>

After these three MA dissertations, the focus for the present thesis emerged: it is an attempt to fill the previously identified gap in Western languages studies, by investigating whether it is possible to demonstrate any regional gardening practices in China. To fulfil this aim it was necessary to take for case study an area of China located outside of the cultural influence of ancient capitals. Since the lack of sources has often been put forward as a reason why garden historians of China have focused on imperial parks and scholar gardens near ancient capitals, it was necessary to find a case study with enough data available to work on systematically and convincingly. After conducting initial fieldwork in three different parts of China (Sichuan, Yunnan, and Lingnan), it appeared that only the Lingnan region – that is around Guangdong province – yielded a large amount of readily available and underused data. The thesis was therefore focused on the Lingnan region. After an analysis of secondary sources, it appeared that publications on Lingnan gardens mostly focused on examples in the surroundings of Guangzhou. The most documented of Guangzhou gardens were the Hong merchants’ gardens, but previous studies on the topic were mostly written by local Chinese scholars with little access to Western archives. Since I could access those archives, it meant that my contribution would be original in both Chinese and Western academic circles: therefore Hong merchant’s gardens made an ideal case study to start filling the gap in regional gardening studies.

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<sup>4</sup> Josepha Richard, ‘Criticising the Regional Bias in Western Study of Chinese Gardens’ (unpublished Master thesis, University of Leeds, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Jerome Silbergeld, ‘Beyond Suzhou: Region and Memory in the Gardens of Sichuan’, *The Art Bulletin*, 86.2 (2004), 207–27.

## INTRODUCTION

Adjoining the private counting room at Paunkeiqua [Pan Khequa II]'s Hong, is a handsome aviary [...]. This little paradise is his private retreat wherein no person ever enters unless invited. On the tiled ground floor in front of the aviary, are always a variety of plants, & beautiful flowers grown in splendid china ware pots, brought from his residence at Honam [Henan, south bank of the Pearl River facing Guangzhou], and changed every tenth day to suit the old gentleman's fancy; so that he has a new little garden at pleasure. He absolutely loves them, and has several times sent for me when changed, to come in alone and admire their beauty.

Extract from American trader Bryant Tilden's papers, 1818<sup>6</sup>

The above quote summarises some of the most important aspects of a private Chinese garden: it shows how Hong merchant Paunkeiqua (Pan Khequa II) had a space designed for his private pleasure, filled it with plants and exotic birds in what American trader Bryant Tilden felt was reminiscent of the idea of Christian paradise. This quote also displays some specificities of urban gardens in Guangzhou in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century: small because land was scarce, and focused on plants – when at the period the fashion in private gardens of the elite further north tended to be focused on curious and precious rocks.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, it shows the wealth of one the most powerful Hong merchants at the time, as Pan Khequa II could afford his favourite plants to be displayed in lavish pots and have them changed frequently. As this thesis attempts to present the first in-depth study on the no-longer extant Hong merchants' gardens, the similarities and differences the latter share with elite private gardens located north of Guangdong at the period will prove important.

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<sup>6</sup> Bryant Parrott Tilden, 'Bryant P. Tilden Papers, 1781-1851, Also Titled "Father's Journals"', 1851, p. 217, Peabody Essex Museum Phillips Library. Extract of Tilden's 'B3 F4 Third Voyage to China in ship Canton p.172-250 (1818-19)'.

<sup>7</sup> Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong province, the southern most on the eastern coast of the current Chinese territory (see map). For an appreciation of what elite private Chinese gardens looked like at the period, consult for example Congzhou Chen, *說園 On Chinese gardens* (Shanghai: Tongji University, 1988); Congzhou Chen, *揚州園林 (Gardens of Yangzhou)*, Di 1 ban. (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2007). For the focus on rocks, see John Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: The Rock in Chinese Art* (New York: China House Gallery, 1985); Pierre Rambach and Suzanne Rambach, *Gardens of Longevity in China and Japan: The Art of the Stone Raisers* (Geneva, Switzerland; New York: Skira; Rizzoli, 1987); Kemin Hu, *Scholars' Rocks in Ancient China: The Suyuan Stone Catalogue* (Trumbull, CT: Weatherhill, 2002); Graham Parkes, 'Thinking Rocks, Living Stones: Reflections on Chinese Lithophilia', *Diogenes*, 52.3 (2005), 75–87; C.Y. James Watt, 'Rocks in the Garden and Studio', in *Dentō Chūgoku No Teien to Seikatsu Kūkan: Kokusai Shinpojūmu Hōkokusho (Report of International Symposium: Landscape Architecture and Living Space in the Chinese Tradition) June 9-10 2007, Kyoto* (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 2013), pp. 109–23.

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for European and North American visitors to China, Guangzhou (Canton) was often the first city to stop in or the only one they could visit (see map Figure 1).<sup>8</sup> During almost a century, Guangzhou was the only harbour opened to Westerners wanting access to China. The period is usually referred to as the Canton Trade or System period (1757-1842). Throughout the Canton System period, Western merchants wanting to make business with China were also obliged to use the Hong merchants as intermediaries during their transactions. The number of Hong merchants varied across time, and they are often referred to as the ‘thirteen Hong’ or *shisanhang* 十三行 in Chinese. Their monopoly on foreign trade lasted until the abolition of their function under the Treaty of Nanjing (1842).<sup>9</sup> In addition to the Western trade, the Hong merchants were often engaged in commerce with East Asian countries through what is usually called the ‘Junk Trade’, after the boats used to carry that trade. When successful, the Hong merchants could accumulate a large fortune, and because of their official position, often had the upper hand in trade negotiations with Western traders. Yet the Hong merchants have been much less written about than their foreign counterparts, whose business dealings and daily life has been researched in minute details.<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 1 Left: Map of China showing Guangdong province in red. Right: Simplified map of Guangdong. Credits: Uwe Dederer, Wikimedia Commons**

<sup>8</sup> In this thesis the term of ‘Westerner’ will be used to refer to Western Europeans and North Americans trading in Guangzhou during that period. It is not reflecting the diverse reality of traders’ nationalities. In the same way, for the sake of convenience the term of ‘China’ will be used to refer to the Qing Empire, although it is an anachronism.

<sup>9</sup> See the full text at ‘Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking), 1842’, *US-China Institute* <<http://china.usc.edu/treaty-nanjing-nanking-1842>> [accessed 23 October 2017].

<sup>10</sup> The most researched tend to be the British traders. Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1633-1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926). Recently other nationalities have sparked more scholarly interest, for example the excellent thesis by Lisa Hellman, ‘Navigating the Foreign Quarters : Everyday Life of the Swedish East India Company Employees in Canton and Macao 1730–1830’ (unpublished Ph.D., Stockholm University, 2015).

The Hong merchants were not only trade intermediaries, but also responsible for assuaging any incidents between their Western guests and locals, which amounted to a quasi-diplomatic role. In general, the Hong merchants strived to maintain cordial relationships with their foreign counterparts, trying to make them as comfortable as possible, while complying with the restraining rules imposed by the Chinese court. Foreigners' movements in Guangzhou were restricted to a small patch of land on the northern bank of the Pearl River: the Factories. The Hong merchants could occasionally allow their Western trade partners to visit various sites around Guangzhou, including their own residences with gardens. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a peak in garden making in Guangzhou, as officials and merchants used benefits from Western and Junk trade to sponsor an increasingly diverse cultural stage in the city. As a result, the gardens of the Hong merchants became the focus of an important part of both the Chinese and Westerners' social life in the city.

Indeed, during the century of the Canton System, Guangzhou was simultaneously the centre of a peak in intellectual development in the Pearl River Delta area, and in global trade exchanges. The Hong merchants took no small part in both these intellectual and economical developments, and their residences with gardens often became the background for the latter. In dynastic China, the garden fulfilled multiple functions: it was first of all a place to live with one's family, an extension of the house. Gardens owners also used their space to gather peers and distinguished guests in social events, during which poetry and calligraphy could be created. As a spectacle, the garden was a display of the owner's taste, adorned with chosen calligraphy referring to ancient texts. At last it was a place for private enjoyment, to relax or to practice the Chinese arts.<sup>11</sup>

To sum up, Chinese gardens were an important tool to display their owners' taste and education. Ji Cheng, the author of the Chinese treatise on gardening *The Craft of Gardens*, might even have hired a literati ghost-writer to write some passages in poetic language because he was not himself a scholar.<sup>12</sup> As merchants, the Hong were not necessarily educated themselves, but they certainly tried to push their children to acquire status through imperial examinations. Additionally, the Hong would use their wealth to organise social gatherings for local Chinese worthies in their gardens, but also pseudo-diplomatic receptions for foreign traders throughout the Canton System and well into the aftermath of the Opium

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<sup>11</sup> For the functions of Chinese gardens, see next chapter.

<sup>12</sup> Cheng Ji, *The Craft of Gardens*, trans. by Alison Hardie (New York: Better Link Press, 2012), p. 12.

Wars. As they had access to both local and global markets, the Hong also collected a great number of plants in their gardens, and displayed them in innovative ways. Thus this thesis' starting hypothesis is that the Hong merchants' gardens exemplify how integrated local and global history can prove to be in the context of late Qing dynasty China.<sup>13</sup>

### Overview of the relevant literature

Since Guangzhou and Macao were the only parts of China that most Westerners could aspire to visit during the Canton System, the amount and quality of Western descriptions available about the two cities is exceptional. Visiting the Hong merchants' gardens was a coveted treat, as the latter were initially only accessible on personal invitation. Western traders sometimes brought home as souvenirs the painted views of the gardens of the most powerful Hong merchants. Since the Hong were often sponsoring social events such as literati gatherings, they also feature in some part in local Chinese gazetteers and in a few surviving Chinese paintings. As photography was invented and cameras brought into China between the two Opium Wars, some of the Hong merchants' gardens also became the earliest photographed Chinese gardens.

As a result, the Hong merchants' gardens are vastly better documented in both appearance and function than the private Chinese gardens most often researched in the field: the gardens of the Jiangnan area, where several of Chinese southern capitals were located (around Hangzhou and Suzhou). Despite the diversity and wealth of sources available on the topic, the Hong merchants' gardens have been mostly left out of Western publications in the field of Chinese garden history. I demonstrated this imbalance in my MA dissertation, *Criticising the regional bias in Western study of Chinese gardens*.<sup>14</sup> Although examples of gardens in Guangzhou are increasingly included in general publications, very few of those written by Western scholars mention the Hong merchant's gardens.<sup>15</sup> Despite a conference paper given by Richard Strassberg in 2007, there has been to my knowledge, no other significant mentions of Hong merchant's gardens in Western publications related to gardens apart from my

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<sup>13</sup> Local and global history as defined in A. Gerritsen and S. McDowall, 'Global China: Material Culture and Connections in World History', *Journal Of World History*, 23.1 (2012), 3–8.

<sup>14</sup> Richard, 'Criticising the Regional Bias in Western Study of Chinese Gardens'.

<sup>15</sup> The Hong merchants' gardens are briefly mentioned in this French publication : Barrier, Janine, Monique Mosser, Che Bing Chiu, and William Chambers. *Aux jardins de Cathay: l'imaginaire anglo-chinois en Occident (The gardens of Cathay: the Sino-British fantasy in the West)*. Besançon: Editions de l'imprimeur, 2004.

contributions.<sup>16</sup> Winnie Chan is one of the exceptions, however this did not prevent her to downplay the importance of gardening for the Hong, stating that “[...] the mansions gardens of the Hong merchants in Fa Tee [Huadi] primarily displayed Chinese plants with the purpose of interesting Western traders”.<sup>17</sup> Chan’s statement contradicts my own findings: among the most powerful of Hong merchants, it seems that gardens were very much designed for their personal pleasure, as the quote I chose to start the introduction with demonstrates.

As can be expected, Chinese scholars have shown more interest than Western ones, yet Chinese research on Hong merchants’ gardens can still be considered to be at an early stage, as the same information and mistakes are often repeated in newer publications. The sheer number of publications does not compare with those dedicated to imperial and Jiangnan gardens. The earliest Chinese articles on Hong merchant’s gardens constituted of short publications focusing on primary sources such as county gazetteers. The earliest of these, as far as I am aware, is Wu Jianxin’s introduction to Qing dynasty gardens in Huadi, published in 1988.<sup>18</sup> These articles and booklets provided a handy reprinting of previous gazetteers in simplified characters, which are much easier to read than the originals, although their content is not particularly new.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, most of the publications since the 1980s made either an incomplete or incorrect use of Western sources and Chinese export paintings. For example, according to my findings, one of the most complete articles on Wu family’s gardens written by Peng Changxin misattributes several of the paintings to the wrong garden.<sup>20</sup>

Since the 2000s, in Chinese publications the gardens located in Guangzhou are often put under the larger umbrella of ‘Lingnan gardens’: Lingnan being the southeastern equivalent to

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<sup>16</sup> Richard E Strassberg, ‘Guangdong Gardens: A Local Style with Merchant and Western Influences’ (presented at the A Symposium on Styles of Chinese Gardens, The Huntington: Unpublished, 2007). Josepha Richard, ‘Uncovering the Garden of the Richest Man on Earth in Nineteenth-Century Canton: Howqua’s Garden in Honam, China’, *Garden History*, 43.2 (2015), 168–81. Richard, Josepha, and Jan Woudstra. “‘Thoroughly Chinese’: Revealing the Plants of the Hong Merchants’ Gardens Through John Bradby Blake’s Paintings.” *Curtis’s Botanical Magazine* 34, no. 4 (December 1, 2017): 475–97. Richard, Josepha. “This Little Paradise.” *Historic Gardens Review*, no. 37 (2018): 34–37.

<sup>17</sup> Quote from Yuen Lai Winnie Chan, ‘Nineteenth Century Canton Garden and the East-West Plant Trade’, in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, Issues & Debates (Los Angeles, California: Getty Research Institute, 2015), pp. 111–23 (p. 115).

<sup>18</sup> Jianxin Wu, ‘清代花埭的名园和名人 (Famous Gardens and Persons in Huadi during the Qing Dynasty)’, *Ancient and Modern Studies of Guangzhou*, 1988.

<sup>19</sup> Guangzhou Haizhu District Gazetteer and Hanxing Mai, *广州河南名园记 (Records of Famous Gardens in Henan, Guangzhou)* (Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng zhengfa guanli ganbu xueyuan, 1984). Guosheng Huang, ‘清代广州的园林第宅 (Guangzhou gardens and mansions in the Qing dynasty)’, *Culture and history of Lingnan*, 1997, 41–45.

<sup>20</sup> Changxin Peng, ‘清末广州十三行商伍氏浩官造园史录 (Review of Howqua’s Gardens at Canton in Late Qing Dynasty)’, *Chinese Landscape Architecture*, 5 (2009), 91–95.

the Jiangnan area.<sup>21</sup> One of the inventors of the term of ‘Lingnan gardens’ was architect Mo Bozhi 莫伯治, who wrote the reference article on Hong merchants’ gardens in 2003. This publication provides an attempt to analyse export paintings and to use early photographs to locate the gardens on maps. Despite being the earliest synthesis of information on the topic, it contains various inaccuracies: some of the pictorial sources are attributed to the wrong gardens, and most of the sources used are not cited.<sup>22</sup> The inventors of the concept of Lingnan gardens further published a monograph titled *The garden courtyards of Lingnan* in 2008, that also included a brief mention to Hong merchant’s gardens.<sup>23</sup>

The quality of secondary Chinese publications has increased considerably since the 2010s. Lu Qi, a prolific author on Lingnan gardens, included a brief mention to the Hong merchant’s gardens at the beginning of his monograph *The private gardens of Lingnan* in 2013.<sup>24</sup> Similarly with previous studies, he misattributed several Western pictorial sources to the wrong gardens. Despite these inaccuracies, Lu cited the Chinese primary sources he used more systematically than his predecessors. Afterwards, Pan Jianfen produced a good analysis of written Chinese sources in his *Short analysis of the Pan family's Nanxue garden* in 2015.<sup>25</sup> In *History of modern Guangdong landscape and gardens* Zhou Linjie matched recent photographs of Guangzhou with the locations of ancient gardens.<sup>26</sup>

So far, Ren Wenling’s research published in 2016 is perhaps the study that best addresses the sources available on a specific Hong merchant’s garden (the Fuyinyuan), and the only that gives full academic referencing for both Western and Chinese sources.<sup>27</sup> Ren’s use of primary Chinese sources gives an excellent insight into what a proper academic approach on Hong merchant’s gardens can produce. As Ren did not benefit from a broad access to Western archives, his interpretation has been necessarily limited; nonetheless he generously made sure that I did not encounter the reverse issue with Chinese archives, and provided me with a high

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<sup>21</sup> A more complete definition of Lingnan can be found in Chapter 2.

<sup>22</sup> Bozhi Mo, ‘广州洋商庭园 (Gardens of Guangzhou Maritime Merchants)’, in 莫伯治文集 (*Collected Works of Mo Bozhi*) (Guangzhou: Guangdong keji chubanshe, 2003), pp. 332–48.

<sup>23</sup> Mo, Xia, and Zeng.

<sup>24</sup> Lu Qi, 岭南私家园林 (*The private gardens of Lingnan*) (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2013), pp. 23–25.

<sup>25</sup> Jianfen Pan, ‘十三行行商潘氏家园“南墅”小考 (Short Analysis of the Pan Family’s Nanxue Garden)’, *Culture and History of Lingnan*, 2015, 55–59.

<sup>26</sup> Linjie Zhou, 广东近代园林史 (*History of modern Guangdong landscape and gardens*) (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Wenling Ren, ‘十三行行商伍氏“馥荫园”(潘氏“东园”)考 (Investigating the “Fuyinyuan”, Garden of Hong Merchant Wu Family (and Pan Family’s ‘Dongyuan’))’, *Culture and History of Lingnan*, 2016, 47–53.



quality reproduction of a Chinese painting that would have been otherwise impossible for me to obtain.<sup>28</sup>

Overall, the great majority of the research on Hong merchants' gardens in Chinese comes from academics in the fields of architecture and landscape studies, where design and spatial arrangement is the main focus rather than historical analysis. As such, compared with private gardens located in the Jiangnan area, the Hong merchants' gardens and others located in the Lingnan region have rarely benefited from in-depth research by historians of art and Chinese literature experts.

As demonstrated above, research on Hong merchants' gardens in the field of garden history is lacking to a different degree in Chinese and Western publications. Since Chinese landscape history is very closely linked with urban history when it comes to urban gardens, it makes sense to turn to the latter to attempt filling some of the gaps. At first glance, Guangzhou makes for a great case study in urban history, as it has long been the third largest Chinese city and its first harbour. However, despite the undeniable importance of Guangzhou during the period of the Canton System, urban historians of China have so far showed remarkably little interest in the city during that period and the aftermath of the two Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860). Guangzhou was the first city to suffer the consequences of the change in Western perception of the Chinese empire throughout the 18-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> The city was blockaded and attacked several times during the Opium Wars, and Westerners progressively abandoned Guangzhou to the profit of other Treaty Ports after 1842 and 1860. Since its inception, Chinese urban history has focused in great part on Treaty Ports.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps it's understandable that Guangzhou was not a priority since its foreign concession was solely composed of the 0.3 km<sup>2</sup> Shamian Island.

Despite the size of its Treaty Port, Guangzhou should have attracted more attention, since it was a central location in the Opium War conflict that is at the very inception of the Chinese Treaty Ports. Another important aspect of this city is that both its population and economy

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<sup>28</sup> Ren works at the Guangdong Provincial Museum and kindly provided me with a high resolution of the Fuyinyuan painting in 2015 (see case study 2, section 2). As a result I sent him my *Garden History* article in the same year, after which he published his own article in 2016. As such, our publications are the product of an on-going academic conversation.

<sup>29</sup> See next chapter for Western vision of China and Chinese gardens.

<sup>30</sup> Liu Haiyan and Kristin Stapleton, 'Chinese Urban History State of the Field', *China Information*, 20.3 (2006), 391–427 (p. 392) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203X06070032>>.

have entertained a close relationship with nearby Hong Kong since the beginning. There has been however a relative dearth of publication in Western languages until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially regarding Guangzhou during the period post-1860 until the first revolution (1911), and this despite Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925)'s deep links with the city.<sup>31</sup> This gap has started to be filled with a recent emphasis on the area of the Pearl River Delta in area studies, with scholars such as David Faure researching the local history of Guangdong.<sup>32</sup> Most recently, the publications of Stephen Miles have shown the richness of Guangzhou's cultural and social history at the period.<sup>33</sup> Miles notably underlines the links between merchants and literati in late imperial Guangzhou, where the social classes are increasingly blurred. The Hong merchants' social ambitions are comparable with that of Huizhou salt merchants established in Yangzhou, who were similarly occupied in building sumptuous gardens.<sup>34</sup>

Where landscape and urban historians have shown relatively little interest, on the contrary historians of the economy and art of the China Trade have produced an increasing amount of research.<sup>35</sup> Paul van Dyke and more recently John Wong have researched in detail the global trade conducted by the Hong merchants.<sup>36</sup> The Chinese agency in 18-19<sup>th</sup> century global

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<sup>31</sup> Among the sources available are for example Jean Chesneau, Marianne Bastid, and Marie-Claire Bergère, *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976). Wing-yu Yeung, 'Guangzhou, 1800-1925: The Urban Evolution of a Chinese Provincial Capital.' (unpublished Ph.D., University of Hong Kong, 1999). Graham Edwin Johnson and Glen Peterson, *Historical Dictionary of Guangzhou (Canton) and Guangdong* (Lanham, Md; London: Scarecrow Press, 1999). Valery M Garrett, *Heaven Is High, the Emperor Far Away: Merchants and Mandarins in Old Canton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> The Pearl River Delta was defined as a Chinese region by William Skinner in G. William Skinner and Hugh D. R Baker, *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1977). David Faure, 'The Lineage as a Cultural Invention: The Case of the Pearl River Delta', *Modern China*, 15.1 (1989), 4-36; David Faure, 'Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty transition', in *Unity and diversity local cultures and identities in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), pp. 37-50; David Faure, 'History and Culture', in *Guangdong: China's Promised Land* (Hong Kong; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> Steven Miles, 'Local Matters: Lineage, Scholarship and the Xuehaitang Academy in the Construction of Regional Identities in South China, 1810--1880' (unpublished Ph.D., University of Washington, 2000); Steven Miles, 'Creating Zhu "Jiujiang": Localism in Nineteenth-Century Guangdong', *T'oung Pao*, 90.4 (2004), 299-340; Steven B. Miles, 'Celebrating the Yu Fan Shrine: Literati Networks and Local Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou', *Late Imperial China*, 25.2 (2004), 33-73; Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning: Mobility and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou* (Cambridge, Mass.: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006); Steven B. Miles, 'Out of Place: Education and Identity among Three Generations of Urban Panyu Gentry, 1850-1931', *Twentieth-Century China*, 32.2 (2007), 33-59.

<sup>34</sup> Meng Yue, 'Re-Envisioning the Great Interior: Gardens and the Upper Class between the Imperial and the "Modern"', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, 14.1 (2002), 1-49 (p. 6). See also Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou: A Chinese City, 1550-1850* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> For example in Fa-ti Fan, *British Naturalists in Qing China: Science, Empire, and Cultural Encounter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). Yuen Lai Winnie Chan. Johnathan Andrew Farris, *Enclave to Urbanity: Canton, Foreigners, and Architecture from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Hong Kong University Press, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> Numerous publications by Paul Van Dyke, starting with Paul Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005). Most useful was

financial exchanges is thus progressively revealed to its true extent, thus counter-balancing the Eurocentric focus of previous publications. In art history, Craig Clunas wrote on watercolours held in the V&A museum, whereas Carl Crossman wrote the reference book on the art of the China Trade.<sup>37</sup> Since then others have started examining diverse aspects of Chinese ‘export’ art produced in Guangzhou and the works of Western painters in the city.<sup>38</sup> Much of the *chinoiserie* that European audience came into contact with was produced in Guangzhou, including wallpapers and decorative chinaware.<sup>39</sup> Architect William Chambers, who famously introduced designs of Chinese gardens to Britain, had only visited Guangzhou during his two trips in 1743-44 and 1748-9.<sup>40</sup> As a result this thesis is largely indebted to the research of economy and art historians: the first gathered key information on the Hong merchants’ biographies and wealth, the second uncovered numerous paintings representing their gardens.

There are still many gaps to address in the history of the Hong merchants, particularly when it comes to their own social ambitions and family life, as reflected in the functions of their gardens. The exceptional amount of relatively untapped sources available makes such research not only feasible but also overdue. The long-lasting focus on traditional Chinese cultural centres around historical capitals in Chinese garden history has long hindered research on gardens located in peripheral areas. The lack of regional diversity in Chinese garden history has been increasingly decried since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As early as 1996, Craig Clunas suggested in the introduction of *Fruitful Sites* that instead of

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the recent Paul Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Baltimore, Maryland: Project Muse, 2016). John D. Wong, *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> Craig Clunas, *Chinese Export Watercolours* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984); Carl L Crossman, *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities*, 1991.

<sup>38</sup> Cicheng Wang, Andrew H-B Lo, and British Library, *大英圖書館特藏中國清代外銷畫精華 (Chinese Export Paintings of the Qing Period in The British Library)(Chinese and English bilingual edition)*, 8 volumes (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2011); Rosalien Van Der Poel, *Made for Trade, Made in China: Chinese Export Paintings in Dutch Collections* (S.l.: Houtschild International, 2016). Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and G. H. R Tillotson, *Fan Kwae Pictures: Paintings and Drawings by George Chinnery and Other Artists in the Collection of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation* (London: Spink for the Corporation, 1987); Ltd Asian Collector, *China Coast Paintings: Works by George Chinnery, Chinese Export Artists, and Western Artists in the Region* (Orinda, Calif.: Asian Collector Ltd., 1991); Patrick Conner, *George Chinnery: 1774-1852: Artist of India and the China Coast* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors’ Club, 1993).

<sup>39</sup> Emile de Bruijn, *Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd., 2017). David Sanctuary Howard, *Chinese Armorial Porcelain* (London: Faber, 1974); David S Howard and John G Ayers, *China for the West: Chinese Porcelain & Other Decorative Arts for Export Illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd for Sotheby Parke Bernet Publications, 1978).

<sup>40</sup> William Chambers, *Desseins des edifices, meubles, habits, machines, et ustenciles des Chinois* (Londres: J. Haberkorn, 1757). Dates of his travels to China cited in Janine Barrier and others, *Aux jardins de Cathay: l’imaginaire anglo-chinois en Occident (The gardens of Cathay: the Sino-British fantasy in the West)* (Besançon: Editions de l’imprimeur, 2004), pp. 12–13.

researching the whole of Chinese gardens, a researcher could only claim to explore relatively restricted areas in space and time.<sup>41</sup> Alison Hardie noted in 2003 that “There is a tendency to privilege the gardens of Suzhou over all other Chinese gardens [...], tendency which can be traced back several hundred years, but is now particularly acute.”<sup>42</sup>

The title of Jerome Silbergeld’s article, *Beyond Suzhou: Region and Memory in the Gardens of Sichuan*, shows that by the 2000s scholars became increasingly aware that there was an exaggerated focus on Jiangnan gardens, especially those located in Suzhou. Silbergeld is was emphatic about the need for change in the very way that Chinese garden history is titled:

The title of Maggie Keswick's book *The Chinese Garden*, which has served as American readers’ most popular introduction to this topic since 1978, provides both a label and a limit for the study of Chinese gardens. Put in the singular, it suggests an isolated species so self-contained, so coherent and distinct from other varieties, that little or no internal differentiation need be discerned by the armchair audience. The title of Osvald Siren's earlier classic on the subject (1949), which Keswick's book supplanted, suggested otherwise: *Gardens of China*.<sup>43</sup>

Hardie again affirmed the need for a wider understanding of the field in her ‘Chinese gardens – New Views and New Directions’ conference presentation in 2010.<sup>44</sup> In 2011, a call for ‘garden research on geographical areas outside the Jiangnan area’ was one of the focuses of the annual Art Historians Annual Conference.<sup>45</sup> Since starting my PhD at the University of Sheffield, I have also organised two symposia (2015 and 2017) on the topic of gardens of China to broaden the field of enquiry; and presented my work on Hong merchants’ gardens in international conferences.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Introduction to Maggie Keswick, Charles Jencks, and Alison Hardie, *The Chinese Garden: History, Art, and Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> Silbergeld, p. 207.

<sup>44</sup> Alison Hardie, ‘Talk for Infinite Worlds’, 2010.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Chinese Garden Research in the Twenty-First Century - A Report from the 37th Association of Art Historians Annual Conference University of Warwick, United Kingdom, 31 March-2 April 2011’, *China Heritage Quarterly* <[http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?issue=026&searchterm=026\\_garden.inc](http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?issue=026&searchterm=026_garden.inc)> [accessed 1 May 2018].

<sup>46</sup> The programmes of the two symposia can be found online: 2015 Symposium ‘New approaches in Chinese garden history’ Josepha Richard, ‘Gardens Of China: “New Approaches in Chinese Garden History” Conference Day, 19 June 2015 Sheffield’, *Gardens of China*, 2015 <<https://gardensofchina.blogspot.co.uk/2015/03/new-perspectives-in-chinese-garden.html>> [accessed 1 May 2018].; 2017 Symposium ‘New Research on the History

As such this thesis is part of an on-going effort to expand the width of Chinese garden history, by including gardens beyond the traditional centres of Chinese history. As the capital of a ‘peripheral’ region that nurtured two unofficial dynasties and was central in the 1911 Revolution, Guangzhou is a suitable topic for this thesis.

### *Hypothesis and Research questions*

The hypothesis underlining the present research can be summarised as follows: the gardens and residences of the Hong merchants and related family members, are revealing of the economical, socio-cultural and political history of Guangzhou. At the period, the diverse inhabitants of the city were simultaneously at the forefront of the Chinese Empire’s global interactions, and engaged in the intensive development of their own local culture. In order to determine if the starting hypothesis is valid, the thesis will answer several smaller questions:

What are the reasons behind the lack of research on Hong merchants’ gardens?

What were the functions of Hong merchants’ gardens, and how did the gardens change as their owners’ fortune fluctuated?

In what measure were 18-19th century Guangzhou gardens innovative in relation to other Chinese gardens?

To produce a first in-depth study on these gardens, I combined the approaches of landscape and urban history to analyse both their owner’s motives and the garden’s function and appearance. As mentioned above, when sources were insufficient I had to borrow from other disciplines. The scope of this historical research has been necessarily delimited by the sources available, which in turn informed the choice of the two case studies.

### *Methodology and sources*

As is usual in landscape history, I have used combined methods to pursue this research, by undergoing both physical fieldwork and historical research.

In addition to fieldworks undertaken during my two MA in other universities, I undertook two surveys when collecting data for this thesis. The first fieldwork took place in 2013, spanning three different provinces in Mainland China: Guangdong, Sichuan and Yunnan. The aim of this initial survey was to ascertain whether any of these provinces provided enough sources to sustain a PhD research. It became evident that only in Guangdong province there were enough examples of surviving gardens, as well as sufficient textual and pictorial sources of past gardens. In 2014, the second fieldwork focused on Guangdong, with the survey of a number of gardens around Guangzhou as well as in the eastern part of the province.

I undertook my Guangdong fieldworks with the help of Sheffield University undergraduate Landscape and Architecture colleague Feng Lishen. The Hong merchants' gardens are no longer extant, but we both were interested in visiting historical public and private gardens in and around Guangzhou, and to compare them with other examples in Guangdong province. The vast majority of these gardens date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are mentioned in recent publications.<sup>47</sup> As a two-person team with a limited budget, only rough plans of the gardens surveyed could be produced: these plans allowed us to either update the information found in earlier publications on Lingnan gardens, or imperfectly record previously unstudied gardens before their potential destruction.

The results of the fieldworks were twofold. On one hand, it allowed me to gather photographs of contemporary and surviving gardens in Guangdong. These photographs are primarily used in the discussion part of the thesis. Only a small number of the gardens surveyed brought interesting comparison material with the Hong merchants', therefore these examples are only introduced in the thesis when relevant. On the other hand, while doing my surveys I gathered important academic contacts, which in turn allowed me to consult the most difficult to access among the Chinese pictorial and textual sources. I am indebted to the staff in the Architecture department of the South China University of Technology and to professor Tang Guo in the University of Guangzhou for letting me access previous surveys and out of print publications on Lingnan gardens.

The historical research was the most time-consuming part in producing the present thesis. In order to avoid following a Eurocentric narrative, and to compile the most complete data

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<sup>47</sup> For example Zhou.

possible, I have used both Chinese and Western sources in this research. I structured my case studies according to the language of the sources, because I found that the latter rarely overlapped and each came with their own set of cultural biases. Nevertheless, while compiling and analysis the data, I often had to use Chinese sources to interpret Western ones, and vice-versa.

Initially, I consulted the previously mentioned secondary sources on Guangzhou gardens, most of which are concerned with Lingnan gardens in general and contain very little on Hong merchants specifically. Although these publications do not always reference their primary sources, the latter seem to mostly consist of the relevant local county gazetteers or *difangzhi* 地方志.<sup>48</sup> The descriptions in these gazetteers were initially compiled at a contemporary period with the creation of the Hong merchants' gardens, and were afterwards updated with later testimonies. Taking into account my proficiency in reading traditional Chinese, the amount of Chinese sources I could realistically read in detail was restrained. Therefore I decided to use Western sources to determine the number of Hong merchants' gardens that was most often described throughout the Canton System and its aftermath (until late 19<sup>th</sup> century). The first step was to read widely through Western descriptions of China in 18-19<sup>th</sup> century, in both English and French, and as many other languages possible when a translated version existed. Borrowing into Western travel literature to find historical evidence on Chinese gardens was bound to produce a subjective narrative. In order to maintain as much objectivity as possible, it was important to become familiar with the academic discourse on Western images of China.<sup>49</sup> Recent publications on travel literature and diplomatic expeditions were also consulted.<sup>50</sup> To a large extent, the changes in Western conceptions of China through the

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<sup>48</sup> I know this because specific dates and names tended to appear first in the county gazetteer. The latter also constitute a basic source for Chinese urban history : Haiyan and Stapleton, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> For example: Donald F. Lach, 'Leibniz and China', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6.4 (1945), 436–55 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2707344>>. Jonathan D Spence, *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (London: Penguin, 2000). A. Reichwein, *China and Europe* (Routledge, 2013). Harold R Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (Taylor and Francis, 2015) <<http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1974460>> [accessed 2 May 2018].

<sup>50</sup> Nigel. Cameron, *Barbarians and Mandarins: Thirteen Centuries of Western Travellers in China* / Nigel Cameron. (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989). N. J Clifford, 'A Truthful Impression of the Country': *British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880--1949* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001). Eun Kyung Min, 'Narrating the Far East: Commerce, Civility, and Ceremony in the Amherst Embassy to China, 1816-1817', in *Interpreting Colonialism*, ed. by Byron R Wells and Philip Stewart (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), pp. 160–80. Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn, *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007). Elizabeth Hope Chang, *British Travel Writing: From China, 1798-1901* (London (GB): Pickering & Chatto, 2010). Robert Bickers, 'British Travel Writing From China in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 54 (2011), 781–89. Greg Clingham, 'Cultural Difference in George Macartney's An Embassy to

18-19<sup>th</sup> century are reflected in the specific topic of Western reception of Chinese gardens across time, which is discussed in the next chapter. Foreign visitors' descriptions of China tended to include topics that would be of interest back in Europe, and as such the information gathered on gardens cannot be comprehensive.

In order to complete textual information, I compiled a collection of pictorial sources on Guangzhou gardens. These included very diverse material such as maps, paintings, sketches, and early photographs of China, most often made for a Western audience. As Peter Burke stated, "images are particularly valuable in the reconstruction of the everyday culture of ordinary people – their housing for example".<sup>51</sup> Since many Western visitors to China did not understand Chinese, captions to photographs and painting descriptions are frequently misspelled or incorrect, and at times successive owners have captioned the sources after the fact. There were a majority of pictorial sources that I was forced not to use directly, either because it was sold in an Auction house without much information, or found on a Chinese website with no reference. This decision was made to maintain academic rigor: in this thesis pictorial sources were only used as historical evidence after their information was confirmed either through textual evidence or another solidly documented pictorial source.

Burke warns about several other issues in using pictorial evidence: the fact that the artist's intentions need to be taken into account (especially when it comes to maps), the use of 'visual formulas' when representing items such as furniture, and the possibility that the artist borrows from previous images without our knowledge – the visual equivalence of inter-textuality. Another of his concerns is that the artist would probably 'tidy' the image so as to show an ideal state rather than reality. The only way to counterbalance these issues is to acquire a familiarity with what the topic would have entailed through other sources.<sup>52</sup> For example, acquiring an understanding of the scale and layout of residences and gardens at the period was one of the added benefits of having undergone fieldwork in Guangzhou looking at near-contemporary examples. Despite valid objections to using paintings, maps and photographs as

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China, 1792–94', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 39.2 (2015), 1–29. Peter J Kitson, Robert Markley, and English Association, *Writing China: Essays on the Amherst Embassy (1816) and Sino-British Cultural Relations*, 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 81.

<sup>52</sup> Burke, p. 96.



historical evidence, it is notable that Chinese export paintings have increasingly been proven to contain reliable, datable architectural elements.<sup>53</sup>

A large number of written, published descriptions of China are increasingly available online. However, to a large extent, private papers kept in archives in Europe and United States still require a physical visit. Contrarily to textual sources, because of issues such as copyrights, pictorial sources are rarely completely and accurately made available in online catalogues. As a result I travelled to as many archives as possible in the UK to acquire the information needed. It was convenient that many of the relevant primary sources were kept in the East India Company's collection in the British Library. I also consulted specialised archives in London, including Kew Royal Botanic Garden and the Royal Horticultural Society; and the National Maritime Museum of Greenwich. Occasionally I need to access more general archives containing relevant primary and secondary sources, such as the Needham Institute and the University of Cambridge's library, the National Archives, the SOAS library, etc.

As part of the research for Western primary sources, European institutions such as the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) or the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam were consulted. Thanks to a 2015 Summer fellowship in Garden and Landscape studies at Harvard-related Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., I was able to consult additional sources in Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, in the Harvard University Libraries and the Library of Congress. The Peabody Essex Museum probably contains the most extensive collection of Chinese export art related to the China Trade in the world. Chinese export art was made by Chinese artist for Western customers, and are usually found in Western archives or private collections, which is why I catalogued them under Western-sponsored sources in my case studies. Despite these travels, I could only visit a minority of the archives containing information on the Hong merchants and the China Trade. There were also many archival documents which I could not access because of the language barrier. As a result, I had to rely on multiple occasions on other scholars' reading of primary sources.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> M. Wilson, 'As True As Photographs: Chinese Paintings for the Western Market', *Orientalism*, 31 (2000), 89–93. W. Shang, 'Pearl River Landmarks: A Method of Dating Paintings', *Arts of Asia*, 31 (2001), 102–15; Patrick Conner, *The Hongs of Canton: Western Merchants in South China 1700-1900, as Seen in Chinese Export Paintings* (London: English Art Books, 2009); Paul Van Dyke and Maria Kar-Wing Mok, *Images of the Canton Factories, 1760-1822 Reading History in Art* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ Press, 2015). Poel.

<sup>54</sup> For example: Jacques M Downs and Frederick Delano Grant, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844* (Baltimore, Md.: Project Muse, 2015); John D. Wong. Most importantly, Paul Van Dyke's research in worldwide archives.

Since I am aware that many sources are difficult of access, I decided to quote some primary sources at length in this thesis. The most representative case is that of Bryant Tilden's papers, quoted at the beginning of this introduction. A trader from Boston, who travelled five times to Guangzhou over the period of 1815-1837, Tilden kept detailed records of the Hong merchants' properties over time. This exceptional source consists of voluminous manuscript notes and their typescripts, largely unpublished to this day, and kept in the Phillips Library of the Peabody Essex Museum.<sup>55</sup> The only part of the manuscript that was published so far is a small booklet. The booklet's first edition in 1935 was titled *An old mandarin home* and the second in 1944 was titled *Bryant Parrott Tilden of Salem, at a Chinese dinner party, Canton: 1819*.<sup>56</sup> At the time of writing, the circulation of both booklets is still very limited in Europe, with no scans available online; and the unpublished manuscript is only available in the Phillips Library except for extracts found in secondary sources. I hope that such a rarity therefore justifies the use of rather lengthy quotes of Tilden's materials in the thesis.

After the textual and pictorial data collection was complete, I selected relevant passages in textual sources on Guangzhou and Macao to compile a number of book notes. I then analysed and coded the latter through the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo.<sup>57</sup> The themes that I underlined in Nvivo included: mentions of plants, of Hong merchants and foreign traders' behaviours, and of course any mention of gardens. Pictorial sources were catalogued into an Excel file, in order to serve as confirmation or extension of the textual evidence.

After this initial data analysis, I found that foreigners visited only a small number of Hong merchants' gardens, and that fewer of the latter were visited frequently enough for sufficient descriptions to accumulate. What's more, the names of these gardens' owners were not spelled consistently throughout the Canton System period, and varied significantly depending on the language of the descriptions' authors. The task was made more difficult by the fact that Hong merchants destroyed their own archives regularly to avoid scrutiny from the local government.

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<sup>55</sup> Tilden.

<sup>56</sup> Bryant Parrott Tilden and Lawrence Waters Jenkins, *An Old Mandarin Home* (Salem, Mass., 1935). Lawrence Waters Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, *Bryant Parrott Tilden of Salem, at a Chinese Dinner Party, Canton: 1819* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944).

<sup>57</sup> 'What Is NVivo? | NVivo' <<http://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo/what-is-nvivo>> [accessed 2 May 2018].

There are only a small amount of reliable sources available on the Hong merchants, since they rarely were mentioned in biographies beyond county level gazetteers. I had to use repeatedly the same secondary sources to determine the merchants' Chinese names and the nature of their business. The most important sources in quantity and quality were the works of Paul Van Dyke, often completed by his generous email correspondence. Besides John Wong already mentioned above, other important sources include the works of Anthony Ch'en, W.E. Cheong and Patrick Conner.<sup>58</sup>

Thanks to these publications, I could determine that the names of the Hong merchants owning the most frequently described gardens seemed to all belong to only two families: the Pan 潘 and the Wu 伍. The Pan and Wu owned between themselves both the longest standing, and the most successful trading companies in Guangzhou during the Canton System. These families each produced a chief Hong merchant, in other words a man that acted as the head of the other Hong merchants. Not only did both families play an active role in both the Western China Trade and the Junk Trade, but their respective head merchants also frequently hosted Western visitors. The latter is probably the reason why so many primary sources documenting the Pan and Wu gardens survived.

The similarities between the Pan and Wu families are striking: both originated from Fujian province, and recently settled in Guangzhou. The heads of both families displayed a consistent appetite for social mobility. Although they owned property in several locations in and around Guangzhou, the most described of the Pan and Wu gardens in Western descriptions were located in the suburbs in Panyu County 番禺县. Their main residences were built next to each other in Henan (Honam) 河南, on the southern bank of the Pearl River opposite the city. In nearby Huadi (Fa-ti) 花地, the two families successively owned the same garden. The two families, because of their longevity, also allowed me an almost continuous insight over period of the Canton System and its aftermath. The Pan and Wu gardens in Panyu County proved to be easily comparable, and as such made suitable case studies for this thesis.

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<sup>58</sup> Kuo-Tung Anthony Ch'en, *The Insolvency of the Chinese Hong Merchants, 1760-1843* (Nankang, Taipei: The Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica, 1990); W. E. Cheong, *The Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series (Richmond: Curzon, 1997); Patrick Conner, *The Hong of Canton*.

By systematically using Chinese sources to verify and interpret Western sources, I could notice an issue that seems to have eluded most Western scholars (and some Chinese scholars too): the fact that there were two main branches of the Pan family settled in Guangzhou, and that the Western spellings of their names were often confused. Western visitors were able to visit both branches' gardens during a short chronological succession. First the head of Hong merchants, Pan Khequa I (Pan Zhencheng 潘振承 1714-1788) and his son Pan Khequa II (Pan Youdu 潘有度 1755-1820), opened their Panyu County gardens to Westerners in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. At a later period, salt commissioner Pan Shicheng 潘仕诚 (1804-1873), used his Haishan xianguan garden in Nanhai County to welcome Western visitors around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the spelling for their names are inconsistent, the two Pan branches tend to be confused even in contemporary analysis of both textual and pictorial sources. As a result, throughout the research I made a point to pay close attention to the date at which each of the Western primary sources were written or produced – as opposed to the time they were published.

The findings described in the two case studies necessarily rely on subjective sources such as the few genealogies available for the Pan and Wu families.<sup>59</sup> A list of all the gardens these families owned was compiled by relying heavily on a close reading of different editions of the *Panyu County Gazetteer*.<sup>60</sup> In order to simplify as much as possible the reading of this source written in traditional Chinese, I chose to use the shorter version of the Panyu Gazetteer in a new and clearly printed edition: the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* 《番禺河南小志》 that focuses only on Henan.<sup>61</sup> Contemporary sources on Huadi gardens come principally from Zhang Weiping's texts, of which I could obtain partial reproduction during my fieldwork.<sup>62</sup> In order to read their content written in late imperial traditional Chinese, I

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<sup>59</sup> Yizeng Pan, 番禺潘氏略诗 (*Concise Collection of Poetry of the Pan Family in Panyu*), 1894; Zuyao Pan, 河阳世系 潘氏族谱 (*Genealogy of the Pan clan*), 1994. 伍氏福建莆田房安海符龙公, 广州十三行之脉族引谱 (*Genealogy of the Wu Clan of Fulong, from the Putian Branch Extended to Those Involved in the Canton Trade*), ed. by Lingli Wu, 2d edn (Guangzhou, 2010). 岭南伍氏合族总谱 (*Complete Genealogy of the Entire Wu Clan in Lingnan*), ed. by Quancui Wu, 1934.

<sup>60</sup> The earliest edition I could consult is 番禺縣志 (*Panyu County Gazetteer*), ed. by Zheng Shi (China: Guang jitung, 1871). It was re-edited and added to afterwards, see for example Guangdong County Gazetteer, 番禺县续志 (*Continuation of the Panyu County Gazetteer*), Reprinted (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2000).

<sup>61</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), Reprinted (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2012).

<sup>62</sup> On Zhang Weiping, see case study 1, section 2

became indebted to many academics, such as Youxuan Wang at Portsmouth University and Vincent Durand-Dastès at Inalco Paris, and my supervisor Alison Hardie.

### *Structure of the thesis*

This thesis is structured in three main sections. The first part provides the necessary background information on the historical, geographical and cultural context on Chinese gardens and the Canton System period. This condensed summary has been designed to help the reader understand the two case studies. At the same time, the first part provides a basis for the discussion chapter by focusing on the reasons why Hong merchants' gardens were not researched before.

The middle chapters are dedicated to the two case studies. As explained above, the case studies survey the gardens of the two most powerful of Hong merchants' families under the Canton System and its immediate aftermath: the Pan and the Wu. These case studies focus on the properties that the Pan and Wu owned in Henan and Huadi (Panyu County). Each case study starts with an introduction demonstrating these families' economical and social ambitions. Both families were exceptional in the manner they accumulated their wealth, and could in turn afford to build their gardens. Secondly, each case study explores the functions that these gardens fulfilled for their owner, analysing the Chinese and Western sources separately. Simultaneously the gardens' appearance and spatial layout is described as thoroughly as possible.

Lastly, the discussion chapter aims to determine whether the Wu and Pan's gardens were noteworthy as Chinese gardens, whether the biases that prevented researchers to discuss them before are valid to this day. Findings extrapolated from the two case studies are examined, including the differences and similarities in layout with other contemporary gardens located in Guangzhou. In the conclusion the several lines of enquiry are summarised.

## Chapter 2 Introduction to the history of Chinese gardens

As the field of Chinese garden history developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it attracted specialists from a various and interdisciplinary background. On one hand in China, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, garden history pertained to the newly created disciplines of architecture and landscape architecture. On the other hand, at this period, scholars from Europe and North America were often historians, art historians, sinologists and translators. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars of Chinese nationality and increasingly joined international academic circles. As a result, on the surface it appears as if disciplinary differences are now less obvious, yet the latter have had important consequences.

The fact that gardens in Guangzhou and Hong merchants' gardens in particular have not been studied thoroughly can be linked to the field's disciplinary heterogeneity. Since Chinese garden history is a relatively niche topic, this chapter introduces some of the reasons for this neglect, as well as the fundamental principles in garden making and ownership in dynastic China. In the second part, this chapter provides the necessary background knowledge in order to understand the history of Guangzhou Hong merchants' gardens.

### **Part I. Western reception of Chinese gardens: prejudice and lack of accessibility**

In Western institutions, the state of the field of Chinese garden history clearly reflects the history of Western reception of Chinese gardens. The latter is a story of misunderstandings sometimes caused by cultural differences, and made more acute by the fact that Westerners could not access a large number of gardens in China until late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This section builds on several important publications on the historiography of the Western reception of Chinese garden.<sup>63</sup> The following text is an extension of previous written and oral

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<sup>63</sup> Patrick Conner, 'The "Chinese Garden" in Regency England', *Garden History*, 14.1 (1986), 42–49; Craig Clunas, 'Nature and Ideology in Western Descriptions of the Chinese Garden', *Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture XVIII*, 1997, 21–33; Peter Valder, *Gardens in China* (Portland, Or.: Timber Press, 2002); Bianca Maria Rinaldi, 'Jesuits Descriptions of Chinese Gardens', in *Dentō Chūgoku No Teien to Seikatsu Kūkan : Kokusai Shinpojūmu Hōkokusho (Report of International Symposium: Landscape*

presentations that I gave on the topic during my PhD.<sup>64</sup> To simplify, Western vision of Chinese gardens can be separated into two main phases, which can be roughly dated before and after 1860.

### *Western reception of Chinese gardens before 1860*

The evolution of Western reception of Chinese gardens until 1860 could be described as going through several phases of interest and rejection. These phases do not neatly follow each other and often are juxtaposed.

#### Fascination: Fairy-tales and missionaries

The first widely distributed description of Chinese gardens was probably that of Marco Polo's *Travels*, which are supposed to have taken place in China from 1275 to 1292 during the reign of the emperor Kubilai of the Yuan dynasty.<sup>65</sup> In its various translations and editions, Marco Polo's descriptions gave Western readers a globally accurate idea of the essential elements encountered in Chinese gardens: an enclosed wall, buildings, lakes, artificial hills, animals and vegetation. Marco Polo's depictions also contained numerous mysterious and fantastic elements of more dubious accuracy, sometimes linked with magic, that were to characterise much of Western descriptions up to the twentieth century. Samuel Taylor Coleridge had read an extract of Marco Polo's account in Samuel Purchas's book just before he wrote his famous poem *Kubla Khan*.<sup>66</sup> The latter was so popular as to become one of the most anthologised

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*Architecture and Living Space in the Chinese Tradition*) June 9-10 2007, Kyoto (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 2013), pp. 171–80; Bianca Maria Rinaldi, *Ideas of Chinese Gardens Western Accounts, 1300-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

<sup>64</sup> Richard, 'Criticising the Regional Bias in Western Study of Chinese Gardens'. Lectures given at the Maison Française d'Oxford in May 2013, for the Postgraduate diploma in East Asian Art at SOAS in March 2016 and 2017, and for the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath in July 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, Henry Yule, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1871).

<sup>66</sup> Samuel Purchas and others, *Purchas His Pilgrimage. Or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places Discovered, from the Creation into This Present* (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Rose, 1626). John Worthen, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 28.

English poems, and contributed to the fantastic image of Chinese gardens held in Western public's mind.<sup>67</sup>

There were very rare illustrations of Chinese gardens at the time and those that were available tended to include exaggerated features. Johan Nieuhof wrote an account of the Dutch East India Company's embassy to the first Qing Emperor Shunzhi in 1655-57, that included a number of illustrations.<sup>68</sup> Many of the latter were exaggerated in nature: in Figure 2, the grand and almost threatening scale of the rocks is unrealistic, but it makes them appear more mysterious.

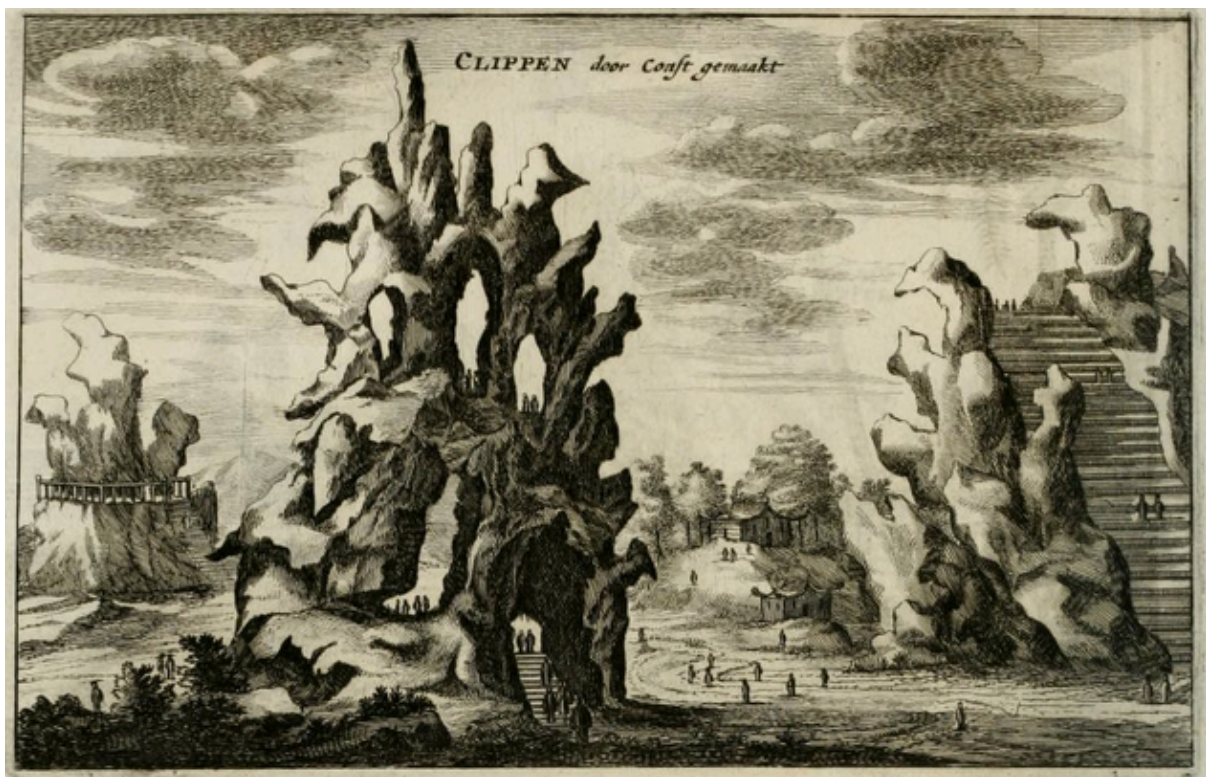


Figure 2 Engraving, in J.Nieuhof, *An embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces*

Few Europeans reached China before the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), until 1513 when the Portuguese reached the Pearl River in southern China. Following this first Western

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<sup>67</sup> Currently ranked second in Poetry Foundation, 'Hit Singles by Joshua Weiner', *Poetry Foundation*, 2018 <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/68445/hit-singles>> [accessed 7 May 2018].

<sup>68</sup> Johannes Nieuhof and others, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China, Delivered by Their Excellcies Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyzer, at His Imperial City of Peking* (London: Printed by J. Macock for the author, 1669) <<http://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-126081-3026>> [accessed 7 May 2018]. The illustration in Figure 2 can be found at p.65.



establishment of trade in China in Macao around 1556, new descriptions of Chinese gardens reached Europe.<sup>69</sup> Written by missionaries, these accounts were mostly second-hand, and had been gathered through intermediaries, as foreigners' movements inside Chinese territory were very restricted.<sup>70</sup>

The arrival of Jesuits in China provided Europe with first-hand descriptions of Chinese gardens. Contrarily to other foreigners in China, the Jesuits managed to reach a privileged position at the Imperial court, and some of them were allowed to see parts of the imperial gardens. One of the most famous examples is that of Matteo Ricci who established the first lasting mission in China starting from 1582 during the Ming Dynasty.<sup>71</sup> However his journals were published at a tardive date, and did not have as much impact on Western minds as the letters of another Jesuit, French Jean-Denis Attiret.

During the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) French Jesuits were then well positioned in the emperor's esteem, as King Louis XIV was contemplating possible trade link with the Far East. The French Jesuits were to act as his intermediaries in order to spread the Catholic faith but also to encourage the French politic and economic sphere to reach China. The earliest and most widely read Jesuit description of Chinese gardens was a description of the Yuanmingyuan, the imperial garden finished under the reign of Manchu emperor Qianlong by Father Jean-Denis Attiret. His letters were published across Europe and translated in English as soon as 1752.<sup>72</sup>

His contemporaries globally considered Attiret's description as objective, probably because Jesuits were known to be systematic in their way of compiling knowledge.<sup>73</sup> His observations on the Yuanmingyuan could also be taken for Chinese gardens in general, as he noticed

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<sup>69</sup> Kenneth Maxwell, 'Macao: The Shadow Land', *World Policy Journal*, 16.4 (1999), 73–95 (p. 1); P. Conner, 'Images of Macao (Export Art, China Trade)', *Magazine Antiques*, 155.3 (1999), 432–441 (p. 432).

<sup>70</sup> See notably Galeote Pereira and others, *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar Da Cruz, O.P. [and] Fr. Martin de Rada, O.E.S.A. (1550-1575)* (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1953).

<sup>71</sup> Rinaldi, *Ideas of Chinese Gardens Western Accounts, 1300-1860*, p. 52.

<sup>72</sup> Jean Denis Attiret, *A Particular Account of the Emperor of China's Gardens near Pekin: In a Letter from F. Attiret, a French Missionary, Now Employ'd by That Emperor to Paint the Apartments in Those Gardens, to His Friend at Paris. Translated from the French by Sir Harry Beaumont* (London: R. Dodsley, 1752)

<[http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&docType=ECCOArticles&bookId=0316401700&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docLevel=TEXT\\_GRAPHICS&version=1.0&source=library](http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?contentSet=ECCOArticles&docType=ECCOArticles&bookId=0316401700&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docLevel=TEXT_GRAPHICS&version=1.0&source=library)> [accessed 6 July 2015].

<sup>73</sup> Rinaldi, *Ideas of Chinese Gardens Western Accounts, 1300-1860*, p. 91.

accurately that there were windings walks, multiple pavilions and artificial grottoes, the use of rockworks and the variety of shapes in doors and windows, and that gardeners had manipulated the ground's layout. He also understood that irregularity was intended in Chinese gardens, and that symmetry was otherwise the norm in most of Chinese buildings. The most striking aspect is that Attiret showed real appreciation of Chinese gardens, which he described in another part to be "*in good Taste*", a judgment that would not necessarily be shared by later visitors from the West. Missionaries' accounts of China at the time were generally complimentary, well-informed accounts from scholars deeply immersed in the foreign culture they were studying. Yet they were also part of these missionaries' agenda to keep their order interested in China: later on Western descriptions would continue to correspond with their authors' various agendas.



Figure 3 "*15e cahier des jardins chinois : jardins de l'Empereur de la Chine [15th book of the Chinese gardens: gardens of the Chinese Emperor]*", in Georges-Louis Le Rouge's *Jardins anglo-chinois*, 1776

Matteo Ripa produced some of the earliest pictorial descriptions of imperial gardens: emperor Kangxi asked him to draw the Bizhu Shanzhuang (Imperial Resort of Chengde) and he also had the opportunity to visit Beijing imperial gardens during his stay (1711-23). However his

work was privately owned, and only published much later.<sup>74</sup> Without this delay, he would have been the “first to provide the Western world with a detailed first-hand description of the Chinese garden”.<sup>75</sup> For reliable illustrations of Chinese gardens to be widely distributed in Europe, the Western public had to wait for Le Rouge to reproduce the engravings of the forty views of the Yuanmingyuan in 1787.<sup>76</sup> The latter achieved a great popularity in Europe, despite the use of Chinese axonometric perspective in the illustrations. However, the engravings not only reproduced but also added or modified the original paintings, and Western viewers would have lacked the cultural context to understand them fully. They could not know for example, that these paintings were originally commissioned by Emperor Qianlong and as such were tools of imperial power self-affirmation.<sup>77</sup>

### Assimilation: Chambers and Chinoiserie

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there was a wealth of European landscape theories developed in reaction to the Chinese gardening style, or more accurately to what *Westerners understood* of Chinese gardening style. For example, William Temple mentioned Chinese gardens in his essay *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus* in 1685: his aim was more to contrast them to classical examples of gardening than to sing their personal merits. He notably underlined the fact that Chinese gardens imitated Nature and its irregularity.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, French Jesuit Pierre-Martial Cibot used Chinese gardens to explicitly criticise European gardens, and notably to denounce the King’s expenses in building formal French gardens.<sup>79</sup> These descriptions of Chinese gardens corresponded with a simultaneous call for ‘natural’ landscape in Europe. In 1712, Joseph Addison described the regularity of English garden as ‘forced’ and ‘artificial’, and the formal garden as opposed with nature.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, he stated that: “Writers who have given us an account of China tell us the inhabitants of that country laugh at the plantations of

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<sup>74</sup> Rinaldi, *Ideas of Chinese Gardens Western Accounts, 1300-1860*, p. 83.

<sup>75</sup> Valder, p. 20.

<sup>76</sup> Georges-Louis Le Rouge, *Jardins anglo-chinois* (Paris: Chez Le Rouge, 1776).

<sup>77</sup> Che Bing Chiu and Gilles Baud Berthier, *Yuanming Yuan: le jardin de la clarté parfaite* (Besançon: Editions de l’Imprimeur, 2000).

<sup>78</sup> William Temple and others, *Upon the Gardens of the Epicurus: With Other XVIIth Century Garden Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908).

<sup>79</sup> Pierre Martial Cibot, ‘Essai sur les jardins de plaisance des Chinois’, in *Mémoires concernant l’histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, &c. des Chinois, par les missionnaires de Peking* (Paris: Nyon, 1782), VIII, 301–26. As analysed by Rinaldi, *Ideas of Chinese Gardens Western Accounts, 1300-1860*, p. 156.

<sup>80</sup> Liangyan Ge, ‘On the 18th Century English Misreading of the Chinese Garden’, *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 27 (1992), 106–26 (p. 108).

our Europeans, which are laid out by the rule and line; because, they say, any one may place trees in equal rows and uniform figures”.<sup>81</sup>

There is to this day a debate on whether the 18<sup>th</sup> century British natural landscape finds its origins in Chinese garden design. Without controversy, one can safely state that descriptions of Chinese gardens were used in various theoretical arguments about landscape at this period, as an existing case providing support for new ideas. Alexander Pope for example agreed with Addison that a garden should imitate nature, and put it into practice into his own garden.<sup>82</sup> Next, elements such as serpentine walks meant to imitate nature appeared in the English landscape, and Charles Bridgeman notably invented the ‘ha-ha’ to integrate the garden in the larger landscape.<sup>83</sup> However this theoretical use of the Chinese garden was done with an incomplete understanding of Chinese traditional aesthetics, some of which might have come from *Chinoiserie*.<sup>84</sup>

The ‘Chinese taste’ started to spread in Europe, first in the 17th century with the limited export of luxury goods, then with a flow of imports in first decades of 18th as the demand expanded. *Chinoiserie* was primarily concerned with decorative objects, such as porcelain tea sets, wallpapers and furniture, and were originally genuine Chinese goods made for Chinese people.<sup>85</sup> However with the increase of Western customers, Chinese makers started to adapt their products to the Western audience, and Western producers tried to imitate Chinese shapes and iconography.<sup>86</sup>

William Chambers, who visited Canton in China twice in 1743-4 and 1748-9, exemplifies a change of mood in how seriously Chinese landscape is being seen in the West and especially Britain.<sup>87</sup> William Chambers was a Scottish-Swedish architect and one of the founders of the

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<sup>81</sup> Joseph Addison, ‘No 414’, *The Spectator* (London, 06 1712), Henry Morley edition.

<sup>82</sup> Ge, p. 109.

<sup>83</sup> Horace Walpole and W. S Lewis, *On Modern Gardening* (New York: Young Books, Inc., 1931), p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> O. R. Impey, *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>85</sup> ‘Style Guide: Chinoiserie’, *Victoria and Albert Museum*, 2012

<<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/s/style-guide-chinoiserie/>> [accessed 7 May 2018].

<sup>86</sup> Crossman. Kristina Kleutghen, ‘Chinese Occidenterie: The Diversity of “Western” Objects in Eighteenth-Century China’, *Eighteenth - Century Studies*, 47.2 (2014), 117–35.

<sup>87</sup> Barrier and others, pp. 12–13.

Royal Academy.<sup>88</sup> He used the novelty of his first-hand experience with Chinese gardens to create several Chinese-inspired landscapes in Britain, notably the famous pagoda built at Kew Royal Botanic Gardens in 1759.<sup>89</sup> Chambers' pagoda was only one of many so-called 'Chinese' buildings and gardening elements that were spreading in European gardens.<sup>90</sup> A later example that can still be visited in the UK is the Chinese garden inside Biddulph Grange (1840), whose pavilion clearly imitates Guangzhou gardens via Chambers' designs (Figure 4).<sup>91</sup> William Chambers posed himself as a champion of the Chinese landscaping style through his *Dissertation on Oriental gardening* published in 1772.<sup>92</sup>



Figure 4 The Chinese garden at Biddulph Grange, UK, 2015

Chambers' accounts were based on memories of gardens he might have actually visited in Guangzhou, mixed with the explanations of a Chinese painter that he pretends to have consulted. There is little doubt that he also built on previous Jesuits' accounts. Chambers also

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<sup>88</sup> R. C Bald, 'Sir William Chambers and the Chinese Garden', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 11.3 (1950), 287–320 (p. 288).

<sup>89</sup> He published the plans in William Chambers, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew in Surrey* (London: J.Haberkorn, 1763).

<sup>90</sup> Oswald Sirén, *China and Gardens of Europe of the Eighteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1990).

<sup>91</sup> 'Biddulph Grange Garden', *National Trust* <<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/biddulph-grange-garden>> [accessed 7 May 2018].

<sup>92</sup> William Chambers, *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (London: Printed by W. Griffin, 1772) <<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/2878513.html>> [accessed 7 May 2018].

used his fertile imagination to add many fantastic and romantic orientalist elements to his Chinese designs. His *Dissertation* was well received in France, where the concept of surprising scenes punctuated with exotic-inspired buildings was gaining popularity.<sup>93</sup>

### Rejection: Diplomats and traders

However, Chambers' *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* was at odds with the contemporary taste of gentlemen in 18<sup>th</sup> century upper class Britain. His extravagant exotic descriptions that would have been accepted with wonder at the times of Marco Polo, instead received great criticism and ridicule at home. The reaction to Chambers' Chinese designs marks the beginning of what Craig Clunas calls 'the denigration of the Chinese garden': J.C. Loudon would for example write in his *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* in 1824:<sup>94</sup>

We know little of the gardening of China, notwithstanding all that has been written and asserted on the subject. [...] It is evident, that the Chinese study irregularity and imitate nature, in attempting to form rocks ; but whether this imitation is carried to that extent in wood, water and ground, and conducted on principles so refined as those given the Chinese by Sir William Chambers, appears very doubtful.<sup>95</sup>

Chamber's detractors echoed the growing criticism faced by the *Chinoiserie* fashion at the time, which became depreciated as a frivolity, as effeminate and grotesque. This rejection of Chamber's fantasist Chinese landscape also appeared at a time when the British Empire and other Western powers were trying to open the doors of Chinese trade in vain.<sup>96</sup> As was explained in the introduction, after the instauration of the Canton System in 1756, the rest of the country was closed to foreigners except for a few Jesuits and some Russians in Beijing and northern borders. The demand for Chinese goods such as tea was however growing, although China was not interested in importing Western products such as wools.

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<sup>93</sup> Barrier and others.

<sup>94</sup> Craig Clunas, 'Nature and Ideology in Western Descriptions of the Chinese Gardens', *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident*, 2000, p. 157 <[http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/oroc\\_0754-5010\\_2000\\_num\\_22\\_22\\_1124](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/oroc_0754-5010_2000_num_22_22_1124)> [accessed 30 March 2015].

<sup>95</sup> J. C Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening: Comprising the Theory and Practice of Horticulture, Floriculture, Arboriculture, and Landscape-Gardening, Including All the Latest Improvements ; a General History of Gardening in All Countries ; and a Statistical View of Its Present State, with Suggestions for Its Future Progress in the British Isles* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824), p. 101.

<sup>96</sup> Clunas, 'Nature and Ideology in Western Descriptions of the Chinese Gardens', p. 157.

As is detailed in the next chapter, to solve this unbalance in trade, foreign traders negotiated with their countries to send several embassies, aiming to convince Emperor Qianlong into reopening Chinese ports to Westerners along the coast. While altogether ultimately unsuccessful, these embassies had for side effect to provide the world with fresh descriptions of Chinese gardens. During Lord Macartney's expedition in 1793, his retinue had the opportunity to visit the several imperial gardens in the north.<sup>97</sup> The painters accompanying the expedition - William Alexander and Lieutenant Parish - produced illustrations of the gardens visited that were then spread in Europe.<sup>98</sup> In their accounts, the embassy's envoys only reluctantly acknowledged the grandiose impression that the Imperial gardens left on them. The tone of the embassy's descriptions often revealed a great disdain of things Chinese: that attitude explains partially the failure of the Macartney Embassy, and further informs us on the growing negative views on Chinese culture harboured by British Empire and other Western powers. Such a critical mind-set towards China was probably rooted in the frustration that they could not yet force open the Chinese market.

Thus, the denial of the Chinese garden's merits came at a time of general distrust and dislike for the Chinese empire: "already by the second half of the 18th century, sinophilia in Europe was on the wane, while sinophobia was on the rise."<sup>99</sup> In the 19th century, as Westerners' negative impression of China grew, the fascination that had been the norm before turned into its extreme opposite. Peter Dobell wrote in 1831 about "the well-known jealousy of the Chinese towards strangers, and extreme vanity and exaggeration with which they speak of themselves and their country".<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Aeneas Anderson, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China in the Years 1792, 1793, and 1794; Containing the Various Circumstances of the Embassy; with Accounts of the Customs and Manners of the Chinese* (London: Printed for J. Debrett, 1795)  
<<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO?c=1&stp=Author&ste=11&af=BN&ae=N009958&tiPG=1&dd=0&dc=flc&docNum=CW105893667&vrsn=1.0&srchtp=a&d4=0.33&n=10&SU=0LRL+OR+0LRI&locID=ureginalib>> [accessed 6 July 2015]; John Barrow Sir, *Travels in China, Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey through the Country from Peking to Canton*, 2nd edn (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1806); George Macartney Macartney, *An Embassy to China; Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney during His Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-Lung, 1793-1794* ([London]; [Toronto: Longmans, 1962).

<sup>98</sup> Alain Peyrefitte and William Alexander, *Images de l'Empire immobile: par William Alexander, peintre-reporter de l'expédition Macartney* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

<sup>99</sup> Harriet T Zurndorfer, 'Book Review: Discovering China: European Interpretations in the Enlightenment', *The China Quarterly*, 1994, 845-47 (p. 845).

<sup>100</sup> Peter Dobell, 'Art. III. Travels in Kamtchatka and Siberia: With a Narrative of a Residence in China. By Peter Dobell. 2 Vols. 12 Mo. 1830', *American Quarterly Review*, 1831, 52-81 (p. 52).

This change in Western views of China had repercussions on descriptions of Chinese culture and its people, and can be progressively felt in Western accounts of Chinese gardens from the late 18<sup>th</sup> until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the instauration of the Canton System, accounts on Chinese gardens originated mostly from Westerners stationed in Guangzhou and Macao, where gardens were small and densely built. At that time, Chinese gardens are increasingly qualified of ‘unnatural’, ‘artificial’, and the excessive cost and effort taken to create one was mocked. A typical way for Westerners to decry the grotesque Chinese garden was to criticise the dwarf trees (*penjing* or *bonsai* in Japanese): “Chinese florists have exhausted their skill in twisting, stunting, and deforming plants, until a tree of more than a century's growth still lives in a narrow pot, having never reached a height of more than three or four feet.”<sup>101</sup>

### Mixed feelings: botanists

After the missionaries and the diplomats, it was the turn of botanists to offer their contribution to Western knowledge of gardens in China. Often such descriptions were not complimentary, as can be gathered from this passage from John Livingstone, a British botanist stationed in Macao in early 19<sup>th</sup> century:

“[The Chinese] botanical arrangements (if indeed they deserve the name) are extremely defective. No attempt has been made by them to form genera and species; the place of growth, the use, and the like, being with them the only distinguishing marks of plants. It therefore cannot be supposed, that anything like a scientific botanical collection exists in China”<sup>102</sup>

Livingstone’s statement comes across not only as arrogant, but untrue: the development of Chinese medicine had prompted a large number of books on medicinal plants and their uses at least since the first century BCE.<sup>103</sup> Western botanists brought with them a conception of botany seen through the lens of Linnean taxonomy: when observing Chinese gardeners, they

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<sup>101</sup> B. C Henry, *Ling-Nam; or, Interior Views of Southern China, Including Explorations in the Hitherto Untraversed Island of Hainan* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1886), p. 55.

<sup>102</sup> John Livingstone, ‘Account of the Method of Dwarfing Trees and Shrubs, as Practised by the Chinese, Including Their Plan of Propagation from Branches. By John Livingstone, Esq. of Macao, in China, Corresponding Member of the Horticultural Society’, in *Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London*, 1822, pp. 224–31.

<sup>103</sup> See notably Joseph Needham and others, *Science and Civilisation in China. Botany Volume 6 Part 1*, 1989.



saw that the latter used gardening techniques without necessarily understanding the underlying botanical concepts.<sup>104</sup>

As John Ball explained later, there was a fundamental issue with Western expectations when visiting China:

“One who comes to China prepared to see the beautiful beds, the grouping of colours, and blending of shades, the massing of foliage, the parterres, the trim gravel walks, the grass lawns, and the *tout ensemble* that goes to make up the idea represented by the word garden amongst us, must be prepared to be disappointed.”<sup>105</sup>

One example of puzzling Chinese practice was the fact that they were willingly letting plants growing in their ponds, as this account from a certain Captain Oliver shows:

“The shrubs were unpruned, the stagnant ponds were covered with Water Lilies, *Nelumbium*, and *Pistia*, and the banks of the ponds clothed with weeds. At the same time, the unchecked luxuriance of subtropical vegetation added much to the picturesqueness of the scenery.”<sup>106</sup>

After the First Opium War (1839-42), the British negotiated the opening of several harbours, which became as many doors leading to the exploration of China and its gardens. British botanist Robert Fortune visited China in 1842-58 under disguise, and brought back descriptions of places that Westerners had never visited before. When Fortune recorded his visit to the gardener selling plant seeds in the plant nurseries in Guangzhou, he remarked that:

“I had been accustomed to believe, (...) that these seeds were boiled or poisoned in some way by the Chinese before they were sold to our merchants, in order that the floral beauties of China should not find their way into other countries, and the trade in seeds be injured. The Chinese are certainly bad enough, but, like other rogues, they are sometimes painted worse than they really are.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> John Potts, *Rough Journal*, transcript, Rare book room shelf 122, reference 910 POT.

<sup>105</sup> J. Dyer Ball, *Things Chinese; or, Notes Connected with China* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1904), p. 254 <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t2p55h640>> [accessed 6 July 2015].

<sup>106</sup> S.P. Oliver, ‘A Chinese Garden (Part 1)’, *The Gardeners' Chronicle : A Weekly Illustrated Journal of Horticulture and Allied Subjects Vol.1 (1874)*, 14 February 1874, pp. 212–13.

<sup>107</sup> Robert Fortune, *A Journey to the Tea Countries of China: Including Sung-Lo and the Bohea Hills : With a Short Notice of the East India Company's Tea Plantations in the Himalaya Mountains* (London: J. Murray, 1852), p. 130. The irony is of course that the Chinese would have been wise to be cautious,

Fortune's account shows that Western visitors thought that the Chinese were ill-disposed towards them. Despite this animosity, Western botanists frequently exclaimed about the beauty of Chinese flora, if not of their gardens. For example, Charles Taylor wrote in 1860: "Many of the flowers and shrubs are very beautiful. [...] The great fondness of the Chinese for flowers is proverbial."<sup>108</sup> The end of the nineteenth century was marked by a softening of the Western criticism towards China, along with the forceful opening of Chinese Treaty Ports. The earliest photographs of China were also taken at that time. The earliest surviving of the latter are daguerreotypes taken by French Jules Itier during the French Lagrené Embassy. Three of these views feature a garden in Guangzhou: the Haishan xianguan, owned by Pan Shicheng of the second branch of the Pan family.<sup>109</sup>

### *Western vision of Chinese gardens after 1860*

The travels of photographer Felice Beato illustrate perfectly the progressive neglect of Guangzhou gardens to the profit of gardens located in the northern parts of China: he accompanied the British-French army during the Second Opium War (1856-60) and first photographed a Hong merchant's garden in Guangzhou in apparent tranquillity. Then he followed the troops to the capital and was a witness of the looting of the Yuanmingyuan in 1860.<sup>110</sup>

### Focus on Beijing, 1900-20s

One of the most famous Chinese gardens was destroyed during the Second Opium War: in 1860, British and French armies sacked and burnt the Yuanmingyuan (Garden of Perfect Brightness, or Old Summer Palace) in Beijing. There are several opinions regarding the

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since Fortune himself could be considered an early industrial spy as he took the tea plant from China to implant it in India.

<sup>108</sup> Charles Taylor, *Five Years in China: With Some Account of the Great Rebellion and a Description of St. Helena* (Derby & Jackson, 1860), p. 65.

<sup>109</sup> G. Gimon, 'Jules Itier, Daguerreotypist', *History of Photography*, 5.3 (1981), 225–244; Gilles Massot, 'Jules Itier and the Lagrené Mission', *History of Photography*, 39.4 (2015), 319–47.

<sup>110</sup> Isobel Crombie, 'China, 1860: A Photographic Album by Felice Beato', *History of Photography*, 11.1 (1987), 25–37.

motives behind Lord Elgin and Baron Gros' actions.<sup>111</sup> Baron Gros was worried that burning the Forbidden City might rouse the Chinese public to take arms.<sup>112</sup> The Yuanmingyuan, as an Imperial park, was a symbol of China's power, but not the seat of its government. As such, it seems likely that Lord Elgin & Baron Gros chose to destroy a garden that was deemed to be a 'Paradise on Earth' as a way to deal a powerful blow to Chinese imperial prestige and stability. In Felice Beato's photographs, the power unbalance of the conflict is made obvious, with more casualties on the Chinese side due to differences in military technology.<sup>113</sup> Back in Europe, the Jesuit's descriptions of the garden had left a strong impression, so that when Victor Hugo heard of the event, he famously commented: "this is what civilization has done to barbarism".<sup>114</sup>

After the British & French declared victory, the Convention of Beijing was signed, which along with the earlier Treaty of Tianjin allowed the British and other nations to gain another series of advantages. Among the latter were the following: the authorisation for foreign embassies to be set in Beijing, the opening of more harbours to Western trade and the authorisation for travellers to access other parts of China. At first, Westerners were mostly attracted by the capital. After the Boxers Rebellion (1898-1901), when the Qing court fled Beijing, for the first time the Forbidden City and its gardens were opened to the public: as a result, many Westerners started to write descriptions of the area. Once Beijing was thrown open, and with it the rumoured imperial gardens described by the Jesuits, Guangzhou gardens were easily forgotten. Since the fall of the Qing dynasty, Westerners could visit numerous ruined gardens in and around the capital, and their publications focused on those examples that they could visit, almost to the exclusion of all other Chinese gardens.<sup>115</sup> Exploring the different sights of Beijing became a popular pastime and guidebooks started to appear.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Young-tsu Wong, *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Haiyan Lee, 'The ruins of Yuanmingyuan: Or, how to enjoy a national wound', *Modern China*, 35.2 (2009), 155–90.

<sup>112</sup> Bernard Brizay, *Le sac du Palais d'Été seconde guerre de l'opium: l'expédition anglo-française de Chine en 1860* (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 2011).

<sup>113</sup> David Harris and Felice Beato, *Of Battle and Beauty: Felice Beato's Photographs of China* (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1999).

<sup>114</sup> Victor Hugo, 'Lettre au capitaine Butler: Hauteville House, 25 novembre 1861', *Le Monde diplomatique*, 2004 <<https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2004/10/HUGO/11563>> [accessed 7 May 2018].

<sup>115</sup> Valder, p. 53.

<sup>116</sup> *Guide for Tourists to Peking and Its Environs* (Hong Kong: China Mail, 1876); Joseph Edkins, *Description of Peking* (Shanghai: Printed at the 'Shanghai Mercury' Office, 1898); L. C. Arlington and William Lewisohn, *In Search of Old Peking* (Beijing: H. Vetch, 1935).

The 1920s mark the true beginning of Western scholarship on Chinese gardens: Western authors started to cite Chinese sources, as more foreigners were now allowed to learn Mandarin.<sup>117</sup> In the decade from 1910 to 1920, the attitude of Westerners towards Chinese culture was “undergoing a change which was to revalidate the Chinese garden as one of the great artifacts of that civilization, precisely on account of its closeness to nature”.<sup>118</sup> The Chinese garden was seen as ‘natural’ again, especially as scholars came to understand that the Japanese gardens took partially origin in the Chinese gardens.<sup>119</sup> Later in the 1930-40s, Chinese gardens were for the first time researched in a systematic historical fashion in the books of Osvald Sirén and Carrol Brown Malone.<sup>120</sup> Despite the serious nature of this period’s scholarship, the history of Chinese gardens was still little understood. Chinese gardens came to be seen as ‘timeless’ and ‘unchanging’, a cliché that pertains to Orientalism and can still be found in publications to this day.

#### Focus on Jiangnan (Suzhou) 1930s-1980s

Around the 1930s, Westerners’ attention was once again attracted to a different part of China: Jiangnan region, surrounding the intensively growing city of Shanghai. Since the Treaty Ports had been opened, Shanghai and other foreign concessions in Chinese Treaty Ports were developing steadily. Besides, the advance of the railway system meant that previously inaccessible parts of China were now reached more easily. As early as 1911, there was a convenient access to Suzhou from Shanghai. As the Chinese civil war unfolded, Westerners could usually retreat to the safe haven of the Foreign concessions, but continue to write on Chinese culture. It is possible that the ready access to Suzhou gardens led Western publications to progressively focus on the latter. The city itself started to be labelled the “Garden city”. Although Suzhou was certainly an important gardening centre in Chinese history, especially during the Ming dynasty, it was not the only one.-During the Qing dynasty another city, Yangzhou, had been the most dynamic centre of Chinese garden’s creation.

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<sup>117</sup> Zhengming Wen, *An Old Chinese Garden : A Three-Fold Masterpiece of Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting* (Shanghai: Chung Hwa Book Co, 1923).

<sup>118</sup> Keyang Tang, ‘From Ruined Gardens to Yan Yuan — A Transformed Vision of the “Chinese Garden”: A Discussion of Henry K. Murphy’s Yenching University Campus Planning’, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 24.2 (2004), 150–72 (p. 155).

<sup>119</sup> Clunas, ‘Nature and Ideology in Western Descriptions of the Chinese Gardens’, p. 161.

<sup>120</sup> Carroll Brown Malone, *History of the Peking Summer Palaces under the Ch’ing Dynasty* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1934); Osvald Sirén, *Gardens of China* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1949).

It seems that after being ignorant of Chinese literature and language for so long, Western scholars suddenly started to adopt Chinese sources without questioning too closely the cultural bias it entailed. One of the consequences of using Chinese criteria is that Chinese gardens started to be described as either ‘imperial’ or ‘private’, the latter often unilaterally associated with the so-called ‘scholar gardens’. As a result, Western publications written at this period and afterwards would usually focus on Imperial gardens in the north, and Jiangnan private scholar gardens in the south. From 1930s onward, the growing tensions in China prevented Westerners to visit more gardens, with no or little access to the Chinese territory after 1949.

### Opening of the field after the 1980s

The situation continued until the late 1970s, with the exception of Maggie Keswick who published “The Chinese Garden” in 1978, the most popular English-language introduction on the subject ever since. Since surviving Chinese gardens were still difficult to access, many Western scholars focused on translating Chinese sources instead. Alison Hardie translated into English Ji Cheng's *Craft of Gardens* in 1988. A new focus on the social and economic aspects of the gardens started from the 1990s, as exemplified by the work of Craig Clunas on the productive aspects in Suzhou gardens. Since the 2000s, in the West, the field of Chinese garden studies has grown to include larger time periods and geographical areas.<sup>121</sup> Despite the wealth of new information uncovered, there seems to be a tendency to focus on surviving gardens. Scholars writing in Western languages have also continued to over-analyse Suzhou gardens as a kind of golden standard of Chinese gardens’ spatial arrangement, sometimes without really acknowledging the numerous changes that occurred since these gardens’ first construction.<sup>122</sup> To understand better those particularities, it is necessary to appreciate the field of Chinese garden history from the Chinese scholars’ point of view.

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<sup>121</sup> Silbergeld. Lei Gao and Jan Woudstra, ‘Repairing Broken Continuity: Garden Heritage in the Historic Villages Xidi and Hongcun, China’, 23.1 (2011), 8.

<sup>122</sup> Che Bing Chiu and Yuxiang Li, *Jardins de Chine ou La quête du paradis* (Paris: La Martinière, 2010); Tuo Liu and Maoru Qiu, *Classical gardens in China* (New York: Better Link Press, 2012).

## Part II. The Chinese garden seen from home: literati taste and landscape architecture as a discipline

In China, Chinese garden history as an academic field finds its origins as a response to Japanese scholars' interest for the topic in the 1910-20s.<sup>123</sup> One of the fathers of the field was Chen Zhi, who promoted research and teaching on the topic, as part of a curriculum focusing on landscape in a practical manner: silviculture, horticulture and architecture.<sup>124</sup> Despite the political and social unrest in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century China, Chinese garden history was soon a proper discipline. The survey and restoration of historical gardens became one of the focuses for specialists after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (1949).<sup>125</sup> Another focus was to develop a theory of Chinese gardens, by debating Ji Cheng's *The Craft of gardens*.<sup>126</sup>

As early as 1936, an English version of Tong Jun's book on private gardens in the Jiangnan area was available and read widely by the Western audience.<sup>127</sup> Scholars such as architectural historian Liu Dunzhen and art historian Chen Congzhou focused on the private gardens of Jiangnan, but from the point of view of spatial design: thus the field continued to be 'architecture-led'.<sup>128</sup> The latter's works contributed to the popularity of Jiangnan region in Western publications, especially the surviving gardens that could still be visited. Such a focus on spatial analysis can be interpreted as an impact of the social and political unrest of the period. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, the number of studies surged. Even in architecture, traditional Chinese literature became an important source for the interest in Chinese gardens.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Andong Lu, 'Lost in Translation: Modernist Interpretation of the Chinese Garden as Experiential Space and Its Assumptions', *The Journal of Architecture*, 16.4 (2011), 499–527 (p. 500).

<sup>124</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>125</sup> Jun Tong, *江南園林志 (Records of Jiangnan gardens)* (Beijing: Zhongguo gongye chubanshe, 1963).

<sup>126</sup> Zhi Chen, *造園學概論 (On the creation of gardens)* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935).

<sup>127</sup> Tung Chuin, *Chinese Gardens, Especially in Kiangsu and Chekiang*. (Unknown, 1936).

<sup>128</sup> Andong Lu, p. 500. See notably Dunzhen Liu, *苏州古典园林 (Classical gardens of Suzhou)* (Nanjing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1979).

<sup>129</sup> Andong Lu, p. 504.

To this day, in China it is not rare that architects and landscape architects are often the only scholars involved in conferences on Chinese gardens. As a result, in-depth discussions of issues pertaining to social history are rare, especially for gardens outside of Jiangnan area. Although the Chinese expert Chen Congzhou produced an analysis on gardens according to Chinese values of taste, his essays were still focused on gardens in the Jiangnan area.<sup>130</sup> When discussing the Hong merchants' gardens, Chinese scholars rarely engaged with the questions of traditional Chinese prejudice against the merchant class, or the perceived influence of foreigners on garden design in 18-19<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou. These issues are however key to understand the relative neglect of Hong merchants' gardens in Chinese publications, and their absence in Western ones.

### *Categorisation of Chinese gardens*

To this day, the focus on imperial gardens and private gardens of Jiangnan is rarely put into question. Yet, the categorisation of Chinese gardens is hiding much of the unbalance in the field by making that very unbalance seem logical. When examining a sample of publications on Chinese gardens, one can find a wide array of categories: 'imperial', 'private', 'temple' gardens, with as many as six different types discussed at a time.<sup>131</sup> These categories refer most frequently to several kinds of garden's owners, more rarely to different time periods or geographic areas.<sup>132</sup>

Overall, scholars in both China and the West have tended to separate Chinese gardens into two main groups: 'northern imperial' and 'southern private'.<sup>133</sup> Despite containing cardinal directions, these categories are not straightforward geographically speaking. 'Northern imperial' gardens are understood as to be located in any northern historical Chinese capital, which includes both western Xi'an and eastern Beijing. When it comes to 'southern private',

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<sup>130</sup> Congzhou Chen, *說園 On Chinese gardens*.

<sup>131</sup> Richard, 'Criticising the Regional Bias in Western Study of Chinese Gardens', p. 26.

<sup>132</sup> See for example Henry Inn, *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (New York: Bonanza books, 1950); Wah Nan Chung, *The Art of Chinese Gardens* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1982); Frances Ya-sing Tsu, *Landscape Design in Chinese Gardens* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1988); R. Stewart Johnston, *Scholar Gardens of China: A Study and Analysis of the Spatial Design of the Chinese Private Garden* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); T. Yao, *Classical Chinese Gardens* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2003); Yigang Peng, *中国古典园林分析 (Analysis of Chinese ancient gardens)*, Second edition (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2008).

<sup>133</sup> These two categories were suggested by Jerome Silbergeld in his article Silbergeld.

geographically, the gardens discussed are located in the Jiangnan area near the southern capitals of Nanjing and Hangzhou. The Yangzi River marks the southern demarcation in China: in other words, 'southern private gardens' do not include examples in Fujian, Guangxi or Guangdong provinces. Per their location in Guangdong, the Hong merchants' gardens have been researched as part of Lingnan region, traditionally considered a peripheral region.

The focus on Chinese historical capitals is easily understood: the seats of power tended to be flourishing economically, and the concentration of scholars in these locations meant that gardens were built in great numbers. The Jiangnan area around the Yangzi River was exceptional in the number of written and pictorial sources produced by local scholars, sources that are now available to document the local gardens. Suzhou was considered as the economical and cultural centre of the Jiangnan area since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and as a city it remained central into the late Qing dynasty.<sup>134</sup> John Meskill explained well why this region has fascinated historians of China:

The lower Yangtze valley cannot by any statistical legerdemain be offered as a microcosm of imperial China. In all aspects it was unusual. No student of economic history fails to see the signs that have been outlined above of its extraordinary wealth. No student of government and politics fails to notice the powerful representation of the region in the bureaucracy of Peking in the later imperial period. No student of literature can ignore its poets, essayists and fiction writers, who ruled the world of letters. No student of the fine arts need look elsewhere to find almost all the major painters. If the aim is to find regularities and norms, the lower Yangtze valley is not the place to look. Yet if the aim is to observe the life and thoughts of men who were especially favored by the civilization, it offers a rich record.<sup>135</sup>

Neither is Chinese scholars' fascination for Jiangnan area purely founded on the wealth of the region or the beauty of its historical gardens. Alison Hardie has underlined the fact that the Yuanmingyuan carried too heavy a reminder of the Qing empire's frailty, contrarily to privately-owned gardens of Suzhou. The latter are located near to Shanghai, the second

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<sup>134</sup> Michael Marmé, 'Heaven on Earth: The Rise of Suzhou, 1127-1550', in *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 19.

<sup>135</sup> John Thomas Meskill, *Gentlemanly Interests and Wealth on the Yangtze Delta* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies, 1994), p. 5.



largest city in China and the epitome of modernity.<sup>136</sup> In modern political terms, it is understandable why Suzhou would compare well to Guangzhou, which was the capital of two unofficial dynasties and considered at the fringe of Chinese civilisation until the Tang dynasty.<sup>137</sup> As a result, most of the Chinese-style gardens built outside of China are reproductions of, or strongly inspired by Suzhou gardens.<sup>138</sup>

The prejudice in favour of Suzhou can be felt even inside the Jiangnan area. As late as 1992, K.I. Wu wrote rather bluntly that: “The best private gardens are in Jiangnan, south of the Yangzi river, and the best Jiangnan gardens are in Suzhou.”<sup>139</sup> There were numerous noteworthy gardens in Jiangnan, and foremost were perhaps the gardens built by salt merchants in Yangzhou during the Qing dynasty. Yet the latter have received comparatively less attention.<sup>140</sup>

When it comes to Chinese garden categorisation by types of owners, it becomes even clearer why merchant gardens tend to be less researched. For most of the Chinese imperial history, a garden’s design was attributed to the owner’s taste, while the craftsmanship involved was left unmentioned. After the Ming dynasty, the names of designers or master gardeners are recorded more frequently. The greater demand for garden building during the later Ming explained the appearance of a type of learned individual making a living of garden design.

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<sup>136</sup> Hardie, ‘Talk for Infinite Worlds’.

<sup>137</sup> The Nanyue and Nanhan dynasties, discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>138</sup> Josepha Richard, ‘Are Chinese-Style Gardens Built Outside China a Form of “Soft Power”?’ , *China Policy Institute: Analysis*, 2016 <<https://cpianalysis.org/2016/10/06/are-chinese-style-gardens-built-outside-china-a-form-of-soft-power/>> [accessed 30 October 2017].

<sup>139</sup> K.I. Wu, ‘Chinese Gardens: Paintings with Nature’, in *Contacts Between Cultures: Eastern Asia: Literature and Humanities*, ed. by Bernard Hung-Kay Luk and Kaye I. Koppedrayer (Lewiston: Mellen, 1992), pp. 489–92 (p. 489).

<sup>140</sup> There are a number of publications on Yangzhou gardens such as Shaofei Xu, *扬州园林 (Gardens of Yangzhou)* (Suzhou: Suzhou daxue chubanshe, 2001); Jiang Zhu, *扬州园林品赏录 (Records of Yangzhou gardens)* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2002); Tobie Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003); Congzhou Chen, *扬州园林 (Gardens of Yangzhou)*; Gengtian Hu, ‘晚明扬州影园与黄牡丹诗会考论 (Textual Criticism on the Yingyuan Garden Poets Party in Late Ming Dynasty)’, *Journal of Yangzhou University (Humanities & Social Sciences)*, 15.3 (2011), 106–11; Winnie Yuen Lai Chan, ‘Building and Gardening Practices in Eighteenth Century Yangzhou: The View from Li Dou’s “The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou” (Yangzhou Huafang Lu, (1795))’, in *Yangzhou, a Place in Literature: The Local in Chinese Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), pp. 152–72.

The best example is that of the *Craft of the gardens* written around 1631-4.<sup>141</sup> In his book, Ji Cheng did not offer practical step-by-step guiding, but rather a poetic description of garden elements and effects separated in distinct categories. The fact that gardens of China were most often remembered by their owner's fame, rather than that of their designer, is an injustice that Ji Cheng addresses at the beginning of the *Craft of gardens*.<sup>142</sup>

At times, accomplished scholars or artists had a hand in the design of their own garden or that of their friend's, and on these occasions the master gardener and the owner were one and the same. Sometimes the artist who painted a view of the garden was famous enough that the garden was remembered through his work. The Zhuozhengyuan (in Suzhou) was for example recorded through the written and pictorial descriptions of famous painter Wen Zhengming.<sup>143</sup>

When separating gardens according to their owners (scholar, merchant, military, aristocratic), researchers should be aware of the lasting effects of hierarchic social class structure in dynastic China. Traditionally, among the four occupations, the merchant was considered lowest, behind crafters, farmers, and finally scholars that represent the highest social class.<sup>144</sup> This view was long lasting, despite evidence of merchants using their wealth to obtain political and social clout throughout much of Chinese dynastic history.<sup>145</sup> Jacques Gernet noted that this dislike for merchants has come from several origins. Merchants have been the targets of criticism in Taoist texts and depicting as encouraging useless spending, indulging in luxury and the culprits when farmers fell into poverty. The emperors and their court would despise the merchants for their ability to overcome social boundaries, to buy land and eventually to divert the farmers' energy from contributing to the imperial treasury. As early as 199 BCE (Han dynasty), punitive laws were put in place to restrict merchants' lifestyle and power.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Ji, p. 11.

<sup>142</sup> Ji, p. 41.

<sup>143</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 139.

<sup>144</sup> Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*, New Ed edition (Berkeley, CA Los Angeles, CA London: University of California Press, 1999), p. 72.

<sup>145</sup> Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 68.

<sup>146</sup> Jacques Gernet, *Le monde chinois*, 4th edn (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), p. 130.

Although Chinese merchants were technically considered of a lower social rank, as the case studies in this thesis show, wealth could remedy to such situation easily. In a same family, a father could have become wealthy through trade, so that his son could become an official at the Court. Yet Chinese garden scholars might still put such a family's garden in the 'scholar garden' category. The boundaries between Chinese social classes tended to shift, particularly from the Ming dynasty on. During the late Qing dynasty which this thesis focuses on, wealthy merchants and cultivated scholars mingled in much freer ways than had been possible before. Stephen Whiteman warned that it is not possible to mark too clear a "distinction between the literati and the merchant culture in the Ming and Qing, [...] as the two groups were not even wholly distinct, let alone distinctive in their cultural production".<sup>147</sup> Yet, when reading contemporary accounts of gardens, the cultural biases of the times can be easily missed. In the case of the merchant's gardens, Chinese records might hide or highlight some specific information so as to avoid any association with the notion of trade or production, as it was seen as 'vulgar' after the mid-Ming dynasty.<sup>148</sup>

As they are transient in nature, gardens are eventually destroyed or disappear by lack of maintenance. Once the garden was physically gone, in dynastic China it was mostly through written archives, and secondly through pictorial sources, that it could be remembered if at all. On one hand, as craftsmen usually transmitted their techniques orally, historians now find it difficult to reconstruct ancient crafts involved in garden-making. On the other hand, a famous owner or artist linked with a given garden could guarantee a mention of that garden's existence in Chinese records for years to come. As a result, many gardens of China have been left unmentioned in history, whether because records disappeared or were never written. This is especially the case for gardens built in provinces considered provincial or peripheral to the cultural centres of the Chinese empire, beyond the areas of Jiangnan and near ancient northern capitals notably in Zhili region (near Beijing).<sup>149</sup> If the owner were a merchant, he would have had to create situations where scholars would gather in his garden for the latter to be recorded in local gazetteers: gathering was one of the most important functions in a Chinese garden.

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<sup>147</sup> Stephen Whiteman's response to the questionnaire sent during my MA dissertation, Richard, 'Criticising the Regional Bias in Western Study of Chinese Gardens', p. 46.

<sup>148</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 172. Hardie Alison, 'Washing the Wutong Tree: Garden Culture as an Expression of Women's Gentility in the Late Ming', in *The Quest for Gentility in China: Negotiations beyond Gender and Class* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 45–57 (p. 51).

<sup>149</sup> Silbergeld, p. 207.

## *The functions of Chinese gardens*

Analysing gardens through their function is an approach borrowed from the archaeology methodology known as ‘theory of mediation’ formulated in the 1980s by Sorbonne Paris IV’s lecturers Philippe Bruneau and Pierre-Yves Balut.<sup>150</sup> Antoine Gournay successfully applied this theory to the field of gardens of China.<sup>151</sup> The latter’s analysis of the functions of different parts of the garden is helpful, in that it highlights the differences between European and Chinese conceptions of gardens that are otherwise difficult to notice. Such differences in concept explains why Western visitors to China did not always notice the social and cultural layers displayed in gardens. The theory of mediation is especially useful in the context of gardens in Guangzhou, as the most detailed sources come from Western visitors who lacked in-depth understanding of Chinese culture. Therefore, the case studies in this thesis are organised according to the gardens’ functions. To facilitate the understanding of the analysis in later chapters, the most important functions of Chinese gardens are presented below.

The first function of a garden is that of providing habitation: depending on the location of the garden, this aspect is more or less emphasised.<sup>152</sup> The owner’s family was very likely to use the garden too, especially the women of the household, some of whom were not able to walk freely outside the enclosure of the residence.<sup>153</sup> Children are often represented playing in garden courtyards alongside women in paintings or *Chinoiserie*. Married women of the gentry could visit gardens with their husband if their relationship was close; they could also hold parties in gardens or attend celebrations such as birthdays with their family as long as no man from outside was invited.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Philippe Bruneau and Pierre-Yves Balut, *Artistique et archéologie* (Paris: Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997).

<sup>151</sup> Antoine Gournay, ‘Le Jardin Chinois (The Chinese Garden)’, *Revue d’archéologie Moderne et d’archéologie Générale (RAMAGE)*, 1995, 119–35.

<sup>152</sup> Antoine Gournay, ‘L’aménagement de l’espace dans le jardin chinois (Spatial layout arrangement of the Chinese garden)’, *Aménager l’espace*, 1994, 263–78 (p. 263).

<sup>153</sup> See Wu Hung, ‘Beyond stereotypes: the twelve beauties in Qing court art and the Dream of the red chamber.’, in *Writing women in late imperial China* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 306–65.

<sup>154</sup> Hardie Alison, p. 51.

Therefore, gathering groups of like-minded people was another major function of the garden.<sup>155</sup> Although some owners were keen on solitude, from the Song dynasty onwards, gardens were increasingly open to visitors as long as they could afford to tip the door-keeper.<sup>156</sup> Owners would invite friends and famous scholars to poetry competitions and wine drinking, and in return receive calligraphic inscriptions to hang in the garden as testimony of their visit or calligraphy to name some of the gardens' features.<sup>157</sup> The owners' visitors were also likely to engage in a game of chess, to boat on the pond, and in special occasions to watch operas performed in the gardens.<sup>158</sup>

Besides, an essential function of all gardens before the mid-Ming dynasty was to produce food and cash crops to sustain the household's living expenses; these could take diverse form from mulberry leaves, to crab-apple or medicinal plants.<sup>159</sup> Craig Clunas underlined the mid-Ming shift that took place among gentry, after which a purely aestheticized garden was pursued instead of a productive one.<sup>160</sup>

During the flourishing period of the mid-Ming, the number of traders and merchants increased. Although trading was considered a vulgar occupation, the rise in merchant numbers was threatening to the traditional tenants of high society: merchants were actively displaying their wealth by building gardens, and purchasing respectability by buying official titles. Members of the Chinese upper class — aristocracy, scholar gentry as well as those scholars who were unsuccessful in official exams — were keen on widening the gap between them and the merchant class: therefore, they used notions of 'taste' in order to do so.<sup>161</sup> From that time gardens no longer needed to be large, as long as they were elegantly arranged without any trace of 'vulgarity'. Any idea of productivity was likewise removed and the production function became unwelcome in the garden proper: it was driven back into annexes and nurseries, located on the periphery of the residence and far from the visitor's eyes.

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<sup>155</sup> Gournay, 'Le Jardin Chinois (The Chinese Garden)', p. 127.

<sup>156</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, pp. 91–97.

<sup>157</sup> Hu Jie, *The Splendid Chinese Garden: Origins, Aesthetics and Architecture* (New York, NY: Betterlink Press, 2013), pp. 66–67.

<sup>158</sup> See Alison Hardie, *Chinese Garden Pleasures: An Appreciation* (New York, N.Y.: Better Link Press, 2014).

<sup>159</sup> Gournay, 'Le Jardin Chinois (The Chinese Garden)', p. 135.

<sup>160</sup> See chapter 1 'The productive garden' in Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*.

<sup>161</sup> See chapter 6 of Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

The most emphasised function of gardens was what I call ‘representation’, in other words how the garden was used as a tool for social mobility, to broadcast the owner’s wealth, taste, and connections.<sup>162</sup> Facilitating eremitism was one of ways in which the garden was used to represent the owner’s vision of himself. In reality, most garden owners would always be accompanied by a number of servants and therefore very rarely lived a truly retired and simple life. The garden provided architectural tools that could enable the owner to isolate himself and spend a few hours uninterrupted if he so wished.<sup>163</sup>

Additionally, there was an exceptional inter-connection of the garden and the other major Chinese arts: painting, calligraphy, poetry and music.<sup>164</sup> In Europe, gardens have been developed in conjunction with architecture and sculpture, but in dynastic China calligraphy and painting were the major arts. Gardens were at times designed after paintings or poetry, and conversely existing or mythical gardens could become the subject of a painting or poem. Allusions to classics were found in abundance in gardens, and were only understandable to a learned audience. To this day many of the inscriptions found in surviving gardens require extensive knowledge to be fully understood.<sup>165</sup>

A web of meaning was created by the presence of writings that displayed the owner’s cultural aspirations. The theme of reclusion in a natural setting was a popular one throughout most of dynastic China, with the attraction of immortal islands or the Daoist pursuit of a fisherman or woodcutter’s simple lifestyle. Buddhist reclusion was often pursued in monasteries or private gardens, with the intent to achieve a form of enlightenment.<sup>166</sup>

Already appreciated since the Song dynasty, during the Ming dynasty rocks and rockworks became essential elements of the new aesthetic garden among the gentry of Jiangnan and Beijing areas. For example, Ji Cheng dedicated a whole section of the *Craft of gardens* to the selection of rocks.<sup>167</sup> Miniaturisation of a bigger landscape was often the inspiration for some

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<sup>162</sup> Gournay, ‘Le Jardin Chinois (The Chinese Garden)’, p. 128.

<sup>163</sup> Gournay, ‘Le Jardin Chinois (The Chinese Garden)’, p. 127.

<sup>164</sup> Bianca Maria Rinaldi, *The Chinese Garden* (Basel : London: Birkhäuser ; Springer, 2011), p. 51.

<sup>165</sup> See Shelly Bryant, *The Classical Gardens of Shanghai* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016).

<sup>166</sup> See Alison Hardie, ‘Think Globally, Build Locally; Syncretism and Symbolism in the Garden of Sitting in Reclusion’, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 26.4 (2006), 295–308.

<sup>167</sup> Ji, pp. 111–17.

scenes; some could be copied from other famous gardens.<sup>168</sup> Dwarfing of plants in *penjing*, otherwise known in Japanese as *bonsai*, was also largely promoted through this aesthetic shift in garden making, although dwarfing techniques preceding the Ming.<sup>169</sup>

*Fengshui* and geomancy were underlying concepts rarely mentioned in late imperial sources, yet owners definitely used the services of geomancers before building a garden; most importantly to decide the starting date of construction. *Fengshui* (depending on the school followed) would help deciding how to orientate the residence in accordance with local conditions such as the direction of winds.<sup>170</sup>

It is my theory that in Chinese publications on Chinese gardens there is an underlining assumption that merchants' gardens might be less worthy of study. In the case of Lingnan gardens, the fact that the location itself is a periphery of the Chinese empire could only lessen the researchers' interest. Yet in many cases, merchants' gardens were fulfilling similar functions as the gardens of scholars – and the difference between the two is down to a question of taste. To understand whether the Hong merchants' gardens fulfilled similar function as scholar gardens, and whether their location in peripheral Guangdong made them less noteworthy, the following section provides a summary on gardens in Guangzhou and the urban history of the city.

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<sup>168</sup> Jie, pp. 82–89.

<sup>169</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 100.

<sup>170</sup> Rinaldi, *The Chinese Garden*, p. 48.

## Chapter 3 Historical background of Guangzhou

In this chapter, the definition of ‘Lingnan gardens’ is first explained, providing some reasons for the lack of research on the region’s gardens. Then, the factors behind Guangzhou’s prominence inside Guangdong province are demonstrated in order to obtain essential information to assess the case studies and the discussion chapter. Finally, a brief tour of Guangzhou under the Canton System is provided so that the case studies can be understood in their historical and geographical context.

### Part I The concept of ‘Lingnan gardens’

The gardens of Guangzhou are usually studied as part of the Lingnan gardens. The earliest reference to the concept of Lingnan gardens or 岭南庭园 was found in an article entitled “Local Characteristics of Lingnan Gardens” written in 1962 by Xia Changshi 夏昌世 and Mo Bozhi 莫伯治 for the three-part *Guangdong Gardens Accounts* 广东园林学术资料.<sup>171</sup> It was followed in 1963 by an article entitled “Discussion on Lingnan Gardens” 漫谈岭南庭园 published by the same authors in the *Architecture Journal* 建筑学报.<sup>172</sup> Xia and Mo were local engineers and architects. Therefore, in their inception, Lingnan gardens were mainly understood within a framework of architectural and spatial analysis, with a side interest in the local botanical flora.

These early writings were the fruit of intensive surveys of gardens in the region of Guangzhou in that period. In the latter article, Xia and Mo discuss the origin of Lingnan gardens from the second paragraph as the authors cite the gardens of the Southern Han (917-971) as being the earliest examples in the region, with some remains still visible in the Nine Stars garden 九曜园 in central Guangzhou. Even in the 1960s, most of ‘Lingnan gardens’ of later date had been lost: the earliest surviving Qing dynasty examples dated from the reigns of Jiaqing (1796-1821) and Daoguang (1820-1850).

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<sup>171</sup> Changshi Xia and Bozhi Mo, ‘岭南庭园的地方特点 (Local Characteristics of Lingnan Gardens)’, *广东园林学术资料* (*Guangdong Gardens Accounts*), 1 (1962), 1–5.

<sup>172</sup> Changshi Xia and Bozhi Mo, ‘漫谈岭南庭园 (Discussion on Lingnan gardens)’, *Journal of Architecture*, 1963, 11–14 (pp. 11–14).



Lingnan gardens have often been considered ‘the third Chinese garden type’, behind Imperial gardens and Jiangnan private gardens.<sup>173</sup> As such there has been a decent amount of discussion on the topic in Chinese journals, although not comparable with Jiangnan and imperial gardens. Most of the research has focused on understanding the spatial formula that characterises Lingnan gardens. When researching late imperial Lingnan gardening, architects were concretely seeking to reproduce a spatial formula adapted to local weather conditions. As a result, there have been rather few historical-focused studies on gardens in the Lingnan area, and almost no monographs on specific gardens. The width of Lingnan as a region is perhaps to blame for the lack of focus in the research on these gardens.

Scholars writing on Lingnan gardens most often mention the so-called ‘Four famous gardens of Lingnan’, all located in the surroundings of Guangzhou: the Qinghuiyuan 清晖园 in Shunde County and Liang Family garden 梁园 in Foshan County; both built during the reign of emperor Jiaqing (1796-1821). The Keyuan 可园 located in Dongguan County (Started in 1850); and the Yuyinshanfang 余荫山房 in modern Panyu County (built from 1866 to 1871). Those ‘Four famous gardens of Lingnan’, although relatively late imperial examples, have in turn made their way into the few publications existing on ‘Lingnan gardens’ in Western languages.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, the importance of these first publications by Xi and Mo was to highlight the existence of ‘Lingnan gardens’ as a concept in modern Chinese language, and to provide the first systematic surveys of surviving gardens in the region. Since the four famous gardens of Lingnan survived and can be visited, a great importance was placed on these relatively late examples of gardens, without addressing the disparities of putting different periods under one unifying concept.

The word ‘Lingnan’ 岭南 designates an area in south-eastern China, centred broadly in the modern city of Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province. The ‘Lingnan region’ is a concept similar to that of the ‘Jiangnan region’ 江南 centred in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces. Schafer describes Lingnan as ‘transitional between the old familiar north and the true tropics’:

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<sup>173</sup> It is explained as such in the Museum of Chinese gardens in Beijing, for example.

<sup>174</sup> See the following: Johnston; Antoine Gournay, ‘Chine: jardins du Lingnan à la fin de la dynastie des Qing (1644 - 1911) (China: the late Qing dynasty gardens in Lingnan)’, *Polia / L'Association pour l'Histoire de l'Art des Jardins*, 1 (2004), 63–78; Barrier and others; Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition) (Beijing: Zhonggyo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2004).

referring to the subtropical climate of southeast China, Schafer also emphasises the fact that Lingnan was located on the cultural edge of the Chinese empire, particularly during the Tang dynasty.<sup>175</sup> Although vague and rather anachronistic, old regional names such as Lingnan and Jiangnan are relevant in the scholarship of the history of gardens in China: neither appear on current maps of China, yet scholars still regularly refer to these terms.

This discrepancy results from a general lack of precision when it comes to defining regional concepts in the context of modern scholarship on gardens of China — and to a lesser extent in Chinese studies. The territory of modern-day China is both vast in terms of space and long lasting in terms of time; yet many regional studies do not dwell on — or sometimes overlook — the fact that its exact frontiers, both internal and external, have changed over time. Consequently, using the current name of administrative units, such as Guangdong or Zhejiang provinces, can prove anachronistic depending on the time frame discussed. Correspondingly, using old regional names such as Lingnan and Jiangnan without a precise definition only brings confusion in the context of a modern academic research.

Although ‘Lingnan’ as a concept is difficult to pinpoint to a precise and finite geographical entity, a first answer is immediately available in the word itself: Lingnan 岭南 translates as ‘to the south of the Nanling Mountains’ or ‘to the south of the Five ridges’. Indeed *Ling* refers to a precise set of mountain ranges on the map of China: the Nanling 南岭 mountains. The latter is composed of five ranges: Yuecheng 越城岭, Dupang 都庞岭, Mengzhu 萌渚岭, Qitian 骑田岭 and Dayu 大庾岭 ranges (Figure 5).<sup>176</sup> The Nanling mountain range constitutes a common boundary the modern Guangdong, Hunan and Jiangxi provinces. In addition to this clear geographical indication, the fact that Lingnan contains *nan* 南 in its name — literally ‘south’ as a cardinal direction — brings further information: it implies that the region is located ‘to the south of’ a more central location in the Chinese empire. As Christina Chu explains:

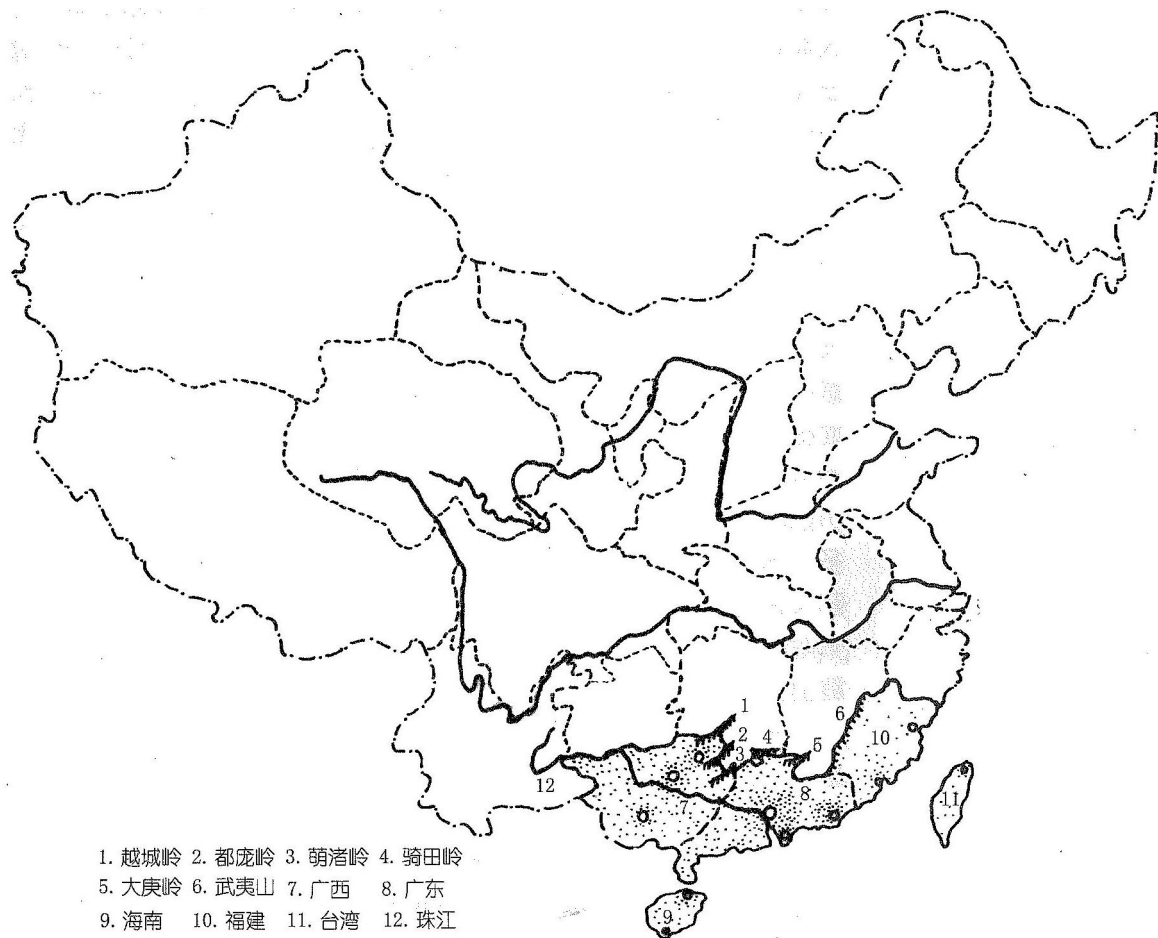
In the year 627 the Tang court divided China geographically into ten administrative regions of which Lingnan, covering mainly present-day Guangdong and Guangxi, was one.

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<sup>175</sup> Edward H Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird, T'ang Images of the South* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 4.

<sup>176</sup> Tingfeng Liu, *岭南园林: 广州园林 (Lingnan gardens: Guangzhou gardens)* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2003), p. 3. Map (Figure 5) also located p.3.

During the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) periods these southern provinces were considered underdeveloped territories, to which undesirable and criminal elements were banished.<sup>177</sup>



**Figure 5** Map of China. Numbers 1 to 5 indicate the different parts of Nanling mountain range. Legend: 1. Yuecheng mountain range; 2. Dupang mountain range; 3. Mengzhu mountain range; 4. Qitian mountain range; 5. Dageng mountain range; 6. Wuyi mountain (Fujian); 7. Guangxi province; 8. Guangdong province; 9. Hainan Island; 10. Fujian province; 11. Taiwan; 12. Pearl River. In *Lingnan Gardens: Guangzhou Gardens*

Lingnan was for long seen as a place to send scholars in exile; in other words, a place on the periphery of the empire and not thoroughly civilised.<sup>178</sup> Lingnan is mentioned as a “backward province” in the chapter on Tang emperor Xuanzong in the *Cambridge History of China*: 6 out of 10 mentions of Lingnan in that chapter are associated with banishment or demotion of

<sup>177</sup> Christina Chu, ‘The Lingnan School and Its Followers: Innovation in Southern China’, in *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum : Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), pp. 64–77 (p. 77). To read more about exiles of Tang poets in Lingnan, see *The Vermilion Bird*, already mentioned.

<sup>178</sup> Robert Marks, *Tigers, Rice, Silk, and Silt Environment and Economy in Late Imperial South China* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 20.

historical figures towards the region.<sup>179</sup> Exile from the centre of the empire was seemingly reinforced on the geographical level, but in fact the Nanling Mountains did not constitute an impossible obstacle to cross. Several passages were available, including the Meiling Pass: located between the peaks of the Dayu range inside the Nanling Mountains, it was widened to allow an easier passage through the natural barrier in 716 CE during the Tang dynasty.

This improvement brought increased trade between what the modern Jiangxi and Guangdong provinces and replaced the previous route through Guangxi.<sup>180</sup> Yet the Nanling Mountains as a barrier probably continued to constitute a convenient metaphor for the separation between the Yangzi basin and the Pearl River Delta.<sup>181</sup> Indeed, these two major waterways represent the opposition of two unequal cultural centres. On one side lies the elegant and prosperous Jiangnan region, where the old capitals of Nanjing and Hangzhou are located, and therefore an uncontested centre of Chinese culture. On the other side lies the mercantile and coastal Lingnan region — with diverse ethnic groups and dialects as well as a record of independent kingdoms — where pride in local culture is juxtaposed with allegiance to the Chinese empire. The name of Lingnan therefore reveals how the region is perceived as peripheral to the traditional core of the Chinese empire.

Despite being perceived as peripheral, the Lingnan area was first conquered as early as the Qin dynasty and added to the Chinese empire around 230 BCE.<sup>182</sup> Yet the territory corresponding to current Guangdong province did not always remain under the control of the Chinese empire since that initial conquest. There were two main independent periods in Lingnan after its inclusion in the Chinese empire. First, shortly after the end of Qin dynasty, the Nanyue autonomous Kingdom (203/204 BCE-111 BCE) was declared in the region. It was founded by Zhan Tuo, a Han Chinese originally put in charge by Qin Shihuangdi, who saw an opportunity to gain independence. Lingnan — understood as synonym with Nanyue — then included parts of Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan provinces, and northern Vietnam; most of the population was non-Chinese.

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<sup>179</sup> Denis Twitchett, 'Hsüan-Tsung (Reign 712–56)', in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 3: Su and T'ang China, 589-906 AD, Part One* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 333–463 (p. 397). Map (Figure 6) located p.403.

<sup>180</sup> Marks, p. 21.

<sup>181</sup> Francis Yvon Allard, 'Interregional Interaction and the Emergence of Complex Societies in Lingnan during the Late Neolithic and Bronze Age' (unpublished Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh, 1995), p. 68.

<sup>182</sup> Faure, 'History and Culture', p. 2. Marks, p. 20.

The kingdom surrendered progressively to the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) after the fall of the capital Panyu in 111 BCE and was incorporated into the Chinese empire again.<sup>183</sup> Another notable episode occurred during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdom period (907-960) when the territory of current Guangdong province was at the centre of the Southern Han 南汉 kingdom (917-971). Liu Yan (917-941) founded the kingdom after the death of his brother Liu Yin, with his capital in Hing Wong Fu or Xingwangfu 兴王府 (Guangzhou). The borders of Southern Han kingdom included, in addition to Guangdong, the “eastern section of modern Guangxi, the coastal plains of Hainan Island and even some stretches of northern Vietnam”.<sup>184</sup> Although the Han Chinese were then more numerous than under the Nanyue period, other non-Chinese had also immigrated to the region since that time, most notably members of the Yao ethnic group.<sup>185</sup> The newly created Song Dynasty started to attack the kingdom from the 960s and the Southern Han finally surrendered in 971 CE.<sup>186</sup>



Figure 6 Lingnan administrative unit in 742 during the Tang dynasty. Source: Denis Twitchett, “Hsüan-Tung (Reign 712-56)”, in *The Cambridge History of China*

<sup>183</sup> Wanxiu Yang and Zhuo'an Zhong, *廣州簡史 (Brief history of Guangzhou)* (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1996), p. 41.

<sup>184</sup> Shing Müller, Thomas O. Höllmann, and Putao Gui, *Guangdong, Archaeology and Early Texts (Zhou-Tang)*, South China and Maritime Asia, 13 (Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), p. VII.

<sup>185</sup> Marks, p. 54.

<sup>186</sup> Yang and Zhong, p. 100.

As part of Chinese empire, the name and scope of Lingnan region as an administrative unit changed a few times. During the Tang dynasty, ‘Lingnan’ was used for the first time as an official administrative name (Figure 6), being one of ten large ‘circuits’ 道.<sup>187</sup> After the Tang dynasty, Lingnan never included such a broad territory again — in particular, northern Vietnam and Yunnan province were no longer associated with south-eastern China. In fact, Schafer gives to this extended Lingnan the name of ‘Nam-Viet’, which is the Vietnamese translation of Nanyue: the defunct kingdom name was still informally used for the region under the Tang dynasty.<sup>188</sup>

As the borders of Lingnan changed across time, in its broadest definition in modern publications ‘Lingnan’ can include parts of several southern provinces and autonomous regions similar to those of the Nanyue and Southern Han periods. An extreme example is that of Zhou Linjie who claimed in *History of modern Guangdong landscapes and gardens*, that, historically, Lingnan includes Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Hainan provinces, plus Hong Kong and Macao.<sup>189</sup> In *Chinese architecture*, Wang Qijun dedicated two pages to the gardens of Lingnan, defined as Guangxi and Guangdong; he described the building of private gardens as starting in the Pearl River Delta and “gradually influenced such areas as Chaozhou, Shantou, Fujian and Taiwan” without citing any sources or entering into deeper explanations.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Xiaoxiang Tang, *岭南近代建筑文化与美学 (Modern architecture and aesthetics of Lingnan)* (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2010), p. 11.

<sup>188</sup> Schafer, p. 5.

<sup>189</sup> Zhou, p. 19.

<sup>190</sup> Qijun Wang, *Chinese Architecture* (New York: Better Link Press, 2011), p. 119.

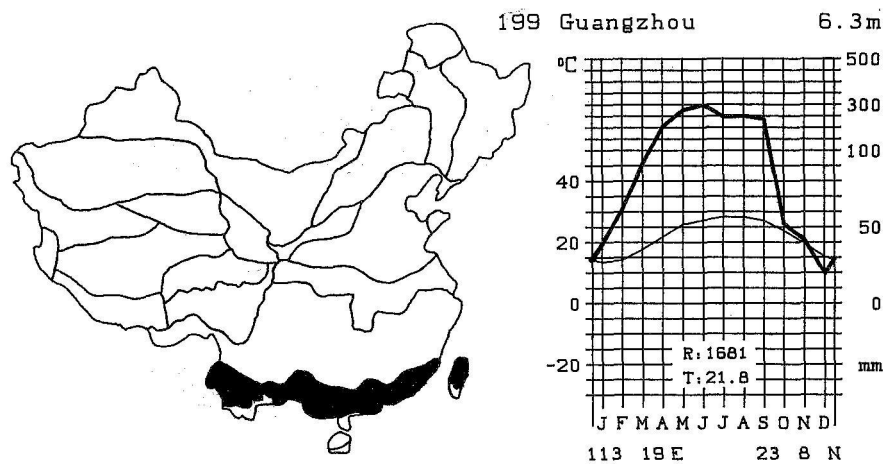


Fig. 9.6. Climate map and reference diagram of the Southern Subtropical Zone. Reference station: Guangzhou/199

Figure 7 Map of China indicating the Southern Subtropical Zone. In *The climate of China*

Such interpretations conflate with the idea of ‘South China’, based on a geographical rationale: often ‘Lingnan’ and ‘South China’ are used as if they were synonyms.<sup>191</sup> The concept of South China or Huanan 华南 can be visualised by imagining a band of Chinese territory falling under the humid southern subtropical climate belt. In *The Climate of China*, the southern subtropical climate is specified to include the southern mountains and hills of Yunnan, the hills and lowlands of Guangxi, Guangdong and Fujian as well as northern and central Taiwan (Figure 7).<sup>192</sup> However, this excludes the Nanling mountain range that falls under the Middle subtropical climate.<sup>193</sup>

While climatic characteristics have an important impact on local gardening and architecture, such a broad interpretation of ‘Lingnan region’ would not be convincing from an historical or cultural point of view. If Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi provinces as they stand now did have enduring cultural and trade links to some extent, Yunnan province on the contrary was far removed from the maritime front — and its population did not share similarities with those three above-mentioned provinces beyond the Nanyue period. The population of Taiwan, beyond a shared climate with that of the mainland, does not share the same settlement circumstances.

<sup>191</sup> See Chapter 1 of Marks. Chapter 3 of Allard.

<sup>192</sup> Manfred Domrös and Kung-ping P’eng, *The Climate of China* (Berlin; New York: Springer-Verlag, 1988), p. 270. Map (Figure 7) also located p.270.

<sup>193</sup> Domrös and P’eng, p. 256.

Moreover, ‘South China’ as a term is unsatisfactory, as it brings with it too many possible misunderstandings. As explained in the previous chapter, the concept of ‘southern’ varies depending on the latitude: from the perspective of the traditional core of the Chinese empire, the south starts from the Yangzi valley. In early Chinese history, during the Warring States (475 BCE-221 BCE), the south would have been the kingdom of Chu 楚, the large rival of the Qin kingdom, whose territory spanned from the Yangzi River to current Hunan and Jiangxi.<sup>194</sup> Lingnan was further to the south of Chu, in other words, it might not have even been part of the picture: some of the records mention the region as *Lingwai* 岭外, ‘outside of Nanling mountains’, as if it were some sort of *terra incognita*.<sup>195</sup>

Even in recent publications, broad terms such as ‘southern gardens’ of China have been discussed without reference to a single example located to the south of the Nanling mountain range.<sup>196</sup> This omission is revealing of the divide between centre and periphery in Chinese studies, where the Yellow River valley in North China is the core of the Chinese empire and the Yangzi River basin in Jiangnan is the southern extension where a number of historical capitals were located.<sup>197</sup> Therefore, the term ‘South China’— and the large region it encompasses — is not appropriate, because it is too similar with the concept of ‘southern private gardens’ discussed in the previous chapter.

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<sup>194</sup> Diana Lary, ‘The Tomb of the King of Nanyue - the Contemporary Agenda of History: Scholarship and Identity’, *Modern China*, 22.1 (1996), 3–27 (p. 7).

<sup>195</sup> See for example the title of *Lingwai daida* 岭外代答, a guide to geographic and environment of Lingnan written by Zhou Qufei 周去非 circa 1178, David B. Honey, *The Southern Garden Poetry Society: Literary Culture and Social Memory in Guangdong* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2013, 2013), p. 3.

<sup>196</sup> See Richard, ‘Criticising the Regional Bias in Western Study of Chinese Gardens’.

<sup>197</sup> Allard, pp. 39–40.





MAP 1. PHYSIOGRAPHIC MACROREGIONS OF AGRARIAN CHINA IN RELATION TO MAJOR RIVERS, WITH REGIONAL CORES INDICATED BY SHADING

**Figure 8** Map of Macro-regions of China, including Lingnan. In *The City in Late Imperial China*

According to the *Hanyu dacidian*, Lingnan is “the area around Guangdong and Guangxi<sup>198</sup> provinces”.<sup>199</sup> This denotation, although it sounds vague, actually corresponds with the viceroyalty of Liangguang (1735-1911). The Liangguang was a Qing administrative unit literally designating the ‘two Guang’ provinces.<sup>200</sup> Although the borders of Guangdong and Guangxi have since slightly changed, the combination of the two remained a relatively stable entity and therefore validates the *Hanyu dacidian*’s definition. This interpretation is mirrored by the modern definition of Lingnan established by William Skinner as one of nine physiographic macro-regions in China, focused on major geomorphological features such as the drainage basins of the major Chinese rivers.<sup>201</sup> According to this definition, “Lingnan as a physiographic region is nearly coterminous with two provinces — Guangdong and Guangxi” (see Figure 8 and Figure 9).<sup>202</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Although Guangxi was designated as an autonomous region in 1958, it is frequent to see it designated as a ‘province’ in recent English-language scholarship.

<sup>199</sup> Zhufeng Luo, *汉语大词典 Hanyu dacidian (Comprehensive Chinese Word Dictionary)* (Shanghai: Hanyu dacidian Chubanshe, 1990), 1.

<sup>200</sup> Johnson and Peterson, p. 119.

<sup>201</sup> Skinner and Baker, p. 212. Maps are located p.214 (Figure 8) and p.215 (Figure 9).

<sup>202</sup> Marks, p. 8.



MAP 2. PHYSIOGRAPHIC MACROREGIONS IN RELATION TO PROVINCES, AND SHOWING METROPOLITAN CITIES, 1843

**Figure 9 Map of Macro-regions of China in relation to provinces. Showing Guangxi (Kwangsi) and Guangdong (Kwangtung) in relation to Lingnan. In *The City in Late Imperial China***

While the number of modern province(s) included in Lingnan varies depending on the point of view endorsed, the current province of Guangdong is a constant in all definitions. In its smallest definition Lingnan is understood to correspond broadly to the modern province of Guangdong. In the *Guangzhou Gazetteer* it is succinctly summarised thus: “Guangdong area, also historically called Lingnan”.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, apart from the Nanling mountain ranges, the Pearl River Delta — centred in Guangdong — is the other major geographical component of the region. Scholars often make the shortcut from Lingnan to Guangdong, although scholarship on Lingnan gardens regularly includes examples from Guangxi province.<sup>204</sup>

The separation of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces can be seen as motivated either by modern administrative constraints and associated political issues, or as an instrument of local identity insisting on ethnic and cultural differences.<sup>205</sup> Without endorsing an overly simplified view of ‘South China’ as equal to ‘Lingnan’ and ‘Lingnan’ as equal to ‘Guangdong’, it seems that the greatest number of academic research has so far focused on

<sup>203</sup> 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*) (Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), p. 1.

<sup>204</sup> For example see Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition).

<sup>205</sup> Lary, p. 21.

the province of Guangdong: therefore it **is** appears odd to use a broader term as an umbrella, for what is essentially representing one Chinese province. Guangdong province, notwithstanding its changes in name and borders through time, does have a coherent history of its own.<sup>206</sup> It can be studied as a relatively stable entity through its first annexation to the Chinese empire under the Qin, up to modern times, including several periods of political autonomy mentioned before.

Moreover, although Guangdong province shares some characteristics with the north of the Nanling mountain ranges, it does have a unique combination of languages and an enduring mercantile development in connection with the sea. Zhou Linjie claims that Guangdong is the oldest established cultural centre in Lingnan.<sup>207</sup> More importantly, since a great number of surviving gardens in the Lingnan region are located in Guangdong, more precisely around its capital Guangzhou, it is difficult to ignore that there was historically a cultural dominance of Guangdong — and especially Guangzhou — within the Lingnan region. The next section explores the reasons for the centrality of Guangzhou inside the Guangdong province, as a background for the development of garden building in the city.

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<sup>206</sup> Müller, Höllmann, and Gui, p. VII.

<sup>207</sup> Zhou, pp. 19–20.

## **Part II: Guangdong, Guangzhou, and the Canton System period**

If scholars writing on Lingnan gardens have mostly discussed examples taken from Guangdong province and built near the capital Guangzhou, it is because the latter comprised the most gardens recorded in the region during the Ming and Qing dynasties. This chapter starts with a brief introduction to the factors that brought the city of Guangzhou to the forefront of Guangdong province.

This section will notably address how the development of Guangzhou garden-making during the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is intrinsically linked with the history of Chinese maritime trade. A monopoly on foreign trade was granted to the city from 1757 to 1842, a period also called the Canton System or Canton Trade. One of the consequences of the Canton System was an unprecedented afflux of wealth in and around Guangzhou. The most important gardens built at this period belonged to families linked with the merchants in charge of maritime trade: the Hong merchants.

This section therefore addresses the role of these merchants, whose position was both privileged and laden with financial and diplomatic duties towards an increasingly corrupt administration in Guangzhou and at the Qing Court. Individual merchants will be introduced in the corresponding chapters.

### *The factors behind Guangzhou prominence in Guangdong province*

This section demonstrates the different factors behind the city of Guangzhou's cultural prominence in the area corresponding approximately to the administrative unit of current Guangdong province. If the word 'Guangdong' is used here for the sake of coherence, it is anachronistic as the frontiers and the name of this region of Chinese territory have changed over time (see map Figure 10).<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> The map reproduced as Figure 10 is titled 'Imperial map of complete territory and provinces 皇朝直省地輿全图', in Cartographic archive of China and Guangzhou archives, *广州历史地图精粹 (Essential historical maps of Guangdong)* (Beijing: Zhongguo dabai kequan shu chubanshe, 2003), p. 53.

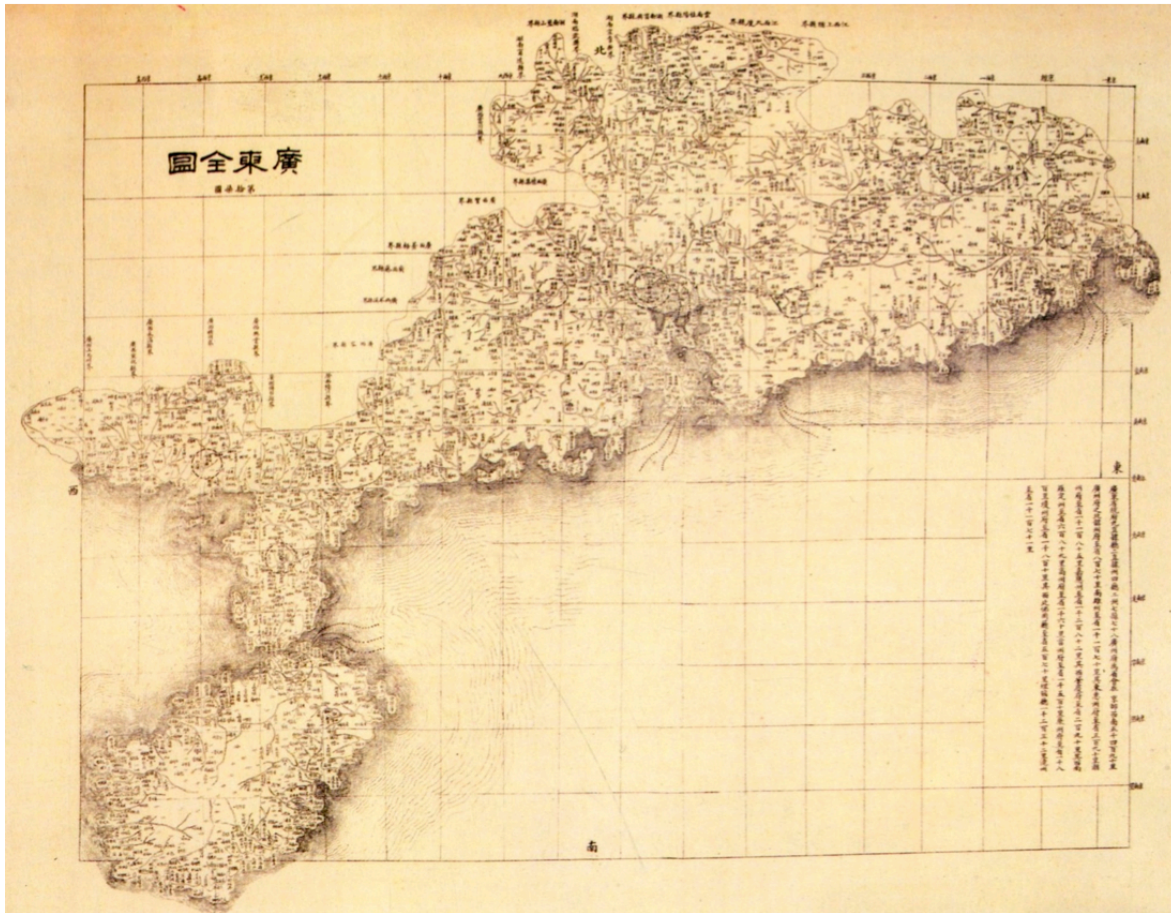


Figure 10: Map of Guangdong province in 1889.

Located in the southeastern part of China, current Guangdong is a large province of 178,000 square km.<sup>209</sup> Its climate is mostly subtropical humid, with mild winters and a monsoon season bringing heavy rains as well as the risk of typhoons and floods.<sup>210</sup> There are two major waterway systems in Guangdong, around which were especially fertile pieces of land.<sup>211</sup>

First of all, the West River, the North River and East River converge through the province to form the Pearl River 珠江, which notably passes through Guangzhou and finishes its course in a large estuary passing through the Bocca Tigris straits, or Humen 虎门, near Hong Kong and Macao.<sup>212</sup> The Pearl River Delta is the primary centre of garden-making in the province,

<sup>209</sup> Zhou, p. 12.

<sup>210</sup> Domrös and P'eng, pp. 270–71. Johnson and Peterson, p. 129.

<sup>211</sup> Gungwu Wang, *The Nanhai Trade: The Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998), p. 70.

<sup>212</sup> David Faure, *The Rural Economy of Pre-Liberation China: Trade Expansion and Peasant Livelihood in Jiangsu and Guangdong, 1870 to 1937* (Hong Kong; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 14.

including Guangzhou and surrounding cities, and as such is the focus of this thesis. Secondly, the Han River 韩江 flows through Eastern Guangdong and finishes its course in Shantou (Swatow). The area of Shantou associated with the neighbouring city of Chaozhou, and usually shortened as ‘Chaoshan’, constitutes the second most important centre of garden-making in the province. After surveying some gardens in Chaoshan, I determined that it would deserve more in-depth research, but that it would not be possible within the framework of this thesis.

The prominence of Guangzhou in Guangdong province is rooted in demographic, linguistic, administrative, and economic factors. The settlement patterns in the territory corresponding to modern Guangdong provide insights into the diverse cultural landscape of the province. Considered as a ‘peripheral’ region to the Chinese Empire since its first recorded appearance as ‘Lingnan’ during the Zhou dynasty (c.11th century - 221 BCE), Guangdong province has been at the receiving end of successive arrivals of population groups.<sup>213</sup> As such it is the seat of a complex social landscape: cultural identity was created and recreated with each movement of population through claims of settlement or lineage.<sup>214</sup>

Non-Chinese ethnic groups had lived in this area before the Qin conquest: usually referred to as the “Hundred Yue” 百越 in Chinese sources, they were Tai-speaking people; but there might have been other populations that did not leave records. After the conquest by the Qin around 230 BCE, other non-Chinese populations continued to migrate to the region, the most important being the Yao.<sup>215</sup> Chinese migration into the region was progressive, starting with a first settlement of Qin troops in the area after their subjugation of the Yue and continuing up to the Song dynasty.

The following period was that of the Nanyue independent kingdom (204 BCE), and coincides with the earliest remains of gardens found in the region. According to archaeologists’ findings from 1995, the layout of the Nanyue Palace Garden 南越宫苑 was similar to that of Qin imperial palaces and gardens.<sup>216</sup> Among the most interesting finds inside the garden was a

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<sup>213</sup> Johnson and Peterson, p. 98.

<sup>214</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 10.

<sup>215</sup> Marks, p. 54.

<sup>216</sup> See Lingyun Wu, *南越宫苑 (Palace and gardens of the Nanyue)* (Guangzhou: South China University of Technology Press, 2011).

long stone-paved ditch undulating through the garden that was apparently engineered to create a flow of water rippled with waves. This narrow canal finished in a crescent pool on the eastern end, probably covered by a semi-circular building; archaeologists have nicknamed it the ‘crescent-shaped stone turtle chamber’ after finding numerous turtle remains in the pool.

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After the end of the Nanyue kingdom and subsequent return of the region to the Chinese empire, further migrations to the area of present-day Guangdong province consisted mostly of movements to escape northern invasions.<sup>218</sup> The repartition of this incoming population changed over time: at first under the Han dynasty, Chinese stayed mostly in the northern mountainous and hilly areas where malaria was non-existent – the sickness was prevalent in the lowlands near the slow waterways of the Pearl River Delta. Guangzhou, the current capital of Guangdong, belonged then to the least populated part of the region. The demographic prevalence of the northern part of Guangdong, or Lingnan as it was named under the Tang, continued through the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Western, Eastern and Central Guangdong slowly became more populated, and by 1080 the city of Guangzhou and its surroundings in central Guangdong had become the most densely populated part of the region. The other parts of the province saw a simultaneous increase in population, for example the eastern prefectures of Huizhou and Chaozhou, with the latter constituting the second largest city in the province.<sup>219</sup>

This change was largely brought about by technological progress permitting water control on the Pearl and Han River systems, eventually destroying the environment conducive to malaria and thereby removing the most important impediment to population settlement in the Pearl River Delta.<sup>220</sup> These changes were reflected in the location of gardens during that period: From 917 to 971, Guangzhou was again the capital of an independent kingdom, that of the Southern Han 南汉, whose royal family reportedly indulged in a luxurious lifestyle that included palace and garden building. Around 919, the founding emperor Liu Yan 刘龔 notably had a swamp excavated and enlarged to the west of current Guangzhou in order to create the West Lake 西湖 or Immortal Lake 仙湖.<sup>221</sup> The lake had a circumference of over

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<sup>217</sup> Qi Lu, *岭南园林艺术 (Art of Lingnan gardens) (Bilingual edition)*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>218</sup> Marks, p. 56.

<sup>219</sup> Marks, pp. 62–63.

<sup>220</sup> Marks, p. 78.

<sup>221</sup> Qi Lu, *岭南园林艺术 (Art of Lingnan gardens) (Bilingual edition)*, pp. 9–11. (p.9-11)

1600 meters and in its centre was located an islet planted with medicinal plants, hence it was named the ‘Medicine Islet of the Immortal Lake’ 仙湖药洲 or ‘Yaozhou’ 药洲. The most notable feature on the islet was a group of stones called ‘Nine Star Stones’ 九曜. Moreover, at the foot of the Yuexiu Mountain in Guangzhou were located additional Imperial Gardens: the Fangchunyuan 芳春园 on the western side and the Ganquanyuan 甘泉苑 on the eastern side. The latter was the most important of Southern Han palaces and served as a summer residence for the emperor. Finally, the Western Imperial Garden 西御苑 was built for emperor Liu Chang 刘鋹 on the site of modern-day Liwan Lake 荔湾湖 in Lychee Bay.

After the fall of the Southern Han in 971, the construction of royal gardens in Guangdong province – among which are the earliest specimens of gardens excavated in both the region and China – came to an end. The earliest known private garden attested to in the region is the Lychee Garden 荔园,<sup>222</sup> built during the Tang dynasty and located in the Lychee Bay area just outside the city walls of Guangzhou. Private gardens progressively multiplied during the Song dynasty.

During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Guangzhou became the cultural core of the province. One of the most important gardens of the period was the Xiao Yunlin 小云林 or ‘Little Cloudy Forest’. Built around 1548 near Yuexiu Mountain in the north of Guangzhou by Ming dynasty poet Li Shixing,<sup>223</sup> it included pavilions, halls, bridges, towers, terraces, and a pool surrounded by many tree species such as willow, peach, plum, as well as banyans. The most important phase of garden building in the region occurred under the Qing dynasty, especially during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which are the focus of this thesis and will be introduced later in this chapter.

This brief overview of settlement in the province demonstrates that Guangzhou prefecture emerged as the uncontested populated core of Guangdong during the Song dynasty, with another smaller core in Chaoshan area. This demographic advantage linked with the fertile Pearl River Delta explain why most documents on gardens emerge from this area. This advantage was compounded by a linguistic and administrative dominance over the rest of the region.

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<sup>222</sup> Barrier and others, p. 47.

<sup>223</sup> Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition), p. 13.



The prominence of Guangzhou in Guangdong province is reflected in language and administration. Among the Han people inhabiting the area, the three main dialects are Cantonese, Hakka and Chaozhou. Historically, Cantonese speakers have often taken the ‘spotlight’ in cultural writings in the province, as will be discussed further in the last chapter. In English the word ‘Cantonese’ – in French ‘Cantonais’ – is sometimes used broadly to refer to the people of Guangdong province or inhabitants of Guangzhou. As Faure puts it, “it was used in the nineteenth century to denote the Cantonese dialect, which in the Ming and the Qing dynasties was referred to Yueyu (the language of the Yue people). But built into the word, obviously, was also a sense of connection with the city of Guangzhou (Canton).”<sup>224</sup> Using the word in this sense can be seen as perpetrating an historical bias of Guangdong province as culturally dominated by Cantonese speakers and the city of Guangzhou.

The reality, as was demonstrated through the demographic history of the province, is that Guangdong was originally non-Chinese, and that the Chinese population immigrated progressively into the region. The inhabitants of the territory of current Guangdong province have long represented a multiplicity of dialects and associated cultures, as they continue to do to this day. Therefore, in this thesis the word ‘Cantonese’ will be consistently and solely associated with the speakers of the *Yueyu* dialect, rather than with the inhabitants of Guangzhou and/or Guangdong, since there were also speakers of other dialects in the city.

The distribution of the three dialects in the province can only be described approximately. Generally speaking, Cantonese (*Yueyu*) speakers were located in the south of the province in the fertile drainage area of the Pearl River Delta and its tributaries, including Guangzhou.<sup>225</sup> Chaozhou is a form of Min dialect and, as the name indicates, was mostly found in the Chaozhou and Shantou prefectures located in Eastern Guangdong.<sup>226</sup> As for the Hakka, although not uniquely found in Guangdong, their settlement in this province started in the north towards the Han River valley and then moved towards that of the East River. The locations for the Cantonese and Chaozhou dialects appear to correspond to the two main centres of Guangdong garden-making mentioned above, concentrated along the main waterways of the province. The scarcity of records on gardens in other parts of the province

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<sup>224</sup> Faure, ‘Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty transition’, p. 37.

<sup>225</sup> Faure, ‘History and Culture’, p. 1.

<sup>226</sup> Schafer, p. 10.

does not necessarily reflect an absence of gardens in these areas: it is possible that gardens beyond the large administrative centres of the province were simply not recorded at all.

Indeed, in addition to the perceived superiority of the Cantonese (*Yueyu*) speakers settled in the most flourishing part of Guangdong – the Pearl River Delta – the development of Guangzhou as the cultural core of the province is linked to an attempt to firmly integrate the region into the Chinese empire through improved administrative control. The city gained prominence in Guangdong as the main seat of Chinese allegiance in a region otherwise historically seen by the Imperial Court as populated by tribes of ‘barbarian’ culture.<sup>227</sup> Panyu 番禺, the original name of the city of Guangzhou – and that of the current county-level municipality to the south of the modern city – was identified as an administrative unit from the time of its conquest by the Qin, and defined then as a part of the contemporary Lingnan region.<sup>228</sup> Chinese chieftains originating from the north were in charge of the Nanhai Commandery, which had its seat in Panyu.<sup>229</sup>

Under the Tang dynasty, Guangdong was the most important part of the administrative region of Lingnan as “Chinese control was most firmly established there, especially in the great port of Canton, the administrative seat of Kuang-chou (county) [Guangzhou] and Kuang-kuan (administration) alike”.<sup>230</sup> The city was then divided into two townships, that of Nanhai and that of Panyu – it was still the case until 1918 – but both were referred to as Guangzhou or Guang-fu.<sup>231</sup> Guangzhou was still very much cut off from the surrounding hinterlands and, according to Faure, a local elite would have only appeared from the Tang dynasty onward. Guangzhou also temporarily reached the status of capital under both the Nanyue and Southern Han kingdoms. Once the region was back under the control of the Chinese empire again under the Song, Guangzhou retained a privileged status as the administrative core of the province. This administration did not necessarily control the countryside where local temples and Buddhist monasteries acted as so many local centres of organisation.

Guangzhou did not reach a truly prosperous state until the Imperial Court moved to Lin’an (Hangzhou) under the Southern Song. From that time to the Ming dynasty, Guangzhou and

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<sup>227</sup> Faure, ‘Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty transition’, p. 39.

<sup>228</sup> Johnson and Peterson, p. 98.

<sup>229</sup> Faure, ‘Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty transition’, p. 38.

<sup>230</sup> Schafer, p. 5.

<sup>231</sup> Schafer, p. 27.

the Pearl River Delta underwent a transformation from a marginal marshland economy to a thriving trade centre – through dyke building and land reclamation – as there was rice production demand to fulfil for the southern capital.<sup>232</sup> Thanks to this economic growth, and a resulting increase in population density, Guangdong emerged during the Ming dynasty as ‘fit’ to be fully integrated into the Chinese empire. This was notably achieved by a Court-orchestrated replacement of local places of worship with officially approved ‘family temples’ or *jiamiao*, in the sixteenth century. Local rituals were suddenly emphatically associated with the idea of lineage, and the appearance of the concept of ancestral halls was meant to link demonstration of filial piety with obedience towards the emperor.

To summarise, according to Faure, by redefining “local loyalty in terms of lineage loyalty”<sup>233</sup> and imposing orthodoxy in the local religious context, the Imperial Court almost completely replaced Buddhist monasteries by family temples and ancestral halls as the centres of organisation in the hinterlands. Under the Ming, then, the city of Guangzhou was no longer the only ‘civilised’ part of Guangdong, as the countryside surrounding it had been progressively integrated into the Chinese empire through lineage loyalty.<sup>234</sup> Yet the power struggle between Guangzhou and the hinterland did not disappear, as will be discussed further in following chapters. Under the Qing dynasties, the administrative prominence of Guangzhou was confirmed with no less than five different governmental levels represented in the city: the civil and military officials administrating Guangdong province; both Nanhai and Panyu prefectural officials as the city was composed of two counties; the Manchu Tartar general residing with his troops in the Tartar quarter; and finally the Viceroy-General of the Liangguang (Guangxi and Guangdong).<sup>235</sup> These numerous officials were involved in several aspects of cultural production and sponsorship, including the building of gardens, and their presence was linked with the increased economic development of the city.

However, the prominence of Guangzhou as the centre of Guangdong cannot be credited to the sole efforts of the Ming Chinese court to integrate the province into the empire. As the seat of imperial administration in the province, Guangzhou was inhabited by local literati elite. The writing of local histories, started under the Yuan dynasty, began to thrive during the Ming

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<sup>232</sup> Faure, ‘Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty transition’, p. 38.

<sup>233</sup> Faure, ‘Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty transition’, p. 42.

<sup>234</sup> Faure, ‘Becoming Cantonese, the Ming Dynasty transition’, p. 37.

<sup>235</sup> Johnson and Peterson, p. 4.

dynasty. Scholars from Guangdong province were breaking away from a vision of Guangdong as exotic and peripheral to the Chinese imperial culture up north by participating in empire-wide literati trends such as publishing local histories and gazetteers. One of the most important agendas for these elites was to revisit the cultural history of the province. Despite achieving wider recognition in the empire mostly from the Ming dynasty onward, Guangzhou literati had existed as early as the Han dynasty. The drive for recognition of Guangdong local culture in the late imperial period often took the form of anthologies of poems by local scholars, full of references to regional landscapes and specialities. David B. Honey names that phenomenon the ‘Southern or Cantonese Muse’ – to keep with the above-mentioned definition of Cantonese, it will be referred to in the thesis as ‘Southern’ — and defines it as “the voice of the collective verse produced about Guangdong, gradually created what we may call an ‘epic of Guangdong’ [...] by various authors across time and centred on a particular region”.<sup>236</sup> Honey follows there the definition of ‘epic’ from Pauline Yu as “an extended narrative that can provide origins, structure, and meaning to a culture”.<sup>237</sup>

During the late imperial period, literati of the Pearl River Delta were actively rewriting their regional identity: according to Miles this process unfolded in two phases of intense interest for regional history and culture and the production of publications such as anthologies or local histories.<sup>238</sup> During each period, the scholars involved had specific agendas, yet both in different ways were interested in creating discourse on Guangdong identity. The first phase, between 1526 and 1700, was dominated by the ‘Three Great Masters of Lingnan’ 岭南三大家: Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630-1696), Liang Peilan 梁佩兰 (1632-1708) and Chen Gongyin 陈恭尹 (1631-1700). They were a group of Ming loyalists during the early years of the Qing dynasty and their political stance was reflected in their works.<sup>239</sup> Qu Dajun notably collected works of early writers of Guangdong province in his *New Tales of Guangdong* 广东新语 printed in 1700. One of the earliest poets of note in the region was Zhang Jiuling 张九龄 (678-740). According to Honey, his poem ‘Seeing off the Guangzhou Adjudicative Official Zhou’ 送广州周判官 used literary terms traditionally associated with the capital of Chang’an

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<sup>236</sup> Honey, p. IX.

<sup>237</sup> Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 79.

<sup>238</sup> Steven B. Miles, ‘Rewriting the Southern Han (917-971): The Production of Local Culture in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 62.1 (2002), 39–75 (p. 39).

<sup>239</sup> Honey, pp. 31–35.

in order to describe his native Qujiang area in Guangdong as part of the Chinese empire.<sup>240</sup> The theme of patriotism and attachment to the Chinese empire remained important for later poets, especially under the Ming, as southern scholars were frequently suspected of sedition.<sup>241</sup> As such, the Terrace of the King of Yue, located in present day Yuexiu Park, was an ideal metaphor: Nan Yue king Zhan Tuo was said to have used it as a place to pay his respects to the Chinese Emperor, of whom he was a vassal.<sup>242</sup> Exiled officials in Guangzhou visited this place with melancholy and turned their faces north, longing for their former life and homes.<sup>243</sup>

The second phase started in the early nineteenth century, and reached its highest point before the First Opium War (1839-42). It was again centred on the Pearl River Delta, especially Guangzhou. During that phase a great number of literary anthologies were written, three of them partly by maritime merchant Wu Chongyao 伍崇曜 (1810-1863) — the heir of Houqua — the owner of some of the most noted gardens of the region. An important aspect of the compiling trend of the second phase was the adoption of the method of evidential research or *kaozheng* 考證 developed in Jiangnan during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This literary tool was used to investigate local histories, and in this the Guangdong elite followed an empire-wide trend. A major institution of this period was the Xuehaitang Academy 学海堂, founded in the 1820s in Guangzhou, with the apparent purpose of re-examining local Lingnan history and culture.<sup>244</sup> Its leader was Ruan Yuan (1764-1849), originating from Jiangnan and Governor General in Guangzhou from 1817 to 1826.<sup>245</sup> Dominating the anthology discourse in 19<sup>th</sup> century Guangdong, the Xuehaitang Academy was credited with the improvement of the quality of scholarly productions in the province, centring it on the city of Guangzhou. In reality, the Xuehaitang was far from the only active institution in Guangzhou at the time, but the reputation of its members and prestigious publications issued through the academy gave it prominence in the city. At first glance, the Xuehaitang Academy was used to spread literati tools originating in Jiangnan as well as to critically assess local cultural production from the point of view of an outsider. Yet as many of the scholars involved in the Xuehaitang had no

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<sup>240</sup> Jiuling Zhang, 曲江張先生文集 (*Collection of works from Mr Zhang native from Qujiang*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Commercial Press, 1967). 4.3b

<sup>241</sup> Honey, p. 31.

<sup>242</sup> Honey, p. 37.

<sup>243</sup> Steven B. Miles, p. 58.

<sup>244</sup> Steven B. Miles, p. 40.

<sup>245</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 1.

personal links with Lingnan culture and originated from outside Guangdong province, Miles suggests that the aims of this Academy might have been to fit in with the local elite by monopolising the discourse on local culture.<sup>246</sup> Late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou was still separated from the surrounding hinterland in terms of power hierarchy: the old elite families of the province were based mostly outside of Guangzhou and relied on the authority of ancient local lineages.<sup>247</sup> In contrast, a growing population without personal ties to the Pearl River Delta lived in Guangzhou itself, and increasingly wielded a different kind of power, that of the administrative or trading kind. According to Miles, there was a real struggle for legitimacy of discourse on Guangdong local culture between the hinterland and the city. Ultimately, the money flow from foreign trade might have helped to tip the balance towards Guangzhou, with a peak of the city as a cultural hub of the province in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century before the first Opium War.

In both periods of interest in local Guangdong history, a few themes could be perceived to belong to Honey's 'Southern Muse', besides the previously mentioned 'protestation of patriotism'. Laudatory poems on local flora or fauna were common, with an insistence on local species: reminding the reader of the wealth of precious vegetal and animal specimens in Guangdong was an early characteristic of writings pertaining to the 'Southern Muse'. For example, although Zhang Jiuling wrote some poems about his native Guangdong, among those figured prominently a rhapsody on the Lychee fruit, native to the region: the *Lizhifu* 荔枝賦.<sup>248</sup> According to Paul W. Kroll, this poem "celebrates the unappreciated glories (by northerners) of his native region and attempts to effect a reorientation of traditional geographic prejudice".<sup>249</sup> Praise for the vegetal realm extended to landscape appreciation inside the province, and increasingly in and around Guangzhou. As already mentioned, famous spots in Guangzhou such as the Terrace of the King of Yue were often used in poems. Literary and other cultural production were often created through literati circles such as poetry societies: these were gatherings of scholars that would often meet within gardens.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Steven B. Miles, p. 42.

<sup>247</sup> See Chapter 'Cosmopolitanism and Insularity' p.23-54 in Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*.

<sup>248</sup> Jiuling Zhang. 1.11a-12b

<sup>249</sup> William H Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 208.

<sup>250</sup> Honey, p. 69. p.69

Although this was an empire-wide phenomenon, Guangdong province counted a large number of poetry societies, especially during the Ming and Qing periods. One striking example is that of the Southern Garden Society, first created in the early Ming dynasty by Sun Fen 孙蕢 (1335/38-1390/93), a Cantonese (Yueyu) considered as the first major poet of the city of Guangzhou.<sup>251</sup> The Southern Garden was unique as it was revived a record number of times from the moment of its initial creation and through the following 500 years. It was originally attached to a garden to the south of the city walls outside the Wenming Gate.<sup>252</sup> Throughout the revivals of the Southern Garden Poetry Society, scholars involved originated from Panyu – its immediate surroundings such as Shunde 顺德 or Dongguan 东莞 – and celebrated regional themes in their poetry and other literary works. The number and importance of poetry societies in the region during the Ming and Qing periods, combined with the rise of academies in Guangzhou during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contrived to make Guangzhou the focus of local cultural production in late Qing Guangdong.

Moreover, the prominence of Guangzhou in Guangdong is in large part the result of the city's economic growth, which is in turn tied to maritime trade. The peak in private garden building in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century-Guangzhou was also the result of the city's thriving economy at that time. Guangzhou is considered the earliest maritime trading port in China, established during the Han dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE). As the first global port of the empire, the economy of Panyu (Guangzhou) has historically revolved around maritime trade with the rest of Asia and the world. In fact, "trade long preceded the political and cultural conquest of South China by the Chinese," and it is known that the conquest of the Nanyue Kingdom by the Qin was chiefly motivated by economic considerations.<sup>253</sup> Indeed, the traders of Guangzhou, ideally located on the southeast coast, could act as intermediaries in both global and internal trade. At first commerce was mostly conducted with the parts of Southeast Asia that surrounded the Nanhai Sea (South China Sea).<sup>254</sup>

Starting in the Tang dynasty (618-906), officials and merchants in Guangzhou grew used to conducting trade with merchants from further afield, notably with Arabs:<sup>255</sup> the Huaishengsi

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<sup>251</sup> Honey, p. X.

<sup>252</sup> Honey, p. 70.

<sup>253</sup> Quote: Gungwu Wang, p. 2. Gungwu Wang, p. 7.

<sup>254</sup> For the history of the Nanhai Trade until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, see Gungwu Wang.

<sup>255</sup> Johnson and Peterson. p.3. See also Adam Christopher Fong, *Flourishing on the Frontier: Trade and Urbanization in Tang Dynasty Guangzhou, 618--907 CE* (University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2009).

怀圣寺 still existing today, is the first recorded mosque in China and was “said to have been founded by Muhammad’s uncle in 627”.<sup>256</sup> Guangzhou remained the centre of foreign maritime trade for most of Imperial China, with the exception of periods during the Southern Song (1127-1279) and early Ming (1368-1644) when the port of Quanzhou in Fujian supplanted it.<sup>257</sup> One of the most distinctive aspects of the Southeast Asian maritime trade in Guangzhou was the junks used for transportation: technical improvements in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries made this type of seagoing ship an emblem of South China and its maritime trade.<sup>258</sup>

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, Western European traders seeking to acquire Chinese products – as well as access to the Chinese market – met with varying degrees of success. The Portuguese were the first to succeed in a permanent way with the establishment of Macao in 1557, and the city was closely linked with that of Guangzhou from that moment on. The Dutch attempted trade through Taiwan around 1624-1662, but eventually had to relinquish the island to Ming loyalists and fell back on their footholds in Batavia to obtain Chinese goods through the Junk Trade. The British were less fortunate and had to compete with the Dutch and the Portuguese, eventually using other East Asian countries’ harbours to obtain much sought-after Chinese merchandise. The Portuguese Governor of Macao interfered in a first failed British commercial contact in 1635.<sup>259</sup> Then the British encountered a series of disappointments with their following attempts through Taiwan and Xiamen (Amoy) in the 1670s-80s and did not get proper access to the China Trade until the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>260</sup> Although there is a marked tendency in English-language literature to focus on British stakeholders, the reality is that traders from a wide array of nationalities also took part in the China Trade, from Western Europe, to North America and in Guangzhou, the Junk Trade brought in traders from different parts of Asia.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, ‘China’s Earliest Mosques’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 67.3 (2008), 330–61 (p. 335).

<sup>257</sup> Chu, p. 77.

<sup>258</sup> Wing-kai To, ‘Trade & Culture in Maritime China: The Case of Early Modern Guangzhou’, *Bridgewater Review*, 17.1 (1998), 3–6 (p. 4).

<sup>259</sup> Jean Sutton, ‘Lords of the East: The Ships of the East Indian Company’, in *British Ships in China Seas 1700 to the Present Day* (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2004), pp. 17–33 (p. 18).

<sup>260</sup> Ulrike Hillemann, *Asian Empire and British Knowledge: China and the Networks of British Imperial Expansion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>261</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*. p.xiii.



After having conquered Taiwan in 1683, the newly established Qing dynasty became more amenable to Western trade, with regular Sino-Western contacts taking place from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>262</sup> In 1685, the Guangdong Customs were created in Guangzhou, as European traders were allowed once again in Chinese harbours and, one year later, able to live for part of the year in an enclave south of the city. By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Guangzhou (or Canton) appeared to Western European traders as the most beneficial harbour to participate in the China Trade.<sup>263</sup> Its location might not have provided ideal access to the products most in demand in the West – such as silk and tea – but the local merchants had experience handling international trade, making it easier to reach mutually beneficial terms of trade. In the 1730s-1750s, some Danish, Dutch, Swedish, French, Portuguese, Armenian and English traders were either residing in Guangzhou year-long, or briefly staying in the city before moving to Macao for the off-trade season.<sup>264</sup>

After the British tried to initiate trade in the harbour of Chusan in 1757, the Imperial Court moved to control Western European trade more tightly.<sup>265</sup> It is unsurprising that Guangzhou was then selected to be the sole harbour opened to Western traders: from the Qing court's point of view, the advantage of using Guangzhou merchants' well-honed history of dealing with Western trade was doubled by the city's convenient location – a safe distance away from the capital, Beijing. Van Dyke cites a host of other considerations that made Guangzhou the best choice to control Western trade to the satisfaction of the Imperial Court, and most of these stem from the well organised flow of goods and skilled labour into the harbour, both from within and outside the Chinese empire.<sup>266</sup>

Although a *de facto* reality since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Guangzhou officially became China's sole harbour for Western trade in 1757, ushering in the period usually referred to as the 'Canton Trade or System'. In Chinese, the Canton System was named '一口通商' (Single port commerce system).<sup>267</sup> An imperial edict officially restricted foreign trade to certain locations: Western Europeans were only allowed in Guangzhou harbour, while Russian trade

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<sup>262</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, p. 6.

<sup>263</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, p. 2.

<sup>264</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, p. 13.

<sup>265</sup> Garrett, p. 76.

<sup>266</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, p. 9.

<sup>267</sup> Yang and Zhong, p. 183.

was confined to the northern borders.<sup>268</sup> A few missionaries also remained in Beijing.<sup>269</sup> The use of trade intermediaries — the Hong merchants — was imposed. When North American traders started to appear on Chinese coasts after 1784, they became subject to the same restrictions.

To summarise, the historical prominence of Guangzhou as the first Chinese trading port meant that prosperity kept flowing through the city, increasingly from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward as Western traders arrived and the Junk Trade continued, and reaching a peak during the Canton System at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This unprecedented wealth was partially channelled into increased cultural production: gardens, for example, were an ideal medium to gather scholars and elite members of society to network and produce art. As garden building is usually proportionate with available wealth in a region, the scope of trade-related prosperity in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou deserves closer scrutiny.

Recent research led by Paul A. Van Dyke on both Western and Chinese sources has revealed the volume of trade in Guangzhou during the Canton System and how it was spread among the city's different stakeholders in maritime trade. The spectacular growth of maritime trade in 18<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou can be reconstituted by consulting the records of ship arrivals and tonnage of the participating nations: between the 1730s and 1760s for example, there was an increase of 176 per cent in foreign ship tonnage.<sup>270</sup> The British East India Company (EIC) was then the most important Western customer in Guangzhou, with about 27 per cent of the volume of Guangzhou's commerce in the 1740-60s.<sup>271</sup> Between 1763 and 1769, the EIC's estimated exports from Guangzhou rose from 58,297 to 100,568 *piculs* – one *picul* weighing 133 pounds.<sup>272</sup> It is very difficult to convert these volumes to monetary units as the original Chinese *tael* would have been translated by Western contemporaries in their own currency and at their current value, making rather arduous any comparison between different countries' trade beyond the actual volume transported.

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<sup>268</sup> Johnson and Peterson, p. 3.

<sup>269</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, p. 16.

<sup>270</sup> See Vol II of Louis Dermigny, *La Chine et l'Occident: Le Commerce à Canton Au XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, 1719-1833* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1964).

<sup>271</sup> The East Indian Company was initially founded in 1600 and was dissolved in 1874; its China monopoly abolished by 1833. For volume of commerce, see: Paul Van Dyke and Li Tana, 'Canton, Cancao, and Cochinchina: New Data and New Light on Eighteenth-Century Canton and the Nanyang', *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, 1 (2007), 10–28 (p. 10).

<sup>272</sup> Paul Van Dyke, 'Port Canton and the Pearl River Delta, 1690--1845' (unpublished Ph.D., University of Southern California, 2002), p. 462.

One important finding emerging from Van Dyke's research is that the Junk Trade was still going strong from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until at least the first Opium War (1839), whereas previous scholars thought it had become negligible by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1740-60s, the Junk Trade represented a volume of Guangzhou commerce comparable to that of the EIC, both still only accounting for a quarter of the trade respectively.<sup>273</sup> Western scholars have tended to focus on the EIC, but Van Dyke's information on the Junk Trade was found by analysing records from other European companies: Swedish, Dutch and Danish among others. These findings are relevant to this research as the Hong merchants had either a direct or indirect hand in most of the Junk Trade originating in Guangzhou.

Indeed, the Western 'China Trade' and native 'Junk Trade' were linked through some products such as tin, which came from Southeast Asia and served as ballast when shipping tea to Europe.<sup>274</sup> Suffice it to say that there were great opportunities to make a fortune as a Hong merchant by exploiting the interdependencies between Western Trade and the Junk Trade, in addition to less official forms of commerce based in Guangzhou, such as smuggling and opium trade. The details of the role of Hong merchants in the Canton System will be described in the following section, and the estimated personal fortunes of Hong merchants relevant to this research will be discussed in the biographical sections of the case studies.

### *The role of Hong merchants as key stakeholders in the Canton System*

This section introduces the role of Hong merchants, as they are, with their affiliated family members, the owners of the gardens discussed in this thesis. During the Canton System period, Hong merchants were the intermediaries imposed upon Westerners while conducting trade, and thus stakeholders in diverse aspects of maritime trade in Guangzhou.

Guangzhou merchants had been trading with foreigners in Guangzhou since 1684, but the origin of the Hong monopoly can be traced back to 1720, before the advent of the Canton System.<sup>275</sup> This was the date of the foundation by Chinese merchants of the *guanhang* 官行

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<sup>273</sup> Van Dyke and Tana, p. 10.

<sup>274</sup> Paul Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press ; Kyoto, 2011), pp. 67–68.

<sup>275</sup> Cheong, p. 11.

(combined merchant companies), a guild created by merchants who had been granted by Imperial favour the monopoly on foreign trade in Guangzhou (Canton) after 1720. Additionally, the Hong merchants were briefly part of the similarly named Co-hong guild 公行, created in 1760 and dissolved in 1771.<sup>276</sup> In 1782, the number of Hong merchants grew to twelve and later on to thirteen, and although that number fluctuated, they are often referred to as the ‘Thirteen Hong’ 广州十三行.<sup>277</sup> In Chinese, these merchants are also named *hangshang ren* 行商人 or *waiyang shangren* 外洋商人. In English, they are referred to by multiple names: Hong, ‘hongists’, Co-Hong, maritime merchants; in French they were also called ‘Hanistes’. Hong merchants usually came from wealthy families residing in Guangzhou, some were not natives but originated from other provinces such as Fujian or Zhejiang.<sup>278</sup> The two monopolies these families engaged in in Guangzhou were ‘maritime’ and/or the salt trade. The Hong merchants proved to be key stakeholders in sustaining the influx of foreign maritime trade in late Imperial China, and maintained a powerful standing even after the end of the Canton System in 1842 and well into the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their primary role was to satisfy Guangzhou officials through the control of Western trade and related diplomatic relations, although they also engaged in other activities such as the Junk Trade.

The position of Hong merchant came with a series of duties and heavy constraints, as they were effectively responsible for foreign maritime trade and therefore in the service of the three major officials in Guangzhou’s administration: the superintendent of maritime customs, known to Westerners as Hoppo 户部, who tended to handle most of the trade business; the Governor-general of Guangdong province; and the Governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, also called ‘Viceroy’ by Western traders.<sup>279</sup> Westerners had mistaken the Hoppo for a member of the Board of Revenue (Hu Pu) but his actual position was that of delegate of the Imperial Household, in charge of collecting a portion of Canton custom duties for the Emperor’s personal treasury. Together these three direct superiors dictated how to handle

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<sup>276</sup> Wenqin Zhang, ‘十三行行商首领伍秉鉴和伍崇曜 (Head of Hong merchants Wu Bingjian and his son Wu Chongyao)’, in *广州十三行沧桑 (The thirteen hong in Guangzhou)* (Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng ditu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 206–14 (p. 4).

<sup>277</sup> See Wenqin Zhang and Jiabin Liang, *广东十三行考 (The thirteen hong of Guangdong)* (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2009).

<sup>278</sup> For an introduction on the families originated from Fujian and Zhejiang in nineteenth century Guangzhou, see pages 29–42 in Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*.

<sup>279</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 7.

foreign trade in Guangzhou, and if necessary would bring matters forward to the Imperial Court. Non-compliance with official policies could get Hong merchants arrested or disgraced. There was also a fourth official of a lower administrative level involved in the management of Western merchants: the magistrate of Nanhai County, who supervised the area of the factories where Westerners lived and carried out trade.

The role of the Hoppo and his colleagues was to address the Imperial Court's concerns and needs, to both "control and foster" foreign trade.<sup>280</sup> On one hand, this meant restraining Western traders in small and manageable areas where they could be threatened by sudden blockades to enforce the Canton System's rules. On the other hand, it implied offering Western merchants good enough conditions so that trade would keep growing, filling the Imperial Household's treasury as well as the pockets of the Hoppo and his colleagues. Although balanced enough to last a century, the Canton System proved flawed for several reasons. One of these was of main concern to Hong merchants: the fostering of corruption across both the local and national Chinese administrations. Additional factors include the dependence on silver as a trade currency, and as a result of global shortage of silver, the growing importance of opium either sold officially or smuggled. These flaws were of major importance in triggering the First Opium War, as will be discussed in further chapters.

The most obvious aspect of the Hong merchant's role was that of trade intermediary. To put it simply, when a Western trader ordered Chinese products, the Hong merchant would be charged upfront for these as well as related taxes and then seek reimbursement from the trader.<sup>281</sup> Although the Hong did have a monopoly on Western trade in Guangzhou, in reality there were many other individuals involved in the process. Hong merchants chose the providers of Chinese exports for Western trade as well as to whom they would sell Western imports. However, the merchandise had to be handled by multiple staff members, each getting their relative share in the profits. In 1843, the list of employees under one Hong merchant included 20 chief clerks and their 182 assistants plus contractors, work foremen and their underlings amounting up to 60 men; to which were added sentries, runners, boatmen, and minor military staff.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, p. 1.

<sup>281</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 9.

<sup>282</sup> Cheong, p. 15. (p.15)



Figure 11: Map of the end of the Pearl River Delta. Guangzhou is indicated as ‘Canton’

A Western captain arriving to trade in China could not directly reach the city of Guangzhou proper: he had first to hire a pilot, usually in Macao, to guide his ship to Whampoa or Huangpu 黄埔. Macao was wholly part of the Canton trading process, as both the arrival and departure points of many vessels and the yearly residence of many Western traders, and will be discussed when relevant in following chapters.<sup>283</sup> Easily distinguished by its renowned pagoda, Whampoa Island (see position on map Figure 11) was the location designated for unloading cargo and mooring foreign ships. The avowed reason for this step was practical – most ships could not continue in the shallower waters beyond this point – yet it also prevented foreign canons from coming into direct view of Guangzhou. As a trans-shipment centre, complete with docks, warehouses, hospital and a cemetery, Whampoa occupied a prominent place in foreign traders’ diaries and its landscape has been described or painted many times (Figure 12):

Whampoa was beautiful. The vessels were displaying their different flags; Chinese boats were crossing and re-crossing in every direction, and the setting sun was shedding its gilded light on everything around, giving to the low, flat island, covered

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<sup>283</sup> Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*. p.xiv; see also Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*.

with rich, green-like velvet, the pagodas and the foliage of the trees, a touch of enchantment.<sup>284</sup>



Figure 12: “Wampoa”. Youqua, c. 1850. Oil on canvas. Peabody Essex Museum

From the moment of its arrival in Whampoa to that of its departure with a renewed cargo, a foreign ship had to be allocated a number of Chinese staff. Among those, the most important were a Hong merchant, a linguist, and a comprador, and the most numerous were the myriad of owners of small craft, called *sampans*, in charge of unloading and loading cargo.<sup>285</sup> Authorisations to unload would not be delivered until the payment of proper taxes had been calculated through the measurement of the ship: only then could the traders proceed to Guangzhou aboard a native ship while most of the crew remained in Whampoa.<sup>286</sup> All the steps of the trade involved the payment of fees to the various staff employed: fees that could increase immoderately if unchecked by the Hoppo and the source of many complaints

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<sup>284</sup> B. L. (Benjamin Lincoln) Ball, *Rambles in Eastern Asia Including China and Manilla, during Several Years' Residence: With Notes of the Voyage to China, Excursions in Manilla, Hong-Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Ningpoo, Amoy, Pouchow, and Macao* (Boston: J. French and Co, 1855), pp. 97–98.

<sup>285</sup> The comprador was in charge of supplying the boats for the unloading and loading of the cargo. For a detailed study of the compradors' role, see Paul Van Dyke, 'Pigs, Chickens and Lemonade: The Provisions Trade in Canton, 1700-1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 12.1 (2000), 111–144.

<sup>286</sup> For a detailed explanation of the trade process, see Paul Van Dyke's books; for a summary, see for example Jean Sutton, 'Lords of the East: The Ships of the East Indian Company', in *British Ships in China Seas 1700 to the Present Day* (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2004), pp. 17–33.

recorded in Western traders' diaries. The Hong were compelled to take responsibility for their allocated foreigners' behaviour for the full length of their stay in Guangzhou, including the payment of the transit taxes to the Hoppo.<sup>287</sup> This is why they are sometimes referred to as 'security merchants'. In the year 1836-1837 for example, Hong merchants were responsible for "307 foreign residents, 55 foreign firms, and over 200 foreign ships and their crews".<sup>288</sup>

The Canton System was accompanied by growing corruption of big and small Chinese stakeholders in the profits from Western trade. Although Hong merchants were those who officially profited from the Canton System, in reality fees, taxes or 'squeezes' were deducted from their earnings at every stage of a transaction. The amount of these official and unofficial fees kept growing during the 1757 to 1842 period, threatening at times the stability of the Canton System. In spite of frequent financial difficulties, the Hong merchants had to stay on good terms with the Hoppo and governors, who were behind the biggest 'squeezes', or punishment would ensue:

The Hong merchants are required to consider the duties to be paid to government as the most important part of their affairs. If any merchant cannot pay at the proper period, his Hong,<sup>289</sup> and house, and all his property are seized by the government, and sold to pay the amount, and if all that he possesses be inadequate, he is sent from prison into banishment at Ele, in western Tartary, which the Chinese call the 'cold country;' and the body of Hong merchants are commanded to pay in his stead.<sup>290</sup>

A side effect of limiting direct contact between Western traders and Guangzhou officials was notably the increased possibility of collusion between the Hong and the foreign traders. The importance of the EIC as a partner became such that some scholars talk about an Anglo-Chinese monopoly: as Britain and China became increasingly wary of each other, their trading representatives came closer together to keep the trade going.<sup>291</sup> In general, the Hong strived to maintain good relationships with their foreign counterparts and, as far as commercial

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<sup>287</sup> Jonathan D Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 2d edn (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), p. 120. p.120.

<sup>288</sup> James Hayes, 'The World of the Old China Trade: The Locales and the People', *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 43 (2003), 29–62 (p. 38).

<sup>289</sup> The "Hong" designated the buildings where the trade took place in Guangzhou, called by foreigners "Factories". Their location is detailed in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>290</sup> John Phipps, *A Practical Treatise on the China and Eastern Trade Comprising the Commerce of Great Britain and India, Particularly Bengal and Singapore, with China and the Eastern Islands ...* (London: W.H. Allen, 1836), pp. 138–39.

<sup>291</sup> Frederic Jr. Wakeman, 'The Canton Trade and the Opium War', in *The Cambridge History of China. Vol. 10, Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 163–212 (p. 166).



affairs were concerned, were thought to keep true to their word. Although growing irritation with the Canton System led foreign traders to want to dispense with the security merchants, it is rare to find in diaries any complaint about the character of an individual member of the Hong.

Initially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was not uncommon for Chinese officials to visit foreign traders frequently. Yet as trade developed further, Hong merchants were used as intermediaries to convey any messages between foreign traders and Guangzhou officials. As the trade grew, the Hong continued to assume a quasi-diplomatic role as intermediaries between Western powers on one side and the Qing Court and local officials on the other. This compromise was successful as the Hong were used to dealing with foreigners in a respectful or even friendly manner and made a good show of being of equal standing. One of the Hong merchants, Consequa, was thus remembered after his death in 1823:

He professed to be, and indeed was, I believe, attached to Europeans, and at all times endeavoured to show it, by his liberality, and his friendly and cordial attentions and hospitality towards foreigners; and there seemed no reason to doubt his sincerity in these points.<sup>292</sup>

In contrast, Chinese officials would formally treat Westerners as hierarchical inferiors, much like tribute bearers – a perceived contempt that was often irksome for the Western traders involved. One of the reasons for the longevity of the Canton System lies in the fact that Qing officials had long used Hong merchants to avoid direct state-to-state contact with Western countries. As long as this arrangement prevailed, any trading dispute was unlikely to escalate into a power struggle serious enough to spark a war. It is therefore unsurprising that the first Opium War (1839-42) took place shortly after the EIC monopoly in China ceased in 1833 – after which official Crown representatives were sent to Canton, as will be discussed in the following chapters.

From 1775, the Co-hong guild of merchants created the ‘Consoo Fund’ to protect its members from bankruptcy. Each Hong merchant paid a tenth of his trade profits into the Co-hong fund. An initiative that was originally secret then became officially sanctioned by 1780.<sup>293</sup> It was

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<sup>292</sup> J. Reeves, ‘VIII. Biography of Consequa’, *The Gardener’s Magazine and Register of Rural & Domestic Improvement*, 1835, 111–12 (p. 112).

<sup>293</sup> Wakeman, p. 165.

an important guarantee towards Hong merchants' debts with foreign traders, notably credit with the EIC.<sup>294</sup> The debts had several origins, notably the necessity each season for the Hong to obtain cash in order to secure the following year's tea, silk or porcelain for their Western traders. Obtaining credit from foreign traders was not officially allowed, but in reality the Hoppo let the practice go unpunished unless the debt was unpaid. Indeed, financially stable Hong merchants were more likely to help him reach his quotas for transit taxes. As a result, the extent of these debts, unchecked by Guangzhou officials, reached unprecedented heights due to a combination of 'squeezes' and financial speculation. Until 1818 the EIC, as the major trade partner of the Co-hong, simply had to keep some key Hong merchants solvent – despite their aggravated bankruptcy – in order to secure the promised following year's contracts. Nor was the Hong bankruptcy completely unrelated to Western traders: often Hong merchants had to sell Western imported goods to obtain a trader's custom, but most of these, such as fabric, were in very low demand in China and therefore likely to be sold at a loss. Once the existence of the Consoo Fund was made public, it became prey to inevitable demands of monetary contributions initiated by the local administration under various pretexts: contribution to flood repairs, combatting coastal piracy, and presents to officials including the Emperor, etc.

To summarise, despite being privileged stakeholders in the Canton System and thus likely to accumulate personal fortunes, many of the Hong merchants were prompt to lose wealth or health under diplomatic pressure, debt and never-ending 'squeezes'. Only a handful of Hong merchants managed the perilous balancing act through a combination of luck, wisdom and cunning for a sufficient amount of time to afford luxurious living conditions for their family, such as residences with gardens. The Pan and Wu families, whose gardens are the objects of the case study chapters, were arguably the most well known and successful of Hong merchants.

The two previous sections detailed the factors for the prominent role of Guangzhou in Guangdong province while giving an overview of the economic boom of the city and its main stakeholders during the period of the Canton System. The following section offers a brief look at Guangzhou during that time to help the reader locate the gardens discussed in further chapters.

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<sup>294</sup> Van Dyke explains the credit mechanism in detail in Chapter 5 of Van Dyke, 'Port Canton and the Pearl River Delta, 1690--1845'.



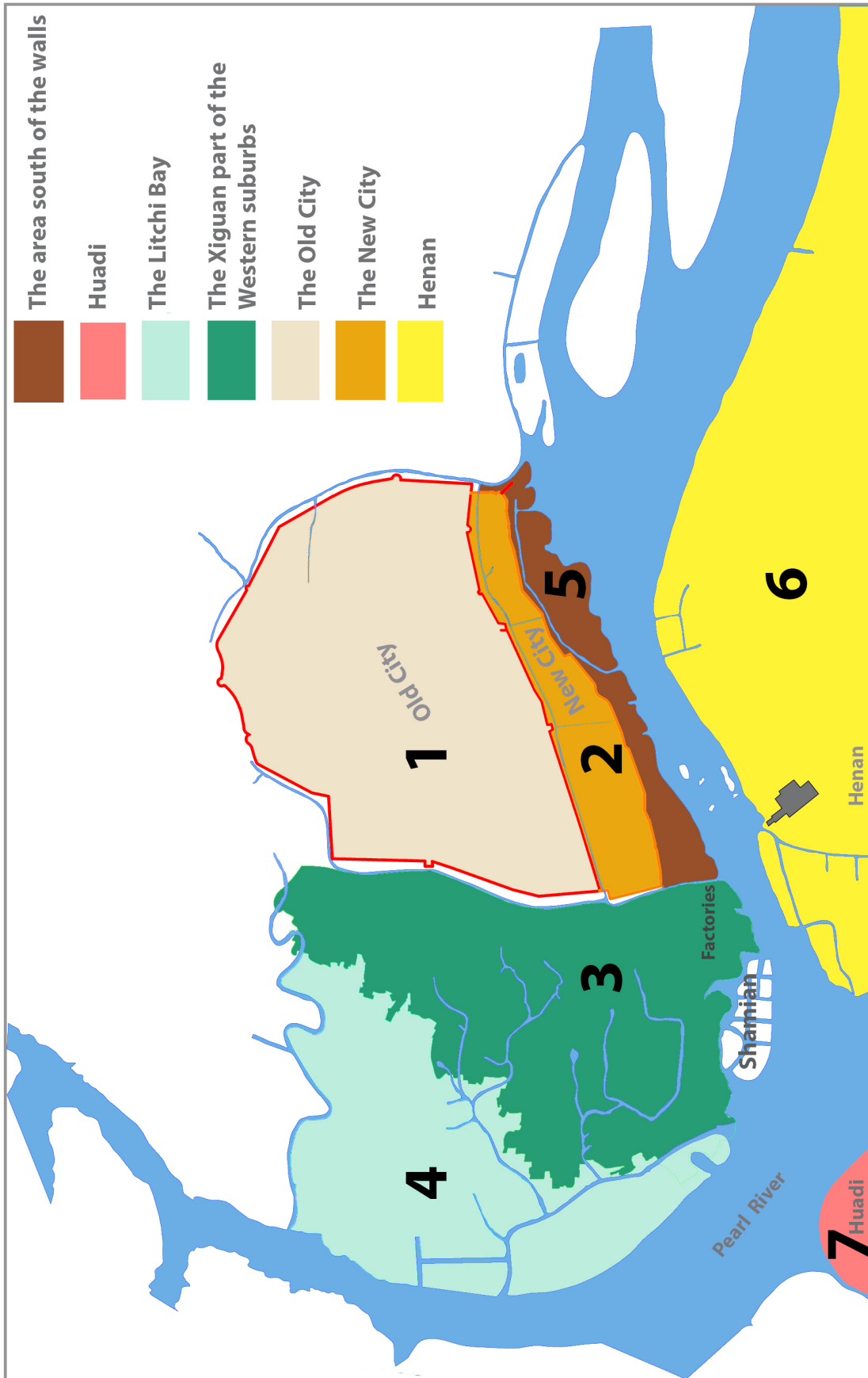


Figure 13: Map of Guangzhou under the Canton System. Credit: Gulsah Bilge for Josepha Richard

### **Part III. The city of Guangzhou under the Canton System**

The following description is intended to provide the reader with a general sense of the distribution of population and gardens in Guangzhou during the period of the Canton System and its aftermath as background to the three case studies chapters. The map designed for this section (Figure 13) is intended to represent Guangzhou between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the Second Opium War (1856-60). However, some of the sources used to compile this short introduction were written, published or reedited at an earlier or later date: this was deemed necessary for lack of better description or illustration. The map was essentially lined according to the *Plan of the City & suburbs of Canton*, dated 31 Oct 1857,<sup>295</sup> with a few modifications. It is not true to scale, but was intended for military use, and is therefore probably the most accurate map available for this period.

The administrative centre had been protected by a wall since the foundation of Panyu under the Qin dynasty, and expanded several times since; during the Qing the wall was approximately ten kilometres long, and approximately eight to fourteen metres high. The walled city was set on the north bank of the Pearl River.

#### **The Old City (number 1 on the map, in beige)**

The Old City was constituted by a multitude of *yamen*: these walled units of habitation typically had offices at the front and residential parts behind, often containing garden grounds. The strict organisation of the space was enhanced by two main streets, orientated north-south and east-west and linked to four of the major gates.

The Manchu first arrived in Guangzhou in 1650 during the Qing conquest. Afterwards the Manchu Bannermen stationed in Guangzhou settled in the northwest quarter of the walled city, separated from the rest. The best-documented official garden in Guangzhou is that of the *yamen* of the Tartar General, the commander-in-chief and head of the banner garrison. The two-story building was originally built as a palace for the son-in-law of Emperor Kangxi

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<sup>295</sup> Two versions of this map are conserved at the Library of the University of Cambridge (UK): MAPS.350.85.1 and MAPS.350.85.2. The legend indicated that it was compiled by the Quarter Master General's Department, during the British Chinese Expeditionary Force, in 1857-8, and its indicated scale is 1: 12 000.

(ruled 1661-1722). In the 1860s, after the Second Opium War, most of the palace was overtaken by the British Consulate 大英领事衙门 and the Manchu administration only kept use of a small part of the residence, as can be seen in the photograph (Figure 14).<sup>296</sup> Kerr described it in these words: “Some fine old banyans make this a cool and shady retreat in the middle of the city. In a park on the north side are several deer.”<sup>297</sup>



Figure 14 “Residence of English Consul – *yamen* of Canton”, attributed to John Thomson, date unknown. In George Ernest Morrison, *Photographic Views of Canton*.

Apart from the Manchu district, the rest of the Old City was mostly home to Chinese officials. On the northernmost portion of the wall stood the Five Storey Pagoda or 镇海楼, a watchtower built during the Ming dynasty, culminating at 300 metres above sea level. The Yuexiu Hill 越秀 occupied the space below the watchtower, famous as the location of the Terrace of the King of Yue. The area south of the Yuexiu Hill was a popular area for gardens during the Ming and Qing dynasty: Chinese sources notably mention the Xiaoyunlin 小云林 built in 1548 by Li Shixing 李时行.<sup>298</sup> How many of those gardens were still extant at the time of the Canton System is an uncertain matter, but it is certain that the location was still favoured for garden building beyond the Opium War period: a famous example is that of the

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<sup>296</sup> Albert Smith, *To China and Back: Being a Diary Kept out and Home* (London: Author’s edition, 1859), p. 38.

<sup>297</sup> J. G. Kerr, *A Guide to the City and Suburbs of Canton* (Hong Kong: Kelly et Walsh, 1904), p. 22.

<sup>298</sup> Qi, p. 16.

Jiyuan 继园, created in that area by Shi Cheng 史澄 in 1878.<sup>299</sup> The oldest and most well-known garden in the area is probably the Yaozhou 药洲, still visible in Guangzhou today as the Nine Star Stones garden 九曜园. The painting most commonly referred to to describe the Yaozhou (Figure 15) was painted by Su Liupeng 苏六朋 (1791-1862).<sup>300</sup>

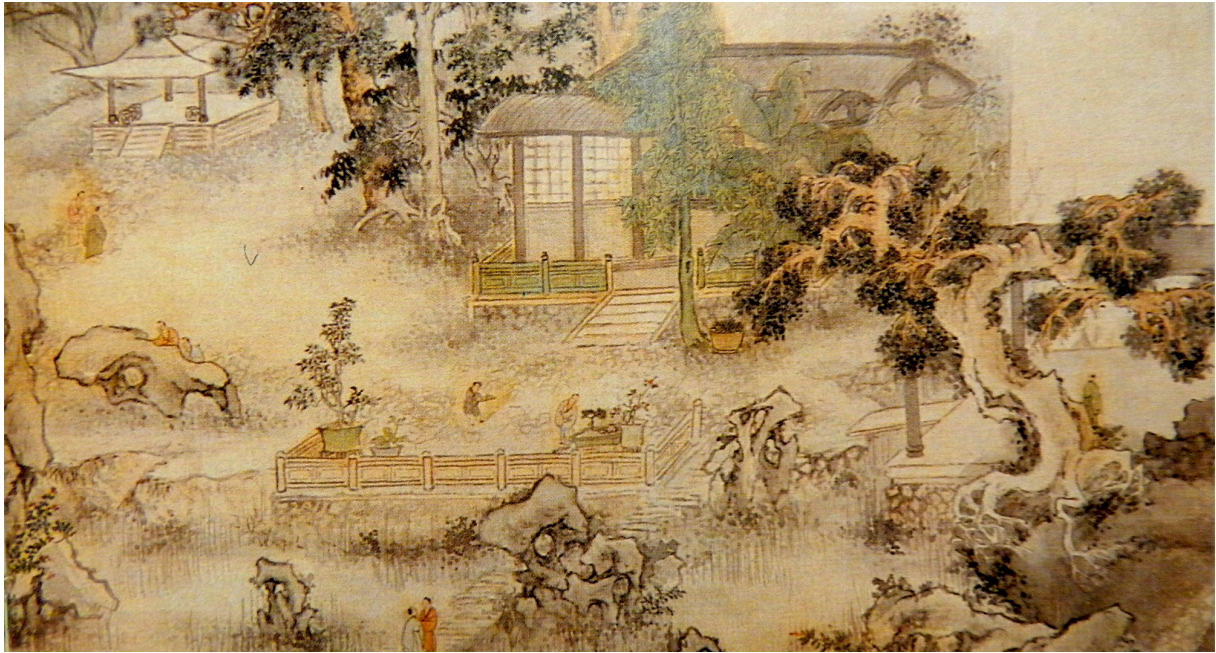


Figure 15: “Yaozhou Garden”. Su Liupeng. 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kept at the Guangzhou Museum

### **The New City (number 2 on the map, in orange)**

The New City, linked by four gates to the Old City, was created as a southward extension of the city wall in 1566 when bandits and Japanese pirates roaming along the southeast coast became a threat to unprotected lands.<sup>301</sup> It was a very dense area packed with shops.

The wall surrounding the New City opened through eight gates towards the suburbs:<sup>302</sup> according to Ida Pfeiffer, one didn't know when one was leaving the walled city or entering it

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<sup>299</sup> Qi, p. 17.

<sup>300</sup> The detail of 药洲晶石图 reproduced in this chapter is taken from Guangzhou Museum, *广州历史文化图册 (The illustrated history and culture of Guangzhou)* (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1996), p. 5.

<sup>301</sup> E. C. Bridgman, *Description of the City of Canton: With an Appendix, Containing an Account of the Population of the Chinese Empire, Chinese Weights and Measures, and the Imports and Exports of Canton* (Canton, 1834), p. 12. Yeung, p. 21.

<sup>302</sup> Garrett, p. 15.

as there was such a continuity in the urban fabric.<sup>303</sup> The most populated suburbs were located on the western and southern sides of the walled city.

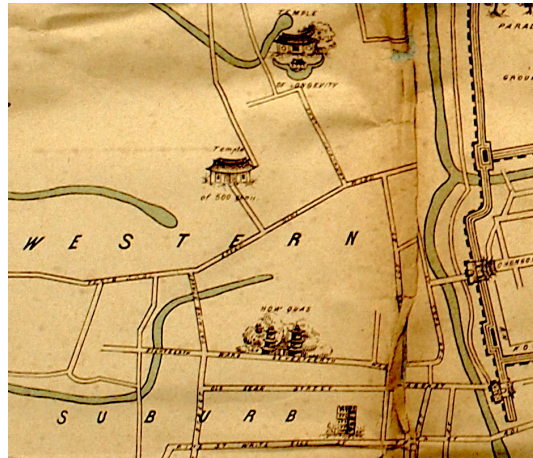


Figure 16: Detail of “Canton, Plan of the city and suburbs”, published in 1898. Cropped to highlight the western part of the city walls with notably ‘How quas’ and ‘Temple of Longevity’ indicated.

### **Xiguan (number 3 on the map, in dark green)**

Immediately west of the wall was the Xiguan 西关 district, which satisfied Guangzhou merchants’ need for larger warehouses and residences.<sup>304</sup> It was a popular area for temples, guilds and private gardens.<sup>305</sup> The garden of the Temple of Longevity, for example, was recorded in early photographs (Figure 17).<sup>306</sup> Hong merchants such as Houqua typically possessed a residence in Xiguan (see the map Figure 13).<sup>307</sup> These houses should not be confused with the buildings Hong merchants owned in the nearby Factories, sometimes confusingly called *hong* as well.

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<sup>303</sup> Ida Pfeiffer, *A Woman’s Journey Round the World from Vienna to Brazil, Chili, Tahiti, China, Hindostan, Persia, and Asia Minor* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1852), p. 1095.

<sup>304</sup> Yeung, p. 19.

<sup>305</sup> John Henry Gray, *Walks in the City of Canton ... with an Itinerary* (Hong Kong: De Souza, 1997), pp. 185–96.

<sup>306</sup> The stereograph reproduced in Figure 17 is held at Getty Research Institute (84.XC.759.30.85). See a description of the gardens in George Smith, *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan, in Behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1857), pp. 116–17.

<sup>307</sup> The extract reproduced as Figure 16 was published in R. C Hurley, *The Tourists’ Guide to Canton, the West River and Macao* (Hongkong: R.C. Hurley, 1898).



### **The Factories (indicated in black near the southwest corner of the city walls)**

The Factories were a series of buildings on the waterfront of the Pearl River where Western traders and visitors were confined, part-warehouses and part-residences. The size of the Factories ground was approximately that of a 1000-foot wide and 750-foot deep rectangle until 1850 when it expanded to form a square.<sup>308</sup> Western-style gardens were added between the buildings and the riverside around the 1830s.<sup>309</sup> Until the first Opium War, only male Western visitors were allowed, and their movements beyond the Factories was limited to a few selected locations, as will be discussed further in the following chapters.



**Figure 17: “Canton. Artificial Rock-work and Pavilion in the Garden of the Temple of Longevity, Western Suburbs, Canton”. Pierre Joseph Rossier. 1858-59. Getty Research Institute.**

### **Lychee Bay (number 4 on the map in light green)**

Like much of the area bordering the Pearl River, the land west of the walls was made of accumulated sediment, crossed by a network of small watercourses.<sup>310</sup> At the western-most part of this sediment sprawled a series of small lakes and ponds that constituted the Lizhiwan 荔枝湾, or ‘Lychee Bay’, named after the numerous lychee trees planted in the area. Lychee Bay had been a popular Guangzhou sight since at least the Southern Han dynasty.<sup>311</sup> During the Canton System period, Lychee Bay was home to some of the most famous gardens in the

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<sup>308</sup> Patrick Conner, *The Hongs of Canton*, p. 6.

<sup>309</sup> Farris, p. 47.

<sup>310</sup> Yeung, p. 26.

<sup>311</sup> Qi, p. 13.

city, among which the Tangliyuan 唐荔园 owned by Qiu Xi 邱熙, and the Xiaotianyuan 小田园 owned by Ye Zhao'e 叶兆萼.<sup>312</sup> It is also the location of the Haishan xianguan, the largest garden in the city, owned by Pan Shicheng.

### **Northern and eastern suburbs**

Beyond the western suburbs and further north, it was already the green and open countryside, peppered with small villages and burial sites. Fields and forests occupied the space between the city and the Baiyun Mountains 白云山 at the northern extremity of Guangzhou. The eastern side was considerably less developed than its western counterpart, but during the Ming a few gardens were recorded in that area.<sup>313</sup>

### **South of the walls (number 5 on the map in dark red)**

The strip of land left between the riverbank and the southern wall contained few gardens.<sup>314</sup> Much of the river-linked activity took place in this area. The Pearl River doubled as the main transportation artery of the city and as a permanent home for the 'boat people', also called disparagingly 'Tanka'.<sup>315</sup> The boat people were forbidden to sleep on the shores and earned their living by transporting goods and customers, an essential activity, as there were no bridges to link the shores. When not used for transportation, their boats were kept attached to each other to form street-like rows near the Shamian sandbanks: this floating city was home to a tenth of the total population Guangzhou by the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>316</sup>

### **Shamian (in the river to the west of the Factories)**

As part of several alterations to the riverbanks, in 1859 the sandbanks were converted into Shamian Island and leased as British and French concessions. According to Dennys, "notwithstanding its positive youth, the Shamien site is universally declared the most

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<sup>312</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 63. Guosheng Huang, p. 42. Qi, p. 19.

<sup>313</sup> Qi, p. 17.

<sup>314</sup> See Qi, p. 23. Guosheng Huang, p. 42.

<sup>315</sup> Farris, p. 43.

<sup>316</sup> Garrett, p. 52.

picturesque settlement of all in China".<sup>317</sup> The island included two churches and a promenade, and was isolated by a narrow canal from the rest of the city – as can still be seen today. Shamian Island was often used by Western visitors after the Second Opium War, and mentioned in Western accounts used for this thesis.

### **Southern banks of the Pearl River**

On the southern side of the Pearl River, divided by the crisscrossing of the River's subsidiaries, are the areas of Henan and Huadi. In administrative terms, these were not part of Guangzhou city, and much less densely urbanised than the northern bank; yet Henan and Huadi were very commonly visited or inhabited by Guangzhou dwellers such as the Hong merchants.

### **Henan (number 6 on the map, in yellow)**

On the eastern side, Henan 河南 had been a popular location for garden-making since the Ming dynasty, reaching its peak during the transition between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>318</sup> In Henan the main landmark was the Ocean Banner's Temple 海幢寺, built on the foundations of a Southern Han dynasty religious institution, and still existing today.<sup>319</sup> At the time of the Canton System, the temple was a major Buddhist institution, sponsored notably by the Hong merchants, and one of the rare sites that Western visitors were allowed to visit.<sup>320</sup> Near the temple were notably located the main residences of the Pan and Wu families, whose gardens will be analysed in the case studies in the following chapters.

### **Huadi (number 7 on the map, in dark pink)**

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<sup>317</sup> N. B Dennys, William Frederick Mayers, and Charles King, *The Treaty Ports of China and Japan: A Complete Guide to the Open Ports of Those Countries, Together with Peking, Yedo, Hongkong and Macao : Forming a Guide Book & Vade Mecum for Travellers, Merchants, and Residents in General : With 29 Maps and Plans* (London; Hongkong: Trübner and Co. ; A. Shortrede and Co., 1867), p. 134.

<sup>318</sup> In the conference paper sent to me by Strassberg, p. 5.

<sup>319</sup> 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p. 694. See the Ocean's Banner temple official website : '广州海幢寺简介 Brief Introduction of Hoi Tong Monastery' <<http://www.gzhz.org/about.php>> [accessed 24 December 2016].

<sup>320</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 59.

On the western side, the area of Huadi 花地 was located on the side of a subsidiary leading to the neighbouring Foshan. Huadi is usually cited in Western diaries for the garden nurseries that dotted the area. In addition to the nurseries, and often conflated with the former, were private pleasure grounds such as Houqua's Fuyinyuan garden 福荫园, to be discussed in the second case study.

This chapter introduced the fact that Guangzhou is part of the peripheral Lingnan region, before delving into the history of Guangzhou as capital of Guangdong province. With the help of this background information, the reader is now ready to understand the following case studies and determine whether the Hong merchants' gardens are worthy of further research.

## **Chapter 4. First Case study: The Pan family residences with gardens in Panyu County**

This case study explores the exceptional nature of the Pan family members' success in increasing their social standing. The Pan family used their residences and gardens to fulfil several functions, including receiving Chinese and foreign visitors — those functions will be analysed throughout the case study. It is essential to first explain the origins of Pan Zhencheng (Pan Khequa I)'s success and the reasons behind his family's continued power. Pan Zhencheng was an exceptional trader. Not only did he manage to become the head of the Hong merchants, but he also planned his legacy well: he trained one of his sons to take over at the head of his own company, and maintained the Pan name as one of the main Hong merchants in Guangzhou even in his retirement.

Secondly, contemporary Chinese sources will be systematically analysed to reconstitute the appearance and functions of gardens owned by the Pan in the Panyu county. The Pan family's continuous strive for social improvement is demonstrated through their residences and gardens. Thirdly, the banquets thrown by Pan Khequa I and II are often represented as a golden era in Western descriptions, when Sino-Western social exchanges were still peaceful in Pre-Opium War Guangzhou. The descriptions left by Westerners are used in this case study as primary sources, and allow the verification of the information gathered from Chinese sources.

From the point of view of Western visitors, Pan residences and gardens were not only a place where lucky guests could enjoy one of the best tables in Guangzhou, but also a rare opportunity to get a glimpse of Chinese family life. The Pan family was in a position of power over most foreign visitors, and used their family residence and gardens as a means to pursue quasi-diplomatic activities. Western sources usually focus on different details than their Chinese counterparts, and notably allow for a detailed analysis of gardening characteristics.

### **Section 1: Building a fortune and keeping it: Pan Khequa I, II and III**

The Pan gardens cannot be analysed without introducing their owners, the Pan 潘 family, which played a prominent role in the Canton System as the longest stable family of Hong merchants. The Pan's trade company Tongwen 同文行 — later renamed Tongfu 同孚行 — was the longest-lasting Hong company, surviving over a hundred years.<sup>321</sup> The Pan Company's longevity is all the more exceptional considering that most Hong merchants tended to go bankrupt in the span of a few years: the only other comparably successful family was the Wu 伍, whose gardens are the subject of the second case study.<sup>322</sup>

Tongwen Company's founder Pan Zhencheng 潘振承 (1714-88), or Pan Khequa (Pan Qiguan 潘启官) as his Western counterparts called him, was the leading Guangzhou merchant for most of his career and one of the few Hong merchants to become a figure of national importance.<sup>323</sup> His family originated from Tong'an 同安 in Fujian province, with ties to the cities of Xiamen and Quanzhou.<sup>324</sup> During his youth he acquired trade experience while working with his father in the Philippines: he notably took part in the Chen 陈 family business in the Sino-Manila trade in the 1720-30s. His resulting experience with what is known as the 'Junk Trade', including gaining a working fluency in Spanish, equipped him with a set of unique skills which became game-changing advantages once he became a Hong merchant.<sup>325</sup> This section will demonstrate how Pan Zhencheng managed to secure unique assets and became the most stable maritime merchant of his time in Guangzhou — and how his descendants inherited these assets successfully. The fortune of successive generations of Pan family members had a direct impact on the number of gardens built during their lifetime, as explained in the next section.

### *Pan Zhencheng's ascension to head of the Hong merchants*

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<sup>321</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 35.

<sup>322</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 61.

<sup>323</sup> This is one of the Western transcriptions of the Chinese Pan Qiguan 潘启官, there were many alternative spellings for his name, depending on the writer's native language. Cheong, p. 14.

<sup>324</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), Reprinted (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2012), p. 339. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 72.

<sup>325</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 62.

The reasons behind Pan Zhencheng's rapid ascension through the ranks of Guangzhou merchants are rooted in his early training with his family in the Sino-Manila trade, yet the backdrop of his rise to fortune was Guangzhou. Van Dyke estimated Pan Zhencheng's arrival in the city around the 1740s, as his first son was born in Guangzhou in 1742.<sup>326</sup> The first actual historical source to attest to his presence in Guangzhou is, as far as is currently known, a Swedish map dated from 1748 where he is named as manager of foreign trade of the 'Dafeng Hang'.<sup>327</sup> This means that, at that time, Pan Zhencheng was working on behalf of the Chen family's *hong*, the Dafeng Hang, and not under his own name or *hong*. Nonetheless, his personal achievements did not go unnoticed: by September 1750 Pan Zhencheng was mentioned in the EIC records as someone of significant trading experience, and just a month later the same records pronounced him to be a trustworthy character.<sup>328</sup> In the following years his influence grew steadily despite his financial setbacks: he contracted debts due to external events that had negatively impacted his main trading partners, the Spanish and Swedes.

The debts he accumulated in the 1750s must have made Pan Zhencheng all the more determined and aggressive in his trading manoeuvres, as in 1760 he made a decisive move by replacing the deceased Beau Khequa at the head of the Hong merchants and co-founding the Cohong guild.<sup>329</sup> This move was calculated to cut the grass under the feet of his Hong rivals, a 'triple alliance' of Chetqua, Cai Hunqua and Swetia.<sup>330</sup> As a result, the Triple Alliance and Pan Zhencheng led the Cohong jointly, but not without internal rivalries. Pan Zhencheng and the Triple Alliance had different sets of personal advantages that, for a time, balanced their respective influence on the Cohong. According to Van Dyke, Cai Hunqua had agency with both Chinese and foreign merchants.

On his side, Pan Zhencheng was in charge of buying luxurious gifts for local officials on behalf of the Hong merchants.<sup>331</sup> These gifts, often constituted of expensive Western clocks and mechanisms obtained at a high price from Western traders, were expected to be offered in

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<sup>326</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 62. Van Dyke's source is the Pan shi zupu p.66 and yi pan tong wen p.3

<sup>327</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 62.

<sup>328</sup> India Office Records, G/12/54 : 1749-1751, 11/09/1750 and 29/10/1750

<sup>329</sup> Cheong, p. 82.

<sup>330</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*. (p.55-6)

<sup>331</sup> India Office Records G/12/145 p.5, Pan Youdu (PKQ II) complains about a gift of chandeliers bought for the Hoppo to send to the emperor (Oct 19th 1803)

turn to higher-ranked officials if a local official did not want to endanger his career. As a result, Pan Zhencheng became a favourite with members of the official ranks in Guangzhou, an influence that he took care to later transfer to his sons.<sup>332</sup> This balance between different merchants was likely engineered by local officials on behalf of the Chinese court. These officials probably viewed the Hong merchants, whose hands were easily tied by diplomatic incidents and whose heads could be replaced whenever convenient, as convenient pawns to fill the Treasury. If such was the view of the Chinese government, it could explain why the Hong merchants' unstable and almost untenable situation was never solved satisfactorily, and why their numbers were constantly fluctuant.

Around the time of his stepping in as the head of the Cohong, the name of Pan Zhencheng's Tongwen Company began to appear in records in place of the Chen.<sup>333</sup> Pan Zhencheng continued to take great pains to assure his family's assets: a credit to his success is that after the Cohong guild was abolished in 1771, his business did not go under — he even took credit for its dissolution, pretending to want to help the EIC obtain better trading terms.<sup>334</sup>

#### *Pan Zhencheng's business acumen: the assets behind his fortune*

When looking into the reasons behind Pan Zhencheng's commercial and diplomatic success, it becomes clear that he secured several key trading relationships and sought to diversify his activities in order to make his business survive when other Hong merchants could not avoid going bankrupt. He maintained a privileged partnership with the Spanish as he spoke their language and had experience in the Manila trade, to the point that Van Dyke considers that Pan Zhencheng had a monopoly on Spanish trade in Guangzhou.<sup>335</sup> The distinguishing trait of Spanish traders was that they were interested in silk rather than tea. Thanks to his family ties in Manila and Fujian, and his trade contacts in both the silk production areas of Nanjing and Guangzhou, Pan Zhencheng managed to satisfy the Spanish demand for silk on his own.

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<sup>332</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 61.

<sup>333</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 65.

<sup>334</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 64.

<sup>335</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 79.



As a result, he was able to secure regular and large amounts of Spanish silver in return.<sup>336</sup> Pan Zhencheng also had special ties with the Swedes, who regularly purchased their tea from him with silver coins obtained from trading in Cadiz against their cargoes of building materials.<sup>337</sup> Finally, he was one of the major suppliers for French ships.

In other words, by making sure to extend a near-monopoly on Spanish, Swedish and French trade, Pan Zhencheng was securing a much-needed commodity: silver. Silver was the main currency used under the Canton System, a much safer asset than bills of debts. This silver would be needed in all Pan Zhencheng's transactions, and could keep his business afloat through sudden disasters such as those that regularly befell Hong merchants: missing ships, external events getting in the way of trade, crops failures, etc. To do so, he must have had at least a rudimentary grasp of the global trade system linking the Spanish and Swedish to the supply of Mexican silver.

Another one of Pan Zhencheng's strengths was to diversify his activities. He took an important part in the Junk Trade on behalf of both the Dafeng Hang and Tongwen companies, facilitated by his family contacts installed in Manila. This often-forgotten source of the Pan's fortune has been recently discussed by Van Dyke, including documents spanning the 1760-70s.<sup>338</sup> Apparently, Pan Zhencheng had managed to secure trading partnerships with the Philippines that no other Hong merchants could. From his early days in the Sino-Manila trade, Pan Zhencheng had learned to look much further than the Chinese coast to spread his business.

The last of his unique assets was a network of relatives and contacts inside the Chinese territory that he could rely on to inform him of any changes in the production and price of materials such as tea and silk. According to the EIC records, Pan Zhencheng sometimes asked his sons to help him with purchases; for example, in 1770 an unnamed son was asked to help secure raw silk when he was stationed in Suzhou.<sup>339</sup> The fact that Pan Zhencheng's family had access to the capital and to areas of Jiangnan where silk was produced would probably

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<sup>336</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 78.

<sup>337</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 80.

<sup>338</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, pp. 81–83.

<sup>339</sup> India Office Records R/10/07, 11th of December 1770 p.49

have had an impact on his family members' knowledge in terms of gardens, as will be discussed later in this chapter. In any case, Pan Zhencheng established sound business principles of controlling information on both production and buyers as close to the source as possible.

By obtaining and maintaining these unique trading assets, Pan Zhencheng succeeded in becoming an exceptional merchant, including, but not only, in his official Hong capacity. The three nations he established a trusting relationship with, along with Junk Trade benefits and an insider's knowledge of tea and silk production, made him an appealing partner for other nations as well. For example, his name is frequently mentioned in the EIC records, both in the context of diplomatic and trading events: Pan Zhencheng would have had enough experience dealing with the EIC to know that it represented a high percentage of Western trade, and that the EIC could therefore use their economic weight to manipulate the market to their advantage.

Pan Zhencheng's greatest strength lay, perhaps, not only in anticipating this fact, but also in his ability to develop unique assets to counteract it by becoming — or appearing to be — the most stable and reliable Hong merchant. Although the EIC, like the Chinese government, had great interest in making sure that none of the Hong merchants reached too high an influence through the Canton System, it was still in the best interest of the British traders to find reliable partners among the Hong merchants. Pan Zhencheng managed to remain solvent or at least appear solvent for such a long time that, even though they disliked his growing influence, the EIC was forced to repeatedly rely on him and his family for lack of a better alternative.

### *Succeeding to Pan Zhencheng: Pan Khequa II and III*

One month after the Cohong was disbanded on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1771, Pan Zhencheng attempted to retire from the trade and handed over the direction of the Tongwen Company to one of his sons.<sup>340</sup> This retirement was not intended to be complete, as he continued to take part in different aspects of the trade and to be relied upon by the local administration. At the very least this semi-retirement gave him the much-wanted freedom to travel back to Fujian,

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<sup>340</sup> Dagregister, entry of 9th March 1771, Archives of the Dutch East India Company number 4407, National Archives, The Hague: as quoted by Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 349.

his native province. This must have been significant to him: previously he had only been able to visit for major events such as family members' deaths, since his key position in the Sino-Western trade had made his presence indispensable in Guangzhou. Another sign of his attachment to his native province is that, although he became the first ancestor listed in the Nengjingtang 能敬堂 Ancestral Hall built on the Pan property in Henan, Pan Zhencheng was also the last of his branch of the family to be buried in Fujian. His semi-retirement was ultimately short, as the governor — or Fouyeun — ordered him back to active duty in 1778.<sup>341</sup>

It should be noted that the most difficult aspect in researching the Pan family lies in the sheer number of its members. Without a good grasp on the Pan family tree and the careers of its members, it can prove difficult to fully understand the circumstances behind the building of their gardens. Determining the identity of the Pan son who was officially left in charge of Tongwen Company in 1771 makes for a good example to illustrate the complexity of the Pan family tree. As the records do not directly name him, proceeding by elimination is one of the most reliable ways to narrow down the possibilities. Out of Pan Zhencheng's seven sons, by 1771 the eldest, Pan Youneng 潘有能 (d.1764), was already dead.<sup>342</sup> The second son Pan Youwei 潘有为 (1744-1821) had been focusing on exams to enter an official career in the capital since 1770 and became a *jinshi* 进士 in 1772.<sup>343</sup> It could therefore have been the third son Pan, Youxun 潘有勋 (d. 1780), who took over the company before dying shortly afterwards.

The date of 1780 corresponds with the appearance in Western records of another Pan relative in connection with the Tongwen Company:<sup>344</sup> that of Conseequa or Kunshuiguan 坤水官. His real name was Pan Changyao 潘长耀, and it appears that he took over some of the Tongwen company's duties around that time — possibly after Pan Youxun's death. Pan Changyao eventually founded his own company, the Liquan 丽泉行, before becoming an official Hong merchant in 1797. It is significant that he was related to Pan Zhencheng, as the gardens of Conseequa were probably the third most often described gardens in Western sources — behind those of the main branches of the Pan and Wu families. It is certain that the Tongwen Company kept going profitably, as Van Dyke estimates that by 1780 Pan Zhencheng had

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<sup>341</sup> India Office Records G/12/62, 1777/06/03, p.11-12

<sup>342</sup> In Liang Jiabin's introduction to Pan Yuecha's *Pan Qi's short biography*

<sup>343</sup> 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*) (Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), p. 700.

<sup>344</sup> Ch'en, pp. 330–31.

become “unrivalled in wealth, power and influence”.<sup>345</sup> The EIC had therefore failed to prevent a Hong merchant from becoming essential to the Canton trade.

This state of prominence would naturally have been challenged by Pan Zhencheng’s death in 1788, depending on who would inherit the ‘Pan Qiguan’ position. It was the fourth son, Pan Youdu 潘有度 (1755-1820), that took over his father’s role as director of the Tongwen Company. Perhaps it is not surprising that Pan Youdu was given preference over his only surviving elder brother at that time, as Pan Youwei was otherwise engaged in pursuing an official career in Beijing. As part of this succession Pan Youdu agreed to share some of the profits with all of the remaining family members.<sup>346</sup> Not much is known about the three youngest brothers, but it is likely that the two surviving elder brothers maintained good relations: after Pan Youwei moved back to Guangzhou he established his own garden in the Pan residence in Henan. Furthermore, Pan Youwei occasionally took part in his brother’s gestures of hospitality towards Westerners, who nicknamed him ‘the Squire’.<sup>347</sup>

Having spent some time working in the Tongwen Company before taking over its management, Pan Youdu continued to run business in much the same fashion as his father, drawing on established assets to maintain a steady reserve of liquidities.<sup>348</sup> Although Pan Youdu renounced the title of head Hong merchant, Western traders soon started to trust him as much as his father -- to differentiate himself from the latter he went by the name Pan Qiguan (or Pan Khequa) II. It was under Pan Youdu’s management that the main extension of the Pan residence and gardens was built in Henan, as will be examined in the next section. It appears that Pan Youdu must have inherited or been trained in business as he displayed many of his father’s qualities, and under his direction the Pan family’s assets are said to have reached 10 million silver dollars in 1820.<sup>349</sup> Pan Khequa II also inherited a number of *hong* or Factories from his father, with a total of four of these buildings’ ownership attributed to the Pan.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 92.

<sup>346</sup> India Office Records G/12/273, 1821/10/11, p.101-107.

<sup>347</sup> India Office Records, G/12/273, 11th of October 1821, p.102

<sup>348</sup> Guodong Chen, ‘潘有度（潘启官二世）：一位成功的洋行商人 (Pan Youdu or Pan Khequa II: A Successful Hong Merchant)’, in *广州十三行沧桑 (The Thirteen Hongs in Guangzhou)* (Guangdongsheng ditu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 150–93 (p. 179).

<sup>349</sup> 1 Mexican silver dollar approximately equals to 0.72 *liang*. Guodong Chen, p. 150.

<sup>350</sup> Paul Van Dyke, ‘The Hume Scroll of 1772 and the Faces behind the Factories’, *Revista de Cultura*, 54 (2017), 64–102 (p. 90).

The complexity of the Pan family tree deepens again when examining the next succession to the ‘Pan Qiguan’ title. According to Chen Guodong, Pan Youdu did not wish to inflict the pains of becoming a Hong merchant upon any of his four sons after his own death, and therefore did not train them to replace him.<sup>351</sup> In order to prepare for his family leaving the spotlights of the Sino-Western trade, Pan Youdu attempted to retire like his father had done. In 1815 he changed the name of the Tongwen Company to ‘Tongfu’ 同孚行, hoping that the company would not have such a prominent role in the Sino-Western trade thereafter. However, when he died in 1820, the local authorities and Western traders relentlessly pressured the Pan family to keep their role in the Canton System, until they accepted to put the Tongfu Company in the hands of one of Pan Youdu’s sons.<sup>352</sup>

Having witnessed his father’s work-related struggles, the eldest son Pan Zhengheng 潘正亨 (1779-1837) was very reluctant to have anything to do with the Canton System, and even told the EIC’s translator Robert Morrison that he would rather be a dog than become a Hong merchant.<sup>353</sup> In the end it was Pan Youdu’s fourth son, Pan Zhengwei 潘正炜 (1791-1850), who was appointed as Pan Qiguan (Puan Khequa) III.<sup>354</sup> With no training for a career in trade, the title of ‘Pan Qiguan III’ was for Pan Zhengwei (炜) in large part honorary: the lion’s share of the work was done by another relative that Westerners named ‘Tinqa’. In elucidating the latter’s identity lies another possibility for confusion: according to Chen, it is likely that Tinqa was in fact Pan Zhengwei 潘正威 (dates unknown), whose name was a homophone of Pan Qiguan III’s name Pan Zhengwei (炜).<sup>355</sup> Since Pan Qiguan III did not speak any foreign languages, Western traders only ever talked to Tinqa, therefore frequently mistaking one for the other in their writings. One thing to keep in mind is that it was Pan Zhengwei (炜) who had a hand in modifying the Pan residence and gardens in Henan. However, it was Pan Zhengwei (威)’s son Pan Shicheng 潘仕成 that would later build the largest garden among all the branches of the Pan family in Lychee Bay: the Haishan xianguan 海山仙馆.

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<sup>351</sup> Guodong Chen, p. 154.

<sup>352</sup> India Office Records R/10/29, 1829/10/05, p.233-234.

<sup>353</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>354</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 343.

<sup>355</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 340.

Under Pan Qiguan III's name, the Tongfu Company steadily lost its economic prominence among other Hong companies, but also avoided having to take part in any risky trade ventures. From 1820 onward, the spotlight was on the new head of the Hong merchants, Howqua, and his Yihe 怡和 Company — whose gardens are the subject of the second case study. As William Hunter phrased it: “The leading members of the Co-Hong, as they were conjointly called at its close, were How-Qua, Mow-Qua, and Pwan-Kei-Qua. The grandfather of the latter had been chief of the Co-Hong in 1785.”<sup>356</sup> As a result, the Tongfu Company was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> highest in taxes paid by Hong merchants in 1824-25 but, thanks to its careful choice of ventures, was also one of only three houses that did not go bankrupt in the period 1830-37.<sup>357</sup> At the signature of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, the Canton System was dismantled and Hong merchants' monopoly on Western trade dispelled. As a result, Pan Zhengwei (炜) chose to voluntarily close the doors of the Tongfu Company: under that name and the previous ‘Tongwen’, it had been the longest standing of all Hong companies.

As part of one of the Treaty of Nanjing's articles, the Chinese government was required to pay a sum of 6 million dollars for the opium lost before the war, 3 million dollars for the debts of Hong merchants to foreign traders, and a further 12 million dollars for “redress for the violent and unjust Proceedings of the Chinese High Authorities towards Her Britannic Majesty's Officer and Subjects”.<sup>358</sup> The Pan family had to contribute around 260,000 dollars to the fine, however in the aftermath Pan Zhengwei (炜) is said to have spent most of his fortune to the benefit of local people and the Chinese government in order to help the war effort.<sup>359</sup> Along with Howqua's son Wu Chongyao 伍崇曜 (1819-1863), Pan Zhengwei (炜) took an active role in organising the local population against the British army, so that the Westerners did not actually gain lasting access to the city itself after the first Opium War.<sup>360</sup> His patriotic activities did not go unrewarded. He received a ‘peacock feather’ 花翎, small recompense for what must have considerably diminished the financial resources, and perhaps the number of properties, of the Pan family.

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<sup>356</sup> William C Hunter, *Bits of Old China* (Taipei: Ch'eng-Wen Pub. Co., 1966), p. 218.

<sup>357</sup> Gang'er Pan, ‘十三行行商潘正炜 (Pan Zhengwei, a Businessman in the Thirteen Hongs)’, in *广州十三行沧桑* (*The Thirteen Hongs in Guangzhou*) (Guangdongsheng ditu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 194–205 (p. 199).

<sup>358</sup> See the text of the Treaty at ‘Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking), 1842’.

<sup>359</sup> *番禺河南小志* (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 343.

<sup>360</sup> Gang'er Pan, pp. 201–2.

While summarising the reasons behind Pan Zhencheng's successful business venture and the following vicissitudes of his company under the management of his descendants, this section also introduced some of the main stakeholders involved in building the gardens covered in the three case studies. The Pan and Wu families were, after all, the only two Hong families to make a lasting mark in history by 'outwitting' the Canton System, and therefore both of their trade histories are necessarily interrelated. Conseequa and Pan Shicheng are also two important figures in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Western descriptions of gardens in Guangzhou. This section examines how Pan Zhencheng obtained his fortune and how it was maintained by his descendants. The following section explores the benefits reaped by Pan Zhencheng himself and his family in terms of social status and living conditions: the fortune gained was notably invested in the education of his sons, and in buying land and building residences with gardens.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> The Canton -Macao dagregisters 1764, it was noted that PanKQ1 used lots of money to support his sons becoming mandarins (tutors) Cynthia Vialle and Paul Van Dyke, *The Canton-Macao Dagregisters 1764*, 1st ed.. (Macau: Instituto Cultural do Governo da RAEdede Macau, 2009), pp. 66–67.

## Section 2: The Pan gardens in Panyu county according to Chinese sources

Although not a scholar himself, Pan Zhencheng had the ambition to improve his family's social condition: in addition to his fortune and reputation, he invested in his sons' education, probably in the hope that they would be able to sit in official examinations and obtain official posts. Stephen Miles estimates that the Pan were the “most successful among maritime merchant in entering the ranks of the city [Guangzhou]'s literati”.<sup>362</sup> Over the years the generations of Pan hired notable scholars to become tutors for their sons, such as Zhang Bingwen 张炳文, Jin Jing'e 金菁莪 and Xie Lansheng 谢兰生.<sup>363</sup> This strive for education and improvement of social status seemed to have been common across all the members of the Fujian-originated Pan Family that settled in Guangzhou (Figure 18) :<sup>364</sup> in an article about regional stone engravings, Zhu Wanzhang was able to name no less than 31 different Pan Family members who had produced a scholarly writing or artistic creation of some sorts.<sup>365</sup> This section will demonstrate that Pan Zhencheng and his descendants used the exceptional fortune raised through the Tongwen Company to boost their social status, notably by being garden owners.

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<sup>362</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 35.

<sup>363</sup> Miles, p.64.

<sup>364</sup> Including also those of Pan Zhencheng's relatives who established their own family in Guangzhou after him, such as Pan Changyao (Conseequa) & Pan Shicheng's father Pan Zhengwei (威).

<sup>365</sup> Wanzhang Zhu, ‘潘氏家族与岭南刻帖 (The Pan family and the Lingnan inscription)’, in *广州十三行沧桑 (The thirteen hongts in Guangzhou)* (Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng ditu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 129–44 (pp. 131–34).



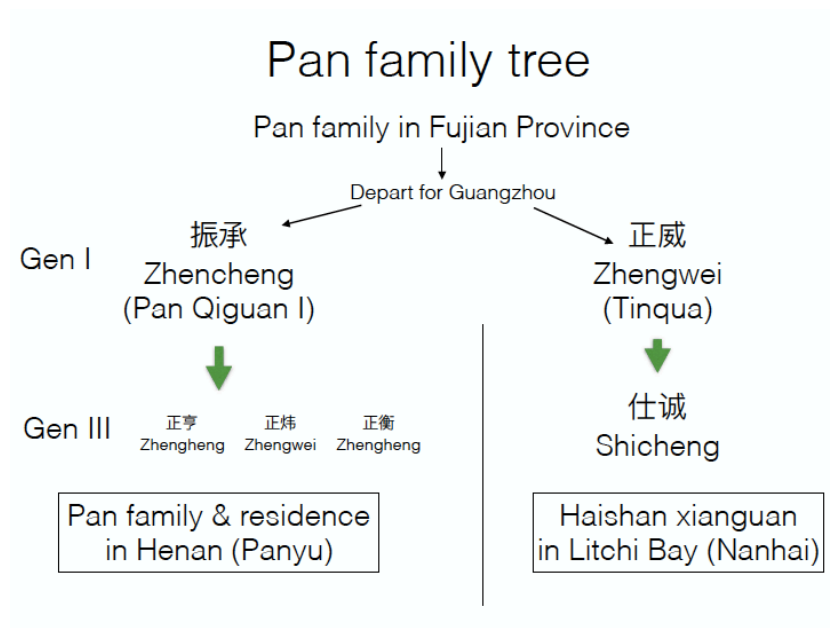


Figure 18 Simplified family tree for the broader Fujian-Pan family

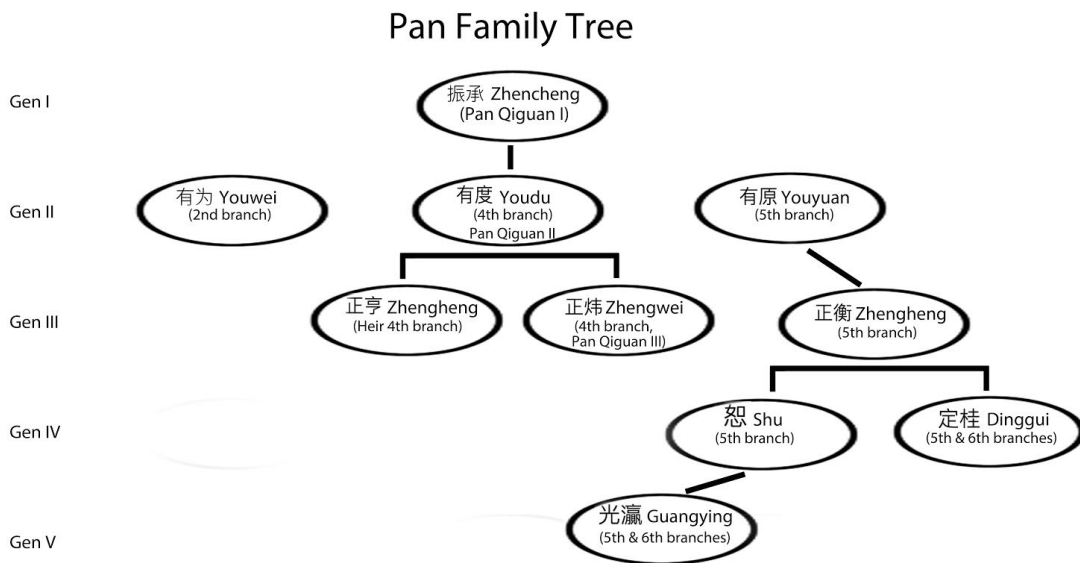
The two case studies in this thesis are focused on the Pan and Wu properties located on the southern banks of the Pearl River in Henan and Huadi (Panyu county): these are better known and more extant than the Pan properties located on the northern side of the Pearl River (Nanhai county). As the map shows, the Pan family's Henan properties are also in direct proximity to those of the Wu family, of the second case study (see number 3 on Figure 19).<sup>366</sup> These two families constitute 41% of all entries in the 'private residences 第宅' section of the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, and a much larger percentage in terms of space since theirs are the longest entries. In Huadi, the Dongyuan garden was built by the Pan, and later bought by the Wu family under which it changed name to 'Fuyinyuan'. Although owning land on the northern bank of the Pearl River was more prestigious, it was only on the southern side that the two major Hong families could find the space to compete in terms of social status by sponsoring social events and cultural developments, and displaying their luxurious living conditions.

<sup>366</sup> This map was adapted from Plan of the city and suburbs of Canton compiled by the Quarter-master generals department Chinese expeditionary force, dated of October 1857 and kept in Cambridge University Library, UK, as mentioned in the Background chapter. It was published before in Josepha Richard, 'Uncovering the Garden of the Richest Man on Earth in Nineteenth-Century Canton: Howqua's Garden in Honam, China', *Garden History*, 43.2 (2015), 168–81 (p. 170).



Figure 19 Simplified map of Guangzhou, adapted by L. Feng from *Plan of the city and suburbs of Canton compiled by the Quarter-master generals department Chinese expeditionary force, October 1857* Cambridge University Library, UK. Legend: 1. Conjectural location of the Fuyinyuan in Huadi; 2. Wu Residence in Henan; 3. Pan Residence in Henan; 4. Ocean's Banner Temple; 5. Thirteen Factories; 6. Conjectural location of the Wu's house in Xiguan.

In order to reconstitute the Pan residences with gardens located on the southern bank of the river, this section takes the shape of a selective and critical summary of the information contained in Chinese sources. One of the basis for this section is the rearrangement of information contained in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*: the Pan family owned 22 out of the 100 residences and buildings mentioned in the 'private residence 第宅' section of the gazetteer. Completed with other primary and secondary sources such as the poems of Zhang Weiping, the Pan-owned entries of the 'private residence' section provide a basis for comparison with the information contained in Western sources as discussed in the next section.



**Figure 20** Simplified Pan family tree focusing on the main family members mentioned in this section.

When it comes to the Pan family’s Henan properties, the sources are not always clearly stating if the buildings and gardens were all located inside the same Pan residence, if they were smaller parts of the residence, or even just renovations of already existing parts of the residence recorded under a new name. Moreover, precise information regarding the dates of construction is rarely available, but the name of the owner is always recorded, therefore the most systematic way to organise these gardens was under their respective owner’s generation in the Pan family tree.<sup>367</sup>

For the sake of convenience, in this section Pan Zhencheng will be referred to as ‘Pan senior’, as he is the first ancestor in Guangzhou and therefore constitute the first generation of the Pan family in Henan. Pan senior’s descendants will be analysed according to their generations, placed in the order of hierarchical authority that they would have held in the residence – which is not always based on birth precedence. The seven sons of Pan senior led to the family being classified according to seven ‘family branches’, with some disappearing when no heirs were born, and some branches being inherited across the family tree. To facilitate comprehension, a visual reminder of the Pan family tree will be given for each generation (Figure 20).

<sup>367</sup> The family tree in Figure 20 was compiled from information in the Pan genealogy: Zuyao Pan, 河阳世系潘氏族谱 (*Genealogy of the Pan clan*), 1994.

## 1. The First generation: Pan Zhencheng or Pan Senior

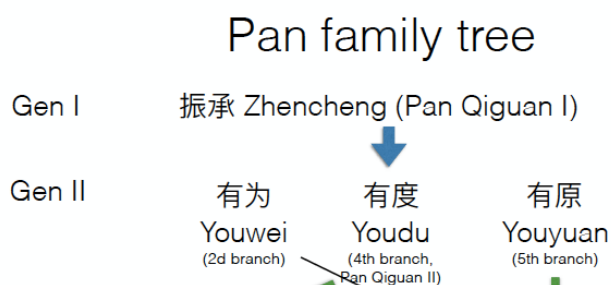


Figure 21 Extract of the simplified Pan family tree, Generation I & II

The first generation (Figure 21) designates Pan Zhengcheng or Pan Senior, who founded a new ancestor hall in Henan after immigrating from Fujian province. Other members of the Fujian-based Pan family also later settled in Guangzhou, and should not be confused with the Henan-based family that is the subject of this section (Figure 18).

### The Dongyuan in Huadi

The oldest garden created by the Pan family in Panyu county is probably the Dongyuan 东园, located in Huadi, west of Henan. In his article on the Dongyuan, Wenling Ren from Guangzhou Provincial Museum delivered a convincing analysis of the different dates and names associated with the Dongyuan, and estimated that this garden was built by Pan Zhengcheng or Pan senior towards the end of his life.<sup>368</sup> This information is extracted from a poem written by Pan senior's son Pan Youwei (1744 -1821) about one of his visits to the garden during the mourning of his father:

The Dongyuan was located in old Cetoucun. There [in the Dongyuan] my late [deceased] father grew selected plants and flowers to sooth his mind in his old age. From 1770 when I proceeded to the north [for an official appointment in Beijing], until I returned to the south [from Beijing to Guangzhou] on my father's death in 1788 with my mother, I had not been to this place. I was moved to recall the past, broken-hearted by sad memories, and was moved to spontaneously write ten quatrains poems. 册头村旧辟东园，选树蒔花，为先大夫暮年怡情之所。自庚寅北上迄遭讳南还，辛亥奉母版舆来停于此，感时追昔，触处伤怀，漫成十绝句。<sup>369</sup>

<sup>368</sup> Ren, p. 47.

<sup>369</sup> The name appears as Cetoucun or Huatoucun depending on the sources. Pan Youwei 潘有为：《南雪巢诗

Pan Youwei left Guangzhou in 1770 because he had obtained the *juren* degree in Shuntian prefecture (Beijing), and in 1772 was a candidate in the imperial examination for Metropolitan Graduate *jinshi*. Afterwards he could only obtain an official position as Secretary in the Grand Secretariat in the Central Drafting Office, a relatively low position of the rank 7b compared to his competences.<sup>370</sup> Pan Youwei notably worked on proofreading the compilation of the *Siku quanshu* 《四库全书》, but the Guangzhou City Gazetteer reports that this appointment did not go well because of quarrels with influential figures.<sup>371</sup>

The death of his father in 1788 and the following mourning might have been an occasion to retire from this position honourably. According to this poem, Pan Youwei had first left for Beijing in 1770 and did not return to Guangzhou until the death of Pan senior 1788. This makes of the year 1770 a convincing *terminus ante-quem*: in order for Pan Youwei to have memories of his family in the garden, the Dongyuan would have needed to have been built in or before 1770. If correct, these dates would make of the Dongyuan the oldest of Pan's gardens south of the river, and the only garden construction that sources indicate to be directly linked to Pan senior.

The Dongyuan remained in the possession of the Pan family until 1846 when it changed owners. It is in the writings of Zhang Weiping 张维屏 (1780-1859) that the year of 1846 can be found. A Panyu-born poet of some local renown, Zhang Weiping's testimony is credible as during his childhood he lived for nine years in the Dongyuan.<sup>372</sup> His father Zhang Bingwen was hired as tutor by the Pan family to school several of their family members. Zhang Bingwen had earned a *juren* degree, and his son became one of the period's best known poets in Guangzhou.<sup>373</sup> As he had gone to school with the Pan sons, Zhang Weiping was particularly close to Pan senior's family.<sup>374</sup>

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钞》 (*A Nest on the South Bank Snow - A Collection of Verses*) quoted in Jianhua Chen, 广州大典 (*Literary cannon of Guangzhou*), ed. by Chunliang Cao (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2015), LVI, pp. 456, booklet 30.

<sup>370</sup> See 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p. 700. The translation for 官内阁中书 is taken from Charles Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in Imperial China* (Stanford Calif: Stanford University Press, 1985).

<sup>371</sup> 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p. 700.

<sup>372</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 33.

<sup>373</sup> It is probably Zhang Bingwen that is alluded to as Pan Shu's 'gongsheng' tutor in Pan Shu's biography in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p.344.

<sup>374</sup> Pan Zhengheng (亨) and Pan Zhengwei were respectively the first and fourth sons of Pan Youdu, son of Pan senior. They are introduced in more details a bit later in the 'Henan' part of this section.

It is not far-fetched to think that whoever hired Zhang Bingwen (perhaps Pan Youdu) wished for the Zhang and Pan families to grow closer, in order to bring the Pan family one step closer to the scholarly circles of Guangzhou. In any case, as a result of this friendship, Zhang Weiping was able to leave in an annotation to a poem both the date of his last stay in the Dongyuan (1837) and that the garden had already changed names and ownership in 1846.<sup>375</sup> Considering that Zhang Weiping was likely to be aware of the Pan family's state of affairs, it seems reasonable to accept the date of 1846 as correct: the Dongyuan was then bought by the Wu 伍 family, and its name changed to Fuyinyuan 馥荫园. The Fuyinyuan's history, in other words the history of the Dongyuan under the ownership of the Wu family, will be discussed in the next case study.

It is important to situate Zhang Weiping in Guangzhou's social circles, as he repeatedly wrote poems on the Pan gardens. His father Zhang Bingwen had ancestry in Zhejiang province, and married into a salt merchant family from Hunan province whom owned a residence in Guangzhou's New City. The Zhang family also claimed to be descending from famous local Guangdong poet Zhang Jiuling 张九龄 (673-740). Zhang Weiping took part in the Xuehaitang Academy's examinations then in 1822 passed the imperial examinations in Beijing and became a county official in Hebei province as a result.<sup>376</sup>

In Guangzhou, Zhang Weiping established his own garden in Henan – the Tingsongyuan (Garden of listening to the pines) 听松园 – and regularly visited the city's elite and their gardens. Thus in addition to recording his childhood memories, he also left records of his social life and garden visits. Zhang Weiping's writings are invaluable resources to document the social life of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou's elite, notably when it comes to Pan's residences and gardens. Without his testimony, it would be especially difficult to sort the discrepancy that appears in the recorded names of the Dongyuan garden: one such confusing example appears in the *Continuation to the Panyu Gazetteer*, with what appears to be a description of the Dongyuan being labelled as the 'Liusongyuan' (Six pines garden) 六松园 :

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<sup>375</sup> Zhang Weiping'eipingeping 《听松园诗》 (Poems on the Garden for Listening to the pines) in Zhang Weiping, 张南山全集 (*Complete Collection of Zhang Nanshan's Writings*) (Guangzhou: Guangdong gaodengjiaoyu chubanshe, 1993), II, p. 502.

<sup>376</sup> Lin Botong passage about merchants and scholars sons Miles p.71 Lin Botong, Xiubentang ji, 4.4a as cited in Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 105.

“The Liusongyuan is located in Huadi Huatoucun. During the Qianlong period, Pan Youwei built it to give to relatives. There is a wind kiosk and water pavilion, as well as two old lychee trees that were moved from Fujian to Guangzhou. Today the trees remain. After the garden was bought by the Wu family, its name was changed to ‘Fuyin’. 六松园，在花埭栅头村。乾隆间潘有为筑以奉亲者。风亭水榭，并有老荔两株，自闽移至。今尚存。园后归伍氏，易名‘馥荫’。”<sup>377</sup>

Wenling Ren underlined that Zhang Weiping never mentioned the name of Liusongyuan in relation to the Dongyuan or to Huadi.<sup>378</sup> There is little doubt that a Garden of Six Pines was at some point in possession of the Pan’s family as a descendant of the cousin Pan family, Pan Yizeng 潘仪增 (1858-?) left a description of the garden’s pines:

The old house is located to the West of the city, and includes the Six Pines [Garden]. [...] One tree grows by the southern bridge, a curbed branch wide like a coiled dragon. Three trees compete in vegetal elegance, and suddenly appear as three elegant pearls. Two trees have long since withered [...]. “城西老苔屋，有园名六松。取法六君子，建自中翰公。一株植桥南，虬枝如蟠龙。三株竞森秀，恍与三珠同。两株久已萎 [...]”<sup>379</sup>

Although this description was written by a member of the cousin Pan family and therefore has some credibility, Pan Yizeng was not yet born at the time of the Dongyuan’s creation therefore the description is to be taken with a grain of salt.<sup>380</sup>

As Ren underlines, it is unlikely that Pan Yizeng could have actually been schooled in the Dongyuan at that date: if we believe Zhang Weiping’s description then the garden had belonged to the Wu family since 1846, well before Pan Yizeng’s birth in 1858. Therefore one of the most likely hypotheses is that the *Guangzhou City Gazetteer* and later sources based on that gazetteer got the two gardens confused. Such a confusion would be easily explained by what Wang calls the members of Panfamily’s “special fondness for pines”:<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Guangdong County Gazetteer, 番禺县续志 (*Continuation of the Panyu County Gazetteer*), Reprinted (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2000), p. 569, ff. 40.19a.

<sup>378</sup> Ren, p. 49.

<sup>379</sup> Pan Yizeng 潘仪增: 《松园诗，仿吴梅邨西田诗意》 (Poem of the pine garden, imitates Wu Mei’s ‘The field in the west of the village’ rural atmosphere) as cited in Ren, p. 50.

<sup>380</sup> Pan Yizeng’s birth is mentioned in Ren, p.51.

<sup>381</sup> Wang, Lo, and British Library, p.103.

the Pan repeatedly used the word ‘pine’ when naming their properties and writings, some of which will be described further in this section. It would indeed be understandable if this profusion of ‘pines’ led to a few misattributed names. Another hypothesis would be that of Wang Cicheng who wrote that the Liusongyuan garden could be just another name for Pan Youwei’s Nanxuechao garden located in Henan.<sup>382</sup>

A number of Chinese sources can be drawn upon in order to reconstitute the appearance of the Dongyuan. Zhang Weiping’s descriptions of the Dongyuan under the Pan ownership imply that the garden did not contain many buildings: For example in 1846 Zhang Weiping wrote in his 《重过东园有感》 (Thoughts on visiting the Dongyuan): “In former days the garden had natural appeal, now the pavilions and kiosks give it a human [appeal]. 昔日园林有天趣，今番亭榭属人为。”<sup>383</sup>

In his longest description of the Dongyuan, he notes that the gardens does not have terraces or kiosks but is suitable for seclusion: “Although it does not have terraces & kiosks pleasing to the eyes, but it has many private groves and streams to delight in seclusion. 虽无台榭美观，颇有林泉幽趣。”<sup>384</sup> His description is akin to an enumeration of garden elements, with corridors, ponds, fish, and a wide array of vegetation. The most poetic aspects of his description suggests that there were birds on the branches and fireflies in the grass, but could be understood as a more generic description of a summer atmosphere in a garden: “The bird sings with a melodious voice on the branch, sings along with the child. The fireflies in the grass come to illuminate the characters written by the ancients. 枝上好鸟，去和孺子之歌；草间流萤，来照古人之字。”<sup>385</sup>

On the whole, Zhang Weiping described trees, plants and flowers more precisely than other elements: as a result Ren hypothesised that vegetation was the main charm of the

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<sup>382</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>383</sup> Zhang Weiping’s 《东园杂诗》并序 (Preface to the Miscellaneous poems on the Dongyuan) in Zhang Weiping, 张南山全集 (*Complete Collection of Zhang Nanshan’s Writings*) (Guangzhou: Guangdong gaodengjiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), III, p. 535.

<sup>384</sup> Zhang Weiping 张维屏: 《东园杂咏》诗序 (Preface to the Miscellaneous poems on the Dongyuan) Ren, p. 49.

<sup>385</sup> Zhang Weiping’s 《东园杂诗》并序 (Preface to the Miscellaneous poems on the Dongyuan) in Zhang Weiping, 张南山全集 (*Complete Collection of Zhang Nanshan’s Writings*), III, p. 536.



Dongyuan.<sup>386</sup> In the preface to the *Miscellaneous poems on the Dongyuan* 《东园杂咏》 the list of vegetation includes bamboo, lichen and lotus flowers. He moreover enumerated a number of fruits and vegetables cultivated for the household's meals: Chinese cabbage, tangerine, pomelo, green vegetables and fruits.<sup>387</sup> He notes that the garden contained five old Chinese junipers that locals named 'water pines' – one of which was hundred years old with a trunk reaching to the sky. These 'water pines' 水松 probably correspond to the *Glyptostrobus pensilis* or Chinese swamp cypress: their number might be an additional reason why some sources confused the Dongyuan garden with the Pan Youwei's 'Six Pines Garden'. Zhang Weiping also mentioned how the vegetation helped cool the heat of the sub-tropical Guangzhou climate:

“The house is shrouded in an atmosphere of sweet scent, because different species of flowers were growing in all seasons. The scorching heat in the atmosphere disappeared, the trees relieved from the heat & attracted the wind.” 异香绕屋，种成四季之花。炎氛消涤，树解招风。”<sup>388</sup>

In the *Yongdongyuan ten quatrains* 《咏东园十绝句》 Zhang Weiping also described pines, lotuses, lychees, a flower nursery, as well as kapok and plum tree(s). Pan Youwei described the vegetation in more detail, as for example this mention of lychees:

In the garden the fragrant lychees grew very well, when they were about to be ripe, bats land on and cover them. About midnight the lychee seeds fall like rain. Someone ordered to use firecrackers to scare them away. Even so, when the harvest arrived, only 2-3 out of 10 were actually left, that's all. 园中香荔种极佳，将熟，蝙蝠罗伏，夜半坠核如雨，命燃爆竹警之。夏至收其实，十存二三而已。<sup>389</sup>

To summarise, Zheng Weiping's descriptions of the Dongyuan depict what seems to be a simple garden, with few buildings but a pond with fish and a variety of plant species. As for now the number of sources for the Dongyuan is greatly limited and mostly reduced to Zhang Weiping's writings; but there are more precise sources to draw from concerning the garden

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<sup>386</sup> Ren, pp. 48–49.

<sup>387</sup> Zhang Weiping's 《东园杂诗》并序 (Preface to the Miscellaneous poems on the Dongyuan) in Zhang Weiping, 张南山全集 (*Complete Collection of Zhang Nanshan's Writings*) (Guangzhou: Guangdong gaodengjiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), III, p. 535.

<sup>388</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>389</sup> Pan Youwei, 《咏东园十绝句》 (*Yongdongyuan ten quatrains*) in Jianhua Chen, 广州大典 (*Literary cannon of Guangzhou*), ed. by Chunliang Cao (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2015), LVI, pp. 457, booklet 30.

after it changed hands and was renamed Fuyinyuan, as will be seen in the second case study. This description of a simple garden centred on vegetation would correspond with the above mentioned poem by Pan Youwei stating that Pan senior had planted this garden for his own pleasure in his old age. Pan senior had not been educated as his sons would be, and therefore by building his garden he could not aspire to reach the level of elegance of a scholar. Although not grand, the fact that someone of Zhang Weiping's talents and status recorded his garden still demonstrates the Pan's growing social clout.

### **Founding the Pan property in Henan**

The largest of properties owned by Pan senior's branch of the family was located in Henan. There are two main indications of its size: one is that Pan senior bought a plot of land of more than ten *qing* in length for ritual purposes, presumably in addition to the land necessary for the residence.<sup>390</sup> The second is the number of family members who are recorded to have owned a part of the residence: to host such a large family would require a relatively large estate. Pan senior chose to establish the family's settlement on the western side of the Longxi Stream 龙溪涌 (See number 3 in Figure 22) and the area was thereafter named the 'Black Dragon Ridge' 乌龙冈, after the village in Fujian province where he was born.<sup>391</sup>

Pan senior seemed to have had an interest in developing the Black Dragon Ridge as he notably helped to improve the area by building three bridges in 1770.<sup>392</sup> To this day, there are still some buildings and street names linked with the Pan family in this area of Henan.<sup>393</sup> Following the Pan, other Fujianese families also started to settle nearby: for example the residence of the Wu family that will be discussed in the second case study, was located in between the Pan residence and the Ocean's Banner Temple.

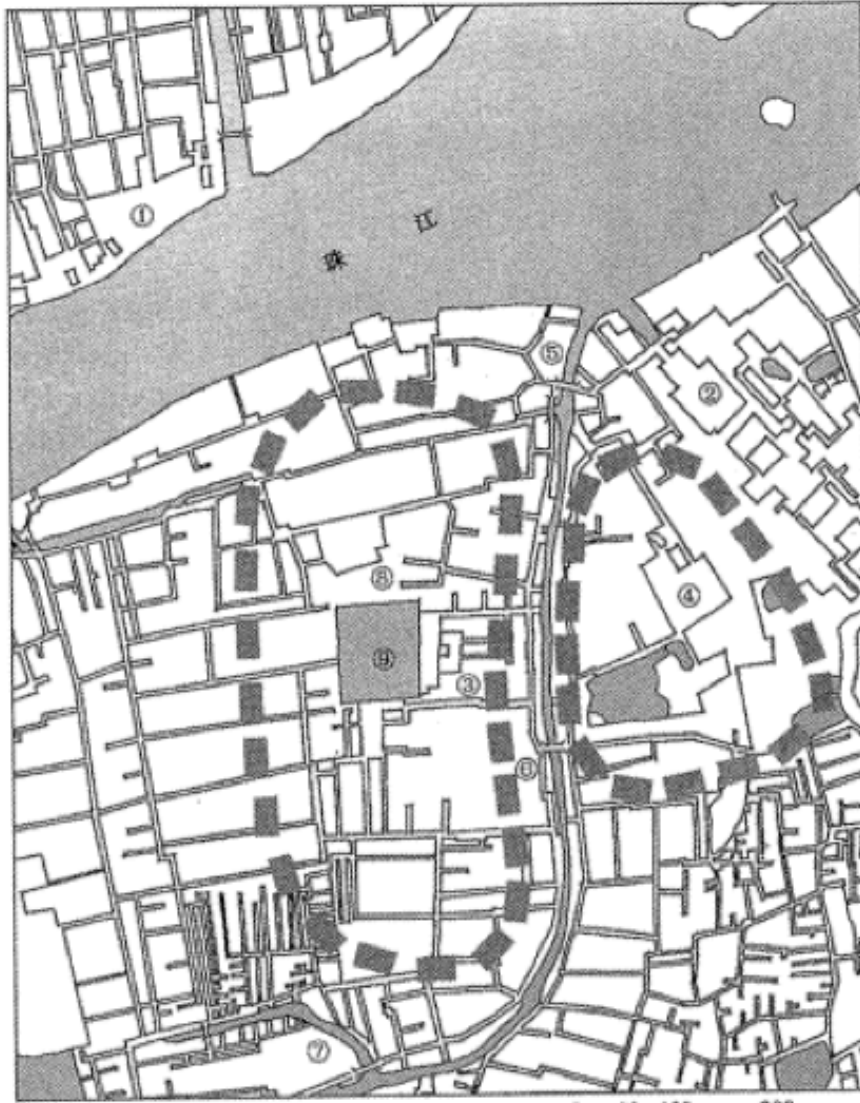
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<sup>390</sup> The length of the parcel is mentioned in Zhang Xilin 张锡麟's 《矩园文钞》下 and in Pan Jianqing's memorial inscription 《潘谏卿墓志》 (Jianqing is the *hao* of Pan Shizheng 潘师征, 4th generation 4th house, father of Pan Baolin 潘宝琳) as cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 339. The location of Longxi is found repeatedly in the 'Mansion 第宅' section of 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*). 1 *qing*=100 *mu*. 1 *mu* is equivalent to 806.65 square yards, 0.165 acre, or 666.5 square metres. 'Mou | Chinese Unit of Measurement', *Encyclopedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/science/mou>> [accessed 4 May 2018].

<sup>391</sup> Mo, p. 334.

<sup>392</sup> The date of 1770 comes from 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p. 701. Also cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 339.

<sup>393</sup> Bo Qin, Bing Li, and Guorong Li, 清朝洋商秘档 (*Secret Records of Foreign Trade in Qing Dynasty*), Di 1 ban. (Beijing: Jiu zhou chu ban she, 2010), p. 132.



注：运河以西原为潘家花园，以东原为伍家花园，图中虚线示两家花园大致范围。运河后被填平，现为步行街，下设暗管。

①十三行地区，今南方大厦一带 ②海幢寺 ③潘家祠堂 ④伍家祠堂  
⑤漱珠桥 ⑥环珠桥 ⑦跃龙桥 ⑧潘家花园之南甃地段 ⑨潘家花园之方塘，后被填平，现为栢栏南街小学

Figure 22 Simplified map of Henan, zoomed on Pan and Wu properties. Number 1 indicates the foreign trader's Factories, 2: Ocean Banner's Temple, 3: the Pan residence, 4: the Wu residence, 5: the Shuzhu Bridge 6&7: other bridges built by Pan senior, 8: the Nanshu 9: a geometric pond in the Pan residence. In *Gardens of Guangzhou maritime merchants*

According to Mo Bozhi, Pan senior started the construction of the Pan residence around 1776 by building an ancestral hall, whose name was Nengjingtang 能敬堂.<sup>394</sup> However the source for this date is not clearly stated, and otherwise the only recorded date so far for Pan senior's activities in that area is that of 1770 for the bridges — including the Shuzhu Bridge 漱珠桥 (See number 5 in Figure 22). The range of dates from 1770 to 1776 would put the Henan residence chronologically later than the Dongyuan in Huadi. Although the whole compound was built with the fortune first established by Pan senior, it was actually under his sons that gardens are first mentioned in the Henan residence, and then were added to or remodelled by his descendants. The map published in Mo Bozhi's article (Figure 22) seems accurate when it comes to the location of bridges (numbers 5, 6 & 7) and an approximation of the Pan residence's size (number 3), but the particulars inside the residence (numbers 8 & 9) are based on a photograph of 1908 and therefore should be taken with caution.<sup>395</sup>

## 2. The Second Generation: Pan Youdu and Pan Youwei

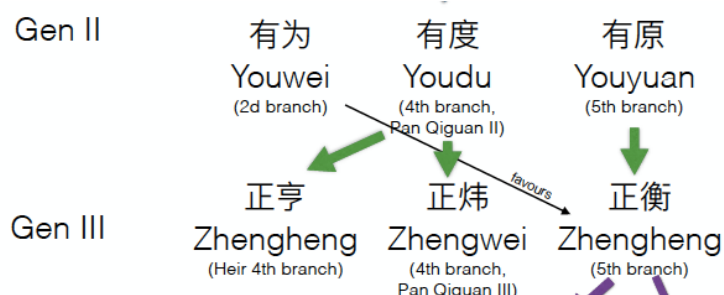


Figure 23 Extract of the simplified Pan family tree, Generations II & III

The second generation (Figure 23) corresponds to Pan senior's sons: apart from the second (Pan Youwei) and fourth (Pan Youdu), the other sons were not much recorded in Chinese and Western sources except for being the fathers of later descendants.

### Pan Youdu's Nanshu

Pan Zhencheng had spent considerable amounts of money to support his sons becoming mandarins, which might explain why Pan Youdu obtained an official post of Bureau Vice Director Expectant Appointee and later was promoted through merit to Salt Distribution

<sup>394</sup> The date is suggested in Mo, p. 334. The name of the hall is also cited in Qin, Li, and Li. (p.132)

<sup>395</sup> Mo, p. 339.

Commissioner.<sup>396</sup> After Pan senior's death in 1788, Pan Youdu became the head of Tongwen Company and improved the residence. There are several geographical names indicated at the beginning of the Pan-owned entries in the 'private residence' section of the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*. The most frequent are 'Longxi village' 龙溪乡, 'Shuzhu bridge' 河南漱珠桥 and 'Xizha' 西栅, the latter two being more precise locations inside of Longxi village. Therefore most of the buildings and gardens were probably built inside the same large Pan residence, the compound perhaps fluctuating in size as the family grew and shrank.

It is unclear if having inherited the title of 'Pan Qiguan' allowed Pan Youdu to replace his father as the head of the Henan residence – instead of his older brother Pan Youwei. It seems likely as Pan Youdu's eldest son Pan Zhengheng (亨) later inherited the first branch of the family from his deceased uncle Pan Youneng 潘有能 (1742-1764).<sup>397</sup> Nonetheless the money necessary to maintain and expand the residence would have come from Pan Youdu's efforts. At this period, the Henan residence was composed of living quarters, the aforementioned ancestral hall and a garden. According to Mo Bozhi, the whole enclosure including the ancestral hall would have reached a surface of approximately 20 hectares, a good size considering that the city of Guangzhou was very populated and land was therefore an important commodity.<sup>398</sup> The Nanshu (Southern Villa) 南墅 was Pan Youdu's part of the Pan residence in Henan. Zhang Weiping recorded that the Nanshu was located to the south of the Shuzhu bridge.<sup>399</sup> It is possible that Nanshu was the name of the residence's garden, but it might also have been used to refer to the residence without the ancestral hall.

According to Zhang Weiping, who was Pan's neighbour in Henan, one of Nanshu's main features was a rectangular pond with a surface of many *mu*.<sup>400</sup> The pond was crossed by a bridge and surrounded by a number of 'water pines'.<sup>401</sup> There were notably a couple of interlaced 'water pines', whose embrace inspired the name of the neighbouring hall Yisong

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<sup>396</sup> Wang, Lo, and British Library, p.103.

<sup>397</sup> Zuyao Pan, 河阳世系潘氏族谱 (*Genealogy of the Pan clan*), p.70.

<sup>398</sup> Mo.p.334.

<sup>399</sup> Zhang Weiping: 《艺谈录》下 (Record of talks on the literati arts, lower volume) as cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 112.

<sup>400</sup> Zhang Weiping: 《国朝诗人征略》 (Brief notes on poets of our dynasty) as cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 112.

<sup>401</sup> Zhang Weiping: 《国朝诗人征略》 (Brief notes on poets of our dynasty) as translated in Wang, Lo, and British Library, p. 103.

(Hall of the brotherly affection of pines) 义松堂.<sup>402</sup> This hall's name is probably at the origin of the name of Pan Youdu's *Yisongtang yigao* 《义松堂遗稿》: as there is no evidence of a garden by this name, it is likely that Stephen Miles was mistaken when he wrote that Zhang Weiping studied in the 'Yisongyuan (Garden of the righteous pines)'.<sup>403</sup>

The main hall of the garden was called Shushi shanfang (Mountain Lodge for Rinsing by the Stream and Reclining on rocks [as a hermit]) 漱石山房.<sup>404</sup> The 'mountain' in this hall's name was probably referring to the nearby Wansongshan hill (Myriad Pines Mountain) near the Ocean's Banner Temple.<sup>405</sup> On the side of this hall was located a smaller building named Jiezhou (Mustard Seed Boat) 芥舟.<sup>406</sup> This 'Mustard Seed Boat' is a reference to Zhuangzi's *Xiaoyaoyou* 《逍遥游》. As such it probably means that the Jiezhou was a *chuanting* (boat hall) or *fang* (boat-shaped building): usually built close to water, these buildings were meant to be metaphors for actual boats, and visitors were invited to imagine that they were travelling on a watercourse.

Zhang Weiping described the Nanshu as an idyllic background with “a bridge of wind and mountains, and a myriad greens drinking the water”.<sup>407</sup> He also recorded how he used to linger in the Nanshu with Pan Zhengheng (亨), Chen Tingyang 陈廷杨, and their tutor Jin Jing'e to write poetry or study classics.<sup>408</sup> They were occasionally joined by three others to drink, sing, play the *qin* and the flute, paint and calligraph.<sup>409</sup> From Zhang's testimony it appears that the Nanshu was therefore a suitable meeting place for young scholars and merchant's sons. This is no wonder as under Pan Youdu, the Nanshu as described above contained most of the main elements to be expected in a Chinese gardens, except for rocks – these were not mentioned in sources but the garden could have contained some.

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<sup>402</sup> Mo, p. 335.

<sup>403</sup> Miles, p. 64.

<sup>404</sup> This translation was given in Wang, Lo, and British Library, p.103.

<sup>405</sup> 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p. 697.

<sup>406</sup> Zhang Weiping 《国朝诗人征略》 (Brief notes on poets of our dynasty) as cited in Wang, Lo, and British Library, p. 103

<sup>407</sup> A translation from Wang, Lo, and British Library, p.103.

<sup>408</sup> Zhang Weiping indicates that Chen Tingyang is a second son. Perhaps Tingyang belonged to the Chen family that also lived in Longxi village according to 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p. 700.

<sup>409</sup> Zhang Weiping's 《听松庐骈文钞》三 (Parallel prose from the Hut for Listening to the pines) and preface to 《回波词》 (Ci poems of the Returning Waves) as cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 112.

## Pan Youwei's Nanxuechao

After returning to Guangzhou in 1788, Pan senior's second son Pan Youwei (1744 -1821) added to the Pan residence, by building the Nanxuechao (Nest of Southern Snow) 南雪巢. Since in the gazetteer its location is recorded as 'Henan Shuzhu bridge', it could be that the Nanxuechao was either located in or north to the Nanshu.<sup>410</sup> The Nanxuechao was constructed on a historically significant location in Henan: this used to be the spot where the Han dynasty poet Yang Fu 杨孚 lived.<sup>411</sup> Pan Youwei made good use of this historical antecedent to bring a poetic reminder in the name of his garden. As he wrote in *Annotations to Nanxuechao poetry* 《南雪巢诗抄》:

Originally there was no snow in Guangdong. After official Yang Fu transplanted pines from the Songshan mount in Henan and planted them all over the banks of the Pearl River, it started to have snow piling up in the peaks. 粤本无雪，汉议杨孚移嵩山松柏遍植珠江南岸，始有雪巢其巅。<sup>412</sup>

The name, 'Nest of Southern Snow' was therefore a way to refer elegantly to Yang Fu's legendary modification of Henan's landscape upon his arrival in Guangzhou, a gardening feat that Pan Youwei was perhaps trying to emulate for himself.<sup>413</sup> The fact that Yang Fu had to move from the north to the south might have also resonated with Pan Youwei, as we can surmise that he was left unsatisfied in his official ambitions. The Nanxuechao was also called Julüchenguang shangguan (The mountain dwelling of the autumnal colours) 橘绿橙黄山馆。<sup>414</sup>

Immediately after the entrance of the garden was a pond of several *qing* adorned with numerous lotus flowers.<sup>415</sup> Although the elements of the scenery are otherwise kept relatively unspecific, it is noted in the *Guangdong provincial gazetteer* that the garden contained two lychee trees that had been transplanted from Fujian province. Such precise information regarding the species and number of the lychee trees leaves room for interpretation. It is

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<sup>410</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 114.

<sup>411</sup> Pan Youwei 潘有为: 《南雪巢诗抄》 (Nanxuechao poetry – notes) in Yizeng Pan, 番禺潘氏略诗 (*Concise Collection of Poetry of the Pan Family in Panyu*), 1894, p.5.

<sup>412</sup> 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p. 687. Also Qi, p. 24.

<sup>413</sup> 'Mou | Chinese Unit of Measurement', *Encyclopedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/science/mou>> [accessed 4 May 2018].

<sup>414</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>415</sup> Guangdong County Gazetteer, p. 569.

possible that it was an important part of the garden's scenery: Pan Youwei might have imitated Yang Fu's transplantation of the pines by bringing these lychee trees from his native Fujian. Another possibility is that the transplantation of these lychee trees might have taken place simultaneously with the set of lychees trees located in the Dongyuan garden – in which case the planting of the lychee trees preceded the building of the garden. A third explanation would be that either Pan Feisheng in his description of the Liusongyuan, or the editor of the gazetteer got the location of those lychee trees confused with each other, and that there was only one set.

In the *Guangdong county gazetteer* it is recorded that the Nanshu contained a collection of paintings, calligraphies and bronze vessels, probably a reminder of Pan Youwei's education and cultural aspirations.<sup>416</sup> Zhang Weiping noted that Pan Youwei sometimes had operas plays set in one of the family's courtyard to entertain his mother.<sup>417</sup> Such entertainment might have taken place in the Nanxuechao rather than other parts of the residence: garden courtyards were commonly used to set temporary stages, and the pond would have improved the acoustic.

### 3. The third generation: Pan Zhengheng (亨), Pan Zhengwei, and Pan Zhengheng (衡)



Figure 24 Extract of the simplified Pan family tree, Generation III & IV

The third generation (Figure 24) corresponds to Pan senior's grandsons, and the number of family branches makes their understanding a bit more difficult. Two of the third generation Pan members' names are also homophones: Pan Zhengheng (亨) and Pan Zhengheng (衡).

<sup>416</sup> Guangdong County Gazetteer, p. 569.

<sup>417</sup> Zhang Weiping: 《国朝诗人征略》 (Brief notes on poets of our dynasty) as translated by Guodong Chen, '潘有度 (潘启官二世): 一位成功的洋行商人 (Pan Youdu or Pan Khequa II: A Successful Hong Merchant)', in 广州十三行沧桑 (The Thirteen Hongs in Guangzhou) (Guangdongsheng ditu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 150–93 (p. 152).



## Pan Zhengheng (亨)'s Wansongshanfang

As Pan Youdu's eldest son, Pan Zhengheng 潘正亨 (1779-1837) was initially part of the fourth branch of the Pan family. However he inherited the main branch of the Pan family on behalf of his eldest uncle Pan Youneng that had died young.<sup>418</sup> As mentioned in the first section, Pan Zhengheng (亨) refused to inherit his father's 'Pan Qiguan' title, which was then transferred to his younger brother Pan Zhengwei. A County-level scholar, Pan Zhengheng (亨) obtained his official post in the Ministry of Punishments by donating money.<sup>419</sup>

Pan Zhengheng (亨) built a part of the Henan residence named the 'Wansongshanfang' (Mountain Dwelling of Myriad Pines) 万松山房.<sup>420</sup> Located at the back of Nanshu garden, one of its main features was a pond covered with lotus flowers.<sup>421</sup> According to Lu Qi, inside the garden grew many kapok trees and one of the buildings was named 'Rongyinxiaoxie' (Small pavilion under the fig tree's shade) 榕荫小谢.<sup>422</sup> There was a scene named the Haitianjianhuage (Tower for talking between the sea and sky) 海天边话阁, containing a *fang* or boat-shaped building named Fengyue qinzun (The boat for bonding friendship over playing the guqin) 风月琴尊舫.<sup>423</sup> The building's name was probably taken from the story 《伯牙与钟子期》.<sup>424</sup> In addition to its boat-shape, the building is also described as containing books and paintings.<sup>425</sup> The gazetteer credits Chen Tan 陈昙 (1784-1851) for the description of the Wansongshanfang: Chen Tan would have indeed visited the garden as he was married to one of Pan Zhengheng (亨)'s sister.<sup>426</sup> This was a powerful matrimonial link for the Pan family as not only did Chen Tan have property in the Old City, he was also recognised as a poetic prodigy at the time and part of the elite scholarly circles of the city.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Pan Zhengheng (亨) as described in 河阳世系潘氏族谱 (*Genealogy of the Pan clan*), p. 66.

<sup>419</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 340.

<sup>420</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 116.

<sup>421</sup> Chen Tan as cited by Guangdong County Gazetteer, p. 569.

<sup>422</sup> Qi, p. 24. Citing 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 115.

<sup>423</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 111. & 341.

<sup>424</sup> The 《列子》 (Taoist book of the Liezi), attributed to Lie Yukou 列御寇 (ca. 400 BCE). The 《伯牙与钟子期》 (Story of Bo Ya and Zhong Ziqi) to which the Fengyue qinzun is referring to can be found in the fifth section of the book, 《汤问》 (The questions of Tang) and found p.109-110 of A.C. Graham's translation: Angus Charles Graham, *The book of Lieh-tzu: a classic of the Tao* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

<sup>425</sup> Guangdong County Gazetteer, p. 569.

<sup>426</sup> Miles, p. 64.

<sup>427</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 64.

Pan Zhengheng (亨) himself found other ways to confirm the Pans' social status in the city: he married into Du Yong (1746-1807)'s family, who were a local 'delta' lineage that had moved to Guangzhou under the reign of Kangxi.<sup>428</sup> Such an alliance permitted the Pan family to legitimise its local standing; whereas Du Yong who had made his fortune in the pawnshop business, was using this wedding to further his social advancement. Stephen Miles noted that Du Yong requested a congratulatory essay to celebrate a relative's birthday from such a well-known Cantonese painter and poet as Xie Lansheng: from the latter's description, banquets and scholarly activities were taking place in the large Du residence.<sup>429</sup>

### **Pan Zhengwei's Tingfanlou**

In 1821, Pan Zhengwei 潘正炜(1791-1850) succeeded to his father Pan Youdu to the head of the Tongfu Company as Pan Qiguan (Pan Khequa) III. Beforehand, his education was undertaken in a county-level school, and he studied under a *gongsheng* scholar. He donated money in order to obtain a *langzhong* level official post.<sup>430</sup> Despite holding the title of 'Pan Qiguan', as the fourth son of the fourth branch, Pan Zhengwei was not at the head of the Pan residence. However Pan Zhengwei also added to the Pan residence in Henan by building the Tingfanlou (Mansion for listening to the sails) 听帆楼.<sup>431</sup>

A veranda-like corridor circled the main building, named Tingfanlou. Described as 'winding and overlapping' with paths, that corridor allowed visitors of the building to circulate around a lotus pond and pergola.<sup>432</sup> From the first floor of the Tingfanlou, one could look into the distance to the Pearl River, described as the 'white geese pond'. It is likely that the Tingfanlou was a 'garden inside another garden' or a specific landscape scene inside a part of the Henan residence. According to the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, the Tingfanlou itself was located inside the Qiujiangchiguan (Dwelling of the Autumn River's pond) 秋江池馆.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 49.

<sup>429</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 49.

<sup>430</sup> Pan Zhengwei's biography, 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 343.

<sup>431</sup> Translation of the name according to Craig Clunas, *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences* (Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 129.

<sup>432</sup> As cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*) 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 104.

<sup>433</sup> As cited by Guosheng Huang, p. 43.

Pan Zhengwei had not been trained to be a trader: his passion was to collect artworks. He owned an expansive painting collection stored in the garden, which he described in details in his *Collection of poems of the Tingfanlou* 《听帆楼诗抄》 in 1843.<sup>434</sup> He must have poured a great deal of money in this endeavour: Craig Clunas remarked that the paintings contained in Pan Zhengwei's catalogue were in greatly orthodox taste according to current criteria of artistic value of Chinese paintings. Therefore it is possible that he and other merchants were at the origin of such a canon.<sup>435</sup> It is no wonder then that the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* noted that Pan Zhengwei occasionally gathered a group of distinguished personages in his garden: his collection would have been enough to attract such a scholarly audience.<sup>436</sup> His knowledge alone made him an interesting host, but his patriotic stance after the first Opium War might have also contributed to Pan Zhengwei building up a genuine urban elite character.

### **Pan Zhengheng (衡)'s Lizhai**

Pan Zhengheng 潘正衡's father was Pan Youyuan 潘有原 (d.u.), Pan senior's fifth son, and therefore Zhengheng (衡) belonged to the Fifth branch of the family.<sup>437</sup> According to Chen Tan, Pan Zhengheng (衡) was Pan Youwei's favourite nephew.<sup>438</sup> We know that the two Pan Zhengheng (亨) and (衡) occasionally studied together, and Zhang Weiping's records implied that the Pan boys often attended plays hired by Pan Youwei. Pan Zhengheng went to a county school and afterwards gained the title of Tongzhixian (Sub-prefectural magistrate) in charge of river engineering projects.

The most interesting aspect of Pan Zhengheng (衡)'s personality was probably his passion for the works of Li Jian 黎简 or Li Erqiao (1747-1799). He collected the artist's paintings and calligraphies obsessively and displayed his collection on the walls of a specially built studio, the aptly named Lizhai (Li Studio) 黎斋 located inside the Pan residence. The Lizhai was for a while famous enough to prompt visits from outside Guangdong province. As a result a number of poems were written about the Lizhai, from local worthies such as Chen Tan, Panyu *ju ren* Liu Huadong 刘华东(1773-1836) and Xie Lansheng but also from outsiders such as

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<sup>434</sup> Clunas, *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences*, p. 129.

<sup>435</sup> Clunas, *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences*, p. 132.

<sup>436</sup> Pan Zhengwei's biography, 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 343.

<sup>437</sup> Pan Youyuan as described in Pan Genealogy p.68 Pan Zhengheng (衡) as described in Pan Genealogy p.73

<sup>438</sup> Chen Tan's memorial inscription as cited by Yizeng Pan, p. 22.

palace secretary Wu Songliang 吴嵩梁 (1766-1834), the most outstanding poet in Jiangxi province at the time.<sup>439</sup> A competent calligrapher and poet himself, Pan Zhengheng (衡) also compiled the *Draft poems of the Li studio* 《黎斋诗草》.

Apart from the Lizhai, the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* also names Pan Zhengheng (衡) as the owner of the Caigenyuan (Vegetable roots garden) 菜根园, which is oddly described as containing the Tingfanlou, owned by Pan Zhengwei.<sup>440</sup> The *Concise gazetteer* adds to the confusion by also listing a poem by Huang Peifang 黄培芳 titled ‘Visiting Pan Bolin [Pan Zhengheng (亨)’s nickname]’s garden’ 《访潘伯临园林》 under the Caigenyuan entry. In his poem, Huang describes the garden as excellent, with a row of pines leading to a hall containing a collection of paintings.<sup>441</sup>

Although the poem’s title indicates Pan Zhengheng (亨)’s name, Huang Peifang’s description of talented people gathering in the garden would rather correspond with Pan Zhengheng (衡): as the authors of poems written on the Lizhai demonstrated, he had contacts with some of the most talented in the scholarly circles in and beyond Guangzhou. It is possible that the two Zhengheng cousins (亨) and (衡) of the first and fourth branches might have competed in the realm of gardens, as Zhengheng also owned a boat-shaped building, the Chuanshi shanzhuang 船屋山庄. Although its exact location in the residence is unclear, it was probably inside the Lizhai as it is mentioned in the *Draft poems of the Li studio*.<sup>442</sup>

#### 4. The later generations: Pan Shu, his son and grandson

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<sup>439</sup> Zhang Weiping’s 《艺谈录》 (Records of talks on the literati arts) cited in Yizeng Pan, 番禺潘氏略诗 (*Concise Collection of Poetry of the Pan Family in Panyu*), p.22. Miles, p.72-4.

<sup>440</sup> 《伍绰餘诗注》 (Wu Chuoyu’s poetry annotations) as cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 138.

<sup>441</sup> Huang Peifang: 《访潘伯临园林》 (Visiting Pan Bolin’s garden), from 《粤东三子诗钞》 三 (Transcriptions from the Three poets of Eastern Guangdong, vol. 3) as cited 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 138.

<sup>442</sup> *Draft poems of the Li studio* as reproduced in Yizeng Pan, p. 27.



Figure 25 Extract from the simplified Pan family tree, Generations IV & V

At some point the Pan family must have been able to sustain itself without the Tongfu company as it closed its doors after 1842: this did not seem to hamper the growth of the family as from the fourth generation on (Figure 25), the number of Pan members becomes too numerous to exhaustively cover in this case study. However by reducing the field to those whose gardens are mentioned in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, it is possible to focus on those of the members still pursuing the legacy of Pan senior: Pan Shu and his descendants, Pan Guangying and Pan Feisheng.

### Pan Shu's Shuangtongpu

Pan Shu 潘恕 (1810-1865) was the son of Pan Zhengheng (衡) and belonged to the fourth generation and the fifth branch of the Pan.<sup>443</sup> Pan Shu's garden in the Henan residence was named the Shuangtongpu (The garden nursery of the two wutong trees) 双桐圃.<sup>444</sup> He also wrote the corresponding *Collection of poems of the Shuangtongpu*.

Pan Shu's Shuangtongpu was a popular place for scholars to gather and compose poems while drinking among themselves.<sup>445</sup> A respected poet, Pan Shu was even claimed to be second only to Zhang Weiping at the time.<sup>446</sup> He was also described as a talented calligrapher and painter, who compiled books on different subjects. Steven Miles noted that Pan Shu and his brother Dinghui took part in the examinations organised in the Xuehaitang academy, and that both had poems was recorded in the Xuehaitang's records.<sup>447</sup> Pan Shu notably took part in

<sup>443</sup> Pan Shu as described in Zuyao Pan, 河阳世系潘氏族谱 (*Genealogy of the Pan clan*), p.84.

<sup>444</sup> The wutong is a Paulownia tree

<sup>445</sup> The Xuantong reign period's Panyu county gazetteer, 'Important people 人物' section 3, as cited by 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 344.

<sup>446</sup> The Xuantong reign period's Panyu county gazetteer, 'Important people 人物' section 3, as cited by 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 344.

<sup>447</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 363.

the preparation for lustration ceremonies with other Xuehaitang literati in Guangzhou in 1860.<sup>448</sup>

Pan Shu was also close to his cousin Pan Shicheng, as he helped him supervise the building of six boats made on Western models to reinforce the province's naval defences.<sup>449</sup> Pan Shu was therefore familiar with the Haishan xianguan, Pan Shicheng's large pleasure grounds in the Lychee Bay, to which he dedicated a poem.<sup>450</sup> It can be supposed that Pan Shu's passion for painting and his garden knowledge would have had an influence on the scenery of the Shuangtongpu.

### **The Shuangtongpu as a link between the Pan generations**

Beyond a simple garden, the Shuangtongpu holds also the key to help the researcher thread several of the Pan generations' gardens together. To start unravelling the links between the different generations, once again Zhang Weiping provides a useful clue.<sup>451</sup> In the 'Shuangtongpu' entry in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, Zhang Weiping recalls his childhood days spent learning under his father in a courtyard with wutong trees. We know that Zhang Weiping spent nine years in the Pan family's estates (1791-1799) and that his father worked as a tutor for the family and resided in the Dongyuan in Huadi.<sup>452</sup> Zhang Weiping's childhood study room actually echoes another of his poems describing the Nanshu Henan residence:

In Nanshu there is a *xuan* pavilion, in front of the steps are two wutong trees whose greenery overlaps [or shades] the eaves [of the *xuan*]. A few paces beyond the *xuan* pavilion there is a bridge. 髫龄时读书南墅，墅中有轩，阶前双梧，碧覆檐际，风枝雨叶，凉入心脾。轩外数武，一桥见山，万绿饮水<sup>453</sup>

This description of a courtyard garden of small size containing two wutong trees located inside the larger Nanshu garden could be interpreted as a simple coincidence: wutong trees

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<sup>448</sup> Miles, p.179

<sup>449</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 344.

<sup>450</sup> Pan Shu: 《海山仙馆》 (Haishan xianguan) in 《双桐圃集》 (Collection of writings of the double wutong trees) as reproduced in Yizeng Pan, p. 37.

<sup>451</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 144.

<sup>452</sup> Guodong Chen, p. 153.

<sup>453</sup> Zhang Weiping 张维屏: 《听松庐骈文钞》 (Collected prose of the Cottage to listen to the pines) in 《回波词》 (Ci Poetry of the Returning waves) as cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 112.

are probably not rare enough to eliminate the possibility of the Pan having two courtyards with two wutong trees, one in Henan and one in Huadi. However a number of other clues reinforce the most simple interpretation: that Pan Shu appropriated the study room and wutong courtyard as his personal garden and named it ‘Shuangtongpu’.

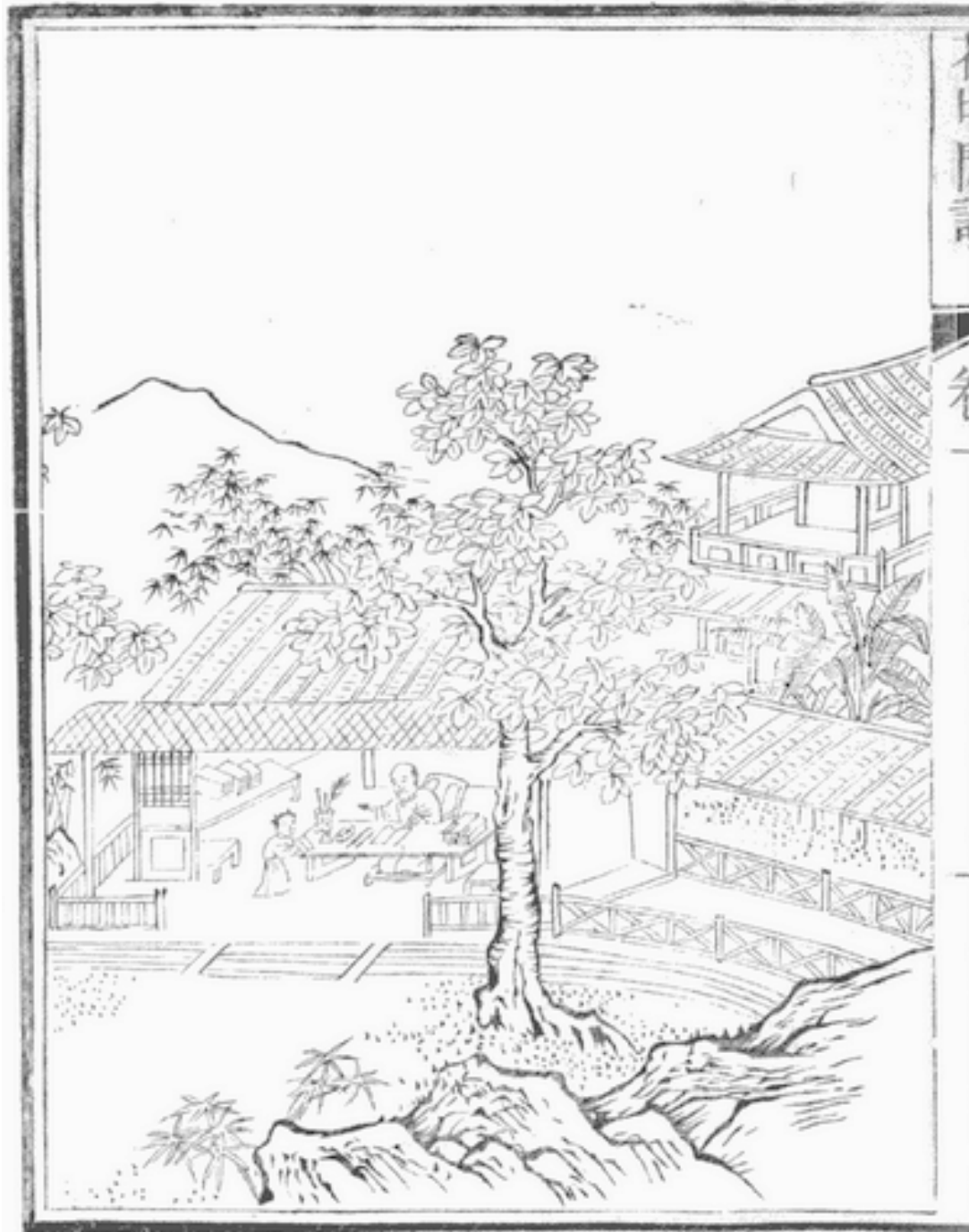


Figure 26 Stephen Miles interpreted this image as representing Zhang Weiping studying under his father. In Zhang Weiping, *Huajia xiantian*.

One of these clues lies in analysing the property of Pan Shu's son, Pan Guangying 潘光瀛 (1838-1891) : he was recorded to own a residence named the Wutong tingyuan (Wutong courtyard) 梧桐庭院.<sup>454</sup> Under the 'Wutong tingyuan' entry, it is mentioned that the four generations of Pan inherited the painting and calligraphy room: "The Pan family's Wutongpu 双桐圃 in Longxi (Henan) is the mansion where four generations inherited the painting and calligraphy room. 龙溪潘氏双桐圃，四世相承书画府。"<sup>455</sup> It is very likely that Pan Guangying just renamed that very same courtyard with the two Wutong trees.

A possible confirmation lies in the wording of the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* for Pan Shu's Wutongpu or Pan Guangying's Wutong tingyuan entries: instead of the verb 'build 建', the words 'mansion 别墅' or 'residence 居' are used, which could indicate that father and son just occupied and renamed what their ancestors had built.<sup>456</sup> They both could have made substantial modifications to the courtyard during their lifetime, but the two wutong trees apparently remained.

Analysing the writings catalogued under Pan Guangying's 'Wutong courtyard' entry in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* adds other important clues as to how some of the Pan generations were linked. In his *Inscription on the painting of composing poems on Pan Jueqing [aka Pan Guangying]'s Wutong courtyard* 《提潘珏卿桐院填词图》Chen Liangyu also mentioned that there were two wutong trees in the garden nursery.<sup>457</sup>

By quoting the story of Yang Fu and the snowfall, it seems that Chen Liangyu is suggesting that the Wutong courtyard is actually located on the same spot as Pan Youwei's Nanxuechao. Pan Youwei was the most scholarly minded of the members of the second Pan generation, and he took an interest in some of his nephew's education. It is possible that Pan Youwei allowed Zhang Bingwen to tutor the Pan household's young boys inside the Nanxuechao, which was itself located inside the Nanshu. The study room in the Wutong courtyard must have held a

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<sup>454</sup> Pan Guangying's biography is in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 345. Also in 河阳世系 潘氏族谱 (*Genealogy of the Pan clan*), pp. 95-6.

<sup>455</sup> Monk Baofa 僧宝筏: 《桐院读画图》 (Studying the paintings in the Wutong courtyard), in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p.131.

<sup>456</sup> For the Wutong tingyuan see 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 130. See p.144 for the Shuangtongpu. Compare with Pan Zhengheng (衡)'s Chuanshi shanfang 船屋山庄 that uses 'build 建' on p.131.

<sup>457</sup> Chen Liangyu: 《提潘珏卿桐院填词图》 (Inscription on the painting of composing poems on Pan Jueqing [aka Pan Guangying]'s Wutong courtyard), in 《梅啻诗抄》 (Collected poems of the Plum tree Chamber) as cited by 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 131.



special significance for Pan Zhengheng (衡), and it is probable that later his sons Pan Shu and Pan Dinggui were schooled in the very same room. It appears reasonable to interpret this extract as Pan Guangying having received the Wutong courtyard from his father, especially as he inherited both the fifth and sixth branch of the family from his father and uncle Dinggui.

That Pan Guangying inherited the family's study room would explain Monk Baofa's earlier quoted mention that four generations of Pan received teaching of calligraphy and painting in the Wutong courtyard. This hypothesis is further reinforced by a passage by Chen Li listed under the 'Shuangtongpu' entry:

Father and son studying how to manage the garden nursery, children growing up to master poetry (A note is added in brackets by the gazetter editor: 'the gentleman teaches his grandsons'). [...] The 'Fengyue qinzun' [name of building] was quiet for a long time, but today it feels just like in the past. 高梧吹绿到孙枝，密篠团云护曲篱。老子婆娑学为圃，儿童长大可言诗（君方课孙）。同斟九日白衣酒，自定千秋黄绢辞。风月琴樽久岑寂，榻来犹觉似当时（风月琴樽，伯临比部斋额也）<sup>458</sup>

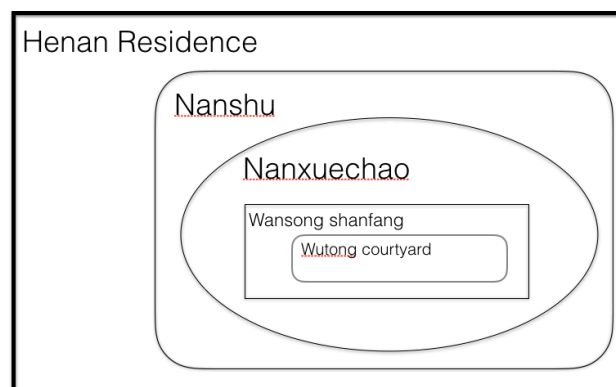


Figure 27 Schematic visualisation of the Pan family's Henan garden successive construction/ownerships

In the poem above addressed to Pan Shu, Chen Li rejoices that the Fengyue qinzun, the previously mentioned boat-shaped building in Pan Zhengheng (亨)'s Wansong shanfang, has become busy again after a period of quietness. Combined with the previous evidence, it is reasonable to interpret this passage as referring to Pan Shu and his son taking over the

<sup>458</sup> Chen Li 陈澧: 《潘鸿轩重葺小园刊定诗稿赋赠一首》 (A prose-poem presented to Pan Hongxuan [aka Pan Shu] on reconstructing his small garden and finalising [the editing of] his poetry manuscript) in 《东墩遗诗》 (Posthumous poetry of the Eastern Mound) as cited by 番禺河南小志 (Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu), p. 145.

courtyard (Figure 27) previously owned by Pan Youwei, and then by Pan Zhengheng (亭). If such was the case, then after the third Pan generation, it was no longer the fourth branch issued from Pan Youdu, but the fifth branch of the family that carried on Pan senior's legacy to the fullest.

### *Pan Guangying and Pan Feisheng*

In his biography, Pan Guangying is described as having inherited the treasures of his family, including a precious ink stone.<sup>459</sup> Instead of working he relied on the money raised from renting his family properties, and spent his time furthering his skill in musical instruments, poetry, and appraising paintings. Like his ancestors he compiled an anthology named after his residence: the *Poem anthology of the Wutong courtyard* 《梧桐庭院诗抄》.<sup>460</sup> He was also well connected enough to have talented scholars such as Chen Li write annotations on his painting on the anthology of the Wutong Courtyard, as mentioned above.

It seems that his eldest son Pan Feisheng 潘飞声 (1858-1934) of the sixth Pan generation inherited the family's taste for gardens. Not only did he have his own property, the Huayulou 花语楼, but he also visited many gardens and commented on the latter: his name appears under five entries besides his own family's gardens in the 'private residences 第宅' section of the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*.<sup>461</sup> In his biography he is described him as an enthusiastic host and traveller, gifted at calligraphy and painting, as were his Pan predecessors.<sup>462</sup> His credentials seem to align with those of an ideal scholar: having many talented friends and students, he was also described as a patriot aiming to reform the Chinese economy. In this latter point he resembled his great-uncle Pan Zhengwei who protected Henan against the British army after the first Opium War. According to his biography, Pan Feisheng embodied the best of his ancestors' efforts to reach a higher social status and become an essential part of Guangzhou's politics. He recorded many of the Pans' assets in details, without whom this research would have been much less complete: with his relative Pan Yizeng (1858-?) as editor they compiled the *Concise collection of poetry of the Pan family in Panyu* 《番禺潘氏诗略》 published in 1894.

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<sup>459</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 345.

<sup>460</sup> Reproduced in Yizeng Pan, pp. 50–54.

<sup>461</sup> Pan Feisheng's Huayulou entry in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 109.

<sup>462</sup> Pan Feisheng's biography in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 346–48.

As a detailed examination of the recorded gardens owned by the successive Pan generations shows, Pan Zhencheng's descendants carried on their ancestor's desire to improve their social status, and to become genuine scholars. Their gardens were frequented by some of the most talented of Guangzhou's residents, and they forged alliances among scholars and wealthy local families. Even after the end of the Canton System, several Pan members are still recorded as living in gardens and hosting scholarly events, as well as writing and compiling poetry. The end of the Pan residence is difficult to mark exactly, however Mo Bozhi affirms that on a 1908 map of Guangzhou, one can see a 0.67 hm<sup>2</sup> geometric pond belonging to the residence.<sup>463</sup> At the time of the article in 2003, the residence could be matched with a primary school located in the Qizhanan 栖栅南街 street. Mo Bozhi also met with the seventh generation of Pan, Pan Zuyao 潘祖尧 (d.u.) who is the author of the Pan genealogy used extensively in this section. In the next section, some of the blanks left in our understanding of the Pan gardens in Panyu county will be filled by analysing contemporary Western sources.

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<sup>463</sup> Mo, p. 339.

### **Section 3: Western encounters in the gardens of Pan Khequa and descendants**

Similarly to the previous section, the Pan residences and gardens are reconstituted and their function analysed below, this time using contemporary and near-contemporary Western sources. Where the Chinese sources reflected how the Pan used their residential and garden spaces to advance their family's social agenda in Chinese circles, the Western sources offer a necessarily more restrained view of the Pans' social life. Western guests did not always understand all that they could see, nor did they access as much of the Pan residence as close friends such as Zhang Weiping. Yet at times Western diaries and correspondence provide us with much more precise documentation on specific aspects than their Chinese counterparts, for example about gardening features.

In this section, Western sources are first used as 'verification tools' that allow us to confirm or to amend some of the information obtained through the Chinese sources. For this reason, several Chinese sources are quoted in this section alongside the foreign descriptions that shed light on the sources' meaning or credibility. Secondly, and most importantly, these Western sources allow us to gather new details on the Pan properties that were not available in Chinese documents. Thirdly, this section contains an analysis of pictorial sources, produced either by Western artists or by Chinese artists for the Western market, as these are the only sources that allow us to visualise with precision what the Pan gardens' appearance was. These visual clues, when combined with information from both Chinese and Western written descriptions, provide the basis for Guangzhou regional characteristics in the analysis chapter.

As Western visitors tended to confuse the names of the Pan family members, their writings are likely to contain some inaccuracies, such as the use of fanciful spelling for Chinese names. In the case of the Pan family, the sheer number of family members added to the title of 'Pan Qiguan' are likely to have confused Western visitors: that is why in some cases it is not possible to ascertain the exact identity of the Pan family member mentioned. To avoid adding to the naming inaccuracies, the Western spelling of Chinese names is used as a rule in this section, and when possible those names are associated with their corresponding Chinese spelling in brackets. For example, in this section Pan Zhencheng will be designated as 'Pan Khequa I', as it is one of the most consistent spellings of his name used by British traders, etc.

The generations and family branches of the other family members will be repeated as necessary.

### *Entertainment at the Pans' Henan residence*

To the Hong merchants fell the task of maintaining cordial relationships with Western traders and visitors, and this in the face of on-going international tensions throughout the Canton System period. The Hong merchants performed diplomatic tasks on top of their trading role to all intents and purposes but in name: yet their relations with Westerners were much more casual than those dictated by the Guest Ritual the Qing court practiced for a country's emissaries. When the Macartney embassy travelled from Hangzhou to Guangzhou in 1794, the Viceroy of Liangguang, an official based in Guangzhou, had to take responsibility for the guests and collect them in person.<sup>464</sup> Although their reception was not as formally and strictly organised as that of envoys under the imperial Guest Ritual, Western traders were still subject to imperial regulations, more specifically under the responsibility of the Imperial Household Department.<sup>465</sup> This meant that a certain hierarchy had to be established regarding Western traders, and that the person representing a ship, say a supercargo, was matched with a specific Hong merchant - and in turn became more likely to receive personal invitations from that merchant.

As the head of Hong merchants, Pan Khequa I and then his son Pan Khequa II (Pan Youdu, Gen II, 4<sup>th</sup> branch) were heavily relied upon by the local Chinese administration to attend meetings and mitigate misunderstandings or more serious conflicts with the foreign community. Additionally, father and son were ever the shrewd businessmen, and regularly entertained a select number of Western traders and visitors in their Henan residence. The avowed aim was to maintain good relationships not only with the Pans' allocated traders, but also with the residents of the Factories more generally, in their capacity as the head representatives of the Hong merchants. Underlying was also the need for the Pan to learn more about their foreign business partners and rivals, gather information on international conflicts that could impact their trade, or even obtain items that could advance their personal goals, such as precious Western clocks. More rarely but nonetheless noteworthy are instances

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<sup>464</sup> James Louis Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 202.

<sup>465</sup> Hevia, p. 54.

of Sino-Western friendship through the repeated acquaintance of Pan family members with ‘Old China’ or returning traders.

An invitation to a Hong’s residence constituted a significant favour or ‘treat’ for Westerners. Otherwise confined to the narrow space of the Factories, starved for sightseeing and bored of their monotonous lifestyles, the foreign residents in Guangzhou were also eager to get a glimpse of Chinese life beyond the immediate vicinity of their lodgings. In this context visiting a Hong merchant’s house and garden was not only a welcome distraction from the daily humdrum of business, but also an unusual opportunity to enter the private home of a wealthy family. The great majority of Western guests and occupants of the Factories would have had a middling status in their home country.<sup>466</sup> This meant that, in most cases, the Pan family would have been many times richer than they were, so it should not come as a surprise that their Western guests described such rare occasions at length in their diaries. Although Western authors sometimes left their host unnamed, it is logical that the banquets hosted by the Pan family should feature among the most detailed descriptions available: after all, Pan Khequa & son were the most important Hong merchants for most of the 1760-1820 period. Below is an analysis of three Western descriptions of entertainment at a Hong merchant’s house: two of them are identified as hosted by the Pan family and one by an anonymous host. The focus is put on the role of the residence and gardens as the spatial background of Sino-Western interactions, rather than on the contents of the banquets.<sup>467</sup>

The first example took place on 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> October 1769, when EIC cadet William Hickey attended an extravagant two-day dinner at the home of Pan Khequa I. This timing would have been just before Pan Khequa I’s attempt at retirement in 1770. Hickey explained that, on the first day of the banquet, the meal was served in Western fashion. During the second day, guests had to use chopsticks and eat Chinese fare. The entertainment was also split into two parts: the first night, a play was performed by Chinese actors, including a character caricaturing an English man, exclaiming “God damn!” to great hilarity of both sides of the audience. On the second night, Pan Khequa I led his guests to his gardens and treated them to a lavish display of Chinese fireworks:

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<sup>466</sup> Farris, p. 34.

<sup>467</sup> May-bo Ching, ‘Chopsticks or Cutlery?: How Canton Hong Merchants Entertained Foreign Guests in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, in *Narratives of Free Trade: The Commercial Cultures of Early US-China Relations* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), pp. 99–199.

At night brilliant fireworks (in which they also excel) were let off in a garden magnificently lighted by coloured lamps, which we viewed from a temporary building erected for the occasion and wherein there was exhibited slight of hand tricks, tight and slack rope dancing, followed by one of the cleverest pantomimes I ever saw. This continued until a late hour, when we returned in company with several of the supercargoes to our factory, much gratified with the liberality and taste displayed by our Chinese host.<sup>468</sup>

As this extract demonstrates, Hickey was suitably impressed by both the fare and entertainment provided by the Pan. Hickey's accounts of China were on the whole rather critical: his memoirs abound with snarl regarding the city of Guangzhou and its inhabitants, as well as anecdotes regarding the way that Westerners tried to circumvent the restrictions of movements imposed by the Chinese.<sup>469</sup> Yet a single invitation to the Pans' was sufficient for Hickey to uncharacteristically praise his host's taste, and even praise the quality of Chinese fireworks. As such, Hickey's appreciation of the event justifies the following analysis by David Clarke:

Clearly this pair of evenings was a self-conscious performance of cross-cultural knowledge on the host's part, displaying his cosmopolitan sophistication [...]. Pankeequa was clearly displaying his understanding of Western culture in order to enhance his personal prestige and thus consolidate his position as one of the leading merchants in the city's international trade.<sup>470</sup>

The extract above also suggests that Pan Khequa I extended to his Western guests the same level of entertainment that his son Pan Youwei (Gen II, 2d branch) would later order for the pleasure of his mother after his return to Guangzhou in 1780. Since it was not unusual to have temporary buildings erected for plays, it could very well have been the same courtyard as that used by the Pan for festive family occasions.

Describing a similar occasion in December 1804, James Johnson echoes Hickey's compliments on the Hong merchants' liberality, although he does not name his host: "The cohong merchant and a few of his relations gave us a very polite and hearty welcome, shewed

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<sup>468</sup> William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey, 1749-1775* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1913), I. (p.224)

<sup>469</sup> See for example Hickey, I, p. 225.

<sup>470</sup> David Clarke, 'Chinese Visitors to 18th Century Britain and Their Contribution to Its Cultural and Intellectual Life', *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 34.4 (2017), 498–521 (p. 503).

and explained every thing to us in the most kind manner imaginable.”<sup>471</sup> The occasion Johnson describes is very similar to that of Hickey: a dual Western and Chinese meal with chopsticks and a play for entertainment. He does, however, add interesting details about the familiarity displayed by his hosts:

[...] the women were of course excluded: the male children, indeed, came out and dined with us, sitting on our knees, and eating off our plates with the upmost familiarity; boys of five, six, and eight years of age behaving with the utmost decorum, and as easy in their manners and deportment as the most accomplished courtiers!<sup>472</sup>

The fact that the host’s children were present is an important display of trust and familiarity on the part of the Hong merchants. In the Factories, foreigners were all leading lives of bachelors; even if their family had followed them to China, they would have had to stay in Macao.<sup>473</sup> Considering the date of this event (1804) it is likely that Johnson describes an instance of Pan Khequa II’s hospitality without naming him. The event also shares similitudes with an account written by Tilden some ten years afterwards. After first arriving in Guangzhou in 1815, Tilden, who seemed to have been gifted with an amiable personality, soon became acquainted with his Hong merchant, Howqua. Tilden also wrote that he was on very good terms with a Pan that he names ‘Paunkeiqua’, and from the context is assumed to be Pan Khequa II (Pan Youdu, Gen II 4<sup>th</sup> branch), who by that time was already considered an elderly gentleman.<sup>474</sup>

At the point of his third journey to China in 1818-9, Tilden was already considered an ‘Old China’, in other words, a returning trader that received more trust than a newly arrived one.<sup>475</sup> Perhaps that is the reason why in 1819 Paunkeiqua (Pan Khequa II) gave him the opportunity to select himself a number of guests to attend a chopstick banquet at his Henan residence. The description of the occasion contains detailed explanations shedding light on the etiquette of

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<sup>471</sup> James Johnson, *An Account of a Voyage to India, China &c. in His Majesty’s Ship Caroline, Performed in the Years 1803-4-5, Interspersed with Descriptive Sketches and Cursory Remarks.* (London: R. Phillips, 1806), p. 78.

<sup>472</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>473</sup> Patrick Conner, *The Hong of Canton*, p. 12.

<sup>474</sup> Pan Khequa II (Paunkeiqua) was described by Tilden as an ‘old gentleman’ during the 1818-1819 journey. Bryant Parrott Tilden, ‘Bryant P. Tilden Papers, 1781-1851, Also Titled “Father’s Journals”’, 1851, pp. 217–19, Peabody Essex Museum Phillips Library.

<sup>475</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> of Sept. 1818: “Houqua is our security Hong merchant – and he says – as I have now come three times to China – he shall add to my former title which he conferred on me of ‘Tea Schoolmaster’ – that of ‘Old Canton Typan – N1, first chop!’ ” *Bryant P. Tilden Papers, 1781-1851*, p.187.



luxury dining in Guangzhou, and again underlines the role of the Pan family members in the process.<sup>476</sup>

To start with, Pan Khequa II invited each guest in writing, then visited them in person with Tilden in tow. On the appointed day, Pan lent them his trusted staff to replace the Factories' servants. His coolies in fine livery collected the foreign guests and carried them across the river.<sup>477</sup> Once inside the residence, Pan Khequa II himself came to greet and guide them on a visit of his garden, a description of which will be discussed later in this section. Tilden mentions that some of Pan's younger descendants were accompanying the foreign guests: the presence of young children seems to confirm that Tilden's chosen guests were given a tour of a particularly private part of the house.<sup>478</sup>

Tilden also described the kind of conversation that took place during an opulent twenty-course meal: world-wise Pan Khequa II discussed world maps and listened to one of the guests' recount his travels in India.<sup>479</sup> Since Tilden had mostly invited American nationals, Pan Khequa II also used the occasion to ask questions about the British. The late 1810s were a time of increasing Sino-British tension, as Emperor Jiaqing was juggling with the opium problem and the crews related to EIC ships misbehaved more frequently.<sup>480</sup> Pan would have been trying to assuage conflicts and perhaps make personal gains in the process, but his death shortly thereafter (1820) left these thorny matters in Houqua's hands.

Tilden's description reinforces the hypothesis that the Pan used their children to make their guests feel welcome and at home — and perhaps to satisfy their children's curiosity as well. Not only were Tilden's guests showered with attention, as mentioned by Johnson in the description of his unnamed host, but they were also escorted by servants and personally welcomed by the owner. It seems that, combined with the appeal of a higher social and material position of the Chinese host, these occasions were carefully calculated to placate

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<sup>476</sup> Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America.

<sup>477</sup> Lawrence Waters Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, *Bryant Parrott Tilden of Salem, at a Chinese Dinner Party, Canton: 1819* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p.18.

<sup>478</sup> *Bryant Parrott Tilden of Salem, at a Chinese Dinner Party, Canton: 1819*, p.20.

<sup>479</sup> "All of us listened attentively to my friend Mr. Martucci, who speaks and understand English very wel, and gave us some rare information about Turkey, Egypt, Arabia, & various parts of India, over which countries he has been a great inland traveller." *Bryant Parrott Tilden of Salem, at a Chinese Dinner Party, Canton: 1819*, p.22.

<sup>480</sup> Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 2d edn (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), p.150.

foreign guests into a grateful attitude towards the Hong merchant — to obtain either diplomatic or trade advantages.

This does not preclude the appearance of genuine friendship between Chinese and Western traders, as shown in this scene also involving children during Tilden's previous visit in 1816-17:

On entering [Pan's] premises, 'This time,' said he [Pan Khequa II], 'I introduce you as a friend' (my flinded) and we were soon surrounded by a large number of his own and grand children in the gardens, who were permitted to come out to see and touch a 'fanquie.' None of the wives or female children over eight years old were seen. He afterwards told me that while we were engaged looking about, we were plainly seen by his wives & daughters from behind screened windows & closets.<sup>481</sup>

This extract seemingly refers to contraptions such as leaking windows found in Chinese gardens that allow a person standing on the inside to see without being seen.<sup>482</sup> Pan Khequa II entertained good relations with other Americans: on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1818, Captain William F. Megee, the owner of the only boarding house in Guangzhou, organised one of his frequent instrumental concerts in front of the American factory. As Pan Khequa II's *hong* was neighbouring the American Factory, Tilden reports that the Hong merchant heard the music and requested to join in the fun with a few Chinese friends. Pan Khequa II and Captain Megee had known each other since 1788, which perhaps explains why Pan asked to see American dances and that the American Factory's residents obliged in a rather rowdy fashion.<sup>483</sup> Tilden seems to have genuinely mourned the death of Pan Khequa II:

The descendants of my venerated and lamented friend Paunkeiqua [Pan Khequa II], still occupy the old Honam [Henan] residence, under charge of his oldest son, who has retired with a large fortune from all business, and keeps aloof from all foreigners. His independent spirited father had he lived, would have been a very efficient chief of the Company of Hong merchants, such an [sic] one as is much wanted in these turbulent times.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, p. 12.

<sup>482</sup> See notably Antoine Gournay, 'Le système des ouvertures dans l'aménagement spatial du jardin chinois (Openings as elements of the spatial layout of Chinese gardens)', *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident*, 2000.

<sup>483</sup> Downs and Grant, p. 81.

<sup>484</sup> Fourth journey, 1833-34. Tilden, pp. 878-80.

The extract above allows us to verify and add some details to information previously known from Chinese sources. After the death of Pan Khequa II, Tilden's description confirms that it was his elder son Pan Zhengheng (亨 Gen III, 1<sup>st</sup> branch) who took over the residence. Since Pan Zhengheng (亨)'s fortune was large enough, he did not need to interact with foreign traders. The wider implications are that after the death of Pan Khequa II in 1820, since his successor Pan Khequa III (Pan Zhengwei, Gen III, 4<sup>th</sup> branch) did not speak foreign languages, international friendships likely came to an end for the Pan family — along with banquet invitations. Pan Khequa III was not the head of the Henan residence as the two previous tenants of the title had been, therefore Westerners probably stopped visiting the Pan gardens after 1820.

After discussing the reasons why the Pan family invited foreign guests to their property on the southern bank of the Pearl River, it is time to follow Tilden's own advice: "for particulars of this noble & generous hearted mandarin [Pan Khequa II], see frequent notices in journals of my first voyages from 1815 to 19".<sup>485</sup>

#### *Detailed information on the Pans' residence and gardens*

The analysis of Western sources, including Tilden's, continues below through Western writers' description of the Pans' residence and gardens, revealing precise details regarding the scale, gardening features and content of the properties. At times the Western accounts also contain inaccuracies that can be balanced by our knowledge of Chinese sources from the second section.

It is difficult to obtain a clear idea of the size of the Henan Pan residence from Chinese sources, whereas there are several indications in Western sources. The most cited of Western testimonies on the Canton System are probably American trader William Hunter's *The 'fan kwae' at Canton before treaty days, 1825-1844* and *Bits of old China*.<sup>486</sup> Hunter wrote about the Henan Pan residence that "The entire mansion - rather a series of villas - covers several acres of ground, and the whole is enclosed by a well-built brick wall, resting on granite

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<sup>485</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>486</sup> William C Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844* (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Pub. Co., 1965); Hunter, *Bits of Old China*.

foundations, about twelve feet high.”<sup>487</sup> Since this description was published two decades after Hunter’s return from China, his estimation of the overall size should be taken with a grain of salt. However, Hunter’s comment about the wall’s material is realistic: temples in Guangzhou are often built on granite foundations and with granite columns, as the stone is readily available in the region.<sup>488</sup> In 1815, Tilden noted down a more precise estimation of the surface of the Wu and Pan residences, although no mention is made of granite:

This beautiful establishment [the Wu family residence], and that of another, which is more antique & owned by Paunkeiqua [Pan Khequa II] — a principal member of the board of Hong merchants, are situated on each side the Honam [Henan] Josh temples, before described, covering say five acres of ground each. Both estates are walled — all round — the walls being built of sun baked bricks & stone, & topped with broken glass ware.<sup>489</sup>



Figure 28 Detail of the modified map of Guangzhou. Credits: Lishen Feng for Josepha Richard

This extract’s mention of Henan ‘Josh temples’ is a good example of potentially misleading information contained in Western sources: at first the researcher assumed that Hunter meant that the Pan and Wu residences were located on both sides of the Ocean’s Banner temple. However, from Zhang Weiping’s writings cited in the previous section, it has become clear

<sup>487</sup> Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, p. 32.

<sup>488</sup> Granite is abundant in Guangdong province, see Tianfeng Wan, *The Tectonics of China: Data, Maps and Evolution* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2012). For the materials used in Ancestral halls in Guangdong, see Yang Yang, ‘广府祠堂建筑形制演变研究 (The architectural form study of ancestral halls in Canton)’ (unpublished 硕士, 华南理工大学, 2013).

<sup>489</sup> Tilden, pp. 63–65.

that the Pan residence was actually located to the west of the Shuzhu bridge, on the opposite side of the canal from both the Wu residence and the Ocean's Banner Temple (Figure 28).

Western diaries abound with numbers, lengths and cost estimations, as many travellers wanted to project an image of being objective or 'survey-like', with the aim of publishing their journals upon their return home. These included estimations of the cost of Hong merchants' properties: for example, we know that on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1812, a woman of the Pan's household accidentally set fire to the temple while offering sacrifices — causing the loss of its altar. James Wathen paid a visit to the Pan immediately after the fire, but his host dismissed his guests' alarm, saying that the loss amounted to no more than 3-4000 *taels*.<sup>490</sup>

Wathen refers to his host as the 'squire Pon-qua-qua' (presumably Pan Youwei) while also describing him as retired from mercantile business (more likely to apply to Pan Khequa II or Pan Youdu) so it is difficult to ascertain whom Wathen visited. However, to respect the original source, he will be designated as 'Squire'. Wathen reported that the fire had also threatened the Pan women's quarters, suggesting that the damaged temple was located near them; whether this temple was in fact the Ancestral Hall is also left to interpretation. Although Wathen's contemporary evidence is likely to reflect a genuine conversation between the two men, it is possible that the Squire underestimated the costs of his loss so that his brother (Pan Khequa II)'s business partners would not start doubting his financial stability.<sup>491</sup> As a comparison, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1815 the women's quarters of their cousin Conseequa (Pan Kunshui) were destroyed by fire and the loss estimated at 7,200 tael or 10,000 Spanish dollars.<sup>492</sup>

An estimation of the whole Henan residence in the introduction to *Bryant Parrott Tilden of Salem, at a Chinese dinner party, Canton: 1819* is 7,000,000 tael, or nearly 10,000,000 dollars.<sup>493</sup> The size of the Henan Pan residence can also be estimated through Hunter's description of the number of staff it employed:

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<sup>490</sup> James Wathen, *Journal of a Voyage, in 1811 and 1812, to Madras and China; Returning by the Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena; in the H. C. S. the Hope, Capt. James Pendergrass*. (London, JNichols, son, and Bentley etc, 1814), p. 211.

<sup>491</sup> Paul Van Dyke, 'Fires and the Risks of Trade in Canton 1730s-1840s', in *Canton and Nagasaki Compared 1730-1830: Dutch, Chinese, Japanese Relations*, Intercontinenta, 26 (Leiden: Institute for the history of European expansion, 2009), pp. 171–202 (p. 172).

<sup>492</sup> The Dutch helped extinguish the fire. See Van Dyke, p. 194.

<sup>493</sup> Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, p. 10.

One of the most beautiful was that of Pwankeiqua [Pan Khequa II or III], on the banks of the river, three or four miles west of the Factories. The number of servants in these private ‘palaces,’ as they would be called elsewhere, was very great, comprising, with those ordinarily in attendance, doorkeepers, messengers, palankin [sic] bearers, and choice cooks. [...]<sup>494</sup>

When it comes to the description of the garden scenery, a number of short descriptions by different visitors can be assembled to visualise its layout. Wathen and Tilden are complementary witnesses of Pan Khequa II’s gardens. Tilden listed the various elements of the garden’s scenery in 1816-17:

[The Pan garden’s] numerous larger and small fish ponds are connected & crossed by airy and fairy-like short stone bridges, also ponderous artificially made rocks around which are seats of naturally-formed yellow shining, single stones, all of which are shaded by grotesquely made-to-grow palm, orange and other fruit trees.<sup>495</sup>

According to this extract, the Pans’ garden contained typical elements for a Chinese garden: water, buildings, vegetation, bridges, fish, and rocks. The importance of giving the exact materials is highlighted by the insistence on ‘short stone bridges’, probably made more noticeable to his Western eye as Chinese traditional architecture is mostly made of wood. The yellow and shiny rocks could possibly be a reference to the Huanglashi 黄蜡石 (yellow soap stone), that were displayed in at least one 19<sup>th</sup> century private garden near Guangzhou.<sup>496</sup> The only other description mentioning rockworks in the Pans’ gardens is that of British naturalist John Potts in 1821:

Monday, visited the Squire [presumably Pan Youwei]’s gardens a native of China (name of squire given by the Englishmen), whose forefathers must by the appearance have laid out a considerable sum in grotesque work. He has representations of Rocks in various forms which are built of a kind of [illegible] and indeed the appearance of the house and garden has more the appearance of a grotto than any thing I can compare them to. [...] there was a *nelumbium* [lotus]

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<sup>494</sup> Hunter, *The ‘fan Kwae’ at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 40.

<sup>495</sup> Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, p. 12.

<sup>496</sup> The Shiershi zhai 十二石斋 (Twelve stones garden), now included in the Liangyuan garden 梁园 in Foshan Zhou, p. 43.

which formed a completed canopy over a stagnating pond overhung with the grotesque work above mentioned.<sup>497</sup>

Rocks are rarely mentioned in Chinese descriptions of Pans' gardens, so Potts' description of the large grotto-like rockwork is noteworthy. The only mention of Taihu rocks was found in the Pan Guangying (Gen V, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> branches)'s Wutong Courtyard entry of the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*. The quote is authored by a monk named Shaolian and starts with: "The Taihu rock is suited to the small red kiosk, the bamboo project many shades of green on the veranda. 太湖石对小红亭，竹影开轩万个青。"<sup>498</sup> This passage is possibly a poetic metaphor rather than a realistic description of the garden. Although potentially revealing new information regarding the Pan family's possession of rocks as well as two precise plant species, this extract from Tilden's materials is of little help when it comes to understanding the layout of the garden.

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<sup>497</sup> Royal Horticultural Society, POTTS Rough journal, Rare Books Room Shelf 122. Classification 910POT. Entry of 12 November 1821.

<sup>498</sup> Song Shaolian 宋绍濂: 《桐院填词图》 (Ci poem for the painting(s) in the Wutong courtyard) in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p.131.



Figure 29 “Banqueting room at a Mandarin’s house near Canton”. Wathen. In *Journal of a voyage, in 1811 and 1812, to Madras and China*

Moreover, an aquatint drawn by Wathen and published in his *Journal of a voyage, in 1811 and 1812, to Madras and China* potentially helps us to visualise some of the garden’s layout (Figure 29).<sup>499</sup> During his first meeting with the Squire, Wathen wrote a description of the Pan residence in Henan on the occasion of a banquet. The written description corresponds with a hand-coloured aquatint titled ‘Banqueting room at a Mandarin’s House in Canton’. At first sight, the picture could easily be mistaken for a generic representation of Chinese architecture as it shows the hallmarks of a Western take on *chinoiserie*: the scale and style of the buildings appear to be hybrids between Chinese and Western architecture.

This aquatint is mentioned by John Reeves (1774-1856), member of the (British) Horticultural Society’s Chinese Committee, in the 1835 edition of the *Gardener’s Magazine*:

The best garden about Canton was, I think, that of [Conseequa’s] relative Puankequa [Pan Khequa II], whose portrait you may recollect over the chimneypiece in my billiard-room, but I have no views of his garden. I have several others besides these which I

<sup>499</sup> Wathen, p. 199. Plate XXI.



send you, but, as they are fancy views, they are less interesting. [...] The only Chinese who paid any decided attention to flowers, in my remembrance, was Puankequa's brother (usually named by Europeans the Squire): he expended large sums upon them; and I have seen some hundreds of chrysanthemums at one time in blossom in his garden (of which a tolerably correct view is in Wathen's *Voyage to China*).<sup>500</sup>

The extract above abounds in interesting details. First of all, John Reeves is as credible a contemporary source as can be found, for he himself lived in Canton during most of the 1812-1831 period, where he was occupied in collecting Chinese plants on behalf of Kew's director Joseph Banks.<sup>501</sup> Reeves' occupation brought him in frequent contact with the Hong merchants, who helped him obtain some botanical specimens, as he was not allowed to collect plants by himself outside of Canton and Macao. In his letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 1812 to Joseph Banks, John Reeves notes that he dined two or three times with 'the Squire' (Pan Youwei), and how he admired Pan's 2-3000 pots of chrysanthemums.<sup>502</sup> Secondly, the extract shows that Reeves went so far as to display a portrait of Pan Khequa II in the prominent location that was the billiard room of his British home. It appears that John Reeves would have been a good judge of whether a view of a Pan's garden was realistic or not, and his vouching for Wathen's aquatint being 'tolerable' means that the picture deserves further analysis.

Several aspects of the (unnamed) Pan garden's layout are highlighted when comparing Wathen's aquatint and Tilden's description. The aquatint (Figure 29) features a rocky element in the right corner of the foreground, most likely representing a sort of artificial rockwork: this would probably correspond to Tilden's "ponderous artificially made rocks". Since the shape of this rocky mass on Wathen's picture is not well defined, it therefore does not reveal further information regarding which kind of stone was used.

Wathen's picture also contains potted plants whose appearance loosely matches Tilden's description of "palm, orange and other fruit trees".<sup>503</sup> As will be discussed in the discussion

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<sup>500</sup> Reeves, p. 112.

<sup>501</sup> 'India and China | Natural History Museum' <<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/departments-and-staff/library-and-archives/collections/india-and-china.html>> [accessed 2 January 2018]. Kate Bailey, 'The Reeves Collection of Botanical Paintings', *The Plantsman*, 2010, pp. 218–25 (p. 219).

<sup>502</sup> DTC, vol 18, ff.193-4. Dawson Turner Copies, Joseph Bank Correspondence, Department of Botany, Natural History Museum of London

<sup>503</sup> Quoted p.133 of this thesis.

chapter, potted plants were described in multiple written and pictorial sources on Hong merchant's gardens. Yet it seems unlikely that the pots would have been spread randomly across a wide lawn as they are in Wathen's aquatint. The fact that the aquatint features a lawn at all reveals that Wathen likely tried to appeal to his Western audience by mixing characteristics of Western landscaping with some real elements of Pan's gardens. Instead of grass, a typical Chinese courtyard would either be paved, or feature some rocks and vegetation intersected by paths made of tiles or embedded stones. William Hunter noticed as much during his visits:

[The Hong merchants'] private residences, of which we visited several, were on a vast scale, comprising curiously laid-out gardens, with grottoes and lakes, crossed by carved stone bridges, pathways neatly paved with small stones of various colours forming designs of birds, or fish, or flowers.<sup>504</sup>

In order to clarify how potted plants would have been used in the Pan gardens, we need additional sources. A set of two Chinese export gouaches held in the British Library partially fulfils this need. Titled *Two drawings of the garden of a wealthy Chinese merchant*, the first represents a garden view (Figure 30) and the second a riverside landscape with buildings (Figure 31). On the side of the paintings are inscribed the words 'Paan Khaqaar Gardens': while the spelling indicates that it was probably written by a contemporary British hand, there is a possibility that this annotation could have been added at a later date than its production or by someone back in Europe with little knowledge of Guangzhou.<sup>505</sup> Produced by an unknown painter, the two paintings were very likely the production of a local studio and are estimated to date around 1800-05 — since the paintings entered the East India Company's Library and Museum circa 1806.<sup>506</sup>

It is entirely possible that a local painter would have been able to represent realistically one of the Pans' gardens; for example, Patrick Conner and Paul Van Dyke were able to demonstrate the realism of depictions of the Factories by similar Canton-based studios, allowing them to understand the different architectural phases of Western residences during the Canton Trade period.<sup>507</sup> However, John Reeves did mention that there were 'fancy' views of the Pan

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<sup>504</sup> Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 40.

<sup>505</sup> Mildred Archer, *Company Drawings in the India Office Library* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1972), p. 262.

<sup>506</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>507</sup> Patrick Conner, *The Hong of Canton*; Van Dyke and Mok.

gardens in circulation, although he was possibly referring to Western-made illustrations rather than Chinese ones.



Figure 30 “Two drawings of the garden of a wealthy Chinese merchant”. Unknown painter. Circa 1800-1805. Gouache. Kept in the British Library

Another reason why the garden view (Figure 30) might represent a Pan garden is the horizontal inscription visible on the pavilion in the centre of the painting: the sign reads ‘Liusongting’ (Six Pines Kiosk) 六松亭, which is reminiscent of one of the Pans’ properties named the Six Pines Garden and mentioned in the second section. According to Wang, it is therefore reasonable to think that the British Library export painting was modelled, perhaps loosely, on one of Pans’ gardens.<sup>508</sup> Whether one is convinced by the attribution or not, the fact is that this specific garden composition was popular enough to be copied more or less faithfully at a later date.

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<sup>508</sup> See “7. Painting of gardens and mansions” p.100-136 of Volume 3 in Cicheng Wang, Andrew H-B Lo, and British Library, *Chinese Export Paintings of the Qing Period in The British Library* (大英圖書館特藏中國清代外銷畫精華) (*Chinese and English bilingual edition*), 8 volumes (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2011).



Figure 31 The second of “Two drawings of the garden of a wealthy Chinese merchant”. Unknown painter. Circa 1800-1805. Gouache. Kept in the British Library, reference: Add.Or.2128

At least two examples of paintings with similar compositions exist, one kept in the Hong Kong Museum of Art (Figure 32) and another in the Stapleton Collection (Figure 33).<sup>509</sup> Both paintings are estimated to date from around the mid-nineteenth century. There are probably similar painting compositions that did not survive up to the present time or that remain in private collections. It is difficult to reconstitute the full series to which these paintings belonged, and whether the views would be linked in terms of what they represented. What can be said is that the apparent popularity of the British Library garden view as a painting composition, combined with the numerous contemporary descriptions of the Pan hosting Western visitors for banquets at that period, does seem to give credibility to its attribution to one of the Pan gardens.

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<sup>509</sup> The painting (Figure 32) is held in the Hong Kong Museum of Art under the reference AH1980.0004.025. It is associated with a second painting in a very similar style, with a different composition, probably from the same series: see Mo, p. 336. The watercolour on paper (Figure 33) is held in the Stapleton Collection under the reference STC84687.

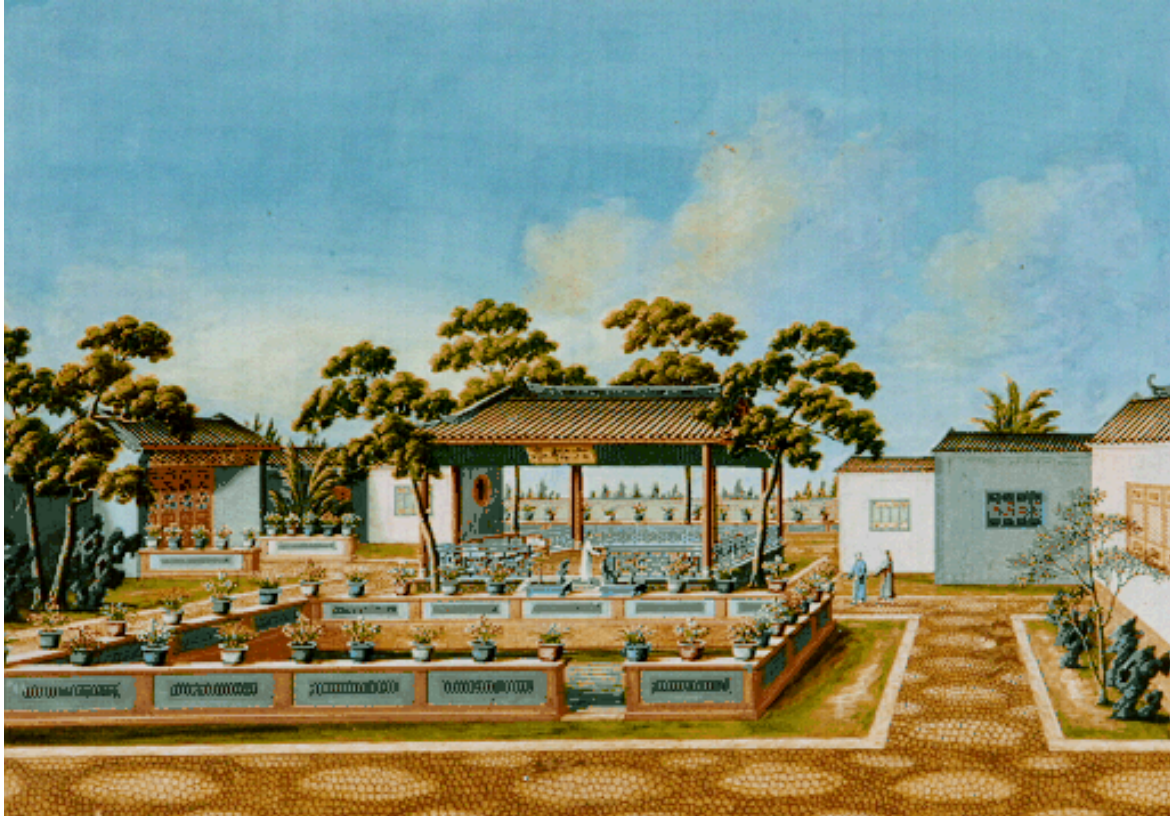


Figure 32 Two painting compositions that appeared copied from the British Library garden scene (Figure 30). “A Garden at Guangzhou”, estimated mid-nineteenth century and attributed to Guan Lianchang, kept in the Hong Kong Museum of Art

Although the garden in the British Library painting (Figure 30) might not be confidently attributed to the Pan family, and even less to a specific garden as described by Chinese sources, the painting can still provide an insight into what might have been the appearance of Pans’ gardens at the time. Bearing in mind that these paintings were made for a Western audience, it constitutes a useful Chinese perspective on a Guangzhou garden to compare with Tilden and Wathen’s written and pictorial descriptions of the Pan’s gardens. A geometrical walled pond and the square kiosk appear to be the main elements of this garden scenery (Figure 30).

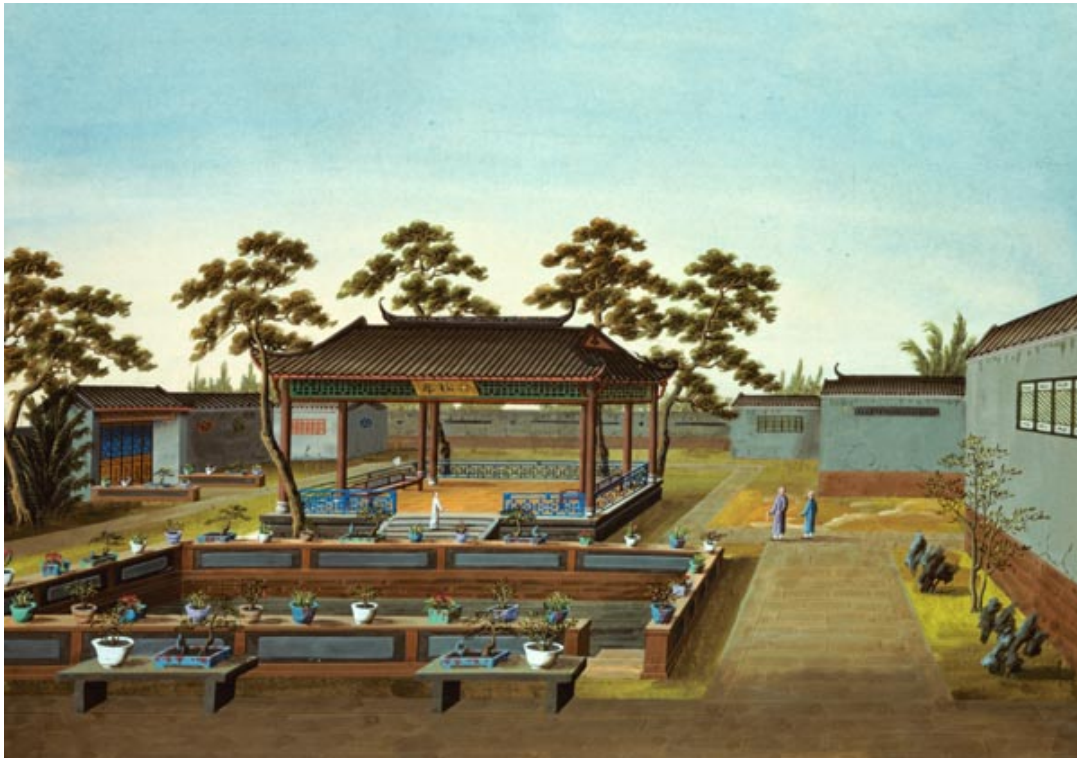


Figure 33 Another example of painting composition that appeared copied from the British Library garden scene (Figure 30). “Garden Scene”, anonymous, estimated c.1820-40 and kept in the Stapleton Collection

However, geometrical ponds were not the most fashionable way to build a pond at that period: under the Qing, imperial gardens, and those of men of letters, abounded with irregular-looking artificial banks. Similarly, there were more fanciful shapes for kiosks, such as fan-shaped or boat-shaped. Therefore, what really stands out in this painting is the abundant presence of vegetation: the most prominent are *penjing* and potted flowers set on small benches on the left-hand side of the foreground, and the collection of pots arranged around the rectangular walled pond in the centre. In the background, more pots can be found lining both sides of a door on the left, standing on a bench on the right, and lining a fence — perhaps in front of the canal — at the very back.

These potted plants appear to be the most unique characteristic of this garden view. Another extract from Tilden’s memoirs helps us contextualise the function of potted plants in the Pan gardens. Describing the aviary that Pan Khequa II had installed in his *hang* or factory on the northern side of the river, he noted that:

This little paradise [the aviary] is his private retreat wherein no person ever enters unless invited. On the tiled ground floor in front of the aviary, are always a variety of plants, & beautiful flowers grown in splendid china ware pots, brought from his

residence at Honam [Henan], and changed every tenth day to suit the old gentleman's fancy; so that he has a new little garden at pleasure. [...] He absolutely loves them, and has several times sent for me when changed, to come in alone and admire their beauty.<sup>510</sup>

The use of potted plants in Pan's gardens is therefore clarified: their aim is to be moved around and changed frequently, to create new scenery at will. However, if potted plants had such an important role in modifying the Pan garden's scenery, it seems rather odd that none of the Chinese sources alluded to them — this will be further discussed in the analysis chapter. Most of the Chinese sources did allude to one or more vegetal species, such as bamboo, lychee trees or pines. The British Library painting (Figure 30) does contain a number of trees planted directly in the soil: it seems that the 'six pines' from the kiosk's name were conscientiously included in the composition, with five around the main pavilion and the last one on the left side. Tilden also mentioned palm trees, orange and other fruit trees. Wathen's written description of Pan's garden adds another tree species to the list:

The library, full of Chinese books, was kept in the neatest order. And what rendered these fine rooms the more striking to a stranger, was an immense banyan-tree, planted many ages since, spreading its huge branches over the greatest part of them. — This noble tree grew in the garden, and had seats beneath it, where the generous host and his visitors generally sat to converse, while they waited for dinner. On my expressing my admiration of this fine tree, the Mandarin [the Squire] told me that it was planted by one of his ancestors, and that he could not take too much care of it upon that account.<sup>511</sup>

This extract consolidated the hypothesis mentioned in the second section, that several generations of Pan inherited parts of the gardens and took care of the trees they contained. Taking the timescale into account, the only ancestor that could have planted this banyan tree was Pan Khequa I. However, since Guangzhou families often tried to affiliate their lineage to more ancient celebrities recorded in Chinese annals, it is possible that Wathen's host was referring to someone else, much as Zhang Weiping's family declared that Guangdong poet Zhang Jiuling 张九龄 (673-740) was their ancestor.

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<sup>510</sup> Tilden, pp. 217–19.

<sup>511</sup> Wathen, pp. 199–200.

It would be tempting to dismiss Wathen's identification of the tree species: if his description was instead of two wutong trees, this passage could well be describing the Pan school in the Wutong courtyard. It is rather unlikely that Wathen, a newcomer in Guangzhou, would have had the time to become close enough to the Pan to be allowed in such a private part of the residence. Moreover, his description is consistent with the aquatint (Figure 29) and only contains one large tree, behind the wall on the left-hand side. There is no doubt that Wathen meant to represent a single banyan tree: the plate name in the descriptive catalogue of prints reads: "View of a Banqueting-room [sic] at the house of Pon-que-qua [the Squire], with the Banian-tree, and buildings in the Garden, over the river Tigris [Pearl River]."<sup>512</sup>

On the contrary, Bryant Tilden had a much more intimate standing with Pan Khequa II, and was able to describe the Pan's library more precisely, and even the Pan schoolrooms in the diary of his second journey to China (1816-17). This visit to Pans' Henan residence took place on the same day as Pan Khequa II professed him to be a friend, as quoted earlier in this section. Tilden was allowed a more thorough visit than ever before and spent most of the day surrounded by Pan children, including two male descendants of Pan Khequa II:

I was invited by the sons into their school rooms, situated against the garden walls, side by side, and open in front; protected by screens. Here teachers attend daily but were not present at this time, it being a sort of grandfather's holiday devoted to recreation & frolic. Their only study at this home school is learning to read, write & practical arithmetic.<sup>513</sup>

This passage confirms that there were tutors hired to take care of the Pan sons inside the residence. It seems that the study room was indeed built in close connection to the garden and it is possible that, this time, what Tilden visited was genuinely the Wutong courtyard. His mention of the room open in the front corresponds with a common feature of Chinese pavilions built in courtyards, and what Tilden saw as screens were possibly foldable door windows. The two boys asked Tilden numerous questions, that Pan Khequa II translated to their guest: those that Tilden reproduced in his journal concerned Western-style sailing boats. Quoting their questions in pidgin English, Tilden might have been displaying an uncharacteristic bout of smugness for the superiority of Western navigation: "How can jonck ship make come China so fashion [arrive to China] and no catche locks [perhaps 'avoid

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<sup>512</sup> Wathen, p. 245.

<sup>513</sup> Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, p. 13.



shipwreck’?] Ayah! Chinamans no can do all same same!!”<sup>514</sup> Assuming that Tilden did not invent those questions, the presence of the two curious boys raises the possibility that these young Pan boys were Pan Dinggui (Gen IV, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> branches 1811-1840) and his elder brother Pan Shu (Gen IV, 5<sup>th</sup> branch 1810-1865). If that were the case, it would fit with the latter’s adult life: Pan Shu is recorded to have helped his cousin Pan Shicheng (a cousin living in Lychee Bay) supervise the building of the first Western-style boats in China.<sup>515</sup>

After surveying the gardens and the schoolrooms, Tilden’s visit was interrupted by a meal, then continued as follows:<sup>516</sup>

[...] we adjourned up stairs to the library, which overlooks the river, affording a new and beautiful view all around. This was indeed a rare treat & an unusual favour toward me, being a foreigner, and now I shall attempt a description of what I saw but could only imperfectly understand in this his [sic] beautiful library retreat & museum, consisting of three connected rooms, or halls. On the walls of one hall, were *chinese* [sic] *block stamped & painted drawings*, set in old, carved rose & black colored wood frames [...]. These large pictures and some curious looking *old chinese* [sic] *maps of the world* as these ‘celestials’ suppose it to be [...] Paunkeiqua [Pan Khequa II] values very highly on account of their antiquity. [...] The main or great library hall contains a large collection of books, etc., relating to chinese [sic] history and literature, some of which he says are very ancient [...]. In the third room is a curious invaluable collection of ancient copper and bronze articles, principally vases, urns, house and field utensils, & pottery, old china ware, some of which bear marks of being very aged.<sup>517</sup>

In this extract, Tilden provides confirmation that the Pan residence did contain an important library of ancient books, as was suggested by several Chinese sources mentioned in the second section. We also learn that the Pan library was composed of several rooms located on the first floor of a building near the riverside — assuming Tilden did not confuse the river with a canal, it indicates that the library was built at the northernmost end of the estate. The building’s description also corresponds with the descriptions of Pan Zhengwei (Gen III, 4<sup>th</sup> branch)’s Tingfanlou, which had two storeys, a view on the river and a well-furnished library.

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<sup>514</sup> Tilden was usually complimentary towards his Chinese guests in his diary. Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, p. 12.

<sup>515</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 344.

<sup>516</sup> Tilden’s description of the Pan gardens during this 1816-17 visit corresponds with the passage quoted earlier in this section.

<sup>517</sup> Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, pp. 13–15.

To obtain an idea of the appearance of riverside buildings in Henan, one can refer to the second of the British Library views (Figure 31). The waterscape's background is populated with a number of buildings that could well represent the flip side of the garden view (Left side Figure 30), although it is not possible to confirm at the moment.

The contents of what Tilden styles as the 'museum' in the lengthy quote above are similar to those described in several Chinese texts quoted in the previous section. Block stamp illustrations and paintings displayed on the walls remind us both of Pan Zhengheng (衡, Gen III, 5<sup>th</sup> branch)'s Li Studio and its four walls covered in Li Jian's paintings. The location of the building near the river could correspond with the Fengyue qinzun (The boat for bonding friendship over playing the *guqin*) located in Pan Zhengheng (亭, Gen III, 1<sup>st</sup> branch)'s Wansong shanfang: as mentioned earlier, this building was recorded as containing multiple books and paintings. The antique bronze vessels mentioned also give credibility to Pan Guangying (Gen V, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> branches)'s recollection of his family treasures as follows:

My house had three treasures [...]. Late uncle Bo Lin [Pan Zhengheng 亭] and his father's old collection of bronze vessels, rubbings of Qujiang stone tablets dated of the Tang dynasty and a pair of ink stones of the Song dynasty. 从叔祖淑亭先生有诗云：吾家三长物，又割紫云双。谓先伯临公旧藏周叔兴父簋、唐拓张曲江碑，及宋双砚也。<sup>518</sup>

Tilden was apparently convinced that the Pans' collection had been accumulated over several generations, although he does not explain why: either because their appearance gave credit to their antiquity or because of Pan Khequa II's explanation regarding his family's love for collecting artworks. Tilden might, however, have exaggerated the numbers of years and the value of objects in the following passage:

One vase has chinese [sic] characters upon it by which it is known to be fifteen hundred years old, which he says an ancestor of his own family paid 1300 taeles, (over \$1700), for sake of possessing so valuable a relic of antiquity. [...] These [blue and white china ware] specimen he assured me had been handed down in his own family now over 400 years!<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> Quoted in the entry for Pan Guangying's Songshuang yantang 宋双砚堂 from 《绿水园诗话》 (Commentary on the poems of the Garden of Green waters). 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 98.

<sup>519</sup> Jenkins and Newcomen Society in North America, p. 15.

Although, so far as we know, Chinese sources did not mention any 400 year-old porcelain passed on as the Pan family treasure, it would be plausible for a collector to obtain such items. Furthermore we know that bronze vessels were indeed present thanks to Pan Guangying's above quoted text. It is conceivable that there would have been ancient Shang or Zhou bronze vessels or good reproductions thereof in Pan's residence. Sir Henry Ellis, a member of the 1816 Amherst embassy to China, also commented upon the antiquity and quality of Pan Khequa II's vessels. Upon their return from Tianjin, the embassy stopped in Guangzhou and was entertained by the Hong merchants:

The houses of both Puan-ke-qua and How-qua contained halls of their ancestors, with tablets dedicated to their immediate progenitors; the vessels for sacrifice and other parts of their worship were similar to those we had before seen but in somewhat better order and of better materials.<sup>520</sup>

While this passage does seem to give credibility to Tilden's estimation of the Pans' collection, it strikes one as a great exaggeration to estimate that the vessels used in both Wu and Pan's ancestors hall were better than what Ellis had witnessed in the rest of his travels in China. Ellis would have visited more cities than the typical Western trader at the time, and while the Amherst embassy was not received in court as the Macartney one had been, it is still possible that the Hong merchant's was the most luxurious hospitality that the Amherst retinue had witnessed in China. Although his description does not give much information regarding the residence's layout, Ellis does mention the presence of farms in close proximity to the garden: the content of the inscription suggests that these farms corresponded with the lands that Pan Khequa I had bought in Henan for ritual purposes.<sup>521</sup> This means that many of the elements of the Pans' Henan property have been confirmed, in even more detail in Western sources. A few specific details, such as on potted plants, have been gathered on Pan's gardens, although nothing as precise as a layout could be combined from the Chinese and Western sources.

### *Huadi nurseries and the Pans' role in global plant exchanges*

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<sup>520</sup> Henry Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China* (Philadelphia: A. Small, 1818), pp. 415–18.

<sup>521</sup> Mentioned in Zhang Xilin 张锡麟's 《矩园文钞》下 and in Pan Jianqing's memorial inscription 《潘谏卿墓志》 as cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 339.

If the analysis of contemporary Western descriptions are helpful in providing in-depth details on the Pan family's Henan residence, such is not the case for the Dongyuan garden in Huadi. So far, none of the Western descriptions analysed contained any mention of a Pan property within the Huadi area — including both those descriptions naming Huadi directly and those that describe a geographic location that corresponds with Huadi. The most straightforward way to explain such absence is simply that the Dongyuan garden was not opened to foreign visitors. Another hypothesis would be that some foreign guests did visit the Dongyuan, albeit without realising it belonged to the Pan. It is unclear how different the Dongyuan would have appeared to a visitor compared to a regular nursery around the turn of the nineteenth century. If we accept the previously mentioned descriptions of the garden by Zhang Weiping, then under Pan Khequa I the Dongyuan did not contain many buildings and gardening efforts had mostly been focused on its vegetation. Perhaps this means that Westerners would have been able to wander in the Dongyuan without noticing any difference with other nurseries. This hypothesis is less likely, in part because it is difficult to imagine that Zhang Weiping would have praised a garden that looked the same as commercial nurseries. In the end, it is not at the moment possible to ascertain the Dongyuan's appearance under the Pan's ownership, although there are plenty of Western sources describing the garden after it passed into the Wu family's ownership (see case study 2). Regardless of the Dongyuan, an analysis of Western writings on the Huadi nurseries still reveals several mentions of the Pan family: this is notably the case in relation to Western efforts to procure Chinese plants in Guangzhou and subsequently transport them to Europe.

As one of the few spots that foreigners were allowed to visit in Guangzhou, the Huadi nurseries were an often-described location in Western diaries. Nor was it always an easy place to access, as this translation of the Chinese ruling on foreign movements offered by William Hunter suggests:

On the 8th, 18th, and 28th days of the moon [month] these foreign barbarians may visit the Flower Gardens [Huadi nurseries] and the Honam Joss-house [Henan's Ocean Banner Temple], but not in droves of over ten at one time. When they have 'refreshed' they must return to the Factories, not be allowed to pass the night 'out,' or collect together to carouse. Should they do so, then, when the next 'holiday' comes, they shall not be permitted to go.<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 28.

During the Canton System period, the rules above were at times strictly enforced or relaxed depending on the state of Sino-Western political tensions.<sup>523</sup> While many secondary sources commented on the Huadi nurseries as one of the few havens for Western traders to visit, most scholars did not dwell on the reason why the nurseries were among those available scenic spots to start with. After all, the Huadi nurseries were only one of many Guangzhou scenic locations appreciated by Chinese residents and visitors, and certainly not the most famous — see for example the Nine Stars Garden mentioned in Chapter one. One of the reasons for this specific spot to be open to Western guests was probably its location. Many of the most famous scenic spots were either located *intramuros* or on the Western side of the city: in other words, either in an area strictly forbidden to foreigners (*intramuros*) or in one of the most populated areas outside Guangzhou (Xiguan). To contrast with those inconveniences, Huadi's location on the opposite bank of the river was less populated than the northern bank, and there were always gardeners in attendance: that might have reassured local officials in their belief that foreign guests could be managed, thereby reducing the likelihood of Sino-Western incidents. The fact that the Pan family owned land in Huadi might also be related: the Hong merchants would naturally find it easier to provide access to a location where they already had a footing.<sup>524</sup>

The above reasons might explain why Chinese local officials granted foreigners access to Huadi, but do not explain how they came to choose plant nurseries specifically. Apparently, the Westerners themselves asked to be allowed to visit plant nurseries, although they might not have specified those of Huadi in particular.<sup>525</sup> The early Canton System period corresponds with the rise of 'botanophilia' in Europe. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, notably in Britain and France after 1760, the passion for botany as a science was spreading among different social classes: this was notably a result of Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus's contributions to nomenclature that made botanic science widely available simultaneously with the expansion of a market place and public sphere for what Sarah Easterby-Smith calls 'Enlightenment'.<sup>526</sup> A craze for new and exotic plants developed in cities like London and Paris: there were commercial nurseries offering a number of plants of diverse origins, and providing an

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<sup>523</sup> Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China*, pp. 415–18.

<sup>524</sup> *Idem*

<sup>525</sup> Public Record Office, Kew, reference FO 1048/27/13, as cited by Fan, p. 29.

<sup>526</sup> On the emerging 'marketplace' for Enlightenment science, especially botany, see Sarah Easterby-Smith, *Cultivating Commerce Cultures of Botany in Britain and France 1760-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

opportunity for members of lower social backgrounds to make a name for themselves as enlightened botanical scholars.<sup>527</sup>

The contemporary rise of botanophilia in Europe explains why, upon their arrival in China, Western visitors were keen to visit Chinese nurseries: exploring a range of new plants became one of the main attractions of being in a foreign land. The sons of middle class British families would have perhaps been used to interacting with different sorts of botanical specialists in London nurseries. As such, Chinese nurseries would not have appeared more alien than any other aspect of Chinese culture — if anything Western accounts of Huadi nurseries shows more enthusiasm than usual. The plants that Westerners described in Huadi nurseries broadly overlap with those of the Hong merchants' gardens, although the latter would have contained more precious species. For example, the following extract from the *London Saturday Journal* bears some resemblance to Tilden's description of plants in Pan's gardens:

The last time I visited the Fa Te [...], which was in November 1828, orange trees formed no considerable part of the display, and were then in full leaf. A middling-sized pot was sold for a dollar, and one of large dimensions for three-fourths of the same. The chrysanthemums were all in their prime, and made a garish figure with the imperial yellow; some pretty sorts of bamboo occupied some of the pots, which, like all other plants subject to cultivation, runs into many varieties, differing from each other in size, texture of the leaf, colour of the stem, and so on.<sup>528</sup>

This extract written by an unnamed contributor illustrates well the commercial side of the nurseries: flowers were displayed at their peak and came in many varieties, but always in pots. In this case, the author noticed the orange trees, the chrysanthemums and the bamboos — but not all Western visitors to the Huadi nurseries had the same aim. Some pursued a serious interest in botany and wanted to study exotic specimens. In the case of Thomas Beale and Edmund Roberts, the plants purchased could be cultivated in their Macao gardens.<sup>529</sup> Others merely hoped to bring a valuable specimen home, perhaps hoping to either make

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<sup>527</sup> See Chapter 2 in Easterby-Smith.

<sup>528</sup> Unknown author, 'Visit to the Fa Te Gardens, Canton', *London Saturday Journal*, April 1840, pp. 344–45 (p. 344).

<sup>529</sup> Robert's Macao garden is mentioned in Kew archives, William Kerr's correspondence, Folio 6 dated 04<sup>th</sup> of March 1809 William Kerr to Aiton Esquire. Thomas Beale's Macao garden is notably mentioned in Fortune, *A Journey to the Tea Countries of China*, pp. 6–9. Detailed description starting p.318 in John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and Its Inhabitants* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1836).

money or a name for themselves by introducing a ‘new’ species to the Western world.<sup>530</sup> Finally, it was a pleasant place to have a walk, far from the stuffy Factories.<sup>531</sup> During festivities, Western visitors would be allowed to share the space with Chinese locals: such occasions to observe Chinese of higher classes engaged in an authentic activity were rare.<sup>532</sup> Since some of the Huadi gardeners learned some pidgin English, it is possible that botany was among the least business-like discussion topics between Western guests and Chinese subjects. Thomas Beale and Roberts in Macao even employed their own Chinese gardeners, and reported how they sometimes had to give in to Chinese gardening practices.<sup>533</sup> The Huadi nurseries also feature in a colourful parody of *Know'st thou the land*.<sup>534</sup>

Know'st thou the land where the nankin and tea-chest,  
With cassia and rhubarb and camphor, abound ? [...]

Tho' fairest Hwâ-Te [Huadi ] are thy gardens of flowers,  
And sweet every blossom that flings to the breeze

Its perfume, decks with its tints thy gay bowers,  
Or clings on its vine to thy moss-covered trees [...]<sup>535</sup>

For some of the Western visitors to Huadi, it was their job to find as many plant species as possible and bring either the seeds or the plant itself back to their country. Fa-ti Fan wrote a well-researched book on British naturalists in China during the Qing dynasty, including those that operated in Guangzhou and Macao during the Canton System period.<sup>536</sup> Without a doubt, there were also naturalists of other nationalities engaged in similar pursuits, but one factor that made the British stand out among other naturalists is that Joseph Banks was organising them in a highly efficient way.<sup>537</sup> Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), Director of Kew gardens,

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<sup>530</sup> John Livingstone, ‘Dr. Livingstone’s Letter to the Horticultural Society of LONDON’, *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner: Containing Miscellaneous Communications on the Literature, History, Philosophy, Mythology, Etc. of the Indo-Chinese Nations, Drawn Chiefly from Native Languages, Christian Miscellanies and General News* (Malacca, July 1819), section IX, pp. 126–31.

<sup>531</sup> See for example C. Toogood Downing, *The Fan-Qui in China, in 1836-7* (London: H. Colburn, 1838), p. 202.

<sup>532</sup> Wathen, p. 203.

<sup>533</sup> Fan, p. 25.

<sup>534</sup> *Know'st thou the land* is originally a German song by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) that, once translated in English, inspired Lord Byron’s *The Bride of Abydos* (1813)

<sup>535</sup> This parodic poem was reported by William Hunter as composed by William Wightman Wood, one of the original editors of the Canton Register newspaper. Hunter, *The ‘fan Kwae’ at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, pp. 111–12.

<sup>536</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>537</sup> Fan, p. 20.

was engaged in collecting plants worldwide on behalf of the Crown.<sup>538</sup> Joseph Banks sent several botanical gatherers to China, who had to operate within the limited confines of Guangzhou and Macao.<sup>539</sup> Many of his collectors in Guangzhou seem to have gone through a member of the Pan family in order to facilitate their work. Although it is a coincidence that Joseph Banks, his collectors in Guangzhou and the first two generations of the Pan family all lived at the same time, it seems that Pan family members did take a willing part in facilitating Western naturalists' collecting task.

There is evidence that William Kerr, who was a resident collector for Banks in Guangzhou from 1803 to 1812, exchanged plants via Pan Khequa II.<sup>540</sup> One of the letters sent from Kerr to Banks on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1806 offers great insight regarding the plant exchanges in Guangzhou. Kerr explains that in February 1805 he left Guangzhou on an expedition to Manila to collect plants and returned with a good collection, only to lose most of it to a hurricane in Macao. It seems unlikely that Kerr would have gone to Manila without some sort of recommendation, and the Pan family, having ties with the Manila trade, could very well have provided such a letter. This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that Kerr mentions Pan Khequa II in the very same letter, as the Hong merchant was sending Banks a dwarfed tree among other gifts:

Puan-kequa [Pan Khequa II] says, it has been in his garden for a great length of time, that he remembers it for upwards of 30 years during which time it has continued nearly in the same state as at present, he supposes it must been at least 100 years of age.

According to the sources discussed in the second section of this case study, in 1806 the Henan residence would have existed for barely 30 years — it is therefore probable that the dwarf tree would have either been kept in the Dongyuan, or in another of the Pans' estates on the northern bank. In the same letter, Kerr also confirms that he received plants for China sent by Banks aboard EIC's ships: for example fig trees, rhododendrons, a pear tree, iris and other bulbs.<sup>541</sup> In the letter it is made clear that the intention is to exchange those specimens for Chinese plants. The letter also specifies that among some of the specimens sent by Kerr to

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<sup>538</sup> Josepha Banks eventually became President of the Royal Society

<sup>539</sup> There are notably letters kept of plants exchanges between Britain and Guangzhou in Royal Botanic Garden of Kew Archives. Letters from William Kerr to both Joseph Banks and William Aiton - around 1804-1812, ff.1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 20.

<sup>540</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>541</sup> British Library, in Joseph Banks' correspondences, reference Add.33981, folio 227: Letter from William Kerr to Banks, on 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1806



Britain were ginkgo nuts and dried lychee fruits: these could have been as easily found in the Huadi nurseries, the market near the Factories or in a Hong merchant's garden. This is by far the most interesting aspect of the Pan Khequa II's letter sent together with Kerr's, and addressed to Banks. Although the letter was certainly penned by a linguist or a Western trader, it was likely done with Pan's full approval. A list of presents sent to Banks is attached, including curios such as horn lanterns, the dwarf trees and "eight pots of the finest moutans [in Chinese *mudan* 牡丹 or peony bush]".

The letter starts by paying respect to Banks for his famed and distinguished merit and skills, then continues as follows:

[...] the letter and presents with which you have lately honoured me, I particularly esteem as a prelude to a nearer and more intimate acquaintance with you. It is extremely gratifying to me to find that my endeavour to assist Mr Lance, and his Britannic Majesty's Gardener [probably Kerr] in the highly useful and interesting pursuits in which they were engaged have proved acceptable. [...] If my country affords any natural or artificial productions which may be curious and interesting in your eyes, I trust you will inform me and signify your commands, for in endeavouring to execute them, I shall have a peculiar pleasure. [...] 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1806. Puan Khequa, President of the Company of Merchants privileged to trade with Foreign Nations at Canton in China.<sup>542</sup>

This letter leaves little doubt that Pan Khequa II, as the head of the Hong merchants, was giving his assistance to Banks' collectors in their botanical endeavours. Among the gifts sent to Banks by Pan Khequa II were eight 'moutan': the bush peony was among Banks' most desired plants from China, and the focus of many of his collectors. Alexander Duncan took the place of his brother John as one of Banks' collectors in Guangzhou in 1788. Both brothers were asked to look actively for the moutan, which was not only a rare plant, but also known not to flower in Guangzhou: the peony was native of a temperate climate in a more northern part of the Chinese empire, and likely to accommodate itself well to British weather.<sup>543</sup> In the end the plant was acquired via a number of Chinese, including the Hoppo, and Hong

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<sup>542</sup> British Library, in Joseph Banks' correspondences, reference Add.33981, folio 229: Letter from Pan Khequa II to Banks, on 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1806

<sup>543</sup> Clarke Abel, *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China, and of a Voyage to and from That Country, in the Years 1816 and 1817 Containing an Account of the Most Interesting Transactions of Lord Amherst's Embassy to the Court of Peking and Observations on the Countries Which It Visited* (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1818), p. 220.

merchants.<sup>544</sup> Thanks to EIC records we know that one of Pan Khequa I's sons was posted in Suzhou: it is possible that the moutan was obtained via the Pans' network in the Jiangnan region.<sup>545</sup> This hypothesis is reinforced by the following passage in Alexander Duncan's letter to Banks in 1791:

I have had a long conversation with Puankequa [Pan Khequa II], respecting the moutan, which grows all over the Nankeen province [near Nanjing (Nankin)], and he tells me, 'tis impossible for it, from its great delicacy, ever to reach England alive — as it has never been known to flower in Canton, beyond the season in which it arrived.<sup>546</sup>

From this letter, it appears that Pan Khequa II had either been making repeated experiments with the moutan himself or had arranged to learn from someone who did. If not from his unnamed brother posted in Suzhou, it was perhaps via the other Pan family member that helped Western naturalists in Guangzhou: the Squire (Pan Youwei, Gen II, 2d Branch). John Reeves' aforementioned letter records that the Squire owned no fewer than 2,000 to 3,000 chrysanthemums. That Reeves to recognise in the Squire a fellow plant enthusiast in his letter "only Chinese who paid any decided attention to flowers", suggests that Pan Youwei would have had a specific space for storing his botanical collection. Such a space was possibly available in the Dongyuan in Huadi. It is likely that Pan Youwei took over the management of the Dongyuan after Pan Khequa I's death in 1788. As far as we know, he was the only Pan member who wrote explicitly about this garden.

In order to visualise what this nursery could have looked like, the testimony of Bryant Tilden is once again one of the most helpful and detailed. Below is a description of Huadi nurseries from his 1818-1819 journey:

Similar plants, dwarfed little fruit trees, all bearing oranges etc etc, with an endless variety of flowers are in pots of blue china ware, ranged on brick & stone wall made benches, three feet high — and many of them 150 feet long — with walk paths between and gaps or pass ways for convenience in looking at the flowers etc, etc. These low walls, are in parallel ranges about six feet apart — the alleys between being hard gravelled, & in some places paved with large square flat stones, the whole premises covering over five or six acres of ground. The walls & alleys intersect here and there, at

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<sup>544</sup> *Idem*

<sup>545</sup> India Office Records R/10/07, 11th of December 1770, p.49

<sup>546</sup> British Library, in Joseph Banks' correspondences, reference Add.33979, folio 121: Letter from Alexander Duncan to Banks, 29<sup>th</sup> December 1791.

right angles — all on level ground, occasionally varied by Chinese angles which would puzzle a mathematician to describe, but the picturesque view of them is very pretty; and by this easy method of garden planting, with low walls, the plants & flowers are upon a level with the eye and more conveniently seen. Another advantage is that this fairy like view may be changed at pleasure, by merely shifting the pots and vases on the walls — so as to display changes, as with scenery at a theatre. This is a beautiful improvement upon our method of garden display, where plants are fixtures in the ground.<sup>547</sup>

This extract highlights similar elements described in Pan Khequa II's aviary garden scene already quoted in this section, but with more details. Tilden even suggested that the nursery displays have aesthetic value and could be adopted in American gardens. If the Pan did not have such a nursery in the Dongyuan in Huadi, another possibility was that Pan Youwei arranged for such an area inside the Pans' Henan estate. Wherever this hypothetical Pan nursery would have been located, Pan Khequa II could have used it to grow plants acquired from Banks and other Westerners sending botanical specimens to China. This nursery space remains a hypothesis in absence of concrete evidence -- the only certitude being that, for Western naturalists, the Squire's plant collection was deemed at least as important as the contents of the Huadi nurseries. For example, when the Horticultural Society sent John Potts to Guangzhou in the early 1820s, John Reeves took him to visit the Squire's garden on the very second day of his arrival in Guangzhou.<sup>548</sup> As a side note, Pan Khequa II's cousin Conseequa (Pan Changyao) was also remembered for facilitating Sino-Western plant exchanges. In 1835, *The Gardener's Magazine* reproduced a note by John Livingstone, explaining how a kind of wisteria came to be named after Conseequa:

Conseequa was the first person to propagate the Wistaria [sic], and the two plants brought to England in 1816 by Capt. Wellbank and Capt. Rawes, were obtained from him ; therefore the trivial name may of right belong to him ; but the original plant was brought from Chin Chew (Chang Chow Foo), in the province of Pohccn, by his nephew Tinqu, and planted in his garden adjoining Conseequa's, and remained there still neglected in 1831.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> Third journey to China (1818-1819), *Bryant P. Tilden Papers, 1781-1851*, pp.208-209.

<sup>548</sup> See John Potts "Unpublished Journals, 1821-22" entries on November 1821. Reference 910POT in Royal Horticultural Society Library, London.

<sup>549</sup> 'VIII. Biography of Conseequa', *The Gardener's Magazine and Register of Rural & Domestic Improvement*, 1835, 111-12.

The above-cited instances of Pan Khequa II and the Squire's involvement in Sino-Western plant exchanges around the turn of the nineteenth century are in line with the Pan family's agenda to be active players in global exchanges of goods. The effects of such involvement on the Pans' gardens are uncertain, other than possibly enriching them with otherwise difficult to obtain plants from Europe. The extracts from Western descriptions quoted above also confirm a few specific species present in the Pan's gardens, such as the *mudan* or chrysanthemums. Western testimonies also confirmed that the second generation of Pan family members in Henan had a good knowledge of botanical matters. It is likely that the Pan family used their trading network to procure plants for their own needs, and not only for the benefit of Westerners — this would have contributed to their aim to build up a sophisticated image as garden owners.

This case study focused on several exceptional aspects regarding the Pan family members. First of all, Pan Khequa father and son both displayed great business acumen and flair when it came to global trade flows under the Canton System. While accumulating wealth through the Tongwen (later Tongfu) Company, father and son pursued their aim of social mobility by buying education for their male descendants and investing in material assets such as a residence and gardens. Secondly, from the second generation of Pan members living in Henan onward, the appeal of the family's wealth as well as the collection of paintings and books in their residence and gardens began to open doors to the upper social circles in Guangzhou. Finally, thanks to Western visitors' testimony, several aspects of the Pans' properties, including gardening characteristics, can be revealed. The importance of potted plants, their mode of display in gardens and their frequent replacement is notably confirmed by both written and pictorial evidence.

The three sections of this case study also explore the different functions fulfilled by the Pan Henan's estate and Huadi garden. Pan Khequa I used the Dongyuan in Huadi to appreciate nature and relax in his old age, and his descendants used the Pan gardens to collect art, to attract distinguished Chinese visitors, and even as a retreat to study for official examinations. For Pan Khequa II and his brother Pan Youwei, the gardens also served a quasi-diplomatic function as a stage set when welcoming foreign traders. Most of the foreign visitors welcomed in the Pan residence and gardens were potential trade partners or troublemakers that needed to be placated. Opening their family abode to such foreign guests and treating them to sumptuous dinners and entertainment were ways to guarantee their future

cooperation. However, a small number of foreign guests became family friends, such as Boston trader Bryant Tilden who seemed to have genuinely appreciated the Pans' company although his security merchant was actually Houqua.

Additionally, the exchange of plants between the West and China around the turn of the nineteenth century as exemplified by Joseph Banks, his collectors in Guangzhou, and the Pan family; is one of the most interesting aspects of the Pan family's global reach. Pan Khequa II and his brother the Squire (Pan Youwei) shared an interest for botany and zoology with some of their Western visitors, and were prompt to facilitate their visitors' hobbies by helping them obtain a rare specimen or by discussing horticulture.

The gardens of the Pan family were a repository of sorts for non-local plant species, either from other parts of China and East Asia before exchanging with Western traders, or from other parts of the globe after receiving them from those traders. Such plant mobility was facilitated by their presentation in pots.<sup>550</sup> Beyond the global reach displayed by Pan Khequa II's letter addressed to Joseph Banks, this plant exchange also provides information regarding the botanical knowledge of the Pan family. As such, the Pan gardens were exceptional by their botanical contents, the owners' horticultural knowledge and the kind of Sino-Western exchanges the latter allowed.

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<sup>550</sup> Josepha Richard and Jan Woudstra, "“Thoroughly Chinese”: Revealing the Plants of the Hong Merchants' Gardens Through John Bradby Blake's Paintings", *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 34.4 (2017), 475–97 (p. 496) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/curt.12214>>.

## **Chapter 5. Second case study: The Wu family residences with gardens in Panyu County**

The residences and gardens of the Wu family were used to host the family, organise scholar gatherings and welcome Western visitors during most of 19<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou. The last head of the Hong merchants Houqua (Wu Bingjian) left a lasting impression as an acute player in the global trade whose fortune earned him the unverified title of richest man on earth in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Houqua's friendship with Americans and his tactical investment abroad helped him circumvent Qing inheritance laws and allowed a large part of his assets to remain with his family after his death in 1843. Houqua's fortune is the reason why the gardens of the Wu family outlasted those of other Hong merchant's.

In this case study, first the origins of Wu Bingjian (Houqua)'s wealth are discussed. Then the gardens are analysed from the point of view of the Chinese sources, to demonstrate their function of hosting the family and facilitating social mobility. Finally, by using Western sources, the secondary function of welcoming Western visitors is explored during and after the Canton System period. Most importantly, the Fuyinyuan in Huadi is reconstituted using numerous contemporary pictorial sources: this allows unprecedented insight into what were the local gardening elements in Guangzhou, as analysed in the discussion chapter.

## **Section 1: The richest man on earth and his financial legacy: Houqua and descendants**

Houqua — also spelled ‘Howqua’ — was the name that Westerners used to call Wu Bingjian 伍秉鏞, the head of the Hong merchants from 1813 until his death in 1843. Houqua was arguably the most successful of the Hong merchants, and it is estimated that he managed to accumulate even greater economic gain than the Pan family. Houqua left a strong impression on Western traders and was even named the richest man on earth in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers. His material belongings also bore the mark of his fame - the gardens of the Wu family were still labelled as belonging to ‘Howqua’ in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, well after Wu Bingjian’s death. Confusion reigned as to the number and identity of these ‘Howquas’ until the later works of John Wong and Van Dyke. Zhang Wenqin, for example, noted as many as five holders of the Houqua title.<sup>551</sup> To understand what information is available on the Wu family’s gardens, and how those gardens are linked to Houqua’s mercantile enterprise, this section will first summarise the history of the Wu family’s involvement with Sino-Western trade during and after the Canton System. First, a clarification of which members of the Wu family took part in the Canton System will be provided. Secondly, the reasons behind Houqua’s success will be examined, notably his shrewd understanding of global trade and his ability to adapt to the changes of the market. Finally, this section will address Houqua’s global assets and how he planned his financial legacy to protect his fortune for his descendants. The latter’s use of the late Houqua’s capital will be explained as it is related to the fate of the Wu family’s properties, including gardens.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>551</sup> Wenqin Zhang, p. 206.

<sup>552</sup> See chapter 6 of John D. Wong.

The three Wu family members involved in the Canton System during the late 18th century

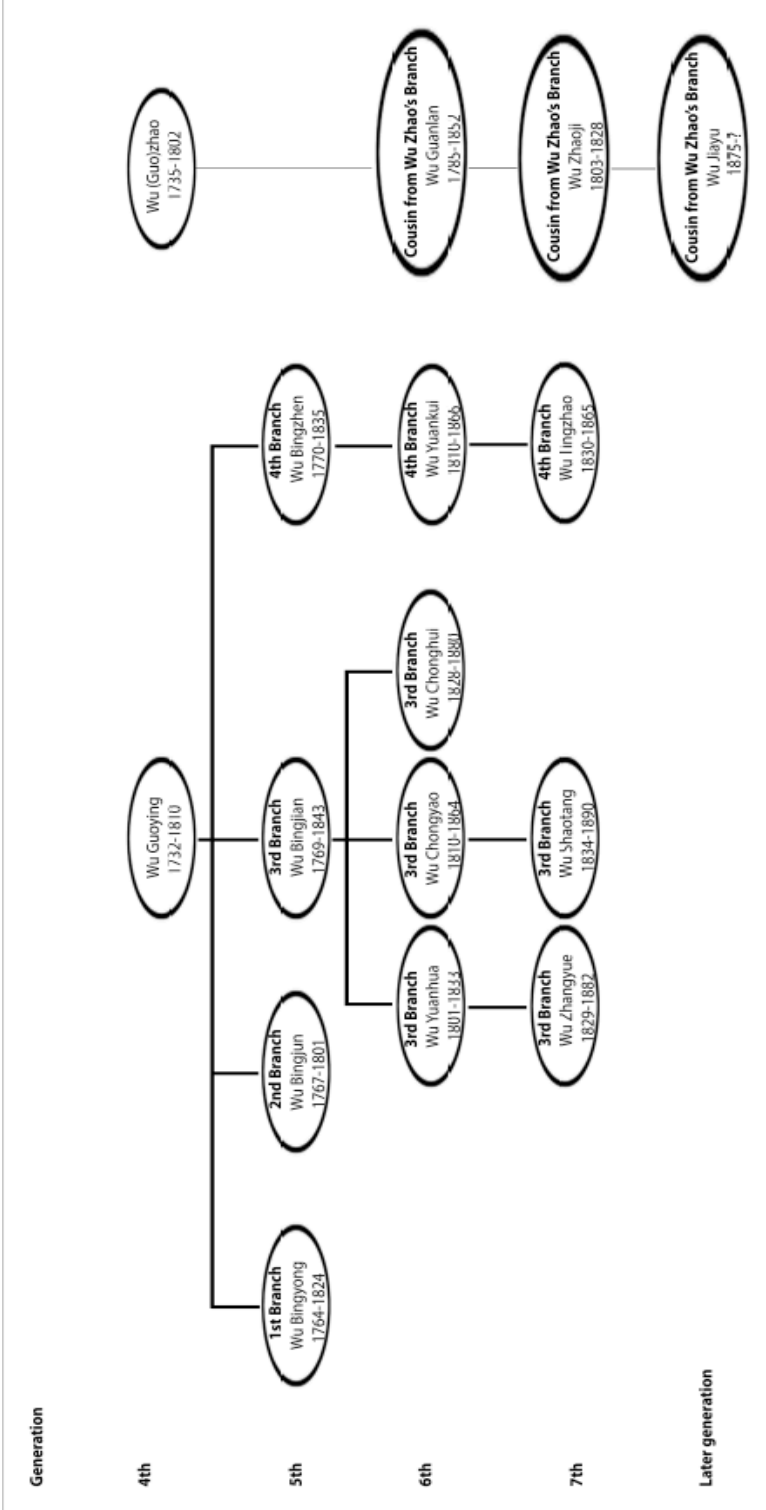


Figure 34 Simplified family tree for the Wu family members mentioned in this section



First of all, contrary to Pan Zhencheng (Pan Khequa I) in the Pan family, Wu Bingjian (Houqua) was not the first member of his family to take part in Guangzhou's Sino-Western trade. The first of the Fujian-based Wu family to relocate to Guangzhou was Wu Chaofeng 伍朝凤 (1613-1693), who settled in Nanhai county during the reign of Qing emperor Kangxi (1661-1722).<sup>553</sup> Since Wu Chaofeng is the founding ancestor of the Wu family in Guangzhou, as a result there are more generations of Wu family members to consider than in the case of the Pan family. However, for the sake of simplification, the family tree will start with Houqua's father (Figure 34).<sup>554</sup>

As far as we know, Houqua's cousin Wu Zhao 伍钊 (1734-1802), whose merchant title was Qiaoguan 伍乔官 (Geowqua), was the first Wu family member to take part in the Canton System.<sup>555</sup> Using his links with tea producers in Fujian, Geowqua attempted to monopolise the sale of specific Fujian tea varieties to establish his market 'niche' in the Sino-Western trade. At the time of Geowqua's first appearance in Western records in 1772, he was old enough (38 y.o.) to have already been trading for a while, but his earlier trading experience is unknown.<sup>556</sup> Geowqua's most important customers were the Danish, Dutch and British, and he traded under the license of other merchants until he officially became a Hong merchant in 1782. The latest research based on the Wu clan's genealogy shows that the familial relationship between Geowqua and Houqua was that of second cousins.<sup>557</sup>

As with the Pan family, the numerous Wu family members were far from all being involved in the Canton System. In fact, Geowqua and Houqua did not really work together: their common trading link is to have both worked with Wu Bingjun 伍秉钧 (1767-1801). Wu Bingjun's merchant title was Puiqua 沛官 and he started to learn the trade under Geowqua, and like the latter focused on trade with the Danish.<sup>558</sup> Puiqua officially became a Hong merchant in 1792 and simultaneously started the Yihe Company 怡和行, helped by his

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<sup>553</sup> The Wu family is originated from the town of Jinjiang in Fujian. See the Wu family's genealogies *Quancui Wu. Lingli Wu.*

<sup>554</sup> The family trees were compiled using the Wu family genealogies, see above.

<sup>555</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, pp. 107–22. Lingli Wu, p. 35.

<sup>556</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 108.

<sup>557</sup> Regarding Geowqua's place in the Wu family tree see Wong p.43. Lingli Wu, p. 35.

<sup>558</sup> Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 117.

younger brother Wu Bingjian (Houqua).<sup>559</sup> This means that there were three Wu family members involved in Sino-Western trade at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Houqua started to appear in Western records from 1787, but after 1792 it seems that Wu Bingjian stopped using this name in transactions, and worked under his brother's name on behalf of the Yihe Company.<sup>560</sup> The name of Houqua reappeared in 1800 when Wu Bingjian progressively replaced his sickly brother during meetings with the EIC.<sup>561</sup> After Puiqua's death in 1801, Houqua inherited the leadership of the Yihe Company seamlessly: the EIC seems to have trusted Houqua to take on this trading role and continued to call him 'Puiqua' long after his brother's death.<sup>562</sup> Perhaps this rapid succession was owed to Puiqua's long illness that had already led Houqua to conduct most of the Yihe Company's business and made Western traders used to dealing with him. As Houqua demonstrated great skill in his business dealings after 1801, Wong suggests that he in fact had much more trading experience than Puiqua, and that Houqua's business acumen was the main strength behind the Yihe Company.<sup>563</sup>

Before exploring his ascension to head of the Hong merchants, it is important to specify why the spelling 'Houqua' is used in this thesis for the transcription of Wu Bingjian's merchant name or title, 'Haoguan 浩官'. Until 2017, researching Houqua entailed rather confusing navigation between the different people that shared a similar name with various spellings in Western records: there are notably many instances of 'Howquas', some were recorded at a time when Wu Bingjian would have been too young to trade. These earlier 'Howquas' might explain why many Chinese and Western publications have given Wu Bingjian the mistaken title of 'Howqua II'.<sup>564</sup> In such studies it is implied or stated that Puiqua and Houqua's father Wu Guoying 伍国莹 (1732-1810) was the first 'Howqua', subsequently transmitting the title to his third son Wu Bingjian.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> Not to be confused with the Ewo Company: Wong explains how Jardine Matheson came to appropriate the Yihe Company's Chinese characters to replace their own firm's Chinese name in the late 19th century. John D. Wong, pp. 170–72.

<sup>560</sup> Houqua's first appearance in EIC records as 'Hooqua': BL, EIC G/12/87, 1787/02/14, p.144. Start of Yihe Company: see Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 117. John D. Wong, p. 49.

<sup>561</sup> BL, EIC G/12/131, in 1800, notably p.141.

<sup>562</sup> BL, EIC G/12/136, 1801/12/03, p.105.

<sup>563</sup> John D. Wong, p. 51.

<sup>564</sup> I was also guilty of it in this article: Richard, 'Uncovering the Garden of the Richest Man on Earth in Nineteenth-Century Canton: Howqua's Garden in Honam, China'.

<sup>565</sup> See for example Liang, p. 253.

In his 2016 study, John Wong showed that, in reality, Wu Guoying's involvement with the Yihe Company was only nominal: he had only participated financially by providing funds to start the firm.<sup>566</sup> As for the other 'Howquas', in his 2017 book Paul Van Dyke has shown that one of them even worked for the Pan family's Tongwen Company. Thanks to these two recently published studies, we also know that Wu Bingjian (Houqua) was not related to the other Houqua.<sup>567</sup> This thesis adopts Van Dyke's and Wong's choice of spelling of 'Houqua' as Wu Bingjian's merchant title because it avoids furthering the confusion associated with the 'Howqua' spelling. In order to simplify the reader's understanding of the Wu family tree, it is also helpful to note that Houqua was part of the fifth generation after the Wu family's relocation to Guangzhou.<sup>568</sup>

### *The reasons behind Houqua's success in troubled pre-Opium War times*

After becoming the head of the Yihe Company, Houqua endeavoured to establish himself as a reliable partner for foreign traders. At the turn of the nineteenth century, however, the situation was different from that of Pan Khequa I's beginnings in the mid-eighteenth century. Western traders had started to realise that buying large amounts of tea, porcelain and silk from China resulted in a great unbalance in silver flow as Chinese merchants were not interested in buying foreign products in return. The British, who had become the main traders in Guangzhou through the EIC's growing prevalence in the tea market, felt this unbalance most keenly. Therefore, the Macartney Embassy was sent in 1793 to appeal to Qianlong Emperor and obtain better trade conditions. Although the embassy was received in several key sites of the Chinese Empire, including Beijing and Jehol (Chengde)<sup>569</sup>, the Qianlong Emperor ultimately refused to accede to British terms. Both sides were displeased by the exchange.

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<sup>566</sup> John D. Wong, p. 141.

<sup>567</sup> An explanation regarding those various Howquas can be found in Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, p. 241. See also Wong, p.42-43.

<sup>568</sup> John D. Wong, p. 20.

<sup>569</sup> See the embassy's reports such as George Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China; Including Cursory Observations Made, and Information Obtained in Travelling through That Ancient Empire, and a Small Part of Chinese Tartary. Together with a Relation of the Voyage Undertaken on the Occasion by His Majesty's Ship the Lion, and the Ship Hindostan, in the East India Company's Service, to the Yellow Sea, and Gulf of Peking; as Well as of Their Return to Europe*. (London: G. Nicol, 1797).

In the context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for Houqua to be successful as a Hong merchant, it was necessary to circumvent the rules of the Canton System without falling prey to the bargaining power of the EIC or the squeeze of local Chinese officials. His brother Puiqua had worked hard for the trust of the EIC. Puiqua's strategy was to accept British woollens that were hard to sell in exchange for a share of the tea sales, and to aggressively ask for more shares. In order to do so, Puiqua also shouldered the debts that his cousin Geowqua had taken on.<sup>570</sup> It seems that his strategy paid off, as Puiqua managed to obtain the second largest allocation of the EIC's sales in 1798 behind Pan Khequa II.<sup>571</sup> As Houqua took over from his ill brother at the head of the Yihe Company, he continued the privileged relationship with the EIC.<sup>572</sup> As a result, he was named third Hong merchant in 1801, behind Pan Khequa II and Mowqua: this meant he had less administrative and pseudo-diplomatic tasks to undertake than the head merchant.<sup>573</sup> Like the Pan, Houqua also started to accumulate specific assets to help his business stay stable. One of them was to become specialised in selling nankeen cloth: as American traders were better positioned for obtaining this product than the EIC, Houqua could court the British by providing access to it.<sup>574</sup> By positioning himself as a reliable partner to obtain a desirable product, Houqua could negotiate or increase prices with the EIC, and even ask for prepayment.<sup>575</sup>

In 1806, Pan Khequa II negotiated his retirement from the duty of head Hong merchant, and the second-ranked merchant, Mowqua, also expressed similar intentions. The EIC viewed the situation with anxiety: as much as they disagreed with one Hong merchant becoming too powerful as Pan Khequa I and II had, they also needed a stable head merchant as a partner to negotiate financial matters with, and to help resolve Sino-Western tensions. Houqua managed to delay this succession, and Mowqua took the seat of head merchant in 1809 when the latter requested to retire on account of his age. In a last attempt to avoid the full responsibility involved with the position, Houqua then constituted a 'team' of senior merchants with Mowqua and Chunqua.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> BL, EIC G/12/119, p. 96-127.

<sup>571</sup> BL, EIC G/12/122, 1798, p.62.

<sup>572</sup> BL, EIC G/12/134, 1801, 108-109.

<sup>573</sup> BL, EIC G/12/136, 1801/12/03, p.105.

<sup>574</sup> BL, EIC G/12/116, p.249 and EIC G/12/131, p. 235-237.

<sup>575</sup> EIC G/12/142, 1804, p. 215-217; G/12/145, p. 230-231.

<sup>576</sup> John D. Wong, p. 61.

Upon the death of Mowqua in 1813, Houqua finally had to become the head Hong merchant.<sup>577</sup> His position was officialised in Qing official documents in 1814, along with a request for Pan Khequa II to return from his retirement and serve along Houqua.<sup>578</sup> The succession between the Pan and Wu families is therefore more entwined and complex than it seems. Houqua was the EIC's main partner from his accession to head merchant in 1813 until the end of the EIC monopoly in 1833. Like the Pan Khequas, Houqua had found a way to prevent the EIC from dictating their own terms, while remaining one of their main providers of tea, in addition to positioning himself in niche market products such as nankeen cloth.

Another important aspect of the Pans' success was to maintain a large amount of cash and liquidities: there too, Houqua found his own answer. Since the Yihe Company had started to trade, the amount of capital accumulated by Puiqua and Houqua was large enough to enable the latter to lend money. The need for cash was always high among Western traders, and even the EIC did not keep its profit in Guangzhou. Moreover, as Wong has explained in detail, the EIC was constantly trying to nurture new Hong merchants to counter the growing monopoly of the senior Hong, and these new merchants typically could not provide the cash advance required by tea producers as guarantee for the next year's harvest.<sup>579</sup> The EIC used Houqua's capital to finance the lesser Hong merchants, and by 1819 most Hong merchants owed Houqua money *via* the EIC.<sup>580</sup> By 1821 EIC reliance on Houqua for capital was such that the latter could effectively be considered as having circumvented the Canton System rules and become an indispensable party in Sino-Western exchanges. The profits earned from such financial lending perhaps explain better why, before the first Opium War, Houqua was considered the richest man on earth: William Hunter estimated his fortune at 26 million dollars in 1834.<sup>581</sup>

### *Houqua's global assets and his planned legacy*

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<sup>577</sup> BL, EIC R/10/26, p.10, p.26.

<sup>578</sup> Number One Historical Archives of China, *清宫广州十三行档案精选 (Featured Archives on Hong Merchants in Guangzhou during the Qing)* (Guangzhou: Guangdong jingji chubanshe, 2002). 7:3924 and 7:3949. As cited by Wong, p.62.

<sup>579</sup> John D. Wong, p. 67.

<sup>580</sup> BL, EIC G/12/214, p.110.

<sup>581</sup> The value of these dollars is to be put into context: Hunter himself says Houqua's fortune would represent fifty two millions by 1965. Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 48.



Figure 35 Wu family tree, Wu Bingjian (Houqua)'s sons

Dealing with the EIC and other Hong merchants was only part of Houqua's recipe for success: his most masterful move was the diversification of his financial assets by investing capital abroad. As relations with the British became increasingly strained in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Houqua turned to another set of English speakers: Americans. Eventually he found a select few trustworthy partners to rely on for investment abroad. Houqua was one of the only few Hong merchants to agree to trade with Americans, who were relative latecomers to the Canton System: the Pan family, for example, apparently never traded with Americans.<sup>582</sup> At first, Houqua used the American traders as a bargaining leverage against the British for products such as nankeen cloth. With time, Houqua's involvement with a select few American traders became more akin to a mutually beneficial partnership.

Since Houqua did not have Pan Khequa I's advantage of speaking Spanish, he had to focus on traders using pidgin English, but was almost unable to read and write English beyond his own signature. Houqua's long-time friend Robert Bennet Forbes remarked that in order to deal with his foreign correspondence, Houqua relied on American partners to read, explain and reply to such letters.<sup>583</sup> In order to safeguard himself, Houqua kept bilingual records of important correspondence and even invented a notation system for him to remember the content of English-language transactions.<sup>584</sup>

In addition to selling tea and other products to Americans trading in Guangzhou, after 1807 Houqua started to trust American partners with tea consignments to sell in the United States. Such a trading method was very risky: Houqua did not receive pre-payment and the sales'

<sup>582</sup> RIHS Dorr, Thomas W. Dorr Collection. Manuscripts Division. Rhode Island Historical Society. Letter dated Canton, July 4, 1801. Cited by Wong p. 80.

<sup>583</sup> Robert B. Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences*, 2nd rev. ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1882), 370.

<sup>584</sup> Wong p.77

success relied on several factors beyond his control such as the fluctuation of foreign currency and market prices. Houqua had no guarantee that his tea would be paid for once carried outside of China — shipwrecks or business failures could happen during the long journey before the ship returned to Guangzhou. However, such a risk came with the possibility of sizeable profit gains, and Americans traders were eager to please Houqua as he allowed them to eliminate the need to bring capital into China when buying products. As Wong puts it, “with his substantial capital, Houqua replaced the Americans as the principal in these transactions, engaging his U.S. partners as agents for the transportation and the sale of his goods abroad.”<sup>585</sup> Thanks to these agents, Houqua could also buy insurance for his products and pursue his debtors internationally if necessary.<sup>586</sup>

Although Houqua did encounter some unlucky spells, he ultimately proved successful in his global financial endeavour. A key element in Houqua’s success was to have found a reliable partnership, and ensuing friendship, with Boston trader John Perkins Cushing (1787-1862). Arriving in Guangzhou in 1807, Cushing soon became Houqua’s right arm in foreign trade. This partnership was not always seamless, and had to adapt to the constraints of the times. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, opium appeared to British traders as the solution to the cash imbalance resulting from the Canton System. The ready availability of this narcotic was ensured by Indian production. The EIC soon established a monopoly on the purchase of Indian opium to sell to Country traders, who in turn brought the drug to China. Opium sales were paid in silver but the Qing Empire forbid the export of this cash.<sup>587</sup> Therefore, it was deposited in the EIC’s Guangzhou branch in exchange for letters of credit.<sup>588</sup> The opium trade brought enormous wealth to Guangzhou’s economy at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, in the beginning, Hong merchants regulated opium sales like any other trade.

However, by 1796 increasing Chinese consumption of opium was raising moral, health and economic concerns among the imperial court and local administration, resulting in the first ban on opium trade and consumption. In the 1810s, Qing officials were increasingly agitated about the opium problem: the drain in silver currency had been reversed and now flowed out

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<sup>585</sup> Wong p.81

<sup>586</sup> See *Master Houqua v. James Perkins et al.*, 3 Rec. Pt. 1, P. 226 (U.S.C.C.D. Mass., May 1812). Minute Book References, October 1811 Term, N-23, and May 1812 Term, C-163. As cited by Wong p.95

<sup>587</sup> Wakeman (2008), p.164

<sup>588</sup> Spence (1999), p.130

of China, and Chinese public morals were progressively affected. By 1813, Hong merchants did not dare trade in opium anymore, at least officially, and tension between foreign traders and the Chinese administration was rising considerably.

One year after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe in 1815, the British renewed their diplomatic effort by sending another embassy to obtain better trade terms.<sup>589</sup> The Amherst embassy was even less successful than Macartney's, and the Chinese court was increasingly wary of foreign traders. Locally, Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849), originally from Jiangnan and Governor-general in Guangzhou (1817-1826), engaged in a fight against the opium trade.<sup>590</sup> Ruan Yuan's efforts resulted in the arrest of a number of opium dealers in Macao in order to stop opium smoking in Guangzhou at its source.<sup>591</sup> In 1821, Qing authorities also punished Houqua for not actively discouraging the sale of opium, and he lost of his official ranking.<sup>592</sup> In order to protect his Chinese partner from further punishment, Cushing had to rearrange his business plan. The solution was to separate the opium trade from legitimate trading activities, the latter being conducted under a newly created firm in 1824: Russell & Company.<sup>593</sup>

Houqua and his descendants would be linked with the Russell & Co until its ultimate failure in 1891.<sup>594</sup> Houqua must have been aware of the subterfuge used by his partners to separate legal trade from the opium business. During his first journey to China in 1814-15, Bryant Tilden notably reported how grateful he was that Houqua, his security merchant, warned him about the consequences of openly trading in opium.<sup>595</sup> Although Houqua outwardly professed great distaste for the drug and those who traded it, in reality his American partners were too useful for Houqua to be picky regarding opium trading. Houqua trusted them to invest his extensive capital in various parts of the world: eventually he acquired a diversified portfolio including EIC bills in Britain, Bombay bills in India, and shares in American railways and U.S. government debt.<sup>596</sup> Houqua's calculated move to thrive in global trading was to allow his trusted partners freedom to sell at the best rate according to local circumstances, which

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<sup>589</sup> See embassy's reports such as Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China*.

<sup>590</sup> Miles (2006), p.1

<sup>591</sup> Spence (1999), p.150

<sup>592</sup> Number One Historical Archives of China, Beijing. 04-01-30-0367-001 DG1/10/14. Cited by Wong p.87

<sup>593</sup> R. B Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1882), p. 337.

<sup>594</sup> Sibing He, 'Russell and Company, 1818-1891: America's Trade and Diplomacy in Nineteenth-Century China' (unpublished Ph.D., Miami University, 1997), p. 9.

<sup>595</sup> Tilden, p. 39.

<sup>596</sup> See a detailed description extracted from the Forbes papers in Baker Library, Harvard University, in Chapter 6 of John D. Wong.



could not be accurately predicted from his office in Guangzhou. Great mutual benefit was achieved through the agency of his American partners responsible for his capital abroad: first Cushing, and later members of the Forbes family, all of whom at some point resided in Guangzhou so as to act as representatives by Houqua's side.

By 1825 Emperor Daoguang (reign 1820-1850) was well aware that the opium trade was bleeding silver from China. This was raising alarm in the Qing Court as there was a general shortage of precious metals in the Chinese Empire. From 1836 onward, Emperor Daoguang started taking his own measures to counter the growing opium trade. In 1839, Lin Zexu, native of Fujian, arrived in Guangzhou as Commissioner in charge of stopping the Opium threat.<sup>597</sup> He started a full-scale investigation, as he suspected collusion between Western traders and Hong merchants. Commissioner Lin made his intent clear on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1839, instituting a blockade that stranded 350 foreigners in their Factories in an attempt to pressure Western traders to surrender all opium.<sup>598</sup> The opium would then be destroyed. Meanwhile, Hong merchants were stripped of their official ranks, and the two senior Hong merchants Houqua and Mowqua were said to have been sent to prison. Over 20,000 chests of opium were given up to end the blockade, which was interpreted as a triumph by the Chinese side. In reality, Commissioner Lin had just given the British a pretext for war with the Qing empire: the situation deteriorated and the consequences are known as the First Opium War (1839-42).<sup>599</sup>

In 1840, Bennet Forbes, the Russell & Co representative at Houqua's side, left Guangzhou because of the culminating Sino-British tensions. During those very uncertain times for the China trade, Houqua was left without a partner present in the city, but trusted his American partners abroad to keep his investments safe: he wrote letters to that effect asking them to administrate his fortune for his descendants in the advent of his own death.<sup>600</sup> To summarise the first Opium War's outcome, in 1841 Guangzhou was in short succession attacked, quickly defeated and occupied, then liberated in exchange for a ransom. The British army led by

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<sup>597</sup> See for example Joyce A Madancy, *The Troublesome Legacy of Commissioner Lin: The Opium Trade and Opium Suppression in Fujian Province, 1820s to 1920s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>598</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, p. 154.

<sup>599</sup> See for example sources cited in the three last notes. Additionally Peter Perdue's summary is helpful and well illustrated: MIT Visualizing Cultures and Peter C. Perdue, 'The First Opium War: The Anglo-Chinese War of 1839-42' <[http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium\\_wars\\_01/ow1\\_essay01.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium_wars_01/ow1_essay01.html)> [accessed 1 February 2016].

<sup>600</sup> For example, MHS Houqua Letters, June 28, 1840. Cited by John D. Wong, p. 126.

Henry Pottinger then proceeded to demonstrate their strength by cutting off the circulation of the main Chinese rivers and canals on their way north towards the capital, Beijing. Pottinger's tactics were ultimately successful and the Treaty of Nanjing signed on August 29<sup>th</sup> of 1842 inaugurated a series of infringements by foreign powers onto Chinese territory.

The aim of the first Opium War had officially been to “get rid of the institutional structures of the tribute system. The Treaty of Nanking abolished the restriction of Sino-foreign trade to Canton and to the licensed Co-hong monopoly there, and inaugurated state-to-state diplomatic relations”.<sup>601</sup> To this effect, Article II circumvented Guangzhou's monopoly by allowing British merchants to trade and reside in a total of five cities or ‘Treaty Ports’: Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo, and Shanghai. The British Crown required to “appoint Superintendents or Consular Officers, to reside at each of the above-named Cities or Towns, to be the medium of communication between the Chinese Authorities and the said Merchants”.<sup>602</sup> Article V abolished the Hong monopoly system and “in future at all Ports where British Merchants may reside [...] to permit them to carry on their mercantile transactions with whatever persons they please”. Additionally, this article specified that the Qing empire was to pay 3 million dollars in payment of Hong merchants' debts to foreign traders.

The First Opium War was very costly for Houqua: first he incurred material losses of about 800,000 dollars.<sup>603</sup> Then he was forced by Qing officials to cover about a third of the ransom of Guangzhou and the debts of Hong merchants.<sup>604</sup> Hunter estimates the part of the city ransom paid by Houqua at around 1,100,000 dollars.<sup>605</sup> Ironically for a creditor, Houqua had to pay part of other Hong merchants' debts, even if his own business had stayed healthy until the end of the Canton System. This sort of ‘squeeze’ was often initiated by the local officials themselves, who had their eyes on Houqua's fortune.<sup>606</sup> Hunter mentions one instance where, under the Viceroy's order, Houqua had to pay one million dollars for three merchants'

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<sup>601</sup> See p.213-4 in John King Fairbank, ‘The Creation of the Treaty System’, in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 10: Late Ch'ing 1800–1911, Part 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 213–63.

<sup>602</sup> See the text of the Treaty of Nanjing here: ‘Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking), 1842’.

<sup>603</sup> Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, p. 220.

<sup>604</sup> Chun Xi, ‘伍秉鉴:150 年前的世界首富 (Wu Bingjian: a world millionaire from 150 years in the past)’, *New Economy*, 2011, 12–13 (p. 12).

<sup>605</sup> Hunter, *The ‘Jan Kwae’ at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 45.

<sup>606</sup> See chapter on Houqua in Cynthia Crossen, *The Rich and How They Got That Way: How the Wealthiest People of All Time--from Genghis Khan to Bill Gates--Made Their Fortunes*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown Business, 2000), p. 174.

debts.<sup>607</sup> Paradoxically, this series of events that cost Houqua money constitute for historians an important piece of evidence for estimating that fortune: Houqua's capital was also directly linked with the number and state of his properties, including gardens.

In theory, the Treaty of Nanjing virtually marked the end of the Hong merchants' *raison d'être*. According to Article II and V, the most important of Hong merchants' functions were revoked: that of trade and pseudo-diplomatic intermediaries. However, in practice, some of the Hong merchants' power took much longer to disappear. Initially, as Houqua was not dependent on his title of Hong merchant anymore, he did not think that his business would be much affected by the fall of the Canton System (1757-1842).<sup>608</sup> Indeed, until his death in 1843, Houqua could not possibly have foreseen what the consequences of the Treaty of Nanjing would be: displacing the nexus of China Trade away from Guangzhou and disturbing Houqua's careful plans for his financial legacy.<sup>609</sup>

At Houqua's death in 1843, newspapers around the world and personal diaries alike carried positive assessments of the late chief Hong merchant. According to Paul Siemen Forbes, who was the resident representative of his American partners in Guangzhou at that time:

His great characteristic was humanity — and in his unbounded confidence in Americans he has never been equaled, entrusting those with whom he had no ties of country, language, or religion between 2 & 3 millions of Dollars at one time. He might have doubled or quadrupled his fortune by dealing in opium but when asked why he did not do it he said in pidgin English: "how can have face to look at the sun".<sup>610</sup>

The longevity of Houqua's fortune makes him a strong rival of the Pan family's longest-standing Hong firm. His was probably the longest lasting of all Hong merchants' fortunes. Houqua had taken steps to protect his properties and his business as much as he could, from 'squeezes' of local officials and from his own family members' greed. The latter point deserves further explanation as it is tied to the Wu properties' management, including gardens. Similarly to the Pan family's, Houqua's eldest Wu Bingyong (1764-1824, 1<sup>st</sup> branch) had gone on to become an official in the capital. Although most of the fortune accumulated

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<sup>607</sup> Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 47.

<sup>608</sup> MHS Houqua Letters, Houqua's Letterbook. Massachusetts Historical Society. April 4, 1843. As cited by Wong p.136

<sup>609</sup> Wong p.147

<sup>610</sup> Baker Forbes, Forbes Family Business Records. Baker Library Historical Collections. Harvard Business School. K, Box 6, f.65. Cited by Wong p.157.

under the Yihe Company had come from Houqua's own exertions, officially and legally it was his second elder brother Puiqua (Wu Bingjun, 1767-1801, 2d branch) that had created the firm before dying without an heir. Therefore, as he anticipated that his descendants would need protection from the greed of other branches of the family, Houqua tried to circumvent common inheritance practices under the Qing period.<sup>611</sup> This concern came notably from the evermore extravagant spending incurred by the large Wu family during Houqua's lifetime.<sup>612</sup>

As part of his preparations for his succession, Houqua arranged for his second son, Wu Yuanlan (1793-1820), to be adopted as Puiqua's heir in the 2nd branch (Figure 35). As a result, when all the visible familial assets were assessed and equally divided among the four branches around 1826, Houqua's descendants controlled *de facto* half of the total assets.<sup>613</sup> Since Houqua's responsibilities as a Hong merchant were impossible to transfer, his branch of the family (3rd branch) kept control of the Yihe Company. Houqua was so long lived that his fourth son who had been chosen as successor died before him. Therefore, it was his fifth son, Wu Chongyao 伍崇曜 (1810-1864), that became the recipient of two sets of capital: one official and kept in Guangzhou-based accounts at Russell & Co, and one hidden in the form of various bonds and investments in the United States.<sup>614</sup>

For Wu Chongyao, taking over his father's business proved to be too difficult — he had not been trained thoroughly and did not have Houqua's flair for global trade. Chongyao had to deal with an unfavourable situation after the First Opium War, as the start of the Treaty Port system meant that trade did not have to stay centred in Guangzhou anymore. Although he was nicknamed 'Young Houqua', Wu Chongyao did not have enough of his father's vision to react to the changing conditions of the Sino-Western market. However, his late father had been wise in his choice of trusted partners. Until the end, Cushing and the Forbes family continued to manage in good faith the late Houqua's fortune on behalf of his family. Under the late Houqua's heir, the Wu family's money was only treated as a loan of capital as the Chinese side stopped providing much direction to the investments. As for Wu Chongyao, he

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<sup>611</sup> David Wakefield, *Fenjia Household Division and Inheritance in Qing and Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998) <<http://site.ebrary.com/id/5004642>> [accessed 29 September 2017].

<sup>612</sup> Siyuan Pan, '代怡和洋行伍敦元作分产议约 (Negotiating an Agreement on the Division of the Family Assets on Behalf of Wu Dunyuan [Houqua] of the Yihe Company Which Handles Trade with the West)', in 思园祖遗稿 (*Surviving Manuscripts of the Ancestor Siyuan*), 1880, pp. 77–79.

Wong p.141

<sup>613</sup> See Wong's explanation of the process: Wong, p.140-146.

<sup>614</sup> Lingli Wu, p. 51.

became a quiet lender providing for his family on the capital's interest. The contrast was stark: "Old Houqua had deployed the capital by investing it in the shipment of goods overseas, but Young Houqua was content with earning steady income on his family's assets from a trusted source."<sup>615</sup>

At first Wu Chongyao could afford to lose the agency that Houqua had had on the family fortune thanks to his father's foresight in saving assets. However, the 'squeezes' started again because of the large cost of the Second Opium War (1856-1860) and the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864). Once again, the Qing administration relied on the late Houqua's fortune. Wu Chongyao had to withdraw as much as 600,000 dollars from his Russell & Co accounts during the 1859-61 period, half of which were for governmental 'squeezes' and the other half for his estate's expenses.<sup>616</sup> The latter part appears to be a staggering amount, but Wu Chongyao also maintained a number of his brother's widows and far-related cousins. As a result, by 1861 the Russell & Co records show that, despite the late Houqua's preventive measures to protect his assets, the Wu family spent more lavishly than could be sustained on their capital's interest alone. Additionally, "the portion of Houqua's estate invested in city properties suffered tremendous wartime damages; most of what survived was occupied by the family and there was little remaining to generate rental income."<sup>617</sup> At that time Russell & Co estimated that Wu Chongyao could no longer rely on interest from his Guangzhou assets kept by Russell & Co and would soon have to start using his American funds. Neither the representative of the Forbes family in Guangzhou, N.M. Beckwith, nor the Wu family knew the exact extent of this American capital.

The one that knew the exact situation of the late Houqua's capital in the United States was John Murray Forbes. Forbes started progressively selling off assets, and the resulting capital was sent to China where a trust under the care of Russell & Co ensured that the Wu family could continue to live on the interest. In 1863, Wu Chongyao died, and his only surviving brother Wu Chonghui 伍崇晖 (1828-1880) inherited the rights to the late Houqua's trust funds (Figure 35). Wu Chonghui kept using his late father's name to sign financial transactions. In 1874, he asked for half of the American assets remaining to be sold: the sale amounted to 300,000 dollars, giving us an idea as to the value of the late Houqua's remaining

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<sup>615</sup> John D. Wong, p. 162.

<sup>616</sup> Baker Forbes archive. G, Box 2, f.18. Cited by Wong p.182

<sup>617</sup> John D. Wong, p. 183.

American capital.<sup>618</sup> Wong estimates that Houqua's American assets would have represented no more than 3-4% of the late Houqua's total capital. The Wu fortune would have included holdings such as Guangzhou fields, shops, houses and interest received from loans, plus the value of shipments to foreign traders.

Up to 1879, Houqua's surviving family continued to unknowingly fund a number of American ventures, such as railway companies, and even owned U.S. government debt. At that time, the Wu family asked for the remaining American assets to be sold and brought back to Russell & Co in China.<sup>619</sup> The partnership with the latter continued, with about half a million dollars left in the trust, until Russell & Co failed following the crisis of 1891: all that remained for Wu Chonghui was approximately 300,000 taels.<sup>620</sup> It must have been a difficult change of pace for the Wu family, used as it was to spending a small fortune on maintenance. Thus ended the fortune made by Houqua, the last head of the Hong merchants and responsible for the numerous properties owned by his family and descendants.

In the next section, the way in which Houqua's fortune was used to build residences with gardens will be explored from the evidence found in contemporary and near-contemporary Chinese sources.

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<sup>618</sup> Baker Forbes archive. L, Subseries III, Box 16, f.9. cited in John D. Wong, p. 191.

<sup>619</sup> Baker Forbes archive. L, Subseries III, Box 16, f.10. cited in John D. Wong, p. 196.

<sup>620</sup> MHS Charles A. Tomes Letterbooks. 1886–1914. Massachusetts Historical Society. 1886–1914, Box 2, Book 1: Letters, 1892–95. September 15, 1893. cited in John D. Wong, p. 201.

## Section 2: The Wu gardens according to Chinese sources

As the overview of the Wus' finances in the previous section suggests, the Guangzhou-based clan progressively started to develop into a sprawling family in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Part of their ever-expanding expenses was a result of Wu Bingjian's brothers, sons and nephews building their own gardens and residences. Once again, the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* will be used as the main source in this section in order to make sense of the numerous properties linked with the Wus. The aim of this section is to analyse Chinese sources on the Wus' residences with gardens from the point of view of the functions they were meant to fulfil for the family. Three main functions are explored in this section: first to provide a home for the large Wu family; and secondly, to accommodate the lavish gatherings of scholars and local worthies with an eye to advancing the family's social agenda. Finally, contrary to the Pan family, there is written evidence that the gardens of the Wu were used to provide a pleasant and intellectually stimulating background for both gatherings of Chinese scholars and family events.

The Wu clan wrote several genealogies, which included the Fujian branches of their lineage as well as several Guangdong branches.<sup>621</sup> This case study is only concerned with the 'Putian Anhai' branch of the Wu clan, thus named because it claimed to be related to an older Wu Clan from Putian 莆田 in Fujian province.<sup>622</sup> Starting with Wu Chaofeng (1613-1693), the 'Putian Anhai' branch settled in Guangzhou in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Wu Chaofeng is thus considered the first ancestor for this part of the family, and Wu Bingjian (Houqua) and his three brothers are correspondingly part of the fifth generation in Guangzhou.<sup>623</sup>

Since the Wu family tree is particularly complex, it would be confusing to constantly remind the reader of the different lineages and branches of the Wu family members. For the purpose of this thesis, a simplified genealogy will be adopted: as they are the major stakeholders of this case study, only the branches of Wu Bingjian and his brothers' descendants will be

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<sup>621</sup> In this research I used the following: Lingli Wu. As well as Quancui Wu.

<sup>622</sup> Wolfram Eberhard, *Social Mobility in Traditional China* (Taipei: Nan Tien Book Co, 1984), p. 82. John D. Wong, p. 19. Both citing *Quancui Wu*. (2a:42a).

<sup>623</sup> Since Wu Chaofeng moved his father's coffin to Guangzhou, some historians consider that Wu Chaofeng is in fact the second generation ancestor, but for the sake of simplicity this classification will not be adopted in this thesis. See John D. Wong, p. 41.

specified. Although such numbering is not strictly accurate, the four brothers will be attributed branches according to chronological order. Generation and branches are indicated in brackets as follows: Wu Bingjian (Gen V, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch).

### *Hosting the Wu family*

From the time of their first establishment in Guangzhou under the Kangxi Emperor (1654-1722), part of the Wu family settled in Nanhai County. To start with, they owned properties in Xiguan, east of the city walls. It was only from 1803 that the family of Wu Guoying (Gen IV) bought land south of the river, more exactly in Henan and therefore administratively part of Panyu County.<sup>624</sup> The *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* contains nineteen different entries of buildings and gardens owned by members of the Wu family in the ‘private residence’ section.<sup>625</sup> These different residences and gardens mostly belonged to Wu Bingjian (Gen V, 3<sup>rd</sup> branch)’s brothers, sons, nephews and descendants, but a few of his cousins are also mentioned.<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Mo, p. 342.

<sup>625</sup> See the ‘private residence’ section of *番禺河南小志* (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 92–146.

<sup>626</sup> ‘Cousins’ include any members of the Putian Anhai clan outside of Wu Guoying’s descendants.



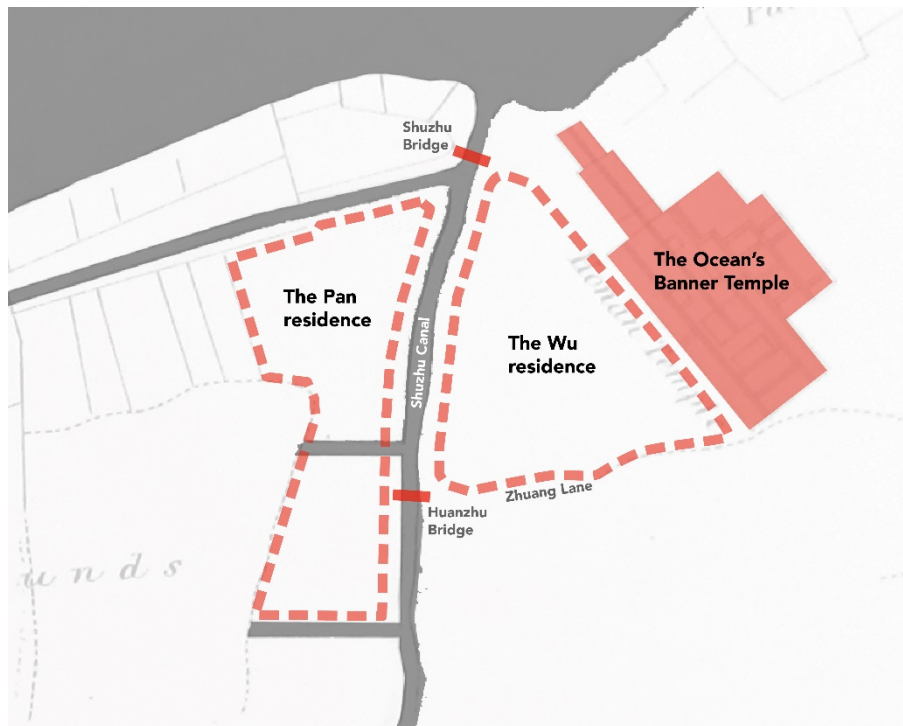


Figure 36 Detail of the modified map of Guangzhou during the Canton System. Credits: Feng Lishen for Josepha Richard, 2015.

The family's first step in Henan was to build a Wu Clan's Ancestral Hall, probably because there was more space available than in crowded Xiguan. The Ze Ancestral Hall 泽祖祠 was built, Anhai village in Xixia 溪峡安海村 in 1803.<sup>627</sup> An additional ancestral hall dedicated to the first ancestor, the Chongben Hall 崇本堂, was completed in 1835.<sup>628</sup> The majority of the entries linked with Wu Guoying (Gen IV)'s family in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* are also indicated to be located near Xixia, in Anhai village. The main Wu residence with gardens was roughly located on a triangular piece of land between the Ocean's Banner Temple and the canal (see map Figure 36). On the north it reached the Shuzhu Bridge 漱珠桥 and to the south the Zhuang lane 庄巷.<sup>629</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century appellations of this area are still echoed to this day with such names as Xixia xincun (Xixia New Village) 溪峡新村 or Wujiaci dao (Alley of the Wu Clan's ancestral temple) 伍家祠道 found in current Guangzhou.

<sup>627</sup> Also named Yiguang Hall 诒光堂. 《重興安海伍氏兩宗祠祀典事略》 (Biographical sketch regarding religious rites in the revival of the two Ancestral Halls of the Wu Clan in Anhai) in Quancui Wu, p. 12.

<sup>628</sup> Also described as First Ancestor's Hall 始祖祠. *Idem*.

<sup>629</sup> Guangzhou Haizhu District Gazetteer and Mai, p. 3.

The Wu Ancestral Hall was an essential part of the Wu family's plan for social mobility: by having his father officially reburied in Guangzhou, Wu Chaofeng (Gen I) had already started to root their family in Guangdong province.<sup>630</sup> The establishment of a Wu Ancestral Hall next to a large residence was a step to reinforce the Wus' local legitimacy. As such, the main function of the Wu residence with gardens was to provide accommodation for the numerous members of the family of Wu Guoying (Gen IV). The Wu Residence in Henan was similar to that of the Pan, in so much as there was a 'main residence' and most of the buildings mentioned in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* seem to have been located either inside this residence or nearby. That main residence with garden was named Wansongyuan 万松园 (Myriad Pines garden), with the residence itself occasionally referred to as Nanxi bieshu 南溪别墅 (The villa on the south stream).<sup>631</sup> The construction of the Wansongyuan is attributed to Wu Bingyong 伍秉镛 (1764-1824, Gen V, 1st Branch) in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* at an unknown date.<sup>632</sup>

There are eight additional entries linked with the Wansongyuan in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* corresponding with buildings and gardens located inside or nearby the main residence. An important one for this case study is the Qinghui chiguan 清晖池馆 (Dwelling of the Radiant pond), a garden whose construction was attributed to Wu Bingjian (Houqua, Gen V, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch) at an unknown date.<sup>633</sup> After the death of his two elder brothers, it does not seem that Wu Bingjian inherited the Wansongyuan, since none of the gazetteer's quotes for the Wansongyuan entry mention him directly. It is more likely that Wu Bingyong (Gen V, 1<sup>st</sup> Branch)'s descendants inherited the Wansongyuan, just as the Qinghui chiguan was subsequently inherited by Wu Bingjian's heir Wu Chongyao (Gen VI, 3rd Branch). Numerous quotes refer to Wu Chongyao as organiser of gatherings in the Qinghui chiguan in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*.

Since many of Wu Bingjian's sons died before him, they are not all cited in the gazetteer. Nonetheless, Wu Chongyao's elder brother, Wu Yuanhua 伍元华 (1801-1833, Gen VI, 3rd Branch), is cited as owner of the Yanhuilou 延晖楼 (Tower of the Inviting Sunshine) and of

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<sup>630</sup> On geographical mobility as a tool for social mobility, see Eberhard.

<sup>631</sup> Nanxi bieshu entry, see 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 113.

<sup>632</sup> Wansongyuan entry, see 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 138–42.

<sup>633</sup> Qinghui chiguan entry, see 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 119–22.

the Tingtaolou 听涛楼 (Tower of Listening to the Waves), both located in Anhai.<sup>634</sup> Additionally, some of Wu Bingjian's nephews also had residences and gardens in Anhai even after their fathers' deaths. Perhaps these properties represented part of their share after Wu Bingjian initiated the division of the family property circa 1826. One of Wu Bingzhen (Gen V, 4th Branch)'s sons, named Wu Yuankui 伍元葵 (1810-1866, Gen VI, 4<sup>th</sup> Branch), is for example mentioned as the owner of the Yuebolou (Tower of Moonlit Waves) 月波楼 located in Anhai.

In Anhai there were also buildings owned or used by relatives that did not belong directly to Wu Guoying's branch of the family. For example, two buildings in or very close to the Wansongyuan were used by Wu Zhaoji 伍肇基 (1803-1828, Gen VII), a cousin belonging to Wu Zhao (Geowqua, 1734-1802, Gen IV)'s branch of the family. Another cousin, Wu Guanlan 伍观澜 (1785-1852, Gen VI) appears frequently in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*. He owned several buildings in Anhai and more importantly, frequently commented on gatherings taking place in several of the residences and gardens of the Wu Guoying's branch.

All these different parts of the Wu family and their descendants constituted several large households and necessitated proportional expenses. In this context it is not surprising that Wu Bingjian tried to secure his descendants' fortune by dividing the family assets. As the previous section discussed, such measures did not succeed in the end, as Wu Chongyao (Gen VI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch) was unable to stop the flow of household expenses. Some clues regarding the extravagant spending of the Wu family can be gathered in the different quotes recorded in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*. Since Wu Chongyao was the heir of Wu Bingjian (Houqua)'s fortune, the research focused on the Qinghui chiguan entry in which four of the quotes were written by Wu Chongyao's cousin, Wu Guanlan (Gen VI). Among those, two poems specifically record what seem to be family gatherings taking place in the garden, since the names of several family members are cited in the poem titles as follows:

On the tenth day of the third month, when uncles Qiuyuan [Social name of Wu Yuankui, Gen VI, 4<sup>th</sup> Branch], Disheng [Unidentified uncle] and Shisheng [Social name of Wu Xiguang, Gen VI, 1<sup>st</sup> Branch] held a gathering in the Qinghui chiguan for a

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<sup>634</sup> Yanhuilou entry, see 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 106. Tingtaolou entry, see 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 104–6.

spring Lustration ceremony. 《三月十日秋园笛生石生诸叔父招集清晖池馆补修禊事》<sup>635</sup>

Uncles Ziyuan [Social name of Wu Chongyao], Qiuyuan [Social name of Wu Yuankui], Disheng [Unidentified uncle] and Qiuling [Social name of Wu Chonghui, Gen VI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch] held a gathering in the Qinghui chiguan to admire the lotuses. 《紫垣秋园笛生秋龄诸从父招集清晖池馆赏荷》<sup>636</sup>

Additionally, the first of these two poems mentions the birth of Wu Chongyao's son and congratulates him on the occasion. According to the Wu genealogy, Wu Chongyao only had one son who was born in 1834, which provides a date for this poem.<sup>637</sup> By 1834, then, although his father Wu Bingjian (Houqua) was still alive, Wu Chongyao was already using the Qinghui chiguan for social and familial gatherings.

It is possible that the Qinghui chiguan garden was used by several members of the family whenever they had an important event to organise: this argument is supported by a text written by Zhang Weiping (1780-1859) commemorating an event organised by Wu Yuankui (Gen VI, 4<sup>th</sup> Branch).<sup>638</sup> Since Zhang Weiping noted that Wu Yuankui was accompanied by his son Wu Tingzhao 伍廷诏 (1830-1865, Gen VII, 4<sup>th</sup> Branch), who drank on his behalf, it provides an indication for a date: the event would have taken place between the late 1840s, when Wu Tingzhao would have been of age to drink, and 1859 when Zhang Weiping died. As Wu Chongyao (1810-1864) was alive during this twenty-year period, it follows that he must have let the fourth branch of the family borrow the Qinghui chiguan for this particular event. Such use of the Wu residence by different family members regardless of their relationship to Wu Bingjian, who in all probability provided the funding for such expenses, might have been a frequent occurrence. It would also explain why Wu Bingjian (Houqua)'s fortune was depleted so rapidly after his death.

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<sup>635</sup> Quote from Wu Guanlan 伍观澜 (1785-1852), 《祕图山馆诗钞》五 (Fifth part of the *Collected poems of the Confidential Mountain Lodge*). Cited in Qinghui chiguan entry, 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 122.

<sup>636</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>637</sup> Wu Chongyao's son Wu Shaotang 伍绍棠 (1834-1890)

<sup>638</sup> Zhang Weiqing 张维屏, 《伍秋园招集清晖池馆修禊》 (Wu Qiuyuan organises a gathering in the Qinghui chiguan to hold a purification ceremony), 《松心诗草堂集》五 (Fifth part of the *Recorded poetry from the Pine Heart Cottage*). Cited in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 122.

### *The Wu residences and gardens as an instrument for social mobility*

The Wu and Pan families used their Henan residences with gardens to achieve greater social status in a similar way. However, since the Wu family settled in Guangzhou earlier than the Pan, they also had a greater number of family members to help in this endeavour. One of the tactics the Wu used was to donate substantial sums of money towards public works, and to marry their daughters to scholars and officials.<sup>639</sup> Their residences with gardens were, however, one of the most revealing tools used by the Wu family: they demonstrate how, in late dynastic China, a merchant family owning an elegant garden would be able to attract higher-ranking officials and elegant scholars for social gatherings.

Similarly to the Pan family, the eldest son Wu Bingyong (Gen V, 1<sup>st</sup> Branch) focused on becoming a scholar in the hope of obtaining an official status that would benefit the whole family.<sup>640</sup> One of Wu Bingyong's other contributions to his family's social status was to write a genealogy, probably in order "to recast themselves [the Wu clan] as a Cantonese lineage" so that the family's local legitimacy would be strengthened.<sup>641</sup> He was helped in this endeavour by both Wu Bingjian (Houqua) and another brother. Subsequently, their efforts were improved on through three editions and became the *Wushi ruyue zupu* 《伍氏入粵族谱》 (Genealogy of the Wu family that moved to Guangdong).<sup>642</sup> Above all, Wu Bingyong used his garden, the Wansongyuan, as a place to hold gatherings of scholars and friends: successfully attracting high-ranked officials and talented artists to gather in one's garden increased the organiser's prestige.

The Wu family carefully selected the plot of land upon which the Wansongyuan had been built: it was located both near the Pearl River, and near the eponymous Wansong Hill that was part of the Ocean's Banner Temple grounds.<sup>643</sup> Additionally, it was abundantly planted with old pines linked to the myth of Yang Fu, already mentioned in the previous case study. According to the numerous quotes found in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, it seems

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<sup>639</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 35.

<sup>640</sup> 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 349. Entry for Wu Bingyong 伍秉鏞's bibliography.

<sup>641</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 35.

<sup>642</sup> This text could not be procured during the research. The latest edition is the following: 伍氏入粵族谱 (*Genealogy of the Wu Family That Moved to Guangdong*), ed. by Ziwei Wu, 1956.

<sup>643</sup> Location of Wansong Hill mentioned in 广州城坊志 (*Guangzhou City Gazetteer*), p.697.

that many scholars and high officials were keen to visit the Wansongyuan. For example, the scholar and official Xie Lansheng who resigned from the prestigious Hanlin Academy, gave the significant gift of his calligraphy to grace the horizontal plaque bearing the garden's name.<sup>644</sup> This was a significant honour, considering that at the time Xie Lansheng was involved in the elegant Xuehaitang (Sea of Learning Academy), the most prestigious cultural institution in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Guangzhou. The Xuehaitang was directed by Governor-General Ruan Yuan, and its membership included some of the highest-ranking officials and most talented artists in contemporary Guangzhou.<sup>645</sup>

Wu Bingyong (Gen V, 1<sup>st</sup> Branch) was probably trying to get closer to the Xuehaitang's circle. He attended at least one gathering held at the Ocean's Banner Temple with monks and a number of other literati, some of whom were members of the Xuehaitang.<sup>646</sup> Many of the regular attendees of meetings in the Ocean Banner's Temple would also reside or attend gatherings at the Wansongyuan. For example, the scholar Zhong Qishao 钟启韶, who would later participate in examinations at the Xuehaitang, left several poems about his time as a tutor at the Wansongyuan.<sup>647</sup> Stephen Miles names several famous scholars who resided at the garden in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Xuehaitang examinee Cai Jinquan 蔡锦泉, co-director of the Xuehaitang Xiong Jingxing 熊景星 and son of the famous poet Zhang Jinfang 张锦芳 (1747-1792).<sup>648</sup>

It comes as no surprise that the Wu family took turns with the Pan and the Ye 叶 — the latter being another wealthy Guangzhou family — to fund the Xuehaitang academy.<sup>649</sup> It is very likely that the funding sent to the Xuehaitang, and used for other elegant activities taking place in the Wansongyuan, were in fact coming from Wu Bingjian (Houqua)'s earnings. The probability is made more certain by the fact that Wu Bingyong died in 1824 just before the estimated date for Wu Bingjian's separation of the Wu family assets in 1826.<sup>650</sup> We can

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<sup>644</sup> Wansongyuan entry. From 宣统《县志·古迹》一 (The *County Gazetteer*, presumably Panyu County, Xuantong period (1906-1967), "Old vestiges" section). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 139.

<sup>645</sup> About the Xuehaitang, see notably: Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*; Steven Miles, 'Local Matters'; Steven Miles, 'Creating Zhu "Jiujiang"'.  
<sup>646</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 60.

<sup>647</sup> See Wansong yuan entry, in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 140.

<sup>648</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 65.

<sup>649</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 82.

<sup>650</sup> For Wu Bingyong's dates of birth and death, see: *Lingli Wu*, p. 35. For the date of the Wu family division of assets, see : Siyuan Pan.

speculate that excessive spending by the first branch might have been one of the reasons why Wu Bingjian deemed such separation necessary. Yet, considering his own ambition, Wu Bingjian probably agreed with the aim of improving the Wu family's social standing.

One of the recurring topics that guests wrote about the Wansongyuan was the soothing sound of the wind passing through the pine trees. For example, the poem "Listening to the pines in Wansongyuan" by He Shilin 何世麟 starts with this line:

Where is the sound of the wind coming from, intermittently reaching the curtain of pines? A dim rhyme passing through the garden, much like someone suddenly tuning the string of a musical instrument. 涛声起何处, 断续接松帷。暗递园林韵, 乍调琴曲丝。<sup>651</sup>

Similarly, in a poem also titled "Listening to the pines in Wansongyuan", Zhou Yinqin 周陰琴 wrote the following:

In Xixia, covered by greenery, the sound of the wind blows in waves in the tall trees. It suddenly all clears up at the quiet sunset, and I lean on the threshold to listen to the flutter of the waves." 溪峡松濃翠, 声翻百尺高。拂空寒落日, 倚檻听飞涛。<sup>652</sup>

Apart from its location near the water and its ancient pine trees, a few of the Wansongyuan's other features were recorded during or after Wu Bingyong's lifetime. One of the most complete descriptions is that written by his remote cousin, Wu Jiayu 伍家裕 (1875-?), long after Bingyong's death.<sup>653</sup> This account is to be taken with caution, as Wu Jiayu was not yet born during the prime period of the garden. Below is the most informative extract in the text:

[Inside the Wansongyuan] the Hidden spring garden's horizontal tablet was calligraphed by Zhang Nanshan [Social name of Zhang Weiping]. There is a Taihu rock standing towering inside the door of the garden, like clouds at the top and raindrops at the foot, and exquisite apertures in the rock. The height of the rock reaches three metres or more,

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<sup>651</sup> He Shilin 何世麟: 《万松园听松》 (Listening to the pines in Wansongyuan). 《仙航山馆续草》 (Continued draft of the Immortal travel to the mountain cottage). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 140.

<sup>652</sup> Zhou Yinqin 周陰琴: 《万松园听松》 (Listening to the pines in Wansongyuan). 《味间轩诗抄》 (Collected poems of the Appreciation of leisure studio). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 141.

<sup>653</sup> For Wu Jiayu's place in the Wu Genealogy, see Lingli Wu, p. 39.

with an inscription by Mi Yuanzhang [The famous Song dynasty artist Mi Fu]. The pond's extent is of several *mu*, and the bent mountain stream is crossed by several stone bridges of different sizes. Next to the pond is a pavilion, its inverted image reflected in the water is picturesque. There is a sluice gate at the entrance of the water, linking the water in the garden to [the canal in] Xixia. In former times, in the pond was commonly anchored a flower pleasure boat. [...] 藏春深处额，张南山书。有太湖石屹立园门内，云头雨脚，洞穴玲珑，高丈余，有米元章题名。池广数亩，曲通溪涧，驾以长短石桥。旁倚楼阁，倒影如画。水口有闸，与溪峡相通。昔时池中常泊画舫。<sup>654</sup>

This description is partly reproduced in the *Records of famous gardens in Henan, Guangzhou*, including a speculation that the Taihu rock described is actually the one now standing inside the current Haichuang Park 海幢公园, on the site of the Ocean's Banner Temple.<sup>655</sup> Taihu rocks were not only expensive to purchase, they would also have been costly to transport to the southern province of Guangdong. Wu Jiayu's allusion to clouds and rain refers to one of the more desirable shapes for a Taihu rock: larger on top than at the base, so as to appear to float above the ground. Such an elegant Taihu rock was one of the quintessential trappings of the elegant scholar garden from at least the Ming dynasty, which explains why Wu Bingyong or one of his relatives installed one in the Wansongyuan despite the prohibitive cost.

The name of 'Hidden spring garden' also suggests that this part of the Wansongyuan was a smaller 'garden in the garden', probably reserved for the use of family members only. The *Records of famous gardens in Henan, Guangzhou* specifies that, beyond the door mentioned in this extract, was located the residence of one of the Wu concubines.<sup>656</sup> That the Wansongyuan was sometimes used for private enjoyment is also confirmed by Wu Jianyu's mention of the flower boat often anchored in the pond. In Guangzhou, 'flower boats' were elaborately decorated vessels hired for entertainment in the company of musicians and courtesans.

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<sup>654</sup> Wu Chuoyu 伍绰余 (Nickname of Wu Jiayu), 《万松园杂感》 (Random thoughts on the Wansongyuan). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 139.

<sup>655</sup> The rock's new location is mentioned in Guangzhou Haizhu District Gazetteer and Mai, p. 5.

<sup>656</sup> Guangzhou Haizhu District Gazetteer and Mai, p. 5.





Figure 37 “Flower boat”. Attributed to Lai Afong, taken in the surroundings of Guangzhou, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Held in the Rubel Library, Harvard University.

Allusions to visiting the famous flower boats were frequent among scholars living or visiting Guangzhou. The most famous example is probably that of Qing dynasty writer Shen Fu 沈复 (1763-1825), a Suzhou native who described his visits to the flower boats while in Guangzhou in his *Six chapters of a floating life* 《浮生六记》.<sup>657</sup> In his diary, Xie Lansheng mentions how in 1824, after visiting the Yihe Company’s *hong* or Factory, he joined a banquet organised by Wu Bingjian (Gen V, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch) on a flower boat, followed by a viewing of festival displays.<sup>658</sup> This passage tells us that the Wansongyuan’s pond connected to the river or canal, and was large enough to accommodate one or more of the flower boats: to estimate how large the latter could be, it is helpful to refer to this photograph attributed to Lai Afong 赖阿芳 (c.1839-1890) and held in the Harvard Rubel Library collection (Figure 37).

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<sup>657</sup> The passage can be found p.110-114 of this translation: Shen Fu, *Six Records of a Life Adrift*, trans. by Graham Sanders (Hackett Publishing, 2011).

<sup>658</sup> See entry for the tenth day of the seventh month of 1824 in: Lansheng Xie, *常星星齋日記 (外四種) (Four Volumes of the Diary from the Studio of Constant Awareness)*, ed. by Ruoqing Li (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2014), p. 152.

Another common theme found in the descriptions of the Wansongyuan and other Wu family gardens was the gathering of like-minded individuals, where the main activity was to drink while producing or appreciating poems, paintings and music. For officials or aspiring officials, hosting scholars to pursue cultural activities was indeed one of the most important functions of Chinese gardens. Although the generation of Wu Bingjian (Gen V) held many such gatherings, it is without doubt the generation of Wu Bingjian's heir, Wu Chongyao (Gen VI), that organised the most memorable of such occasions in the Wu gardens.

Although built by Wu Bingjian, the entry for the Qinghui chiguan mostly contains texts mentioning Wu Chongyao as organiser of events in the garden. It is possible that Wu Bingjian was too busy or too frugal a man for organising many gatherings. Such restrictions certainly did not apply to his son and heir Wu Chongyao, who benefited from both his father's fortune and the benefits of education that such fortune provided for him and his brothers. One of the most common reasons for gathering scholars and officials to banquet in his garden was that of the spring lustration or *xi* 禊 rite. The lustration rite was popularised by the Qing poet Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634-1711) and the gatherings he organised at the Red Bridge in the city of Yangzhou during the spring of 1662 and 1664. These gatherings were held on the occasion of the spring lustration festival, which "historically was a day on which people went to the water's edge to cast off evil influences. Later it became an occasion for drinking, singing, and poetry composition".<sup>659</sup>

Wang Shizhen's Red Bridge gathering during the spring lustration festival was a reference to one of the most famous of Chinese calligraphers: Jin dynasty writer and official Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361), who held the celebrated gathering at the Orchid Pavilion in Zhejiang province in 352 C.E. After Wang Xizhi immortalised this event in his calligraphy entitled *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection* 《兰亭集序》, the spring lustration festival gathering became one of the most quintessential representations of elegant garden parties, involving wine drinking and cultural production.<sup>660</sup> In turn, Wu Chongyao borrowed this symbol by holding spring lustration gatherings at the Qinghui chiguan, usually at the beginning of the third month of the lunar year.

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<sup>659</sup> Meyer-Fong, p. 59.

<sup>660</sup> To learn more about the importance of Wang Xizhi, see for example Robert Harrist, 'Copies, All the Way down: Notes on the Early Transmission of Calligraphy by Wang Xizhi', *East Asian Library Journal*, 10 (2001), 176–96. Antje Richter, 'Beyond Calligraphy: Reading Wang Xizhi's Letters', *T'oung Pao*, 96.4/5 (2010), 370–407.

Out of nine poems quoted in the Qinghui chiguan entry of the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, seven contain the word ‘xi 禊’ or ‘Lustration festival’ in the title, and commemorate a gathering on such occasion. The other two are also related to drinking gatherings, but taking place during the summer time. For example, Wu Yuankui (Gen VI, 4<sup>th</sup> Branch) described such an occasion in his poem entitled “Third day of the third month in the Qinghui chiguan”.<sup>661</sup> Wu Chongyao’s cousin, Wu Guanlan (Gen VI) titled his poem “Uncle Ziyuan [Social name of Wu Chongyao]’s spring lustration ceremony at the Qinghui chiguan, continuing the drinking after the gathering of the fourth day of the third month of 31<sup>st</sup> year of Sexagenary cycle [1834-5]”.<sup>662</sup>

The longest quotes were not, however, written by family but by eminent scholar Tan Ying 谭莹 (1800-1871). His text entitled “Preface to the spring lustration ceremony at the Qinghui chiguan”, probably a reference to the gathering in the *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion*.<sup>663</sup> Inside the text he mentioned that the gathering took place on the 31<sup>st</sup> year of the Sexagenary cycle (1834/5), therefore it was the same event as that commemorated by Wu Guanlan above. The second of Tan Ying’s texts is simply titled “Spring lustration ceremony at the Qinghui chiguan”.<sup>664</sup> Both texts are lengthy and contain multiple allusions to poets from the Jin dynasty, which is also Wang Xizhi’s dynasty, and a period whose literature Tan Ying seemed to favour most.

The reason why a cultivated scholar like Tan Ying was writing elaborate poems for such a gathering has to do with Wu Chongyao’s personal hobbies. As mentioned in the previous section, although he was the heir of Wu Bingjian (Houqua), Wu Chongyao was not much involved in global trade. He obtained a *juren* degree by donating large sums of money

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<sup>661</sup> Wu Yuankui 伍元葵：《上巳修禊清晖池馆》（Third of march in Qinghui chiguan）。《月波楼诗钞》（Collected poems of the moonlight pavilion）。Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 122.

<sup>662</sup> Wu Guanlan：《紫垣叔清池馆招赴禊饮并续甲午三月四日之会》（Uncle Ziyuan [Social name of Wu Chongyao]’s spring lustration ceremony at the Qinghui chiguan, continuing the drinking after the gathering of the fourth day of the third month of 31<sup>st</sup> year of Sexagenary cycle [1834-5]），in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p.122.

<sup>663</sup> Tan Ying 谭莹：《清晖池馆春禊序》（Preface to the spring lustration ceremony at the Qinghui chiguan）。《乐志堂文集》六（Sixth part of Prose collected from the Hall of Joyous Determination）。Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 119–20.

<sup>664</sup> Tan Ying：《清晖池馆春禊》（Spring lustration ceremony at the Qinghui chiguan），in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p.120.

towards public causes.<sup>665</sup> Wu Chongyao's real passion was to collect rare texts and to produce anthologies of local poetry. As such he became one of the most prolific sponsors of local anthologies of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Guangzhou, and brought forward the Wu family's aspirations of belonging to the literati.<sup>666</sup> Since his childhood, Wu Chongyao had studied under residing scholar Zhong Qishao, and printed his teacher's poems.<sup>667</sup> In turn, he hired Xu Yubin 许玉彬, a Xuehaitang scholar, as a tutor to teach the younger generation in the Wansongyuan and perpetuate the family's social ascension. Wu Chongyao also associated himself with another scholar linked with the Xuehaitang: Tan Ying, whose erudition was the perfect complement to produce anthologies of the highest standard.

After writing many of the *Lingnan Lychee Songs*, a compilation of poems about the most renowned of Guangdong province's fruits, Tan Ying's talents met the approbation of the Governor-General of Guangzhou and Xuehaitang's director, Ruan Yuan.<sup>668</sup> The Wu & Tan association — continued by Wu Shaotang 伍绍棠 (1834-1890, Gen VII, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch) after his father's death — is behind the publication of four anthologies on local themes. One of the most important of these anthologies was the *Lingnan yishu* 《岭南遗书》 (Surviving works from Lingnan), compiled between 1831 and 1863.<sup>669</sup> At this period Tan Ying resided at the Wus' estate.<sup>670</sup> According to Miles, Tan Ying's role was not reduced to that of an editor: his extensive network of scholars, both from the Xuehaitang and beyond Guangdong province, also made Tan Ying an important provider of rare texts. These Wu & Tan anthologies were precious from the point of view of local intellectual endeavours, as they brought to the fore important local writers that were rarely read beyond the province.

On one hand, the production of such anthologies meant that the residences and gardens of the Wu family contained large quantities of precious books, as well as paintings and antiques. On the other hand, the Wu family also benefitted from the presence of Tan Ying, who not only did his work of compilation but also wrote scholarly poems for his patron Wu Chongyao. The largest of the anthology compiled was titled *Yueyatang congshu* 《粤雅堂丛书》

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<sup>665</sup> Biographic note for Wu Chongyao in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 350.

<sup>666</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 150.

<sup>667</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>668</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, pp. 137–41.

<sup>669</sup> See notably Steven B. Miles, 'Rewriting the Southern Han (917-971): The Production of Local Culture in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 62.1 (2002), pp. 39–75, (p.40, note 2).

<sup>670</sup> Tan Ying, 《乐志堂文集》 (*Prose collected from the Hall of Joyous Determination*), Liyinyuan, 1860, ff.11.12a. As cited Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p.357, note 80.

(Collectanea from the Hall of Yue Refinement).<sup>671</sup> In the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, there is an entry for the Yueyatang 粤雅堂, but besides mentioning that it was built by Wu Chongyao, it only contains a poem by Tan Ying.<sup>672</sup> Perhaps this hall was an area solely dedicated to scholarly study. As mentioned above, Wu Chongyao's older brother Wu Yuanhua (1801-1833, Gen VI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch) had a library built near the Wansongyuan, the Tingtaolou 听涛楼, which was used to store ancient calligraphy, paintings and valuable scripture texts. It was also the location where Tan Ying spent much of his time compiling texts.<sup>673</sup> The Wansongyuan was also recorded to contain a collection of precious antiques, books and works of art.<sup>674</sup>

As a consequence of his presence to compile anthologies, Tan Ying wrote poems about many of the Wu family's gardens. His writings include literati allusions of a more complex level than what Wu Chongyao would have received from less involved scholarly guests. One of the most striking examples of Tan Ying's writing for Wu Chongyao is that of the *Records of the Returning rock pavilion* 《还石轩记》.<sup>675</sup> This text describes how the priest of a small waterside temple gave to Wu Chongyao a Yingshi 英石 rock, then how this precious rock was returned to the temple three years after, and the Huanshixuan 还石轩 (Returning Rock Pavilion) built to commemorate the event.

In this case, as he did in many of the anthologies' prefaces, Tan Ying literally wrote on behalf of Wu Chongyao.<sup>676</sup> The text offered a scholarly commentary on the Yingshi rock, how it was installed in the Yueyatang, and what its owner thought of it before returning it to the temple. In the *Records of the Returning rock pavilion* Wu Chongyao is not only portrayed as a generous sponsor of a new pavilion for the temple, but also as a cultivated patron. Tan Ying notably includes a reference to the story of Northern Song dynasty painter and calligrapher Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107), who famously bowed to a rock as if it were his brother. As far as is

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<sup>671</sup> Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p.149.

<sup>672</sup> The entry for the Yueyatang, 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp.96-98.

<sup>673</sup> Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p.150. Some of Tan Ying's texts in the Tingtaolou entry are discussed later in this section.

<sup>674</sup> Wansongyuan entry. From 宣统《县志·古迹》一 (The *County Gazetteer*, presumably Panyu County, Xuanton period (1906-1967), "Old vestiges" section). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 138.

<sup>675</sup> Huanshixuan entry. Tan Ying 谭莹 for Wu Chongyao: 《还石轩记》 (Records of the Returning rock pavilion). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 127-28.

<sup>676</sup> It is indicated in the text of the Records of the Returning rock pavilion: "Tan Ying on behalf of Wu Chongyao. 谭莹代伍崇曜撰", 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p.127.

known, this is also the only other allusion to the Yueyatang in the gazetteer, reinforcing Tan Ying's link with that part of the Wus' property.

Besides the Huanshixuan, Qinghui chiguan and Yueyatang as already mentioned, Tan Ying also wrote relatively lengthy poems for two other Wu properties: the Tingtaolou library and the Yuanailou 远爱楼 which was a smaller property owned by Wu Chongyao in the White Goose Pond 白鵝潭 area of Henan.<sup>677</sup> The fact that Tan Ying did not apparently write about the Wansongyuan, at least according to the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*, is a valuable piece of information in itself. This absence of writing reinforces the hypothesis that, after the separation of the family's assets in 1826, the first branch of the family had inherited the Wansongyuan. Despite the active meetings inside the familial circle described earlier in this section, the focus of the third branch's cultural activities was clearly put on the Qinghui chiguan and other buildings built by Wu Bingjian's sons. In the end, Tan Ying's involvement with Wu Chongyao insured that the latter's gardens entered records such as the county gazetteer, giving more visibility beyond the Wus' immediate social circle.

### *The appearance of the Wu family's gardens*

The two important functions of the residences with gardens described thus far were to house the large Wu family; and secondly, to allow for scholarly gatherings to facilitate the clan's social ascension. However, both of these functions could not be fulfilled without the construction of a number of buildings and landscape sceneries suitable for housing and gathering. One of the aims of this thesis is to obtain an idea of the appearance of the Wu properties in order to analyse whether they facilitated intellectual entertainment and displayed any local gardening characteristics. In this section, this objective is partly fulfilled by looking closely at contemporary and near contemporary Chinese written sources such as the texts recorded in the *Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu* and poems written by Zhang Weiping, as well as a rare pictorial source.

One of the most important aspects of the Wansongyuan is contained in its name: the 'Myriad Pines Garden'. Similarly to the Pan family, the Wu family was well aware of the fact that the

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<sup>677</sup> For Tingtaolou, see later in this section. For Yuanailou, the entry is in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp.106-107.

ancient pines growing in Henan were linked with Han dynasty Yang Fu 杨孚. This fact was often repeated or alluded to in writings about the garden: for example, Wu Bingyong's cousin Wu Guanlan (Gen VI) started the eponymous poem "Wansongyuan" by this sentence: "There are not many records that Yang Fu planted the numerous verdant pines that brought snow [to Henan]. 手种苍松一万株, 不多南雪记杨孚。"<sup>678</sup> By this, Wu Guanlan might have been implying that not many remembered that Yang Fu planted the pines in Henan. All evidence seems to indicate that, on the contrary, many of the Guangzhou-based scholars remembered Yang Fu, as an early resident of Guangzhou. Yang Fu's rhyming appraisals (*zan*) were notably included in the fifth volume of the *Lingnan yishu* anthology compiled under Wu & Tan.<sup>679</sup>

Another important part of the Wansongyuan was the pond mentioned in Wu Jiayu's description earlier in this section, repeated below for convenience's sake:

The pond's width is of several *mu*, and the bent mountain stream is crossed by a several stone bridges of different sizes. Next to the pond is a pavilion, its inverted image reflected in the water is picturesque. There is a sluice gate at the entrance of the water, linking the water in the garden to [the canal in] Xixia.<sup>680</sup>

The Wansongyuan's main pond is here described as a complete landscape scenery with a pavilion and bridges reflected in the water. The pond was also mentioned by other guests of the Wu family, notably for the numerous lotuses it contained. Numerous authors quoted under the Wansongyuan entry in the gazetteer used these lotuses or other vegetal elements as a poetic tool to indicate the season during which they visited the garden. For example, Xu Yubin wrote that: "Ten thousand fragrant lotuses in the water, clear as a mirror and its reflection seems like an autumn scenery." 《万荷香在水一镜影如秋》。<sup>681</sup> Another example is that of Lü Jianhuang 吕鉴煌, who wrote the following verse:

The Milky Way in the clear autumn sky, jade steps in the silent night, the cool wind blows through the entire garden. I am watching the emerald lotus leaves blown upside

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<sup>678</sup> Wu Guanlan 伍观澜: 《万松园》 (Wansongyuan). 《秘图山馆诗钞》五 (Fifth part of the *Collected poems of the Confidential Mountain Lodge*). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 140.

<sup>679</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, pp. 155–56.

<sup>680</sup> Wu Chuoyu 伍绰余 (Nickname of Wu Jiayu), 《万松园杂感》 (Random thoughts on the Wansongyuan). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 139.

<sup>681</sup> Xu Yubin in 《万松园玩月偶作》 (Spontaneously done while looking at the moon in Wansongyuan). 《冬榮館遺稿》五 (Fifth part of the Posthumous manuscript of the Glorious winter lodge). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 141.

down, and the water in the pond is crystal clear. 银汉秋高，玉阶夜静，满园吹送凉声。  
看荷翻翠盖，一水盈盈。<sup>682</sup>

Contemplating chrysanthemums was also an important element of spectacle to attract seasonal visitors to one's garden: it mirrors the Pan family's efforts to collect chrysanthemums, as mentioned in the first case study.

Although pines and lotuses were not in themselves particularly rare in Chinese gardens, in the Wus' gardens these two are the most frequently described elements of flora. Yet their importance in the texts does not necessarily reflect their actual number in the gardens: there were numerous poetic tropes that made those two plants particularly suitable for scholarly writings about gardens. Other types of flora were also named occasionally in descriptions of the Wus' properties. For example, in his poem about the Tingtaolou library, Wu Rongguang 吴荣光 (1773-1843) mentioned that the bamboo planted here is 'one of a kind', and described rows of 'Huangmu 黄木' planted near the waterside: these can possibly be referring to the *Rosa banksiae 'Lutea'* among other trees.<sup>683</sup> Wu Rongguang was a scholar with an official post who was married with one the Wu family's daughters, making his testimony credible.<sup>684</sup> This passage also indicates that the Wus' library was located on either the northern or western side of the property, where the Wus' residence was enclosed by watercourses (see map Figure 36).

Tan Ying offers a bit more precision in his writings. Describing the Tingtaolou where he spent much of his time compiling anthologies, he comments on the constant background noise in the area; such as the sound of the water springs, of bamboos in the wind, of the movements of fish and other animals in the pond, and of birds singing.<sup>685</sup> In one of his texts about a lustration festival gathering taking place in the Qinghui chiguan, Tan Ying also mentions a

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<sup>682</sup> Lü Jianhuang 吕鉴煌：《金菊对芙蓉·月夜宿安海伍园》(Chrysanthemum facing the lotus - Sleeping under the moon light in Wu's garden in Anhai). 《金霞仙馆词钞》(Collected *ci* poems of Golden sunset pavilion). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 141.

<sup>683</sup> Wu Rongguang 吴荣光：《题听涛楼图卷》(About a painting of the Tingtaolou). 《楚庭耆旧诗续集》八 (Eight part of the Posthumous poetry of Chu Hall). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 105.

<sup>684</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 35.

<sup>685</sup> Tan Ying 谭莹：《听涛楼歌为伍春岚作》(Song about the Tingtaolou written for Wu Chunlan [Nickname of Wu Yuanhua, Gen VI, 3rd Branch]). 《乐志堂文集》二 (Second part of Prose collected from the Hall of Joyous Determination). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 105.



number of additional plants: a small-fig tree 榕, wutong trees, willows and the *bombax* tree (kapok tree) 木棉.<sup>686</sup> As always it is difficult to tell whether the plants mentioned in the text are used for poetic effect or because they really existed in the garden. What is certain is that Tan Ying really had long-term access to the Wu properties.

The fragments of information above are not conclusive enough if one is to try to reconstitute the Wus' gardens with any degree of precision. It is therefore very helpful for such research that one painting representing a Wu garden still exists to this day (Figure 38). Kept in the Guangdong Provincial Museum in Guangzhou, the “Fuyinyuantu” 馥荫园图 (Painting of the Fuyinyuan) was created by the artist Tian Yu 田豫. Originated from Sichuan province, Tian Yu is known to have been active between the reigns of emperors Xianfeng (1850-61) and Tongzhi (1861-75).<sup>687</sup> The title of the painting in itself indicates that the Huadi garden was represented after it was bought from the Pan family and changed from ‘Dongyuan’ to ‘Fuyinyuan’.

It is uncertain exactly which member of the Wu family bought the Dongyuan and renamed it ‘Fuyinyuan’. Zhang Weiping mentions that in 1854 and 1857, there were *xi* spring lustration ceremonies held in the Fuyinyuan as part of larger events touring other Huadi gardens.<sup>688</sup> A number of important Guangzhou scholars and officials attended those events, including Pan Shicheng, a cousin of the Pan family who had settled in Lychee Bay. Surprisingly, the only member of the Wu family that Zhang Weiping mentioned in these extracts was Wu Zhangyue 伍张樾 (1829-1882, Gen VII, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch). Wu Zhangyue was the son of Wu Yuanhua (1801-1833, Gen VI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch), the fourth son of Wu Bingjian (Houqua), and his *hao* social name was Yinting 荫庭 (The Shaded Courtyard), using the same character as the Fuyinyuan’s ‘Yin’.<sup>689</sup> His presence at these events is the reason why Ren Wenling determined that Wu Zhangyue was the most likely owner of the Fuyinyuan, however at the time of the sale he would have only been seventeen years old.<sup>690</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> This poem was previously cited p.183. Tan Ying 谭莹: 《清晖池馆春禊序》 (Preface to the spring lustration ceremony at the Qinghui chiguan). Renheng Huang, pp. 119–20.

<sup>687</sup> According to the painting’s label in the Guangdong Provincial Museum.

<sup>688</sup> Zhang Weiping, 张南山全集 (*Complete Collection of Zhang Nanshan’s Writings*), II, p. 648. Zhang Weiping, 张南山全集 (*Complete Collection of Zhang Nanshan’s Writings*), III, p.199.

<sup>689</sup> Wu Zhangyue’s dates are found in 伍氏福建莆田房安海符龙公, 广州十三行之脉族引谱 (*Genealogy of the Wu Clan of Fulong, from the Putian Branch Extended to Those Involved in the Canton Trade*), ed. by Lingli Wu, 2d edn (Guangzhou, 2010), p.53.

<sup>690</sup> Ren, p. 48.



Figure 38 The Fuyinyuan painting, by Tianyu, c.1850-1875, held in Guangdong Provincial Museum



Another possibility is that the Fuyinyuan was bought by Wu Chongyao: he was the most likely to have business relations with the Pan family, and we know he had access to enough fortune to buy land. It is also notable that the sale took place in 1846, just after the first Opium War, when many Guangzhou families had properties lost or damaged. A likely hypothesis would be that the Pan family could not sustain the Dongyuan's repairs and decided to focus on their main residence instead: Wu Chongyao would have therefore been in the best position to strike a bargain between Fujian-originated merchant families.

Another important point raised by the painting is that it was likely a commissioned artwork, and that Wu Chongyao was better placed to order such a work of art.<sup>691</sup> Yet it is surprising that this painting alone and no other pictorial representation of other parts of the Wu properties should reach us. The Fuyinyuan was not the main Wu garden, and Zhang Weiping's many writings on the topic were probably tinged with childhood nostalgia. The gazetteer entry for the Tingtaolou library includes two different references to a painting of the Tingtaolou, but as far as we know no such painting is currently held in any Guangzhou museum.<sup>692</sup> However, considering the difficulties in simply obtaining the reproduction of the Fuyinyuan and the Haishan xianguan paintings in 2016, there is a possibility that more paintings could appear once Guangzhou museum holdings are catalogued more thoroughly in the future. Two paintings of the Tingtaolou are available on the Chinese auction market, but their authenticity cannot be verified at the moment.<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> Regretably, there does not seem to be a calligraphic colophon on the painting besides the title and the painter's name, or at least we could not obtain any.

<sup>692</sup> First, the already mentioned Wu Rongguang 吴榮光: 《题听涛楼图卷》 (About a painting of the Tingtaolou). 《楚庭耆旧诗续集》八 (Eight part of the Posthumous poetry of Chu Hall). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), p. 105. In the same entry, Wu Youyong 伍有庸: 《题春嵐聽濤樓圖》 (About Chunlan [Nickname of Wu Yuanhua, Gen VI, 3rd Branch]'s painting of the Tingtaolou). 《闻香馆学吟》 (Fourth part of Scholarly song of the Fragrant dwelling). Quoted in 番禺河南小志 (*Concise gazetteer of Henan Panyu*), pp. 104–5.

<sup>693</sup> For example, a painting titled 'Tingtaolou' and attributed to Xie Lansheng's brother, Xie Guansheng 榭观生: 'Lot 1163. 谢观生, 听涛楼图 (Lot 1163. Xie Lansheng, Tingtaolou Painting)', p. 11 <<http://3g.zhuokearts.com/m/auction/art/detail/28446742>> [accessed 3 January 2018]. '谢观生 (1763~1835) 听涛楼图 (Xie Guansheng (1763-1835) Tingtaolou Painting)' <[http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5\\_det.php?ccid=700&id=88834&n=1163](http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5_det.php?ccid=700&id=88834&n=1163)> [accessed 3 January 2018]. Another painting by Xie Guansheng titled 《听涛山馆图》 (Tingtao shanguan). The painting is supposed to be Wu Yuanhua's painting mentioned before: '642 - 一八二四年 听涛山馆图 (Lot 642. 1824, Tingtao Shanguan Painting)', p. 642 <<http://auction.artron.net/paimai-art20720142/>> [accessed 3 January 2018].



Figure 39 Detail of the left side of the Fuyinyuan painting

After it was sold to the Wu, Zhang Weiping visited the Fuyinyuan and commented: “As I lived there for a long time it seems like returning home, although the name of the garden has changed, the scenery has not. 住久重来似到家，园名虽改景无差。”<sup>694</sup> This is a starting point to understand the layout, as in his descriptions of the Dongyuan he had mentioned that there were few buildings but several types of vegetation. By examining the painting, it appears that the entrance of the garden is located on a small canal at the bottom left of the painting, which allows access to a main rectangular pond lined with buildings (see detail Figure 39). The number of architectural elements corresponds with Zhang Weiping’s subsequent comment that “[In] former days the garden had natural appeal, now [under the Wus] the pavilions and kiosks give it a more human appeal.” 昔日园林有天趣，今番亭榭属人为。<sup>695</sup>

<sup>694</sup> Zhang Weiping 张维屏: 《重游东园，见俞麟士廉访壁上诗，率和一首》 (Again visiting Dongyuan, I saw that Yu Linshi wrote a poem on the wall during a business trip, I spontaneously followed with one poem). Quoted in Ren, p. 48. From second volume of Weiping Zhang, 张南山全集 (Complete Collection of Zhang Nanshan’s Writings) (Guangzhou: Guangdong gaodengjiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), p. 648.

<sup>695</sup> Zhang Weiping 张维屏: 《重过东园有感》 (Thoughts on visiting the Dongyuan). Quoted in Ren, p. 49. From second volume of Weiping Zhang, p. 442.

From the painting's composition, it appears that the main rectangular pond constitutes a complete landscape scenery by itself as it is enclosed by a wall. On the left-most side of the pond the whole side is occupied by a heavily decorated boat-shaped building that reminds one of the famous Guangzhou flower boats. Near the top-left corner is a large rockwork, unlikely to be represented true to scale. The pond is crossed by a promenade reached through an octagonal screen door, with a covered bridge allowing both sides of the pond to communicate. The right side of the pond is smaller than the left side, where a water-based octagonal kiosk is located. The water kiosk is linked to the banks by two low 'zigzag' bridges.



Figure 40 Detail of the right side of the Fuyinyuan painting

Generally, the right side of the painting (see detail Figure 40) contains a larger amount of vegetation than the left. At the top of the painting, a secondary pond can be seen, its banks completely lined with potted flowers. On the right of that secondary pond is located another walled landscape: this third scene contains a square kiosk, a number of potted plants on supports, perhaps a pond at the top left, and a few trees with curved branches, perhaps representing an old pine. A smaller walled pool is seen at the top-left corner of the square kiosk. That third scene corresponds strikingly well with the export painting representing Pan Khequa's garden held in the British Library and discussed in the previous case study.

Many of the elements represented in the Fuyinyuan painting resemble the descriptions of the Pan family's gardens, notably the ponds whose regular banks seem made of masonry, the abundance of potted flowers, and the fantastic-looking rockwork. However, from this painting alone it is difficult to tell if the artist gave a faithful representation of the garden, and to which extent he modified the view to please the patron that commissioned the painting or simply took artistic license. Therefore, Chinese sources alone are insufficient to give us a clear idea of what the Wu gardens' appearance was, or to confirm whether they were representative of local gardening characteristics. The Chinese sources did, however, allow us to confirm that the gardening features were to some extent sufficient to inspire the Wu family's guests to contemplate nature and write poems.

To conclude the historic accounts of the Wu gardens, it is unclear at which point the Wu family lost its properties, yet it was comparatively late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century compared to other Hong merchant families. The only information available is from secondary sources: According to Zhou Linjie, after 1877, the Fuyinyuan was bought by the Luo family's Luoshisi Hall 罗时思堂 and divided into several lots to make commercial gardens.<sup>696</sup> Ren Wenling wrote that this part of Huadi remained a commercial garden area until at least 1929, as mentioned in the *Agricultural general survey report for Guangdong province* of 1933.<sup>697</sup> As for the main Wu residence, it has not yet been possible to find detailed information, but it most likely was partially sold after Houqua's fortune was used up in the 1890s. However, at least part of the residence would have stayed in the hands of the Wu family until the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), during which both the Wu residence and Fuyinyuan were recorded to have been destroyed.<sup>698</sup>

After analysing three of the main functions of the Wu residences and gardens in this section, the last function will be examined in the next section through Western sources. The gardens of the different generations of 'Houquas' were used as the background for welcoming foreign guests and traders, both during and after the Canton System period. Furthermore, after this preliminary enquiry into the Fuyinyuan's appearance in Chinese sources in this section, the reliability of Tianyu's Fuyinyuan painting will be established in the next section by

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<sup>696</sup> Zhou, p. 100.

<sup>697</sup> 《广东农业概况调查报告书续编下卷》, document mentioned in Ren, p. 48.

<sup>698</sup> For the destruction of the Wu main residence in Henan, see Guangzhou Haizhu District Gazetteer and Mai, p. 6. ; for the destruction of Fuyinyuan, see Ren, p. 48.

comparing it with Western pictorial sources, as well as Chinese export paintings made for a Western audience.



### **Section 3: The residences with gardens of the Wu family as a place to host Sino-Western interactions during the Canton System period**

In this section the Western sources on the Wu gardens are used to document their function to host Western visitors, and how this function changed after the end of the Canton System. Then a number of contemporary pictorial sources are used to visualise the main scenery of the Fuyinyuan in Huadi.

#### *Foreign visitors in the Wu family's residences with gardens under the Canton System period*

After succeeding his brother in 1801 and becoming head of the Hong merchants in 1813, Houqua (Wu Bingjian) had to fulfil similar pseudo-diplomatic obligations as Pan Khequa I and II before him. One of the traditions that he carried on from his predecessors as head merchant was to welcome Western traders to his Henan home with gardens. As Wu Bingjian specialised in trading with Americans, it is not a surprise that he was the security merchant for Bryant Tilden.<sup>699</sup> Coincidentally, Tilden's seven journeys to China correspond to a dramatic alteration of Sino-British relations: the first set of three journeys was made between 1815-19 when tensions were starting to escalate, and the second set from 1831-37 when the build-up to the first Opium War was virtually inevitable. The multiple allusions to opium in Tilden's diaries show that the issue was ubiquitous and pervaded most Sino-Western encounters at the time. For example, at the start of his second journey (1816-17), Tilden reported that:

This voyage I assured my respected friend Houqua — without hesitation, that we had no opium on board, and consequently he imm[ediatel]y agreed to be our security merchant — congratulating us upon our favourable sales at home, in 'America'.<sup>700</sup>

Despite entertaining a stronger friendship with Pan Khequa II, Tilden visited the Wus' gardens at least as often as those of the Pans. In 1815-16, Tilden's first impression of the Wus' Henan residence with gardens was that of a fairy-like mix of buildings and gardens.<sup>701</sup> At the time it was apparently straightforward for Tilden to visit his security merchant's residence, which he did several times on his first journey. All he had to do was to ask

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<sup>699</sup> See third section of the first case study.

<sup>700</sup> Tilden, p. 135.

<sup>701</sup> Tilden, pp. 63–65.

permission from his host, who would then send a boat, “attended by a purser from the Hong, or a family servant”.<sup>702</sup> Tilden’s description of the arrival from the river to the Henan estate both confirms information given by Chinese sources and provides a precise image of its appearance:

In front of Houqua’s premises, on the outer side, is a capacious, square, walled pond, into which the river water can be made to flow — or let out at change of tides. The surface is partly covered by a very fine sort of grass, very green, and of a mossy appearance, also with large lilly leaves which serve as shade for fishes, and among which are ducks and geese, swimming in flocks. On one side of this pond, is [...] a spacious courtyard or square enclosure, paved over with large & long blocks of granite. Here house coolies and sedan bearers, having always a number of sedans in readiness — for family use, are sheltered in lodge rooms night and day.<sup>703</sup>

Tilden’s description is sufficient to reconstitute how a visitor would have entered the Wus’ Henan residence from the riverside. First of all, it shows that the river door was considered as a main entrance, since numerous sedan chair bearers were posted there waiting to receive visitors. It was fitting for the most powerful of the Hong merchant families, the Pan and Wu, to position their estate on the riverside facing the Factories: this location was very much akin to a retail brand acquiring a prized location for their flag store on the city’s main artery. As with most busy thoroughfares, a river entrance meant that there was a great amount of footfall: Tilden’s description of the granite-paved courtyard with its sets of entrances reveals that the Wu estate had a system to filter visitor entrances.

Additionally, Tilden’s mention of geese in the pond reminds us of the location of the Wus’ Tingtaolou library: the ‘White Goose Pond’, though that remains uncertain. Yet another possibility would be that this large pond allowed the flower boats to access the Qinghui chiguan’s pool, as mentioned in the previous section. Finally, Tilden’s surprise at the number of aquatic plants on the surface of the pond is common among his contemporaries.<sup>704</sup> In

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<sup>702</sup> Tilden, p. 63.

<sup>703</sup> Tilden, pp.63-65.

<sup>704</sup> See for example Oliver.

Europe at the time, ponds were cleared frequently, in part to allow the pipes of fountains to remain clear and functioning.<sup>705</sup>

Moreover, as Houqua settled in his position of head merchant, the descriptions of Western visitors reveal that he had his residence refurbished in a grander style. Some of the witnesses of the refurbishing works at the Henan estate were in the retinue of Lord Amherst, during the second British embassy to China in 1816. Below is a description from the embassy's official account by Henry Ellis:

How-qua's house, though not yet finished, was on a scale of magnificence worthy of his fortune, estimated at two millions [currency not explained]. This villa, or rather palace, is divided into suites of apartments, highly and tastefully decorated with gilding and carved work, and placed in situations adapted to the different seasons of the year. [...] A nephew of How-qua had lately distinguished himself at the examination for civil honours, and placards (like those of office used by the Mandarins) announcing his success in the legal forms, were placed round the outer court: two bands attended to salute the Ambassador on his entrance and departure.<sup>706</sup>

In this passage Ellis gives confirmation that Houqua's residence was remade in a grand style, suitable for his new position as head Hong merchant. Houqua himself had the reputation of being a frugal man in his own habits.<sup>707</sup> However, since Ellis' testimony comes before the separation of the Wu family's assets, it is possible that the decision was not entirely in Houqua's hands, or that he saw it as a necessary expense to uphold his position. The fact that Ellis paid Houqua such compliments as to say that the estate was 'tastefully decorated' is somewhat surprising, since the British embassy had not been successful, and the retinue not very enthused with their welcome to China.<sup>708</sup> The Amherst embassy gave positive accounts on both Houqua and Pan Khequa II, calling them both "remarkable men" and admiring their

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<sup>705</sup> See for example Zheng-Shi Song, *Jardins classiques français et chinois: comparaison de deux modalités paysagères (Comparing two gardening traditions: the French and Chinese classical gardens)* (Paris: Librairie You-Feng, 2005), pp. 151–52.

<sup>706</sup> Henry Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China: Comprising a Correct Narrative of the Public Transactions of the Embassy, of the Voyage to and from China, and of the Journey from the Mouth of the Pei-Ho to the Return to Canton; Interspersed with Observations upon the Face of the Country, the Polity, Moral Character, and Manners of the Chinese Nation; the Whole Illustrated with Maps and Drawings* (London: Printed for John Murray, 1817), pp. 415–18.

<sup>707</sup> On Houqua's frugal habits see Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China*, p. 417.

<sup>708</sup> See for example Min, p. 167. See also Kitson, Markley, and English Association..

talents.<sup>709</sup> Such courteous words from British diplomatic envoys are proof that the Hong merchants were much experienced in welcoming Western traders at their estates.

The nephew that Ellis mentions as having distinguished himself is difficult to verify, due to the sheer number of Houqua's family members. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the embassy retinue misunderstood the meaning of the banners, as the practice of using placards for such occasions is well documented.<sup>710</sup> In such cases, the physical space of the estate was used to proclaim the Wu family's social ascension. Tilden's records at the same period confirm that the Henan property was refurbished, and that among the new furniture were European objects such as mirrors and clocks.<sup>711</sup>

By 1818, it was already Tilden's third journey to China, and at his arrival Houqua amiably bestowed on him the title of "Old Canton Typan [Taipan is the head of a business or supercargo] — N<sup>o</sup>1, first chop! [first class or best quality]"<sup>712</sup> Their relationship of trust accounts for the positivity permeating Tilden's account, yet some indications of Sino-Western tensions are hinted at. According to Tilden, Houqua could not entertain foreigners in Henan because of the death of a relative and gave a dinner at his factory instead.<sup>713</sup> Although difficult to prove, it is possible that the head merchant took his relative's death as an excuse to avoid inviting foreigners to his estate because of growing tensions linked to the opium trade. Indeed, after an absence of twelve years, Tilden found upon his return in 1831 that it was now impossible to visit the Ocean's Banner Temple or Houqua's garden without gaining prior authorisation in the form of a chop. Upon asking the reason, Houqua's purser explained in pidgin English that foreign visitors had made a ruckus while visiting the gardens:

"Ayah! Tluly some piece fool head halp-wild mans [savages] hab go Honam [Henan] side libber [river] last moon and make bobbily [ruckus] long he dat Josh [Temple or God] mans in garden. So fashion now all fanquie [foreigners] mans must catche [obtain] Hong chop suppose he want make go see dat Josh [Temple] and Houqua garden house".

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<sup>709</sup> Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China*, p. 417.

<sup>710</sup> See for example Mingguang Huang, '科举匾额类型及价值研究 (Research on the Type and Value of Imperial Civil-Service Examinations Horizontal Boards)', *Examinations Research*, 44.3 (2014), 71–75.

<sup>711</sup> Tilden, pp. 151–52.

<sup>712</sup> Pigeon English translation taken from Henry Yule, 'Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive', 1903 <<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/hobsonjobson/>> [accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>713</sup> Tilden, p.193.

To my knowledge, this is only one of several such ‘bobberies’ occasioned by some of us ‘halfwild’ barbarians; and finally to put a stop to such outrageous conduct, the privilege of visiting freely the temples & gardens as heretofore is now denied to all foreigners.<sup>714</sup>

As early as 1816, Lord Amherst’s retinue had already commented on the misconduct of ship’s officers that resulted in the reduction of the access to the Huadi nurseries to one day per week.<sup>715</sup> Tilden’s account implies that foreign, and especially British army personnel never really stopped misbehaving during their stay in Guangzhou. Once Tilden finally obtained entry to the Wus’ Henan estate, he found that the gardens had improved from his last visit.<sup>716</sup> It is difficult to identify which garden he visited: according to the previous section, the more suitable for a visit from a foreigner would be either the Qinghui chiguan which belonged to Houqua, or the Wansongyuan, which was the main garden but belonged to Wu Bingyong (1764-1824). It seems unlikely that Houqua would open smaller gardens, such as the one surrounding the Tingtaolou library, to outsiders. Tilden continues his description of the garden by mentioning a temple containing the coffins of Houqua’s father and mother inside the grounds.<sup>717</sup> Therefore, the chances that he visited the Wansongyuan are higher, since at the time Wu Bingyong was still alive. As the elder son, he would have been the most likely candidate to perform such a show of filial piety.

The difficulties that Tilden encountered while visiting the garden of his security merchant reveal a change of atmosphere in Sino-Western relations towards the end of the 1810s. Western traders had to obtain permission in the form of a ‘chop’, and then be escorted by a Chinese intendant when visiting the sights in Henan. Soon afterwards, the Hong merchants seem to have ceased giving chopsticks banquets altogether. Tilden attributes the end of this era of hospitality “to unfavourable symptoms - arising from a variety of difficulties with the Honorable E. I. Company. The consequences are that all other barbarians besides the British, fare the same.”<sup>718</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> Tilden, p. 760.

<sup>715</sup> Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China*, p. 415.

<sup>716</sup> Tilden, pp. 769–70.

<sup>717</sup> During Tilden’s Fourth journey (1831-1832). Tilden, pp.769-770. The coffins are also mentioned by James Holman, *Travels in China, New Zealand, New South Wales, Van Diemen’s Land, Cape Horn ...* (G. Routledge, 1840), p. 80.

<sup>718</sup> Tilden, p. 795.

After 1833, when the EIC lost its monopoly in China, William Hunter reports that Houqua (Wu Bingjian) took a step back from his duties and focused solely on his business with Russell & Co.<sup>719</sup> After this date, Wu Chongyao started to take over some of his father's duties.<sup>720</sup> John Francis Davis notably reported that one of Houqua's sons had sponsored the building of a hall inside the temple in Xiguan in the 1830s.<sup>721</sup> If that son was Wu Chongyao, then not only was he a patron of scholarly enterprises, but also of religious activities. The acts of charity performed by the Wu family were not restricted to the Chinese community: in 1844-46, George Smith gratefully reported that Wu Chongyao continued to offer free rent to his missionary hospital as his father Houqua had done before him.<sup>722</sup>

By the time of his fifth voyage (1833-34), Tilden lamented that “foreigners do not now receive such friendly invitations from the Hong merchants as they did in former days [...] they but seldom see us except on business.”<sup>723</sup> During his sixth journey (1834-36), he mentions again that Guangzhou has ceased to be an interesting place to stay, because “Hong merchant's dinner entertainments, are no longer given, as on former voyages.”<sup>724</sup> Using his privilege as ‘Old China’, Tilden managed with some trouble to visit the Henan sights on his seventh journey in 1836-7. Once again, because of his nationality, Tilden did not hesitate to lay the blame for these restrictions on the British:

[...] only a few days since that, Capt Glidden & myself were refused admittance & even to cross the river to see the Honam Temples [Ocean's Banner Temple], in consequence of improper conduct on the part of a few English barbarians there, of late. Several of the ferry boat people at first refused even to take us over the river — saying they were forbidden for the present carrying *fanquies* to Honam [Henan].<sup>725</sup>

After Commissioner Lin Zexu arrived in Guangzhou in 1839, Sino-Western tensions soon reached a peak. Houqua took an active role in trying to resolve the conflict: he was part of the committee that negotiated with Captain Elliot the city's ransom immediately after the city fell

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<sup>719</sup> Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 49.

<sup>720</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 150.

<sup>721</sup> Davis, p. 20. Also mention of Houqua founding a Buddhist temple in the suburbs of Guangzhou in ‘The Senior Hong Merchant (From the Friend of China, Sept. 14.)’, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW, 26 March 1844), p. 4.

<sup>722</sup> George Smith, pp. 120–21.

<sup>723</sup> Tilden, pp. 878–80.

<sup>724</sup> Tilden, p. 952.

<sup>725</sup> Tilden, p. 1040.

on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1841.<sup>726</sup> When the British troops landed in Guangzhou, they first occupied parts of the city's north-western suburbs. By that time most of the inhabitants of these areas had left.<sup>727</sup> Some wealthy abodes were occupied, among which at least one mansion with gardens, but there is no mention of damage to Houqua's Henan properties in any of the sources consulted.<sup>728</sup>

After his death in 1842, many foreigners recorded in their diaries and newspapers how much of an extraordinary character the late Houqua had been. Despite the events of the first Opium War that were still fresh in their minds, the obituaries in English-language newspapers seemed more fascinated by the late Houqua's colossal fortune.<sup>729</sup> The most tantalising aspect was perhaps that nobody knew the exact extent of his assets: "Howqua, the senior Hong merchant, expired at Canton on the 4th September, leaving wealth variously estimated at 15, 20, and 25 millions of dollars."<sup>730</sup> Another aspect that newspapers focused on was Houqua's benevolence towards Americans and his distaste for the opium trade.<sup>731</sup> There was no shortage of Westerners genuinely mourning Houqua. Benjamin R.C. Low wrote a poem titled "Houqua, in memoriam A.A.L" on behalf of the American firm A.A. Low.<sup>732</sup> William Hunter went so far as to pay his respects by comparing the late Houqua with two of the most famous of his European contemporaries:

This last chief of the world-renowned 'Co-Hong' which ceased with the treaties after an existence of 130 years, died at Honam [Henan] on September 4, 1843, aged seventy-four, having been born in the same year with Napoleon and Wellington, 1769.<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> *The Canton Register*, 01/06/41, p. 6.

<sup>727</sup> Suburbs deserted, see the 'Canton Register Extra' page in *The Canton Register*, 25/05/1841

<sup>728</sup> The mansion is described in Cree journals, 29/05/1841, and is discussed in further details in the discussion.

<sup>729</sup> 'China, India, and Singapore', *South Australian Register* (Adelaide, 7 February 1844)

<<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article27446504>> [accessed 5 February 2015].

<sup>730</sup> From 'China', *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* (NSW, 2 March 1844), p. 3.

<sup>731</sup> 'The Senior Hong Merchant (From the Friend of China, Sept. 14.)'.

<sup>732</sup> Elma Loines and Harriet Low Hillard, *The China Trade Post-Bag of the Seth Low Family of Salem and New York, 1829-1873* (Manchester, Me.: Falmouth Pub. House, 1953), p. 50

<<http://books.google.com/books?id=OckvAAAAIAAJ>> [accessed 28 August 2017].

<sup>733</sup> Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844*, p. 50.

*Foreign visitors in the Wu family's residences with gardens after Houqua's death:  
between occupation and tourism*

After Houqua (Wu Bingjian)'s death, and the end of the Canton System, the Wu family progressively changed how they welcomed Western traders in their properties. Since Houqua's heir Wu Chongyao was used to dealing with Western visitors, he continued to allow them to visit some of the family's residences with gardens. However, by carefully examining the accounts available, it seems that such visits scarcely involved members of the Wu family. Further, after the Wu family had acquired the Fuyinyuan in 1846, it seems that foreigners visited the latter or the Xiguan properties, rather than the Henan estate. Perhaps this change was due to Wu Chongyao wanting or having to give more privacy to his large family in Henan. While he used the Qinghui chiguan for activities with his Chinese social circles and with the Tingtaolou to compile anthologies, the Fuyinyuan progressively became a pleasure ground that could be visited much like the Huadi nurseries.

One of the earliest accounts of the Fuyinyuan after its acquisition was that of Austrian traveller Ida Laura Pfeiffer in 1847. Although the Canton System had only recently ended in 1842, Pfeiffer apparently was not aware of Wu Chongyao's exact social position: "I was lucky enough to be enabled to visit some of the summer palaces and gardens of the nobility. The finest of all was certainly that belonging to the Mandarin Houqua [Wu Chongyao]."<sup>734</sup> Pfeiffer's misunderstanding of the Wu family's exact status is probably linked with their continued prominent role in welcoming Western travellers in Guangzhou. Although she did not name the properties, from Pfeiffer's description of her itinerary it seems that she visited both the Xiguan property and the Fuyinyuan.<sup>735</sup> Her impression of the garden was mixed, but she nonetheless gave detailed comments and notably remarked that:

Another source of entertainment, no less popular, as well among the ladies as the gentlemen, consists in kite-flying, and they will sit for hours looking at their paper monsters' in the air. There is a large open spot set apart for this purpose in the garden of every Chinese nobleman.<sup>736</sup>

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<sup>734</sup> Pfeiffer, p. 110.

<sup>735</sup> Pfeiffer, p. 112.

<sup>736</sup> *Idem.*



Since Pfeiffer mentioned such entertainments in relation to the Fuyinyuan, it implies that she witnessed visitors other than those of her own party using kites in the garden. These ladies were unlikely to be members of the Wu family, as Pfeiffer did not visit the Fuyinyuan on invitation of its owner: instead she had taken a boat with a small party of Westerners and set to visit several spots including Henan. Her account relates how, because tensions after the first Opium War, the locals sometimes threw stones at foreigners and that such an excursion was therefore risky.<sup>737</sup> The account of American physician Benjamin Lincoln Ball's visit to China in 1848-50 further establishes that Wu Chongyao was not often present when foreign visitors came to his gardens:

The elder Howqua is dead, and his son occupies the place, though absent now. As we drew near the house, one of our boatmen intimidated us somewhat by telling us [...] that Howqua's wife was alone in the house, and that we should be killed if we persisted. Mr. Hunt did not believe any such thing, and we continued on. We came to the gateway, and found the doors that opened into the grounds closed. On knocking several times, and then pounding, a Chinaman appeared. He opened the door far enough to see us, and shook his head. Mr. H. took from his pocket a piece of silver, and held it up before him ; the gate immediately opened wide enough, and we entered. [Description of garden and residence] We came away unfrightened [sic] by the sight of Howqua's wife, for there was no one in the house but a number of [men]-servants, to whom we paid a small fee, not because they had done anything for us, but because they seemed to expect something. I do not believe that Howqua keeps his wives here, but maintains this more to have a pretty place to entertain his foreign friends.<sup>738</sup>

The account above underlines clearly how Ball and Hunt (perhaps William Hunter) had to overcome a series of obstacles to enter the residence and visit the gardens. The (omitted) description of the garden is both lengthy and vague, but generally corresponds with that of the Fuyinyuan as it is reconstituted later in this section. Ball insists that no family members were present during the visit, and doubts the explanation given by his boatman. However, his own explanation is not more convincing: if Wu Chongyao only used the Fuyinyuan to entertain foreign visitors, there would be no reason to commission or receive as a gift such a painting of the Fuyinyuan by Tian Yu as examined in the previous section.

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<sup>737</sup> Pfeiffer, p. 111.

<sup>738</sup> B. L. (Benjamin Lincoln) Ball, pp. 123–25.

After the first Opium War, there was a change of power dynamic between the West and China. Western visitors were more confident than before, notably when travelling across areas subjected to British imperial power.<sup>739</sup> As a result, some visitors started to interpret the gardens of ‘Howqua’ and Huadi as being solely intended for their own use, or to have been modified to conform to Western tastes.<sup>740</sup> British botanist Robert Fortune, as someone who travelled through China widely in the inter-Opium War period, had a more objective account to give during his 1853-56 journey:

Howqua's Garden [...] is situated near the well-known Fa-tee nurseries, a few miles above the city of Canton, and is a place of favourite resort both for Chinese and foreigners who reside in the neighbourhood, or who visit this part of the Celestial Empire. [...] Having reached the door of the garden, we presented the card with which we were provided, and were immediately admitted.<sup>741</sup>

Here Fortune shows that he was aware that both Chinese and foreigners visited the garden, and confirms what was implied in Pfeiffer’s text. The description that follows the extract above corresponds with that of the Fuyinyuan as it is reconstituted later in this section. There is no mention of personal interactions with the family, and the place is described as a resort rather than as a private residence. Fortune’s method of gaining entrance to this garden is akin to buying a ticket to a well-known attraction: the card mentioned might well have been a ‘chop’, but is not called one, it had lost the formal aspect of the Canton System days. Another indication that the Fuyinyuan had become something close to a touristic attraction were the number of notices that Fortune found in the garden and had translated from Chinese by his companion. One such notice reads as follows: “This garden earnestly requests that visitors will spit betle [nut] outside the railing, and knock the ashes of pipes also outside.”<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>739</sup> Kerr and Kuehn, p. 2.

<sup>740</sup> See for example Yuen Lai Winnie Chan, p. 115.

<sup>741</sup> Robert Fortune, *A Residence among the Chinese, Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea Being a Narrative of Scenes and Adventures during a Third Visit to China, from 1853 to 1856: Including Notices of Many Natural Productions and Works of Art, the Culture of Silk, &c. : With Suggestions on the Present War* (London: John Murray, 1857), pp. 215–17.

<sup>742</sup> Fortune, *A Residence among the Chinese, Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea Being a Narrative of Scenes and Adventures during a Third Visit to China, from 1853 to 1856*, pp. 215–17.



Figure 41 ‘Howqua’s garden’. Studio of Tingqua, mid-nineteenth century, gouache on paper, Peabody Essex Museum

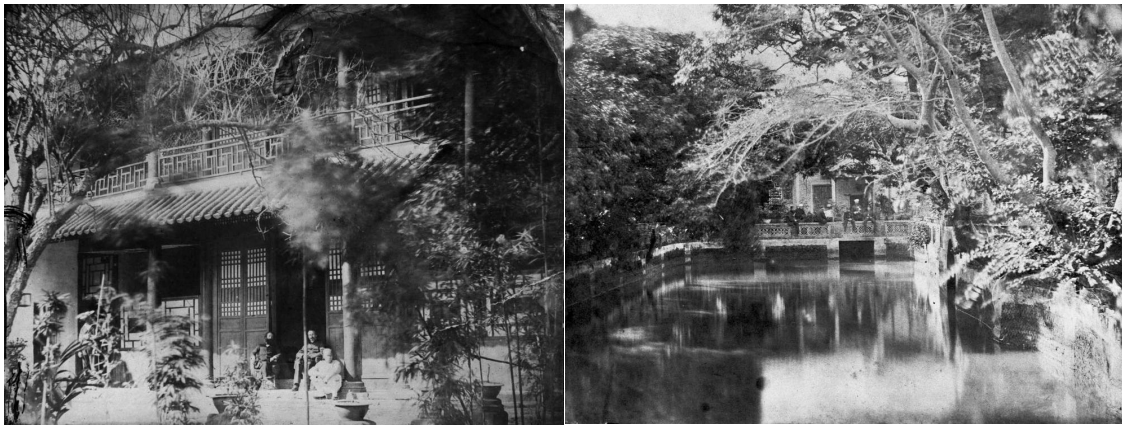
It is perhaps not a coincidence if Carl Crossman estimated that Tingqua’s export painting of “Howqua’s garden” kept in the Peabody Essex Museum was made around 1855 (Figure 41).<sup>743</sup> From its layout, the garden in Tingqua’s painting can be identified as the Fuyinyuan: it contains a similar pond cut in two unequal parts by a promenade and a covered bridge, and the small water-based kiosk can be seen on the left side. The Peabody’s Tingqua painting is part of a pair — the other is discussed later in this section — and together they constitute the most accurate of many other export paintings taking inspiration from the Fuyinyuan (see right side of Figure 58). If the local Guangzhou painting studios thought that the subject of this garden would appeal to foreigners as a souvenir on a painting, it implies that the Fuyinyuan was visited by a considerable amount of people — a different experience than the special occasions that chopstick dinners had represented during the Canton System.

Before the onset of the Second Opium War, it seems that the Fuyinyuan had already become an attraction similar to that of the surrounding Huadi nurseries. As the conflict started in

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<sup>743</sup> Tingqua or Guan Lianchang 关联昌 was active mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. See Carl L Crossman, *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities*, 1991, pp. 192–95.

1857, British and French soldiers landed in Henan on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December.<sup>744</sup> In a letter dated of the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1858, British soldier John Frederick Crease explains how Guangzhou was captured.<sup>745</sup> Although Lord Elgin is said to have taken pains not to destroy or loot Guangzhou, once he left to proceed north, some troops were left behind to keep the city blockaded.<sup>746</sup>



**Figure 42 Left: “Capt. Martineau's house, the man on the right is another officer, on the left is Martineau himself” Right: “near wh. spot are collected a group of Offrs. taking it easy and watching my proceedings...” John Frederick Crease, 1858. Royal British Columbia Museum**

To his letter home, Crease attached photographs: while some depict a Chinese house occupied by members of the French army, there is also a series of views documenting what Crease dubs ‘Howqua’s garden at Fa-tee’.<sup>747</sup> These photographs provide a near-perfect cyclorama of a pond that can be matched with Tian Yu’s Fuyinyuan painting — see later in this section. Although the photographs are accompanied by a lengthy caption, the latter do not state verbatim that the Fuyinyuan itself was occupied. Since the troops landed in Henan, it is likely that the building whose photograph’s caption implies it was occupied by the French, was located in a similar area as the Fuyinyuan (Left side Figure 42). One photograph showing soldiers sitting on the pond’s fence in the background could mean that the garden itself was occupied (Right side Figure 42). However, the writing in Crease’s letter is too faint to provide any confirmation either way.

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<sup>744</sup> Douglas Hurd, *The Arrow War: An Anglo-Chinese Confusion, 1856-1860* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 120.

<sup>745</sup> Royal British Columbia Museum, Crease letter dated 1858/11/13, MS-0055, Box 3, File 28.

<sup>746</sup> Laurence Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin’s Mission to China and Japan, in the Years 1857, ’58, ’59* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1860), p. 162.

<sup>747</sup> Royal British Columbia Museum, Crease papers, photographs with archive numbers HP078415, HP078416, HP078419, HP078420, HP078453.

Despite the Crease photograph showing soldiers in the garden, in all likelihood the Fuyinyuan's occupation would have been widely reported if it had taken place — but no such report has been found so far. The Wu family still played an important role in the Russell & Co affairs in 1858, and the foreign community would have most likely commented on any damage done to the property of Houqua's descendants. Those British soldiers in the photograph are more probably *bona fide* visitors. Although Wu Chongyao was not as involved in Sino-Western trade as his father had been, he took upon himself to carry some of his father's clout in public matters and helped to protect the city on several occasions.<sup>748</sup>

The account below shows that there was good will between the retinue of Lord Elgin and Wu Chongyao, and a common desire to end the conflict peacefully. Laurence Oliphant's account states that at least part of the latter's property was unscathed, and it also lends credit to the hypothesis that the soldiers in the Crease photographs were simply guests:

Amongst those most anxious for the re-establishment of a settled order of things was the celebrated Chinese merchant Howqua [perhaps Wu Chongyao was mistaken for his father], who, in the fullness [sic] of his desire for conciliation, invited some of us to luncheon with him one afternoon. His house in the suburbs had remained uninjured during the troubles, and was tastefully but plainly furnished: he explained, however, that he possessed another handsomer residence. [...] Howqua regaled us with some delicious tea, of course without milk or sugar, and we afterwards sat down to a light repast of preserves and fruits, our host doing the honours with much courtesy and good-breeding.<sup>749</sup>

After Wu Chongyao's death in 1864, the remnants of Houqua's fortune were put under the control of his only surviving son, Wu Chonghui (1828-1880). It is unclear whether Wu Chongyao's son Wu Shaotang (1834-1890) took over the Qinghui chiguan and other parts of his father's property. One of these two became close friends with John Henry Gray, the pastor of Shamian's church who later became Archdeacon of Hong Kong. Since Henry Gray called his friend 'Howqua', the most likely assumption is that it was Wu Chonghui. Henry Gray was an avid visitor of Guangzhou and its surroundings. He wrote a detailed guide to the city including Chinese names, in which he mentions the Fuyinyuan in Huadi:

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<sup>748</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*, p. 150.

<sup>749</sup> Oliphant, p. 171.

[W]e proceeded to a landscape garden, which belongs to a rich, and influential family name 伍 'Ng' [Wu]. This garden, which is termed 馥荫园 Fuuk-Yum-Uen [Fuyinyuan], is, indeed, in a most neglected state. Enough, however, of its former beauty remains to convey to the mind of the beholder, some notion of the perfect state to which it had, at one time, attained. In one corner of this garden, there still exists a well constructed rockery. In the centre of a large lotus pond, there stands a domed pavilion, the roof of which is supported by pillars of wood. It is, however, as is the zig-zag bridge by which it is approached, rapidly falling into a state of decay. The pond, at the time of our visit, was literally blooming with lotuses, and to the eye, in consequence, presented a most agreeable aspect.<sup>750</sup>

Another guide on the city, written by J. G. Kerr, was reprinted several times and mentions both the Fuyinyuan and the Wu's main residence in Henan:

伍家 The Howqua Residence - At a large gateway a few steps west of the entrance to the Honam Temple [Ocean's Banner Temple], a lane (珠海波光) leads to the private dwellings of several branches of the Ng [Cantonese for Wu] or Howqua family. Connected with these dwellings is a large pleasure-garden (万松园), in which a lotus pond, bridges, summer-house, bowers, trees, shrubs, flowers and walks show the taste, refinement and luxury found among the highest classes of Chinese.<sup>751</sup> [...]

福荫园 Howqua's Garden [incorrect character for *fu*, correct character is 馥]- This is a large garden, on a branch of Fa-ti Creek. The lotus pond, rockery, bridges, bowers and summer-houses, with the walks among the flowers, make the place quite attractive.

Kerr's description confirms that both properties were still under the ownership of the Wu family, and that the Fuyinyuan was located in Huadi. Henry Gray's description shows that he has visited the garden several times, a sign that he would have been in good terms with its owner. Henry's wife, whom we only know as Mrs Gray, seems to have shared his taste for exploring their Chinese surroundings: her book *Fourteen months in Canton* is one of the most interesting and comprehensive accounts of Guangzhou in the 1870s. The latter is a collection of the letters Mrs Gray sent to her family during her stay in the city, in which she notably described many interactions with women, and could confidently declare that "A Chinese lady

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<sup>750</sup> John Henry Gray, p. 652.

<sup>751</sup> J. G. Kerr, *The Canton Guide*, Third edition (Hongkong, Canton: Kelly & Walsh ;A.S. Watson & Co., 1884), p. 44, University of Cambridge, RCS.Case.b.17.

spends her time in embroidering shoes and other work, in card and domino playing, in lounging in garden houses, in gossiping with her female friends and *amahs*, and in smoking occasionally.<sup>752</sup>

Mrs Gray's letters contain frequent mentions of her husband's friend 'Howqua', whose large house and gardens she visited often.<sup>753</sup> Her observations give useful information about the Wu's property: for example, she reports that when 'Howqua' prepared to marry a new wife, he added a new room to his house (presumably in Henan) and furnished it in European style.<sup>754</sup> This anecdote illustrates well the continuous process of the Wu residence's expansion and ever-increasing household expenses.

From the details found in the Grays' writings, it seems that their friend 'Howqua' opened his home to them with as much hospitality in the 1870s as Pan Khequa II had to Tilden at the beginning of the century. Additionally, their friend 'Howqua' also acted as a guide to let the Grays visit some of his acquaintances' gardens. One such garden excursion was organised to see the lotus flowers blooming.<sup>755</sup> By allowing a group of ten foreigners to travel by boat to visit the lotus in bloom, 'Howqua' offered the Grays and guests an opportunity to participate in the elegant gatherings so appreciated by his forebears. However, the Grays were among the few foreigners residing in Guangzhou that took interest in local customs. The days of the Canton System were truly gone, and (presumably) Wu Chonghui's friendship with the Grays was the exception rather than the rule.

Since the days of Treaty Ports, the Western visitors' attitudes about China had changed. Having once looked forward to invitations from Chinese hosts, most of the foreign residents now preferred to stay aloof of Chinese life and isolated in their concessions. At the same time, Western visitors to the city increasingly started to judge Guangzhou gardens as distasteful, and notably took the numerous *penjings* they displayed as a sign of frivolity or unnatural taste.<sup>756</sup> The gardens of the Wu family were also often described to be in a state of disrepair,

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<sup>752</sup> John Henry Gray Mrs, *Fourteen Months in Canton* (London: Macmillan, 1880), p. 200, University of Cambridge.

<sup>753</sup> Description of Howqua's villa size : John Henry Gray Mrs, p. 275.

<sup>754</sup> John Henry Gray Mrs, p. 159.

<sup>755</sup> John Henry Gray Mrs, pp. 156–59.

<sup>756</sup> See notably H. Hickck, 'A Visit to the Fati Gardens', *The Ladies' Repository; a Monthly Periodical, Devoted to Literature, Art and Religion (1849-1876)*, April 1849. See also Claudius Madrolle, *Chine du sud et de l'est ...* (Comité de l'asie française, 1904), p. 22 <<http://archive.org/details/chinedusudetdel00madrgoog>> [accessed 9 January 2017].

as seen in Henry Gray's description and that of others.<sup>757</sup> Visitors rarely had a chance to meet any members of the family, but there is at least one exception in the early 1880s:

I had made an appointment to meet a grand-son of Howqua's, who, with his brother [perhaps Wu Shaotang, Gen VII, 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch], then occupied the mansion, and so, after making the gateway sketch, I was guided through an alley across a dilapidated garden, then through an ordinary gateway to the mansion itself. [...] In the rear of this great house was a large lotus pond walled in with brick; on each side were substantial summer-houses, in which dwelt the concubines. [...] Here was every opportunity to make a charming retreat, yet the pond was covered with slime and rubbish, the summer houses were neglected and dirty, and, knowing the great wealth of the family, one was compelled to recognize this condition of matters in China as a national trait.<sup>758</sup>

The extract above confirms that, as late as the early 1880s, Houqua's fortune had allowed the Wu family to keep their residence with gardens in Henan. The dwindling amount of money the family could draw from Russell & Co, until the latter's failure in 1891 and afterwards, explains why the garden would have been in such a state of disrepair. Yet in his account Edward Sylvester Morse also appears clearly prejudiced towards the Chinese that he constantly compared unfavourably to the Japanese, going so far as to imply that the Chinese national trait was to be 'neglected and dirty'. Therefore, it is possible that he did not represent the Wus' residence in the most objective way.

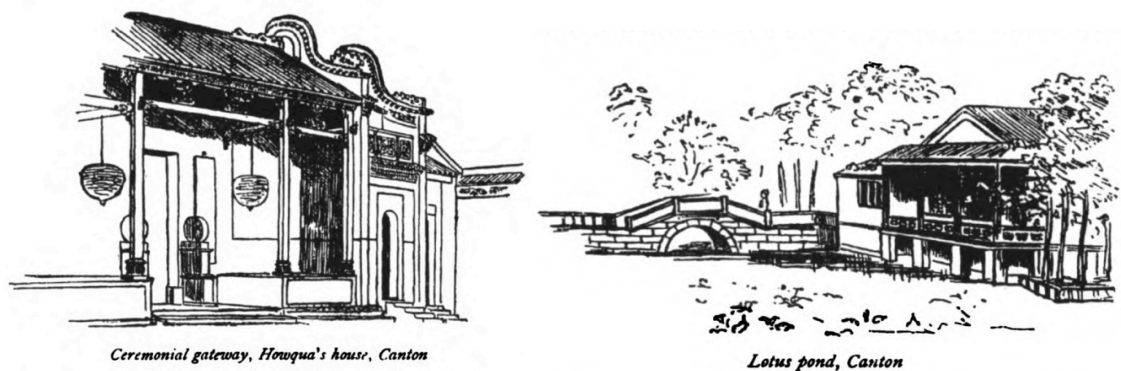


Figure 43 Left: “Ceremonial gateway, Howqua’s house, Canton”. Right: “Lotus pond, Canton”. Edward S. Morse, 1880s. In *Glimpses of China and Chinese homes*.

<sup>757</sup> Albert Smith, p. 43.

<sup>758</sup> Edward Sylvester Morse, *Glimpses of China and Chinese Homes* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1902), p. 160.



Nonetheless, Morse's account is helpful in understanding better the layout of the Wu residence in Henan at that period, as he accompanies his description by his own sketches.<sup>759</sup> The drawing of the imposing gateway confirms that Morse must have visited the main Wu residence in Henan (Left side Figure 43).<sup>760</sup> Morse was quite impressed by this entrance as he gives a long description of the gateway and of the nearby Ancestor's Hall.<sup>761</sup> As for the lotus pond that Morse mentions (Right side Figure 43), it is once again difficult to identify which garden it belongs to. Moreover, since Henry Gray mentioned the Wansongyuan in his guide *Walks in the city of Canton* at the same period, and Chinese sources confirmed that it contained a lotus pond, the Wansongyuan is the most likely to have survived up to the 1880s for Morse to see.



Figure 44 “Guangzhou” Anon. 1881. Album compiled by the Reverend J N Dalton (1839-1931) and presented to King George V. Royal Collection Trust (UK); or “A view of How Qua's summer house with large lotus pond in front”. Anon. Albumen print. Dennis G. Crow's website.

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<sup>759</sup> Edward Sylvester Morse, p. 153.

<sup>760</sup> As explained before in Richard, ‘Uncovering the Garden of the Richest Man on Earth in Nineteenth-Century Canton: Howqua's Garden in Honam, China’.

<sup>761</sup> Edward Sylvester Morse, p. 152.

Morse's sketch indicates that the pond was crossed by a stone bridge; it contained at least one large waterside building or *xie* 榭 with a side overlooking the water. This building on the side of a lotus pond reminds of a photograph kept in the Royal Collection Trust (Figure 44). In Dennis G. Crow's website, the same photograph is titled "A view of How Qua's summer house with large lotus pond in front", but it is not clear whether this was a label applied at a later date.<sup>762</sup> Additionally, the women's quarters that Morse mentioned could well correspond to the Hidden Spring 'garden in the garden' inside the Wansongyuan: it was Wu Jiayu (1875-?) who depicted this part of the garden at approximately the same period.

In addition to giving visual clues regarding the Wus' Henan residence, Morse's account shows that it was still possible for foreigners to meet the Wu family as late as the 1880s. Morse explained that he managed to obtain an appointment with members of the Wu Seventh generation through recommendation: "By good fortune, I got a letter to the family of Howqua".<sup>763</sup> A paid guide accompanied him to and through the mansion. Once inside, Morse met both of the unnamed Wu siblings, who apparently could still afford a multitude of servants for their wives and children, despite the state of neglect of the gardens.<sup>764</sup> This was not a very warm encounter: while Morse was drawing around the house, his sketches were snatched from him to be shown to the ladies hiding from the visitor. Many of those sketches were offered to his hosts, but Morse complained that they pressed him to draw more than he physically could.<sup>765</sup> His account demonstrates that the Wu's offspring were no longer familiar with the way of welcoming foreigners as Houqua and Wu Chongyao had been, and that keeping gardens in good order was not their priority.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, accounts of the Wu family gardens are rarer, and tend to appear in publications printed much later than their authors had visited China. The Fuyinyuan would survive longer in Westerners' imaginations, but as the unnamed 'Howqua's garden' represented in numerous export paintings and photographs. For the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Western audience, this garden must have been associated with the late Houqua rather than with his surviving descendants. Although he had died in 1843, Houqua's wax statue was installed in 1848 in Madame Tussaud's in London and remained there until 1945 when it melted in a

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<sup>762</sup> Crow G. Dennis, 'Canton', *Dennis George Crow | Historic Photography Art & Antiquities* <[http://www.dennisgeorgecrow.com/index.php?p=details&s=china&id=1521&g=D05\\_china\\_canton](http://www.dennisgeorgecrow.com/index.php?p=details&s=china&id=1521&g=D05_china_canton)> [accessed 23 October 2017].

<sup>763</sup> Edward Sylvester Morse, p. 151.

<sup>764</sup> Edward Sylvester Morse, p. 187.

<sup>765</sup> Edward Sylvester Morse, p. 155.

fire.<sup>766</sup> Houqua's portraits were also hung in several American country homes such as the Forbes Mansion in Milton, Massachusetts.<sup>767</sup>

### *Reconstituting the Fuyinyuan through Western sources*

After exploring how the Wu family's residences with gardens were used to welcome foreigners before and after the Canton System, the numerous pictorial sources found in Western archives are used below to reconstitute the Fuyinyuan in Huadi. The pictorial sources available are of two main types, paintings and photographs. When it comes to paintings, Tilden himself wrote in 1815-16 that they offered a good idea of contemporary Guangzhou gardens:

The scenery [of the Wus' Henan garden] is all of a sudden very beautiful; some quite fair ideas of which may be had by looking at Chinese picture drawings, which by many, who have never visited the "Celestial Empire" are supposed to be only imaginary, representations; and though stiffly painted, they are quite correct views of these novel looking places to us strangers.<sup>768</sup>

From his reference to 'stiffness', Tilden probably refers to Chinese export paintings that used Western perspective in a stiff way. Tilden's comment is accurate, as it has been possible to match views of 'Howqua's garden' (or unnamed views) with other pictorial and written descriptions, and verify their accuracy.

As for photography, its technology was developed in the 1840s, just in time to provide pictorial evidence of the Fuyinyuan after it was bought from the Pan family. Western travellers brought with them the first commercialised cameras to China, such as the daguerreotype models.<sup>769</sup> Their first stop in China was usually Guangzhou, still an important trade harbour even after other Treaty Ports were opened following the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). As their movements were less restricted than under the Canton Trade (1757-1842), they visited the city more leisurely and took pictures of its most famous views; among which

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<sup>766</sup> *The New Madame Tussaud's Exhibition: Official Guide and Catalogue* (London: Madame Tussaud and Sons, 1928). As cited in John D. Wong, p. 228.

<sup>767</sup> Elma Loines, 'Houqua, Sometime Chief of the Co-Hong at Canton (1769-1843)', *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 84.2, 99-108. As cited in John D. Wong, p. 121.

<sup>768</sup> Tilden, pp. 63-65.

<sup>769</sup> Notably Jules Itier's view of Pan Shicheng's Haishan xianguan in 1844. Gimon.

were the gardens of Houqua's descendants and Pan Shicheng's Haishan xianguan. During the Second Opium War, soldiers and people accompanying the Franco-British armies also had the opportunity to take photographs of the city. The fact that the first cameras were invented and brought to China just after the end of the Canton System, when the Fuyinyuan was still extant, is coincidental — nonetheless, it provides an exceptional opportunity to verify the veracity of descriptions found in other written and pictorial sources.

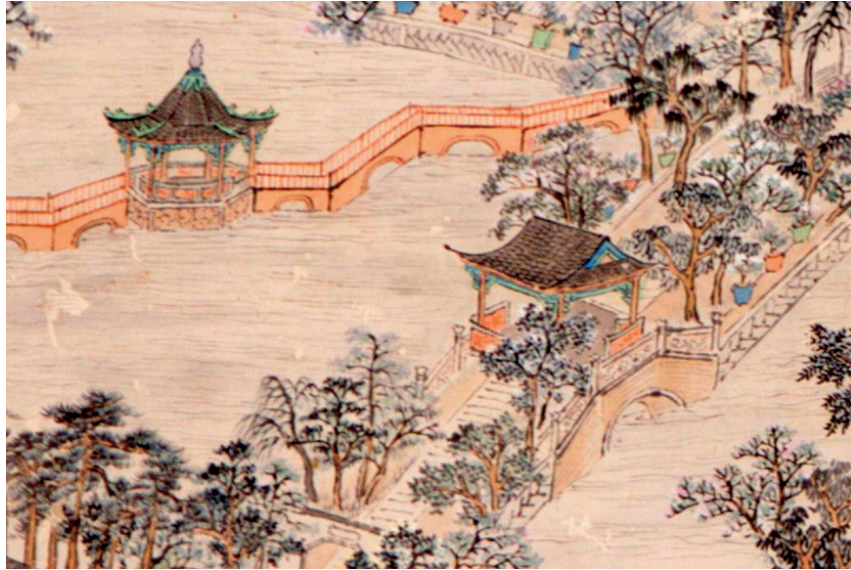


Figure 45 Detail of "Fuyinyuan", Tianyu, Guangdong Provincial Museum. Colours have been contrasted to facilitate visual analysis.



Figure 46 Details of 'Howqua's garden', Tingqua, Peabody Essex Museum. Left: The water-based kiosk. Right: The promenade with the covered bridge separating the pond in two unequal parts.

The most colourful pictorial representation of the Fuyinyuan is probably the previously mentioned gouache on paper kept in the Peabody Essex Museum of Salem (Figure 41). In the foreground stands a large tree accompanied by potted flowers, near the bank of a geometrical bricked pond. In the background on the left is represented a water-based kiosk, whose balustrades are adorned with more potted flowers (Left side Figure 46). The pond is crossed by a walkway or promenade punctuated by a ‘covered’ bridge (Right side Figure 46). A low brick and ceramic banister runs through the promenade’s length, featuring another set of potted flowers.



Figure 47 “Howqua’s gardens, Canton”. Felice, Albumen print, 1860. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

British photographer Felice Beato, accompanying the Franco-British troops during the Second Opium War, took a shot titled ‘Howqua’s garden, Canton’ around 1860.<sup>770</sup> When looking at the promenade with its covered bridge, it appears to be the same garden, but seen from a different angle (Figure 47).<sup>771</sup> The photographer was standing on the smaller side of the pond

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<sup>770</sup> See for example Crombie.Harris and Beato. Annie-Laure Wanaverbecq and Felice Beato, *Felice Beato en Chine: photographier la guerre en 1860* (Paris; Lille: Somogy Éditions d’Art ; Musée d’histoire naturelle de Lille, 2005).

<sup>771</sup> Felice Beato’s albumen print is titled “Howqua’s gardens, Canton”. The digital image is courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

looking towards the covered bridge, and the water-based kiosk is visible in the background. The great similarity between the details in Figure 46 and Figure 47 suggests that Tingqua's export painting indeed provided a rather accurate view of the garden.

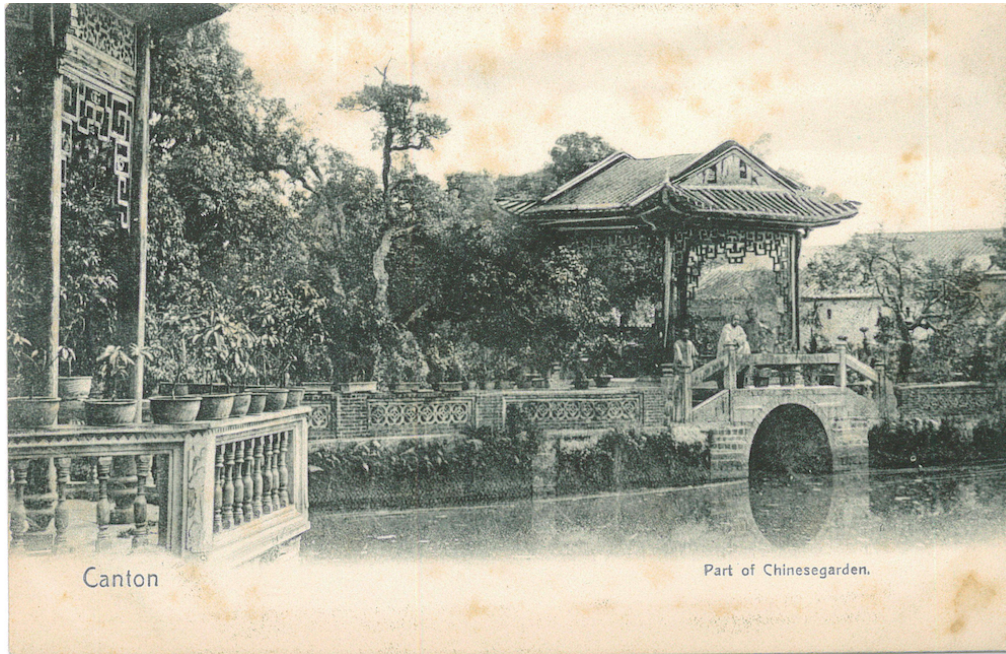


Figure 48 "Canton, Part of Chinesegarden [sic]", Sternberg & Co, second half of nineteenth century. Personal collection.

The Fuyinyuan was apparently representative enough of Guangzhou city to become one of M. Sternberg & Co. Hong Kong studio's postcards (Figure 48).<sup>772</sup> Labelled "Canton — Part of Chinesegarden", this view represents the same garden, but this time taken from the largest side of the pond, with the water-based kiosk on the left edge of the frame. Stamped in 1909, the postcard was probably printed using a late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph, as that was what Sternberg often did.<sup>773</sup>

Beato's view and Sternberg's postcard are just the most well-known of the photographs representing 'Howqua's garden', but they suffice as a tool of verification. Indeed the details shown in the two photographs correspond closely with both Tianyu's bird's eye view of the

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<sup>772</sup> M.Sternberg is a bit of a mystery, and so far the only mentions of him were found in blogs of amateur photography historians, which tend to be passionate collectors. One such blog post in 'Gwulo: Old Hong Kong' claims that the postcards collected so far show an activity window from 1906-1914 for Sternberg, with photographs of Hong Kong and Guangdong mostly. David Bellis, 'M Sternberg, Wholesale and Retail Postcard Dealer [c.1906-c.1914]', *Gwulo: Old Hong Kong* <<https://gwulo.com/comment/36865#comment-36865>> [accessed 3 January 2018].

<sup>773</sup> Arthur Hacker, *China Illustrated: Western Views of the Middle Kingdom* (Boston: Tuttle, 2004).

Fuyinyuan (see Figure 45) and Tingqua's export painting (see Figure 46). These pictorial sources were all produced between 1850-1875, which is also the period when the Fuyinyuan was the most visited by foreigners. After confirming that Beato and Tingqua's views of 'Howqua's garden' represent the Fuyinyuan, the next step is to attempt to reconstitute the garden's main scenery.

Basing our understanding of the Fuyinyuan's layout on Tianyu's painting (Figure 45), the Crease photographs allow for the reconstitution of a great part of the main pond scenery. Not only do they provide a simulation of what taking a stroll around the pond would look like, the Crease photographs also bring a number of clues for detailed sections of the view. To start with, Crease provides a view of the entrance of the garden from the canal (Figure 49). This view corresponds with an export watercolour of the Dongyuan kept in the British Museum (Figure 50): it seems that for a few years after the sale, visitors still referred to the Fuyinyuan as the 'Western garden'.<sup>774</sup>



Figure 49 “11. View of the Canal approaching Howqua's from one of the top windows in the main building, look at the literal cloud of Chinaman [sic] twiggng me at the window, the 3 figures are de Montmorency 65

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<sup>774</sup> See Hickck.

Put side to side, the Crease photographs almost constitute a complete cyclorama of the garden. Based on the different views that can be linked to the Fuyinyuan with certainty, the following plan was created based on conjectural distances as explained below (Figure 51). Each of the letters corresponds to one of the Crease photographs, and the arrows indicate the direction in which the photographer was pointing the camera.

The visit starts at the bottom of the plan, with view A, looking from the entrance of the garden towards the top of the plan. From Tianyu’s painting we know that the entrance communicates with the canal banks. The export watercolour kept at the British Museum also confirms that the Dongyuan (later renamed Fuyinyuan) was located on the bank of a canal in Huadi. The main focus is the screen wall pierced by an octagonal door, framed by numerous potted flowers on ceramic stands. Fortune described that screen wall in his 1853-56 account.<sup>775</sup> The water-based kiosk can be partially seen on the left side of the frame through the vegetation. Looking beyond the octagonal door, a flight of steps reveals the beginning of the covered bridge.

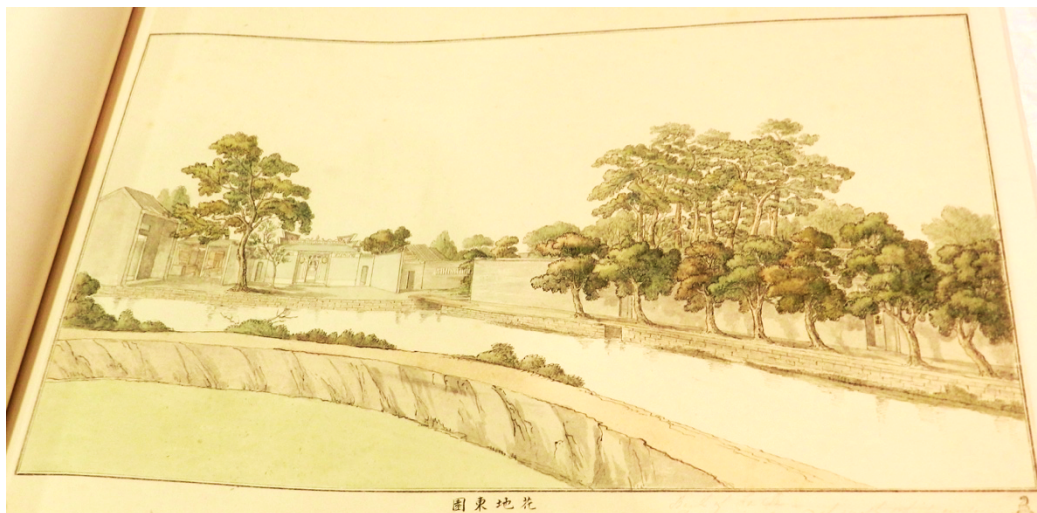


Figure 50 “Huadi Dongyuan”, export watercolour, Reeves Collection reference 1877.7.14.985, British Museum. Colour contrasted to facilitate visual analysis.

<sup>775</sup> Fortune, *A Residence among the Chinese, Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea Being a Narrative of Scenes and Adventures during a Third Visit to China, from 1853 to 1856*, p. 215.



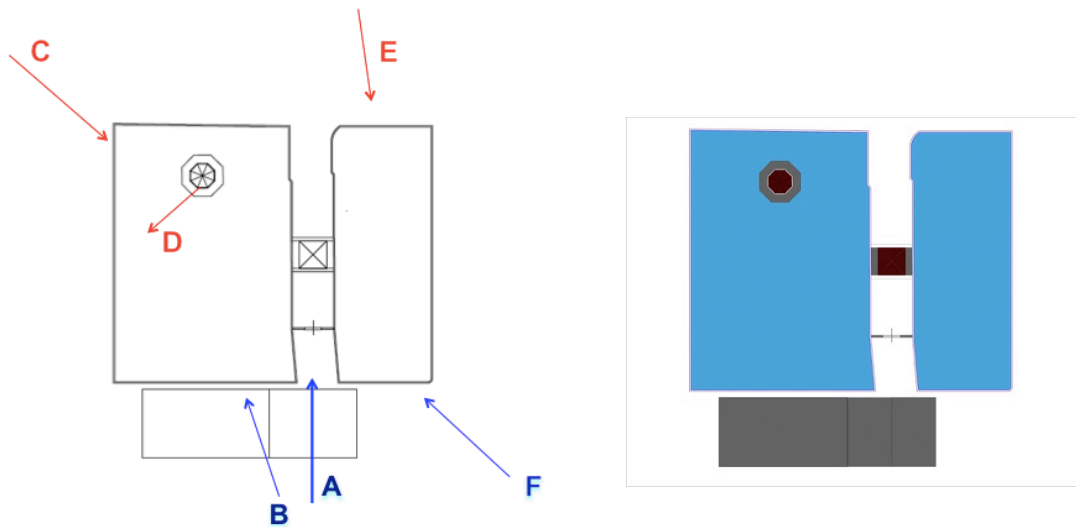


Figure 51 Conjectural plan of the Fuyinyuan. The north cannot be ascertained as for now. Left: Letters and arrows represent the Crease photographs and the directions they were taken. Right: Blue represents the water, grey the roofed buildings. Credit: Gulsah Bilge & Josepha Richard



Figure 52 - VIEW A. "4. Just inside the entrance door of Howqua' the great Tea Merchants' Gardens at Fa-tee - about 4 miles north west from this on the other side of the river. The offr. [officer] on the steps is the French P.M.O. if you turn to the left on entering you come upon No. 5." Photograph by John Frederick Crease. Reference HP078415 in the Royal British Columbia Museum catalogue.



Figure 53 - VIEW B. “This gives you the ornamental water, the little summer house in the centre is where the friends of Hang How-qua retire to in hot weather to drink tea; I am upon the bridge leading to it, wh. is very rickety so I fancy it is seldom visited, the Inscription over the door on the board is Sow-chuck-qua wh. means I believe hot Flower house, the two Chinamen on the left are my servants whom I've drilled to sit steady, by going round where they are and looking back you see on the left and right No. 6 and 7.”  
John Frederick Crease. HP078416

To reach view B, one would need to turn left and follow the side of the pond, then look towards the top of the plan. The main object in this frame is the water-based kiosk standing inside the largest part of the pond. One part of the ‘zigzag’ bridges can be seen, but its length does not reach as far as what Tianyu’s painting suggests. On the right side in the background a screen wall pierced by a door can be seen to interrupt the path circling the pond. Additionally, on the left side a gourd-shaped door opens towards another part of the garden towards the top of the plan. Just in front of that door two men can be seen sitting on a flight of stairs leading to the water. It might be the spot from where Sternberg’s postcard was taken (Figure 48).

To reach view C, one must walk along the pond towards the top of the plan. Once one reaches the steps leading to the water where the two men are sitting in View B, one obtains a point of view similar to that of Sternberg’s postcard. The covered bridge is the main focus in the frame, and the side of the water-based kiosk can be seen on the left edge. In the middle is a

good view of the entrance of the garden. The masonry of the walled pond is apparent. Moreover, fences lined with potted plants circle both the promenade and the pond's banks. Some large trees grow along the ponds' circling path in the background on the right of the frame.

Walking a few steps towards the promenade and then turning back to face the left-side of the plan, one obtains View D. This building is a boat hall built in southern style, as it imitates the shape of a flower boat. This type of building takes the shape of a rectangle, usually with a taller part on one end. Most boat halls are located with one or two sides near water, but they can be completely based on water or on the contrary be located in a dry courtyard.<sup>776</sup> Since View B and C do not clearly connect with View D, it remains to be confirmed whether the boat hall is indeed located in the Fuyinyuan.



**Figure 54 - VIEW C.** “Nos. 6 and 7 take in the entrance to the Gardens, and part of the Main Building of which there are 2 inches (on paper) missing on account of a large tree, on turning to the right of No. 4 picture (the entrance where there is a blotch) and standing under the roof on the extreme left of (No.5) we get a view -”John Frederick Crease. HP078417

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<sup>776</sup> See the section on boat halls in Qi Lu, *岭南园林艺术 (Art of Lingnan gardens) (Bilingual edition)*. And Richard, ‘Le Bateau Sec Dans Le Jardin Chinois (Boat-Shaped Buildings in Chinese Gardens)’.

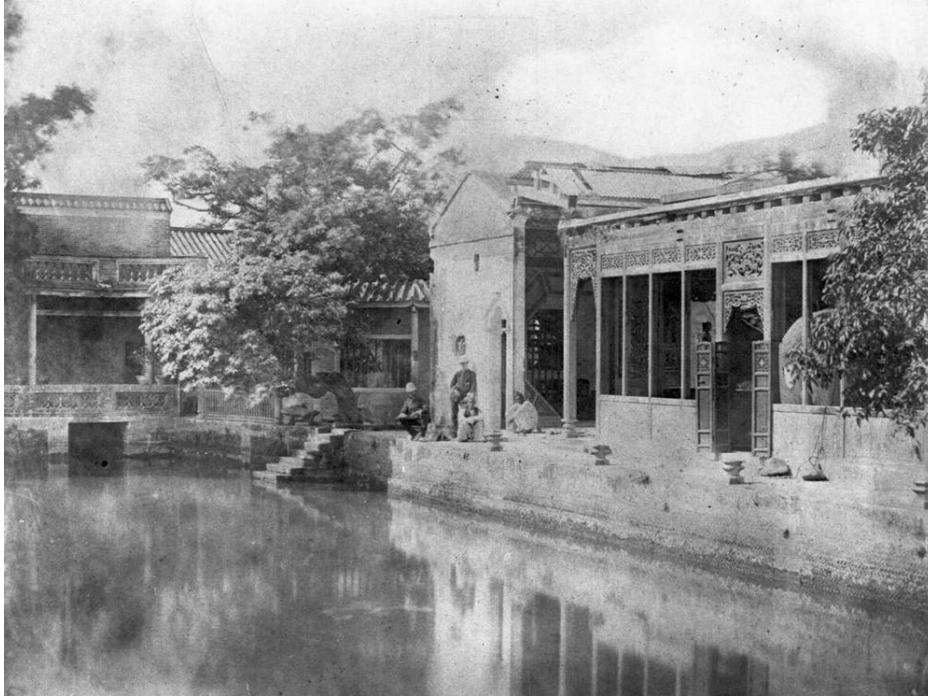


Figure 55 - VIEW D. No title. John Frederick Crease. HP078453

Several stone posts can be seen lining the banks of the pond in View D: these are imitation of mooring bollards. Fake mooring posts are common fixtures in boat-shaped buildings across China and, for example, can be found on the Marble Boat in the Yiheyuan in Beijing. Similar stone posts can be seen behind a standing man in a stereograph taken by Swiss photographer Pierre Joseph Rossier titled “Canton. View on the Lake of the Garden of the Temple of Longevity”. This view was taken around 1858-9 and is kept in the J. Paul Getty Museum (Top side Figure 56).

The caption of Rossier’s view (Top side Figure 56) is most likely erroneous. Another of Rossier’s stereographs held in the Rijksmuseum depicts a different view of the same kiosk and is titled “Canton. Garden of How Qua, The Chinese Merchant Prince” (Bottom side Figure 56). The water-based kiosk represented in both these views clearly belongs to the Fuyinyuan: it was simply mistaken for a similar building located in Guangzhou’s Temple of Longevity in Xiguan. Such a mistake can be better understood when examining two views of the Temple of Longevity, one from Rossier kept in the J. Paul Getty Museum (Left side Figure 57) and the other belonging to Dennis G. Crow (Right side Figure 57).<sup>777</sup>

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<sup>777</sup> See plate 171 in Crow G. Dennis, *Historic Photographs of Shanghai, Hong Kong & Macao: An Exhibition and Sale at The Museum Annex, Hong Kong, 12 April 1999-17 April 1999* (Los Angeles: Dennis George Crow Ltd., 1999).

Establishing the existence of stone mooring posts in the Fuyinyuan is only one way to confirm the boat-hall hypothesis. In Tianyu's bird's eye view painting of the painting, the left side of the pond is occupied by a long ornamented rectangular building that looks like a flower boat (Left side Figure 58). A boat-hall also occupies this part of the pond in an export painting titled "Figures in Howqua's garden", sold by Bonhams Auction House (Right side Figure 58). Parts of the Bonhams painting are not accurate: for example, the octagonal door in the background does not appear in Crease's photographs. However, the water-based kiosk, the shape of the pond and the screen wall with the octagonal door all correspond to the Fuyinyuan's layout. Therefore, the hypothesis that View D was taken inside the Fuyinyuan is strengthened.

Continuing the walk beyond the promenade and turning towards the bottom of the plan, one obtains View E. This is the shorter part of the pond, with an irregular shape. Large trees can be seen on both sides of the pond: this confirms that Tianyu's painting of the Fuyinyuan accurately depicts more vegetation in this part of the garden. After finishing the walk around the main pond, one looks again towards the top of the plan for View F this point of view is very similar to Beato's (Figure 47).

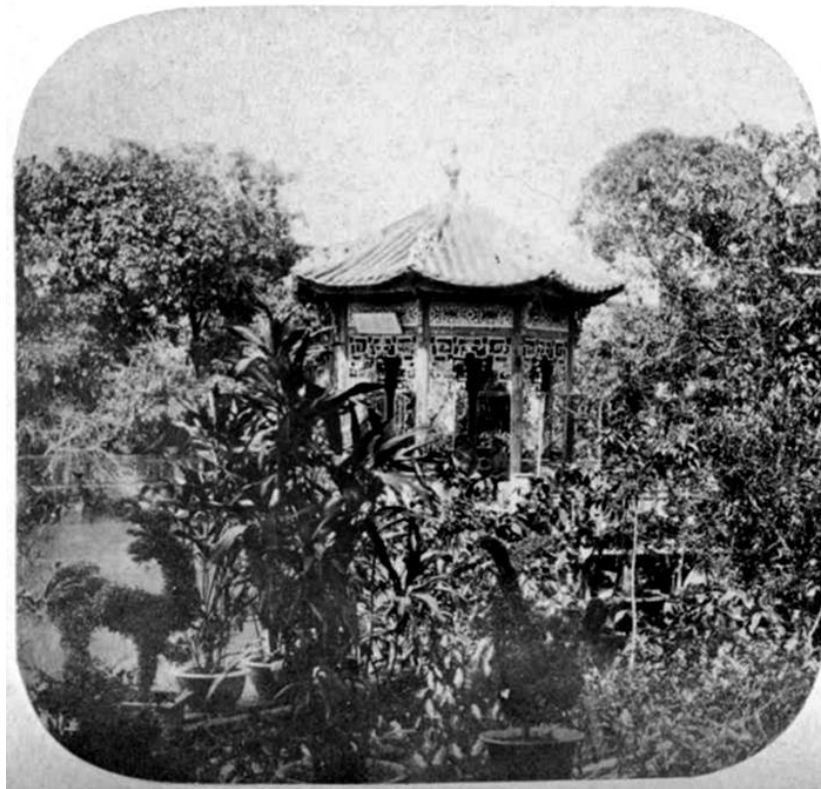


Figure 56 Top: "Canton. View on the Lake of the Garden of the Temple of Longevity", J. Paul Getty Museum. Bottom: "Canton. Garden of How Qua, The Chinese Merchant Prince", Rijksmuseum. Both taken by Pierre Joseph Rossier circa 1858-9, stereographs.



Canton—View in the Garden of the Longevity Temple.

厂府文叔本現

Figure 57 Left: “Canton. Artificial Rock-work and Pavilion in the Garden of the Temple of Longevity, Western Suburbs, Canton”, Rossier, 1858-9, J. Paul Getty Museum. Right: “Summer House at the Longevity Temple”, Unknown photographer, 1890, albumen print. Dennis G. Crow in *Historic photographs of Hong Kong, Canton & Macao...*



Figure 58 Left: Detail of the boat-hall in “Fuyinyuan”, by Tianyu, Guangdong Provincial Museum. Right: “Figures in Howqua's garden”, Chinese School, circa 1860. Watercolour and gouache. Lot 42, Auction 18925 ‘Travel & Exploration 7’ on December 2011 in London, Bonhams.



Figure 59 - VIEW E. "9. Gives part of the house where I stood when I photographed No. 8, near wh. spot are collected a group of Offrs. taking it easy and watching my proceedings - the man standing up, Reevly by name, is the Garrison theatrical genius and flanking him Williams and Crawford of ours, the trellis work in this picture is not bad -" John Frederick Crease. HP078420

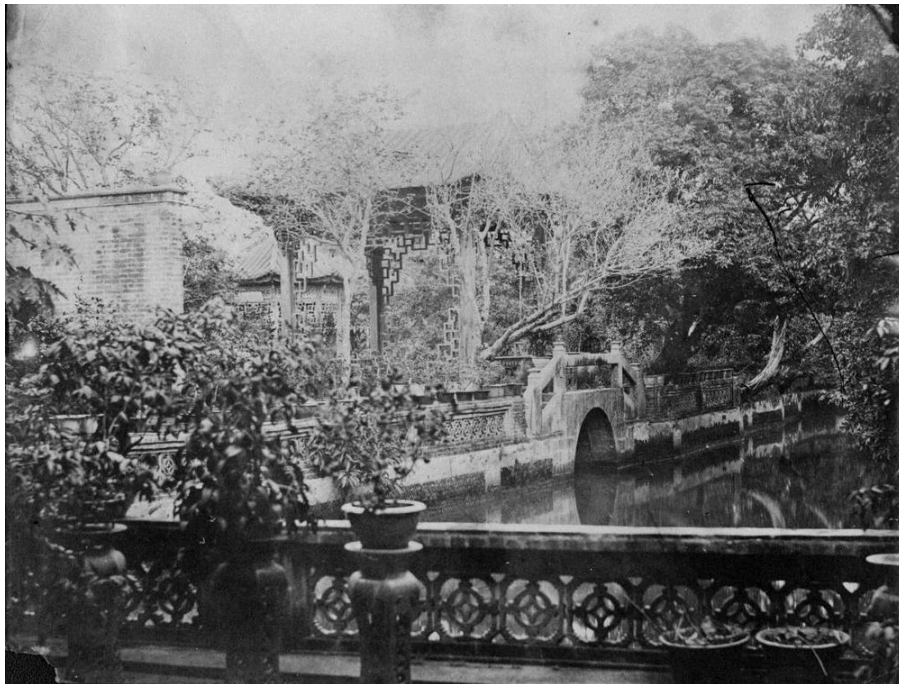


Figure 60 - VIEW F. "8. Gives us another ornamental water and the road leading to the Gardens beyond. The Chinaman peeping from behind the tree close by the bridge, and admire the trees going out from the side of the wall - by walking across the bridge along the road by them, turning sharp round the far corner of Pond and looking back we have No. 9" John Frederick Crease. HP078419



Despite the Crease photographs being the closest thing to an ideal case for reconstituting a garden's layout, a number of uncertainties remain since the views do not follow each other perfectly — one does not necessarily start where the other finishes. Some extra information can be obtained by combining the descriptions of Robert Fortune, an export painting and some additional photographs.

First, a precise idea of the vegetal species contained in the numerous potted plants is given by Robert Fortune:

Looking 'right ahead,' as sailors say, there is a long and narrow paved walk lined on each side with plants in pots. This view is broken, and apparently lengthened, by means of an octagon arch which is thrown across, and beyond that a kind of alcove covers the pathway. Running parallel with the walk, and on each side behind the plants, are low walls of ornamental brickwork, latticed so that the ponds or small lakes which are on each side can be seen. [...] The plants consist of good specimens of southern Chinese things, all well known in England, such, for example, as *Cymbidium sinense* [Orchids], *Olea fragrans* [Osmanthus], oranges, roses, camellias, magnolias, &c., and, of course, a multitude of dwarf trees, without which no Chinese garden would be considered complete.<sup>778</sup>

Thanks to View A of the Crease photographs, the mention of an octagonal arch quite convincingly identifies the garden visited by Robert Fortune as the Fuyinyuan, as opposed to the Henan residence. Conversely, if Fortune described the Fuyinyuan's layout accurately, there is a good chance that, as a botanist, he also identified the plants in the garden correctly. Fortune also mentions potting sheds, a plant nursery and a kitchen garden in the Fuyinyuan, as well as the rare sight of three Chinese banyan (*Ficus nitida*) growing together.<sup>779</sup>

In View A, the potted plants are so numerous that they hide almost completely the water-based kiosk in the background on the right side: this composition corresponds perfectly with Fortune's written description quoted above. The vegetal profusion displayed in the Fuyinyuan was also captured in the Rossier stereograph previously discussed (Right side Figure 56)

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<sup>778</sup> Robert Fortune, *A Residence among the Chinese, Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea Being a Narrative of Scenes and Adventures during a Third Visit to China, from 1853 to 1856: Including Notices of Many Natural Productions and Works of Art, the Culture of Silk, &c. : With Suggestions on the Present War* (London: John Murray, 1857), pp. 215–17.

<sup>779</sup> Fortune, *A Residence among the Chinese, Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea Being a Narrative of Scenes and Adventures during a Third Visit to China, from 1853 to 1856*, pp. 215–17.

where a trained plant shaped like a deer can be seen on the left. One of the most detailed views of potted plots is found in the Rijksmuseum, under the erroneous title of “Canton-Chinese summer House of Cha-fao” (Figure 61): the point of view is very similar to View C. In the Rijksmuseum’s view the wider angle gives a better idea of how the pots were lined on makeshift benches along the path circling the pond.



Figure 61 “Canton - Chinese summer House of Cha-fao”, Anonymous, c. 1850 - c. 1900, Rijksmuseum

Finally, thanks to Fortune we can obtain descriptions of other parts of the Fuyinyuan beyond the main pond scenery:

[...] we approached, between two rows of *Olea fragrans* [Osmanthus], a fine ornamental suite of rooms tastefully furnished and decorated, in which visitors are received and entertained. [...] In this side of the garden there is some fine artificial rockwork, which the Chinese know well how to construct, and various summer-houses tastefully decorated [...]. Between this part of the garden and the straight walk already noticed there is a small pond or lake for fish and water-lilies. This is crossed by a zigzag wooden bridge of many arches, which looked rather dilapidated.<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> Robert Fortune, *A Residence among the Chinese*, p. 217.

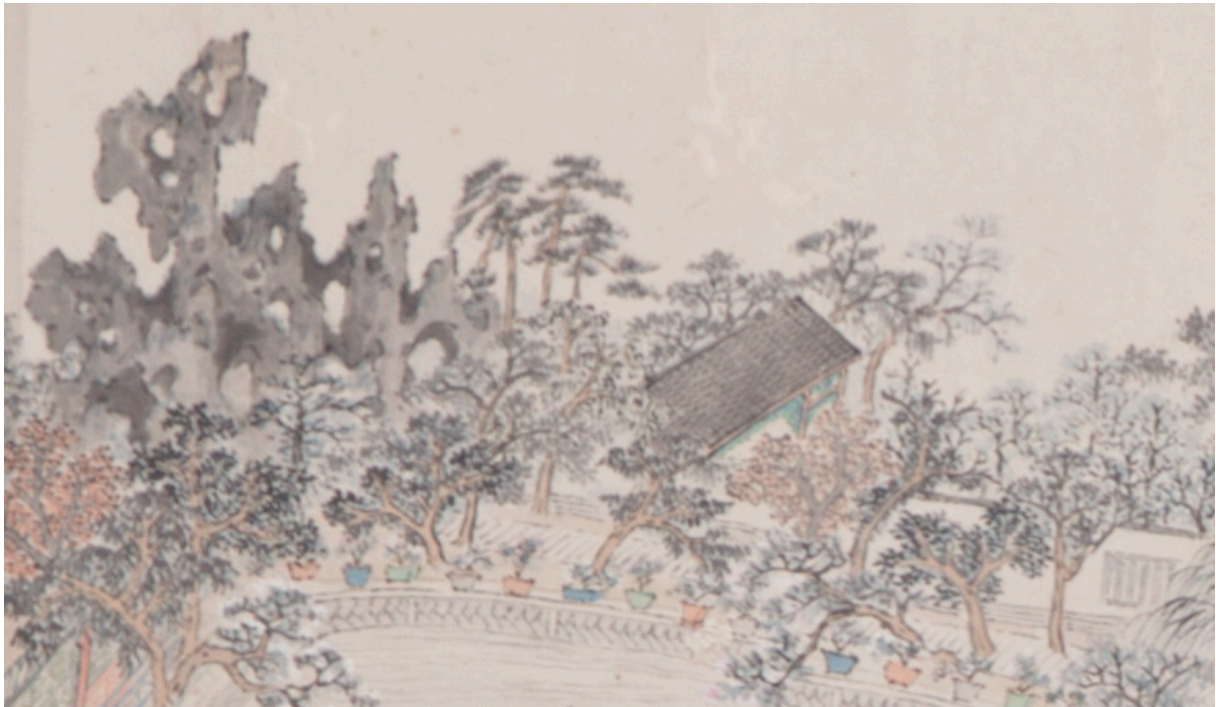


Figure 62 Detail of the rockworkd in "Fuyinyuan" by Tianyu, Guangdong Provincial Museum

The last part of the passage above probably relates to the water-based kiosk and its ‘zigzag’ bridge. The first part of Fortune’s description relates to the area where visitors were received. Like Henry Gray in the description quoted before, Fortune mentioned a rockwork: according to Tianyu’s painting it should be located beyond the top-left corner of the main pond (Figure 62). The most likely hypothesis is that the suite of rooms described by Fortune can be accessed from the gourd-shaped door seen in the background of View B. The same door can be seen on the right side of Figure 63: this is the second painting of the pair attributed to Tingqua’s studio and held in the Peabody Essex Museum. The composition of this painting is focused on a series of buildings and courtyards enclosed by a wall punctuated by leaking windows. These windows with bamboo-shaped bars are very similar to those seen in View B. Beyond the wall on the right, the top of the water-based kiosk can be seen. As such, if one were to enter the gourd-shaped door of View B and turn right, one would likely be facing the scenery of Tingqua’s second painting. The rows of potted plants on ceramic stands in Figure 63 remind us of those seen in another of Crease’s photographs (Figure 64). Although that view is not captioned to be part of the Fuyinyuan, the fact that the soldiers ‘tiffined’ there could also be interpreted as the soldiers being treated to a meal by the Wu family.



Figure 63 “Howqua’s Garden”, Studio of Tingqua. Peabody Essex Museum.

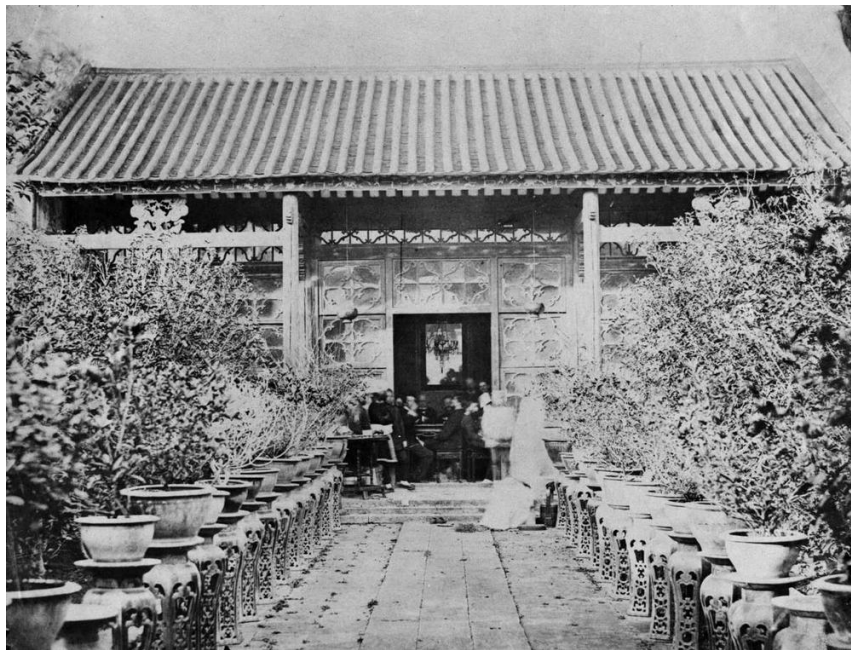


Figure 64 “The house we tiffined in, in the Gardens, the figures are indistinct because they moved however you get their back views in the looking glass behind, examine with a magnifying glass the basket at the foot of the steps on the right and take out a patent for it, it comes in 4 pieces, 1 over the other , confined by the two upright pieces of bamboo wh. form the handle. The two Ghosts on the right are Sepoys whom the Col. threatened to make real Ghosts of for moving” John Frederick Crease, HP078422, Royal British Columbia Museum

Thanks to the accumulation of written and pictorial sources from different archives and books, the final conjectural plan of the Fuyinyuan at its prime can be reconstituted as below (Figure 65). The exact position of the walls and pillars had to be extrapolated by looking at the pictorial sources and surviving examples of gardens in and around Guangzhou. The lengths of the pond were roughly measured by counting the number of ceramic tiles in the fence and the slate of granite pavement. Despite the exceptional number of sources accumulated, it is important to keep in mind that we can only reconstitute about one third of the Fuyinyuan as it is represented in Tianyu's painting.

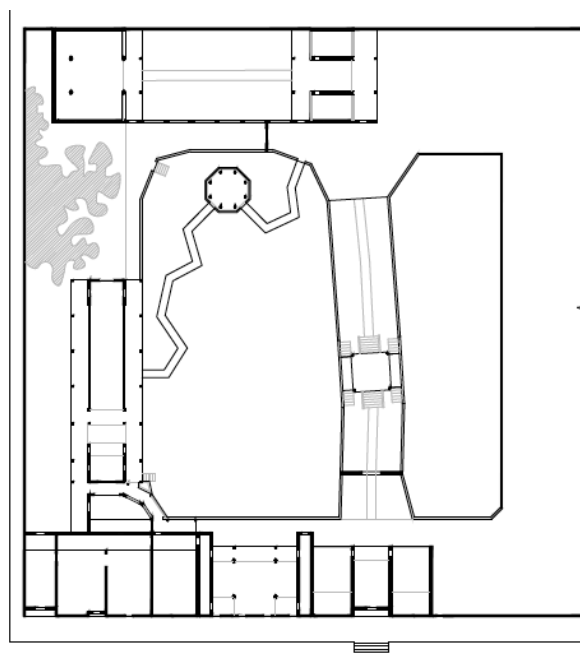


Figure 65 Conjectural plan of the Fuyinyuan's main pond scenery and halls for visitors. The north cannot be ascertained as for now. Credits: Lishen Feng.

This second case study allowed us to visualise the appearance of one complete scenery inside a Guangzhou garden (the Fuyinyuan) during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The findings of the two case studies, when combined with other contemporary pictorial sources, allows for further analysis in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6. Discussing the function and elements of the Hong merchants' gardens

This chapter provides a short summary of the case studies' findings, and expands of these findings to discuss the importance of the Hong merchants' gardens and other gardens in Guangzhou at the period. Thanks to the unique amount of sources available on the Hong merchants' gardens, we have an opportunity to discuss whether these gardens were indeed different from scholar gardens of the period. The method used below to determine these differences is twofold. The functions of the gardens of the Pan and Wu are briefly summarised by combining both the Chinese and Western points of view that were separate in the case studies. At the same time, the Pan and Wu gardens' appearance is analysed by comparison with other contemporary gardens in the area, which are not as well documented. These two methods therefore combine historical analysis with spatial analysis in order to retrieve as much information as possible from the case studies.

As presented in the second chapter, Chinese gardens fulfilled several functions for their owners: those are discussed one by one below. The gardens are also analysed according to the elements that compose their scenery. The latter methodology is preferred in Chinese language studies, and is particularly common when it comes to publications about regional gardening or comparative studies. For example, in *The private gardens of North China*, the author lists as separate elements the layout; buildings; artificial mountains, stones and rockworks; ponds and springs; and vegetation.<sup>781</sup> In *Comparison between Chinese and Japanese gardening cultures*, the authors separate mountain and rocks; water bodies; buildings; and vegetation.<sup>782</sup> The more theoretical *A treatise on the garden of Jiangnan* calls these categories 'elements of scenic imagery' and lists the following: 'shaping of ground surface', 'management of water surface', 'planning of architectural elements', 'planning of vegetation', and finally 'embellishment of garden with animals'.<sup>783</sup> Even in very detailed publications such as the

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<sup>781</sup> Jun Jia, *北方私家园林 (The private gardens of north China)* (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2013), pp. 167–202.

<sup>782</sup> Lindi Cao and Jinsheng Xu, *中日古典园林文化比较 (Comparison between Chinese and Japanese gardening cultures)* (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2004), pp. 137–76.

<sup>783</sup> Hongxun Yang, *江南园林论 A study into the classical art of landscape design of China: A treatise on the garden of Jiangnan* (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2011), pp. 44–268.

monumental *Record of private garden in Beijing*, such separation of elements is used, only with more detailed categories.<sup>784</sup>

It is undeniable that such a methodology contains inherent risks, such as overlooking how these separate elements might combine to compose the general layout of local gardens. This section is written from the starting point of view that there are not currently enough Guangzhou gardens that can be reconstituted, and that it is not possible to analyse systematically local gardens' layout. There are indeed quantities of publications on Lingnan gardens that discuss layout, but these are aimed at architects or landscape designers and do not display the level of academic rigor such research calls for. For example, in *Lingnan gardens* published in 2013, Liu Guanping discusses layout aspects such as the 'garden in the garden', but the bibliography of his 284 page-long book consists of only two pages.<sup>785</sup> Lu Qi's book *Lingnan gardening and aesthetics* similarly only contains a two-page bibliography.<sup>786</sup> It is hoped that future research will address more fully the issue and systematically compare layout in gardens located around Guangzhou and built from late 18<sup>th</sup> to late 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The gardening elements that are examined below have been organised according to the gardens' functions, therefore some elements appear more than once. The focus was put on elements that are unusual or non-existent in contemporary gardens located in Jiangnan and previous capitals in China. Elements that were discussed in the Western descriptions, but were not emphasised in the Chinese descriptions of the gardens of Pan and Wu, have been deemed especially noteworthy.

## **I. Providing habitation**

Chinese gardens are exceptionally integrated with the house compared with Western gardens. The 'outside' and 'inside' are intertwined thanks to a multitude of architectural devices, such

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<sup>784</sup> Jia Jun, *北京私家园林志 (Record of private garden in Beijing)* (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2009).

<sup>785</sup> Guanping Liu, *岭南园林 (Lingnan gardens)* (Guangzhou: South China University of Technology Press, 2013), pp. 165–74.

<sup>786</sup> Qi Lu, *岭南造园与审美 (Lingnan gardening and aesthetics)*, *Ling nan jian zhu cong shu*, 第 1 版., Di 1 ban. (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2005).

as courtyards, covered corridors, and kiosks without walls.<sup>787</sup> In the two case studies, it is clear that the Pan and Wu families made extensive use of their gardens as habitation. Chinese sources mark little difference between the house and the garden proper, while Western sources insisted in the functions of each part of the residence.

The Pan family used its residence including gardens for the purpose of housing their large numbers of relatives. Many of Pan Khequa I's sons either expanded or built a new part of the residence. Some of the gardens were clearly used across different generations, such as the Wutongpu: for the Pan children, the Wutongpu's courtyard was a study room. The two paulownia trees (wutong) were a distinctive part of this urban landscape, one that Zhang Weiping remembered fondly enough to write about. The Zhang family as well as the children of other families were apparently welcome to enter this part of the house. Furthermore, Bryant Tilden's accounts revealed the presence of children during his visit of the Pan residence, as a part of the family's hospitality.

In the Wu family, the need for habitation was even more acute as the family continued to grow in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite Houqua's efforts to protect his sons' inheritance, the expenses accumulated and the Hong merchant's fortune was swiftly spent to support an increasing household. Those of Wu Bingjian's sons that survived long enough also occupied their own part of the residence with gardens. Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edward Sylvester Morse's description of his visit to the Wu family in Henan showed that the needs of the numerous relatives and servants have taken priority over maintaining the garden.

The Hong merchants' gardens can certainly be compared to those of scholar families when it comes to the function of habitation. When a scholar could afford to, he would have large residences with courtyards built for each branches of the family: one of the most famous Chinese novel, the *Hongloumeng* (Dream of the Red Chamber) 《红楼梦》 written in the mid-18th century by Cao Xueqin, describes in detail such a residence.<sup>788</sup>

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<sup>787</sup> Gournay, 'Le Jardin Chinois (The Chinese Garden)'.

<sup>788</sup> See for example this translation: Xueqin Cao, H. Bencraft Joly, and Vincent Kelvin, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, 2015.



## **II. Gathering people**

The Hong merchants seem to have excelled at organising gatherings in their gardens, whether with their own family members, or by inviting Chinese and Western visitors. Pan Khequa I and II became famous for organising chopstick dinners, that each Westerner wanted to attend. Since Sino-Western tensions were growing at the time, as a head merchant Houqua was a bit more cautious in letting foreigners in his properties. Yet he proved generous when it came to his allocated Western traders, and facilitated their excursions by providing his own servants and boats.

When it comes to gathering Chinese guests, the Wu family outshined the Pan: the number of lustration ceremonies recorded in the county gazetteer is a sign that the Wu gardens were often used for social occasions. Both families have benefitted from the generosity of visitors to their gardens, whether in the form of writing calligraphies for the garden name plaque; or of leaving a complimentary poetry for posterity. It is difficult to assess to which level scholars in Guangzhou indulged the Hong merchants' efforts to climb the social ladder. The members of the Xuehaitang academy, arguably one of the most distinguished literati club in early 19<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou, were present in events at both the Pan and the Wu's gardens. For example, Xie Lansheng offered his calligraphy for the name plaque of the Wu's Wansongyuan. He was also the tutor of one of the Pan children, and wrote a poem on Pan Zhengheng (衡)'s Lizhai. Since Stephen Miles has shown how Xie Lansheng was a highly regarded scholar at the period, we must conclude that at the very least it must have been difficult to refuse or avoid taking part in the events organised by the Pan and Wu families.<sup>789</sup>

## **III. Producing food and cash crops**

In Chinese sources, the Hong merchants' gardens are usually discussed in general terms. Only close relatives and friends such as Zhang Weiping gave more precise descriptions of the gardens' contents. It is still possible to infer some aspects of the production in the Pan and Wu gardens.

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<sup>789</sup> Steven Miles, *The Sea of Learning*.

## *Vegetal food crops*

Without the Western visitors' descriptions, we would not be aware of the true diversity of plants displayed in these gardens. To explain the relative lack of interest for plants in Chinese gardens, one needs to look at late imperial Chinese views of the garden's aesthetics and functions. As Craig Clunas explained in his book *Fruitful Sites*, there was a shift mid-17th century from a productive centred garden to a more aestheticized one.<sup>790</sup> The change away from a productive garden was an agenda pushed by scholars, officials and members of the nobility, in order to differentiate themselves from upstarts building gardens, for example, wealthy merchants.<sup>791</sup>

The region's sub-tropical weather facilitates the flourishing of exuberant flora. Although it is impossible to compile a full account of the species found in the Hong merchants' gardens, the presence of diverse fruits was ascertained in the two case studies. Taking for example the writings of a scholar such as Li Yu 李漁 (1611–1679), the most frequently discussed of fruit trees are the prunus, the peach tree, the pomegranate, and the banana tree.<sup>792</sup> These fruit trees were appreciated not for their food production but because they had a visual impact on the gardens' scenery throughout the seasons. In the list above, most plants were appreciated for the colour of their flowers.<sup>793</sup> In the case of the banana, its appeal was the sound made by rain drops falling on its large leaves.

Fruits were important crops and a large part of a garden's food production. In Guangdong province, one of the most important of these fruits was the lychee: in the two case studies, the lychee is mentioned both as a fruit crop and as the name of a poem anthology. The lychee represents the epitome of Guangdong flora: Edward Schafer wrote that it "is regarded as a jewel among fruits in China."<sup>794</sup> Guangdong natives competed with nearby provinces for the honour of having the best of lychee's species. British botanist and trader John Bradby Blake commissioned botanically accurate paintings of Chinese plants when in post as a EIC

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<sup>790</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 67.

<sup>791</sup> Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

<sup>792</sup> Yu Li and Jacques Dars, *Au gré d'humeurs oisives: Les carnets secrets de Li Yu : un art du bonheur en Chine* (Arles: Editions Philippe Picquier, 2003), pp. 94–109.

<sup>793</sup> Antoine Gournay, 'Les fruits du jardin Chinois (Fruits in the Chinese garden)', in *Asie. 3, Savourer, goûter, 3* (Paris: Presses de l'Univ. de Paris-Sorbonne, 1995), pp. 249–56.

<sup>794</sup> Schafer, p. 188.

supercargo in Guangzhou in the 1760-70s. Among the plants represented in his paintings held at the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, are five species of *litchi sinensis* (Figure 66): these provide a good idea of the diversity of lychee that could be found in Guangdong province at the period.<sup>795</sup>



Figure 66 “Hock Yeep Li-chee 黑叶荔枝”, John Bradby Blake collection, Paintings Volume 1 Folio 11, kept at the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, Virginia. Reproduction rights reserved

It is uncertain which exact species of lychees were grown in the gardens of Pan and Wu families: it could very well be that the merchants brought lychee species from Fujian province when they moved in, as a Chinese source describing the Pan gardens seem to suggest. If so, it provides us with an interesting sub-text about local identity for these merchants that otherwise were very keen on integrating their new home: both families had ancestral halls with family members buried in Henan, Guangzhou.

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<sup>795</sup> Hongwen Huang, ‘The Plants of John Bradby Blake’, *Curtis’s Botanical Magazine*, 34.4 (2017), 359–78 (p. 368).

The other edible plant that is most often mentioned in the gardens of the Pan and Wu is the lotus. It is a rather common garden plant in China, valued both for the beauty of its flowers and because of its value as food crop. Eating the lotus seeds and peeling the skin of the lychee fruits were considered refreshing summer activities. An export painting on glass kept in the Volkenkunde museum in Leiden offers a fanciful illustration of such a summer meal (Figure 67).<sup>796</sup> The owner is seating under a lychee tree, surrounded by servants and the ladies of the house, occupied to eat the lotus seeds, peeling the lychees, and even drink from the lotus stem. A third type of summer food is present on the table: the water caltrop or *trapa bispinosa*, whose nut is edible. Since the paintings of John Bradby Blake contain both the red and white variants of the water caltrop, it is likely that the Hong merchants' gardens would have contained such a plant: yet so far I have not found any written proof to confirm this hypothesis.



Figure 67 Details of a Chinese export painting of glass, anonymous, set of 19 paintings with various subjects. Part of the Royer collection at the Volkenkunde Museum, Leiden, Netherlands

The presence of edible plants in the Hong merchants' gardens at the late Qing period shows a departure from the trends in scholar gardens since the mid-Ming dynasty: as Clunas demonstrated in *Fruitful gardens*, scholars and aristocrats were on the contrary actively

<sup>796</sup> The exact painting does not have a title but is referenced as RV-360-1119. See annexes of Poel.

avoiding any association with the idea of production in their gardens.<sup>797</sup> The production of food was contained in garden nurseries at the edge of the residences. The Hong merchants' gardens do not seem to mark a strong difference between garden nursery and landscape.

### *Walled ponds to raise fish*

Waterscapes often constituted structural elements in the layouts of historical gardens in China. The first Chinese emperor Qinshi Huangdi already had an Orchid Pond in his Shanglin hunting park near the capital, Xianyang.<sup>798</sup> In the Western Han capital Chang'an, Emperor Han Wudi had a set of three islands built in the Taiyechi pond inside the Jianzhang park: they represented the mythical islands of Penglai, Fangzhang and Yingzhou supposed to be inhabited by immortals.<sup>799</sup> From 605, in the Xiyuan located east of capital Luoyang, Emperor Sui Yangdi started a tradition of building extensive hydraulic systems in a garden.<sup>800</sup> After this period, imperial parks would often contain a complex of different natural or artificial springs, cascades, canals and bridges.<sup>801</sup> In terms of private gardens, Ming dynasty garden craftsman Ji Cheng prescribed in the *Craft of Gardens* that “[when working] on the main plan, you should go straight to the water source.”<sup>802</sup>

In the two case studies, when precise descriptions are given of the water element, the latter take one of two main forms: either that of a flowing watercourse (river or canal) or as contained into geometrical ponds made of masonry located inside of courtyards. Chinese written sources tended to emphasise the sounds produced by the water or the seasonal aspect of the lotus ponds but did not provide a precise description of the ponds. When it comes to Chinese pictorial sources, Tianyu's painting of the Fuyinyuan does represent more precisely the water element. In the painting, the garden contains a total of three ponds as well as a canal. Each pond adopts a regular shape, but only the main pond scenery can clearly be identified as a brick-walled pond, thanks to the fish scale pattern represented on its edge (Figure 68).

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<sup>797</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*.

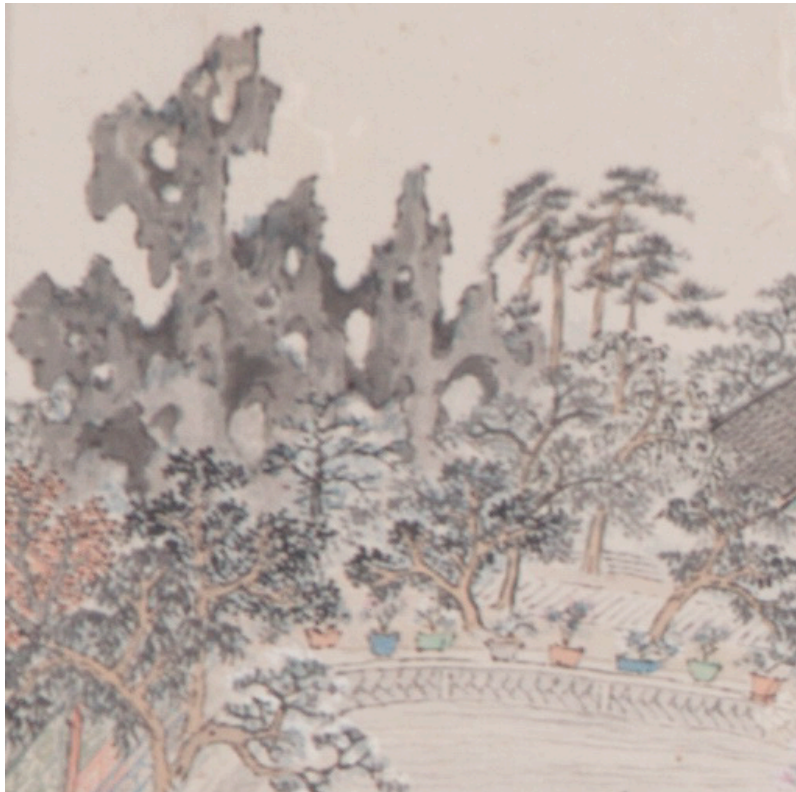
<sup>798</sup> Jie, p. 25.

<sup>799</sup> Ji, p. 47.

<sup>800</sup> Jie, p. 29.

<sup>801</sup> Rinaldi, *The Chinese Garden*, p. 18.

<sup>802</sup> Ji, p. 47.



**Figure 68 Detail of Tianyu's Fuyinyuan painting. Rockery and fish scales brick pattern along the banks of the main pond**

Chinese export paintings made for the Western market include more details: the Pan garden as represented in the British Library painting contains both a canal in the background and a small walled pond in the centre of the composition (Figure 30). In the first Peabody Essex painting, the main pond in the Fuyinyuan is represented as a large rectangle of masonry interrupted by a promenade of the same material (Figure 41)

Despite their aesthetic function, regular-shaped walled ponds are also essentially linked with raising fish for the household. There is pictorial evidence that walled ponds were consistently used in other local gardens built around Guangzhou at the same period, and to this day there are remaining fish ponds located in the surrounding areas of the city.<sup>803</sup> In this export painting titled “A Garden Scene” and kept at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, a walled pond occupies the space between the foreground covered in potted flowers and the building in the background (Figure 69). In the photograph titled “Canton Garden” kept in the Getty Research

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<sup>803</sup> My colleague Feng Lishen is in the process of writing an article on the topic, and gave me his draft to review: Lishen Feng, ‘粤中庭园方池概说 (A Brief Introduction to the Rectangular Ponds of the Gardens in Central Guangdong)’ (Unpublished, 2016).

Institute, the sides of the ponds are defined by brick walls, overgrown with aquatic plants (Figure 70). The view is attributed to John Thomson and was taken in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 69 “A Garden Scene”, attributed to Guan Lianchang (Tingqua), mid-nineteenth century. Export painting. Kept at Hong Kong Museum of Art, reference AH1980.0005.042

A particularly striking example of a walled geometrical pond is found in the Cree Journals kept at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. British surgeon Edward Hodge Cree (1814- 1901) accompanied the First Opium War troops sent to Guangzhou. He noted in his journal how the British army occupied abandoned buildings in the suburbs of the city, to use as residence or hospitals:

May 29<sup>th</sup> [1841]. Landed at a deserted villa where a detachment of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> regiments are stationed. We got breakfast with them... Here I met Collins who is doing duty with the 26<sup>th</sup>. He took me to the garden at the back of the house, a fanciful place in Chinese taste, with paved walks, lakes and bridges in miniature and a little pagoda and distorted trees. We waited for the escort to marsh up to headquarters on the heights, four miles off. A party of the 18<sup>th</sup> was the escort. In the garden were tanks with the sacred lotus growing, grottoes and fantastic rocks, hundreds of pots with plants in them ranged along low walls. The paths are paved with variegated

tiles. There is a swimming bath with a pretty little house on hills in the centre. Deer and sheep pens and conservatories. The verandas are adorned with plenty of carved work with gilding on roofs and doors and stone and bamboo seats scattered about and easy chairs. There are plenty of fine trees.<sup>804</sup>

According to the reports of soldiers' movements during the First Opium War, and Cree's reference to the city's 'heights', this villa was probably located on the northern bank of the river.<sup>805</sup> Cree journal is abundantly illustrated, and this description, in particular, is accompanied by a very colourful watercolour of a Chinese garden (Figure 70). Cree's description of the garden and the drawing accompanying it are similar to the descriptions of the Pans' and Wus' gardens, with features such as a bricked pond with a water kiosk, a stone bridge and numerous artificially trained plants. It would be far-fetched to attribute this garden to Houqua's Xiguan property in particular, as it could either have been a private or a guild's garden.<sup>806</sup>



**Figure 70 “Canton garden”. Attributed to John Thomson, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kept at Getty Research Institute, Clark Worswick Collection, 2003.R.22 Box 40, Item 5**

Regarding waterscapes, in particular, Cree describes a ‘swimming bath’, that can probably be interpreted as the geometrical pond that appears in his watercolour: the fact that he mistook it

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<sup>804</sup> National Maritime Museum, Cairn Library. Cree Journals (CRJ/5 1841), p.32-3.

<sup>805</sup> Supplement to the Canton Press, 12/06/1841

<sup>806</sup> Henry Gray reports for example that the Huizhou merchant's guild has a garden in Xiguan, located not far from Houqua's property. John Henry Gray, p. 194.



for a swimming pool is telling us that it was a very regular construction. Despite an undeniable part of the garden's spectacle, this kind of pond was almost certainly used to raise fish as well.<sup>807</sup>



Figure 71 “Mandarin’s garden, Canton. May 29, 1841”. Cree, Edward Hodges. Watercolour. Kept in National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, reference: CRJ/5 1841

#### IV. Self-representation and inter-connection with Chinese arts

The two Hong merchants’ families were keen to improve their social standing, either by organising strategic weddings or by investing in the education of their sons. As mentioned before, the gardens of Pan and Wu served as the background for scholarly meetings. Both families had prestigious tutors giving lessons to their children in-house. Thanks to Western sources such as Tilden’s descriptions, we can confirm that Pan Khequa II had part of his precious collection of books, paintings and antiques on display in the library. Pan Shu’s *Lizhai* itself is a gesture of self-representation, where the collector names the garden after his favourite painter. In the Wu residence, the library was the location where scholar Tan Ying compiled the *Lingnan yishu* 《岭南遗书》 (Surviving works from Lingnan) anthology, sponsored by Houqua’s son Wu Shaotang. The presence of calligraphy in the form of parallel poems displayed in gardens is difficult to assess from the descriptions available. What can be

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<sup>807</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*.

said for certain is that the Pan and Wu families were aware of the history of Panyu county and in several occasions chose their garden names in relation to local history. There were a number of trained scholars in the two households, which accounts for the literati allusions contained in the garden and building names.

Self-representation was as much a question of gathering selected guests to admire one's garden as a matter of good taste. It is doubtful whether the Hong merchants succeeded in the second instance, as the following elements show; yet the garden design certainly showed creativity.

### *Displaying potted flowers*

As a non-Chinese scholar, one can aim to look at Guangdong gardens with as objective a judgement as possible, for example by querying why 19<sup>th</sup>-century Western visitors found them so compelling as to buy export art representing them as souvenirs. The gardens of the Pan and Wu families, as they are seen in the available pictorial sources, did not correspond to the latest fashion in scholar or imperial gardens. This might explain why none of the Chinese sources on the Pan and Wu gardens mention potted flowers when almost all the Western visitors noticed and commented on that feature. The silence of Chinese scholars could be interpreted as an indulgence for the mercantile taste of their wealthy patrons, or a tactful omission for what a literati would consider 'tacky'. There were contemporary examples of criticism of putting pots in plants: Li Tiaoyuan, who was in post as an official in Guangzhou in the 1770s, notably criticised the practice of using pots for certain plants.<sup>808</sup>

Putting vegetation in pots was criticised 'vulgar' by Ming Jiangnan scholar Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 (1585-1645), in his *Treatise on Superfluous Things* — an influential publication that would have still prevailed in scholars' minds during the Canton Trade period.<sup>809</sup> This meant that among the Chinese elite, from that time garden design privileged less vegetation of greater rarity and a greater prevalence of strangely shaped rocks: the latter's function was close to that of sculptures in Western landscape tradition. Gardens with geometric walled

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<sup>808</sup> Li Tiaoyuan, 《南粤笔记》 (Miscellaneous notes on the southern Yue), as cited by Yuen Lai Winnie Chan, p. 122.

<sup>809</sup> Zhenheng Wen, *Treatise on Superfluous Things* (Zhangwuzhi 长物志) (Zhonggu: Nanhai wu shi, 1874). 2:41, as cited by Yuen Lai Winnie Chan, p. 117.

ponds and an abundance of vegetation were still being built outside of the capital Beijing and in the Jiangnan region after that date.

Chinese scholars tend to respect late imperial notions of garden aesthetics to this day: Chen Congzhou, for example, left numerous indications of his vision of vulgarity in the garden in *On Chinese gardens*, whose bilingual edition is widely circulated.<sup>810</sup> Western scholars, more often than not, also comply with traditional Chinese assessment of what is vulgar and what is not. I would argue that the agenda of Qing scholars and officials should be reminded when looking at such matter: sponsoring Ming aesthetics against the more adorned Qing aesthetics could be a way to denounce the Manchu government as not truly ‘Chinese’. Wen Zhenheng’s judgement and its proponents might explain why, although vegetation is one of the most important aspects of Guangdong gardens, scholars have scarcely approached the matter.

When it comes to potted flowers, it seems that the Pan and Wu families reached a compromise between taking advantage of their trading networks to obtain and produce a variety of plants *en masse* and their thirst for social acceptance among the elite literati circles. As seen in the two case studies, the Pans’ and Wus’ efforts to reach a higher social status involved the sponsoring of local temples or inviting local scholars to gatherings in their gardens. Despite such aspirations, one can understand that they found solace in the profusion of colourful potted plants, by examining several export paintings and photographs of the period.

In the Chinese export painting titled “A garden scene” and held in the Hong Kong Museum of Art and already reproduced above (Figure 69), pots containing an array of plants and flowers are the main focus of the painting.<sup>811</sup> The omnipresence of the pots stresses their importance as one of the garden’s main appeal: they are found lined in the foreground, on balustrades or on individual stands in the background. The gardens represented in such export paintings were probably a mixture of some real elements of Hong merchant’s gardens with the imagination of the artist. A clear example of using a part of the Fuyinyuan in an otherwise unrealistic setting is found in a painting attributed to Youqua kept in Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut. The oil painting seems to represent the Fuyinyuan’s water-based kiosk on the

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<sup>810</sup> Congzhou Chen, 說園 *On Chinese gardens*.

<sup>811</sup> The gouache on paper titled “A garden scene” does not correspond as far as I know to a specific garden. Attributed to Guan Lianchang (Tingqua), mid-nineteenth century, is held under reference AH1980.0005.042 in the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

left, and what is probably the Fuyinyuan's covered bridge in a blurred patch on the right (Figure 72). The foreground does not seem to correspond to the Fuyinyuan's actual layout: rather the artist probably chose to focus on the depiction of attractive flower pots and handsome women in a garden setting.



Figure 72 “Chinese oil painting of a Chinese garden, with two female figures”. Youqua. Before 1855. Oil painting. Mystic Seaport, Connecticut. Reference: 1945\_769\_MSM

The analysis of the gardens of the Pan and Wu families showed the importance of potted flowers as a common gardening fixture in 18-19th century Guangzhou, but the taste for potted flowers was of course not limited to Hong merchants. Mrs Gray observed these gardening habits in the 1880s Guangzhou and declared that:

In the first place, the Chinese do not grow their flowers in beds, nor let them spread from one to the other as we do. They grow all their flowers in pots. Rows of them line the paths in these gardens, and I have seen lovely shows of them, including roses,

cockscombs, camellias, magnolias, chrysanthema, rhododendrons, balsams, azaleas, the narcissus, lotus, etc.<sup>812</sup>

Mrs Gray's description matches well with an anonymous view of the Fuyinyuan kept in the Rijksmuseum, where all the pots are lined on makeshift benches (Figure 61).<sup>813</sup> The extract above shows that Mrs Gray extrapolated the botanical skill of the whole Chinese nation from observations solely based on Guangzhou gardening characteristics. Her mistake is understandable, as the ubiquity of pots was most striking while researching for contemporary pictorial sources representing Guangzhou and its surroundings. As noted by J. Dyer Ball:

There are no flower-beds, almost all the plants being in ornamental pots of various shapes and designs. Some flowering trees are rooted in the ground. Even with or without a garden, plants will be found in pots or ornamental stands in the courtyards.<sup>814</sup>



Figure 73 “Chinese woman in Punti costume”. Unknown creator. Circa 1890-1903. Basel Mission. Reference A-30.12.007

<sup>812</sup> John Henry Gray Mrs, pp. 391–93.

<sup>813</sup> This photograph titled “Canton-Chinese summer House of Cha-fao”, of unknown painter and date, was probably made after 1860. Kept under reference RP-F-F02380 in the Rijksmuseum.

<sup>814</sup> J. Dyer Ball, *The Chinese at Home; or, The Man of Tong and His Land* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1911), p. 200.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it seems that paintings loosely based on the Fuyinyuan were used as a background for studio photography (Figure 73). From this view and others kept in Basel Mission archives, it seems that the Wus' gardens were an appealing setting for the local photography studios; whether that reflects on local taste or on Western studio practices is uncertain. Note that the Chinese woman in this photograph stands near a pot of genuine flowers, which are perhaps important props.<sup>815</sup>

It would be the task of a botanist to explain what are the benefits of growing plants in pots in an alluvial plain in sub-tropical weather. However, after analysing the multitude of evidence attesting the recurrent feature of potted plants in Guangzhou gardens in late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, what could be determined are the different uses for potted plants.

First of all, pots are displayed using already available surfaces such as building's fences and balcony. Mrs Gray commented during a visit to the garden owned by one of Howqua's friends that:

A very large piece of ornamental water stands in the centre of the largest garden, with a stone bridge crossing it. A handsome carved stone palisade surrounds it, upon which innumerable green glazed pots, containing chrysanthema [...], were placed.<sup>816</sup>

Such method of displaying pots is the most straightforward and was observed numerous times in the pictorial sources shown across the two case studies.

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<sup>815</sup> This albumen titled "Chinese woman in Punti costume" by an unknown studio, is estimated circa 1890-1903 and kept under reference A-30.12.007 in the Basel Mission Archive. It was also reproduced on a postcard by Mr Sternberg of Hong Kong under the title "A Chinese high class Lady".

<sup>816</sup> John Henry Gray Mrs, pp. 287–88.



Figure 74 “Inner court in the Neng jen Monastery on the heights of the Mountain of the white Clouds, near Canton.”  
Ernst Boerschmann. Circa 1900-1910s. in *La Chine pittoresque*

Secondly, potted plants were frequently put on self-standing stands inside courtyards or lining pathways. Such use can be found in monasteries, government buildings, and both public and private gardens. Monastery courtyards in Guangdong province contained a profusion of potted plants, as can be seen in this view in a White Cloud monastery (north of Guangzhou) taken in 1900-10s by Ernst Boerschmann (Figure 74).<sup>817</sup> Potted plants on stands can be found inside a courtyard in the *yamen* occupied by the British forces of Earl Elgin during the Second Opium War (Figure 14).

Plants on stands also appear in wealthy individual’s private gardens, as well as in commercial nurseries. The second of the Peabody Essex export painting by Tingqua shows rows of blue glazed ceramic stands (Figure 63), which are also represented in one of Crease’s photograph of the garden (Figure 64). Numerous potted flowers, *penjings* and trained plants on stands can be found in a series of photographs taken by American Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore and kept in the National Anthropological Archives of U.S. in Maryland. She visited Guangzhou around 1869 and notably Huadi nurseries and what she dubs ‘Howqua’s house’ (Figure 75).<sup>818</sup> If not

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<sup>817</sup> “Inner court in the Neng jen Monastery on the heights of the Mountain of the white Clouds, near Canton”  
Ernest Boerschmann, *La Chine pittoresque* (Paris: Librairie des arts décoratifs, 1910), p. 258.

<sup>818</sup> National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Museum Support Center, Suitland, Maryland. Photographs by Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore.

on stands, pots would be put on benches, as can be seen in the British Library painting of Pan's garden (Figure 30).



**Figure 75 Left: “Plants in Fa-Ti Gardens Trained to Grow in Shape of Mandarins”. Right: “Bamboo Plants Trained to Grow in Various Shapes in Fa-Ti Gardens”. Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore. Circa 1869. National Anthropological Archive U.S.A. References NAA INV 04502400 and NAA INV 04502800**

A unique aspect regarding potted plants in late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries gardens of Guangzhou is the evidence that short walls were purpose-made specifically for pots to be placed on. There are several examples of such walls, usually made of brick, constituting a decorative pattern inside a garden courtyard. The small courtyard of the ‘Lee-min-coon’ monastery in Guangzhou can be found in several albums of early photographs of China. The only one that can be dated with certainty is the one titled “Pic-nic party at Lee-Ming-Coon, Canton” kept in J.Paul Getty Museum (Figure 76). This specific occasion of a picnic can be matched with a description left in the Bowra family papers in the SOAS archives.<sup>819</sup> Cecil Bowra's recorded the event in his biography of his father and noted that the picnic took place in April 1870 by the Bowras on behalf of one of their friends leaving the Shamian concession.

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<sup>819</sup> SOAS university London. PPMS 69 Bowra Box 2 Folder 13





Figure 76 “Pic-nic party at Lee-Ming-Coon, Canton”, 1870. J.Paul Getty Museum.

A better view of the octagonal door leading to the monastery’s courtyard is obtained in Rubel Library, Harvard University: “Entrance to Lee-Min-Coon garden” (Figure 77).<sup>820</sup> The photograph demonstrates how low walls were built in geometrical patterns so that the potted plants were displayed at the right height to allow visitors and gardeners to look at them. The low walls delimitate small pathways across the courtyards and become tools of scenery-making. There was probably a small rectangular pond in the centre, lined by walls. The axis of the composition is clearer on another view taken from the bottom of the same courtyard (Figure 78). This photograph is titled “Chinese tea garden, Lee Min Koon, near Canton” and part of an album made circa 1873 and likely taken by G. Prat, a French silk inspector based in Canton in the 1870s.<sup>821</sup>

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<sup>820</sup> Rubel Fine Arts, Harvard University. Photographs of Canton. The caption of this view reads “266. Entrance to Lee-Min-Coon garden. Front view of these gardens - the Arched entrance is made of Granite - at the back is a recreation house”

<sup>821</sup> Getty Research Institute, Photograph album of Canton, ca. 1873. Albumen prints. Reference 2010.R.3\*

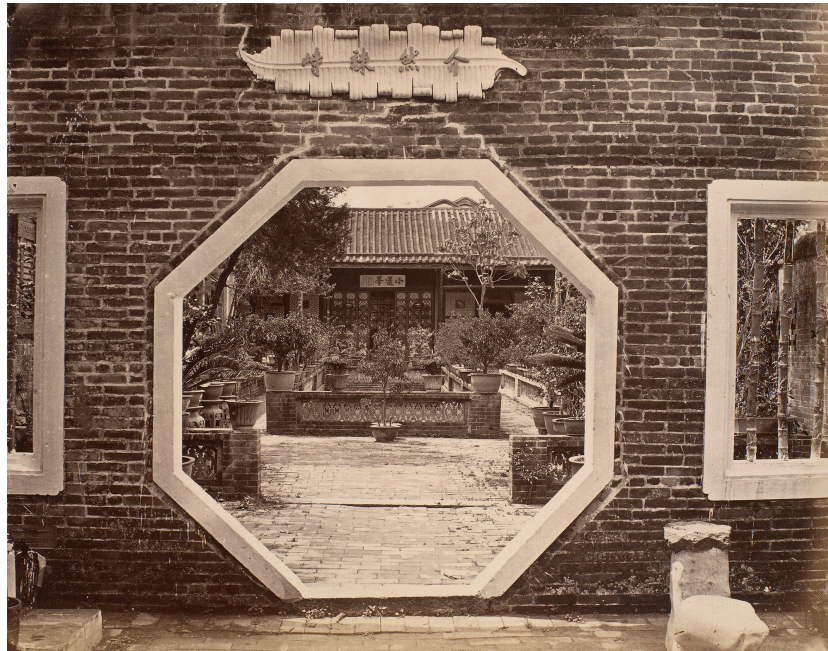


Figure 77 “Entrance to Lee-Min-Coon garden”. Rubel Library, Harvard University

As far as sources available show, the display of potted plants on purpose-made fixed supports in geometrical patterns seems unique to this part of China. One important distinction to be made is whether gardens of Fujian province also contain such walls, in order to ascertain whether the Hong merchants might have brought the idea with them from their original province.



Figure 78 “Chinese tea garden, Lee Min Koon, near Canton”. G. Prat. Circa 1873. Getty Research Institute

During fieldwork, a surviving example of the courtyard with low walls designed for potted flowers was found in Hengsha 横沙. According to local residents, the house called Gongfu jiashu 功甫家塾 belongs to an overseas Chinese family who sends money to maintain the courtyard in a minimum order. An engraved doorway says that the building is dated of 1930, but it is likely the courtyard displays older features that were restored. The walls are made of bricks and masonry, and at times form enclosures to offer space for small bushes and large trees to grow. In the courtyard is also a walled pond lined with a brick fence, which seems to have been built according to *fengshui* principles.



Figure 79 Gongfu jiashu 功甫家塾 in Hengsha. Fieldwork 2014



Figure 80 Gongfu jiashu 功甫家塾 in Hengsha.

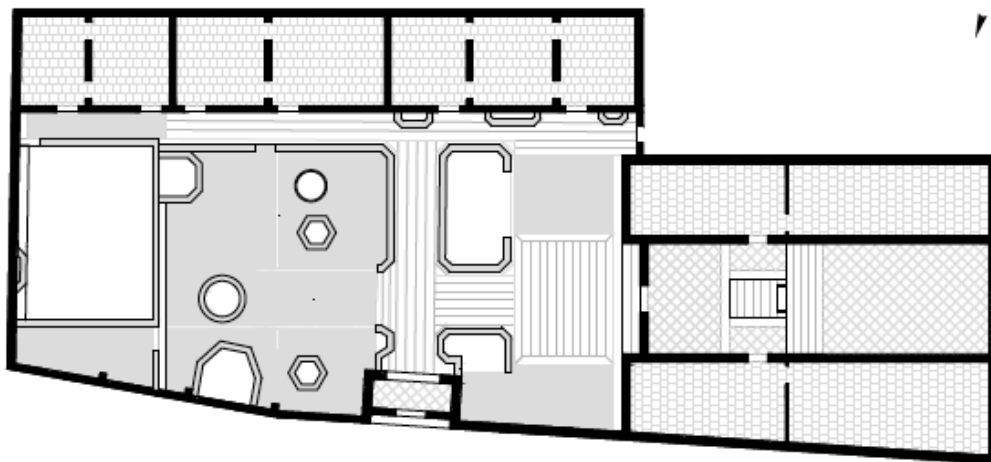


Figure 81 Rough map of the Gongfu jiashu 功甫家塾 in Hengsha. Credits: Feng Lishen & Josepha Richard

Since these walls are used as an open-air gallery for plants, they are slightly different from the makeshift-benches and stands found in the Rijksmuseum photograph of the Fuyinyuan (Figure 61). The logistics of displaying potted plants in the gardens of Guangzhou was alluded to in the third section of the Pan case study: Bryant Tilden reported in the 1810s that

at Pan Khequa II's *hong*, the plants would be changed every ten days.<sup>822</sup> For this purpose, Pan Khequa II used plants from his Henan properties: these were perhaps selected for a pleasant mix of colours and fragrance according to the season. For special occasions, Hong merchants and other garden owners most likely stocked up with potted plants from the Huadi nurseries and other similar plant markets:

A very excellent and pretty collection of plants in flower may be made in Canton, by obtaining a man from these [Huadi] gardens, who brings any that you want, attends to them as long as they remain fresh, and then changes them for others, and all for a trifling consideration.<sup>823</sup>

Pots would also facilitate moving the plants for protection in case of heavy monsoon rains. If the flowers were ruined, however, all was not lost. In *Reminiscences of a voyage to and from china* is recorded an anecdote regarding how fast plants could be changed or fixed in 19<sup>th</sup> century Guangzhou when the occasion called for it:

When the palace of *Shykinqua* [a Hong merchant] was prepared for the reception of Lord Macartney, the gardens were profusely furnished with flowering plants in pots. But as the embassy arrived later than expected, many of the *camellias* had shed their flowers. But on the day of his Lordship's arrival the *camellias* were as blooming as ever with borrowed flowers from other quarters!<sup>824</sup>

Although Mrs Gray's description above already gave an idea of which plants were put in pots, the number of species can be supplemented through Robert Fortune's description mentioned in the third section of the Wu case study or in other of his books.<sup>825</sup> Other Westerners also commented about the species found in pots in Guangzhou. For example Charles Taylor, after his description of Houqua's garden, wrote that:

Here are many varieties of roses, lilies, violets, hollyhocks, sweet-williams, pinks, tuberose, verbenas, peonies, bachelor's buttons, heliotropes, hibiscus, honey-suckles, geraniums, myrtles, cape-jessamines, hydrangeas, artemisias, coxcombs,

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<sup>822</sup> Tilden, pp. 217–19.

<sup>823</sup> Osmond Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese; or, The American's Sojourn in the Celestial Empire*. (Boston; And Cambridge: J. Munroe and Co., 1849), p. 160.

<sup>824</sup> James Main, 'Reminiscences of a Voyage to and from China', *The Horticultural Register*, 1836, p. 177.

<sup>825</sup> Robert Fortune, *Three Years' Wanderings in the Northern Provinces of China Including a Visit to the Tea, Silk, and Cotton Countries: With an Account of the Agriculture and Horticulture of the Chinese, New Plants, Etc.* (London: J. Murray, 1847), p. 152.

chrysanthemums, iris, azaleas, magnolias, lagerstroemias, altheas, convolvulus, japonicas, and many others.<sup>826</sup>

Some at least of those species would have been in pots, as he himself explains on the same page. Nonetheless, a specific study regarding the plants found in that period in Guangzhou is needed: such research can be greatly facilitated by comparing Joseph Banks' correspondence with his various collectors in China and botanic paintings such as the Reeves Collection kept in the Royal Horticultural Society and British Library.

### *The waterscape as part of representation*

In his journal as cited above, Cree mentioned a little 'truncated pyramid' stone bridge that crosses the garden pond. Such a truncated pond corresponds with the shape of the bridge in the foreground of the second Pan garden painting kept in the British Library (Figure 31).



Figure 82 "Spode Willow pattern blue and white plate". 20th century. Kept in MEAA, Bath.

Most Western descriptions tended to emphasise the number of bridges in the Pan and Wu gardens: perhaps that can be linked to the prevalence of *Chinoiserie* that shaped the idea of Chinese gardens in the mind of the Western public. When visiting Guangzhou, Western visitors would make the connection with what they knew beforehand, such as the 'Willow

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<sup>826</sup> Charles Taylor, p. 65.

Pattern' chinaware.<sup>827</sup> The small 'truncated pyramid' bridge is perhaps the most iconic features of the infamous Willow Pattern, which is of British invention.<sup>828</sup> Laurence Oliphant notably reported while in Guangzhou in 1857: "The bridge shaped like a truncated triangle on Chinese plates we actually saw".<sup>829</sup> In Charles Taylor's description of his travel to Guangzhou circa 1860, he insisted on the prominence of the pond in their layout. He then focused on the numerous bridges found in these gardens without giving much comment on the nature of the pond itself:

Another feature in these gardens consists in the artificial ponds or pools of water. They generally fill up so much of the space, that the rocks seem rather like islands rising out of them. Then these pools are crossed in various directions by bridges, some straight, and others running as zigzag as if they had been modelled after a streak of lightning. They are built of well-hewn stone, for the most part, and are from three to five feet high above the water, supported by stone posts or pillars, and provided with curiously-wrought balustrades.<sup>830</sup>

The Western tendency to see *Chinoiserie* in the gardens of Guangzhou can also be felt in Cree's May 1841 watercolour. In his sketching journals, Cree usually demonstrated a good eye and skill in drawing Chinese architecture, and in respecting proportions. Yet despite Cree's usual architectural precision, the garish colours of his May 1841 garden watercolour (Figure 71) are at odds with the overall colours used in his journals. It is hardly surprising that the editor of the book transcript of Cree's journal chose not to reproduce that specific watercolour.<sup>831</sup> For example, when contrasted with "Canton from the heights" drawn about the same time (Figure 83), the garden drawn in May 1841 shows a more immature hand especially when it comes to the use of colour.<sup>832</sup> One explanation is that, since the conflict

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<sup>827</sup> Henry Gray also mentions the Willow Pattern when describing the small Anhui guild's garden. John Henry Gray, p. 196. His wife Mrs Gray also mentions this garden as "is the original quaint bridge and scenery, from which the willow pattern (or rather that part of it which is not mythological) was taken" John Henry Gray Mrs, pp. 65–66.

<sup>828</sup> The Willow Pattern is an invention of British Thomas Minton (1765–1836), apprentice engineer at Caughley pottery who in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century associated in Stoke with Josiah Spode, the inventor of an underglaze transfer painting perfected for fine chinaware. See James Beattie, 'China on a Plate: A Willow Pattern Garden Realized', *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 36.1 (2016), 17–31.

<sup>829</sup> Oliphant, p. 167.

<sup>830</sup> Charles Taylor, p. 66.

<sup>831</sup> The 1841 garden watercolour is not reproduced in Michael Levien and Edward Hodges Cree, *Naval Surgeon: The Voyages of Dr. Edward Cree, Royal Navy, as Related in His Private Journals, 1837-1856* (New York, N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, 1982).

<sup>832</sup> National Maritime Museum, Cairn Library. "Canton from the heights", Cree Journals (CRJ/5 1841), p.33-5. As reproduced in Levien and Cree.

was not yet resolved, Cree only had a brief moment to sketch the garden's general layout. In such situation, the colouring would be filled in at a later time – and Cree could have used his imagination as much as his memories. Since this was a time when Chinese gardens were still objects of orientalist fantasy inherited from *Chinoiserie*, another possibility is that Cree decided to improve upon the design of the original garden after the case.

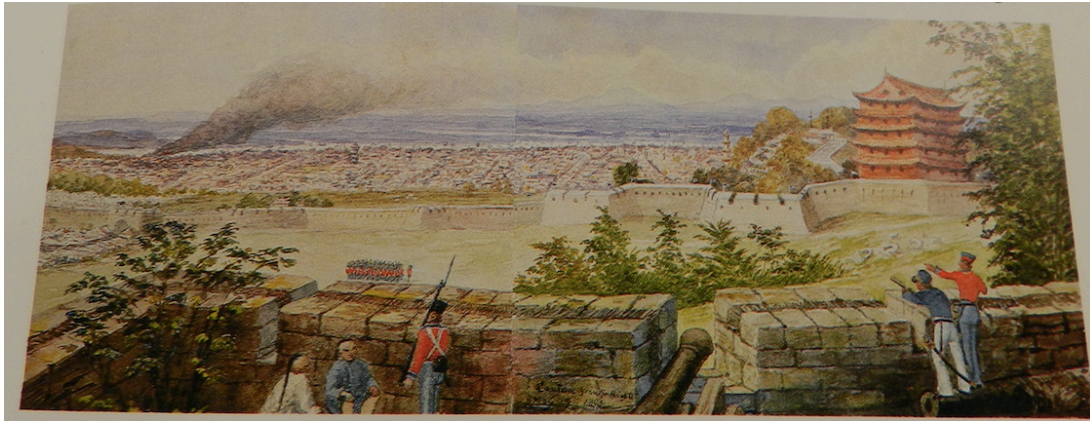


Figure 83 “Canton from the heights”. Cree, Edward Hodges. Watercolour. Kept in National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, reference: CRJ/5 1841

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the negative association with *Chinoiserie* was partly responsible for Westerner's loss of interest in gardens of Guangzhou. The small bridges in tiny, crowded urban gardens came to be seen as unnatural and grotesque. The fact is that gardens in Guangzhou tended to use a compact building style to maximise the space available. Using walled, regularly shaped ponds was logical in a sub-tropical urban setting, with frequent rain; the Pearl Delta's specificity is also to have numerous canals that tend to fill with sand, therefore water needs to be managed with caution.

These bridges are often associated with walled geometrical ponds, as discussed above. The latter were not only found in Guangzhou or in Guangdong province: Bao Qinxing argues for example that the shape of rectangular pools in Song dynasty imperial and private gardens was partly the result of *fengshui* recommendations.<sup>833</sup> However, the taste for irregular pond banks developed as the Xihu 西湖 (West Lake) became the centre of the Southern Song capital Lin'an (Hangzhou).<sup>834</sup> Progressively by the late imperial period, ponds in the gardens of

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<sup>833</sup> Qinxing Bao, ‘两宋园林中方池现象研究 (Study on square pools in Song dynasty gardens)’, *Chinese Landscape Architecture*, 2012, 73–76.

<sup>834</sup> Jie, p. 33.



scholars and nobility tended to adopt an irregular shape, with rocky banks. Similarly, while ponds used to be associated with rearing fish for consumption, such an idea was dissociated from the scholarly garden's ponds during the mid-Ming dynasty.<sup>835</sup> Chen Congzhou noted in *On Chinese gardens* that the gardens of southern Jiangsu province feature curved banks, and describes such a pond as 'feminine'.<sup>836</sup> From the written evidence alone it is difficult to ascertain whether Hong merchants' gardens included such irregular ponds.

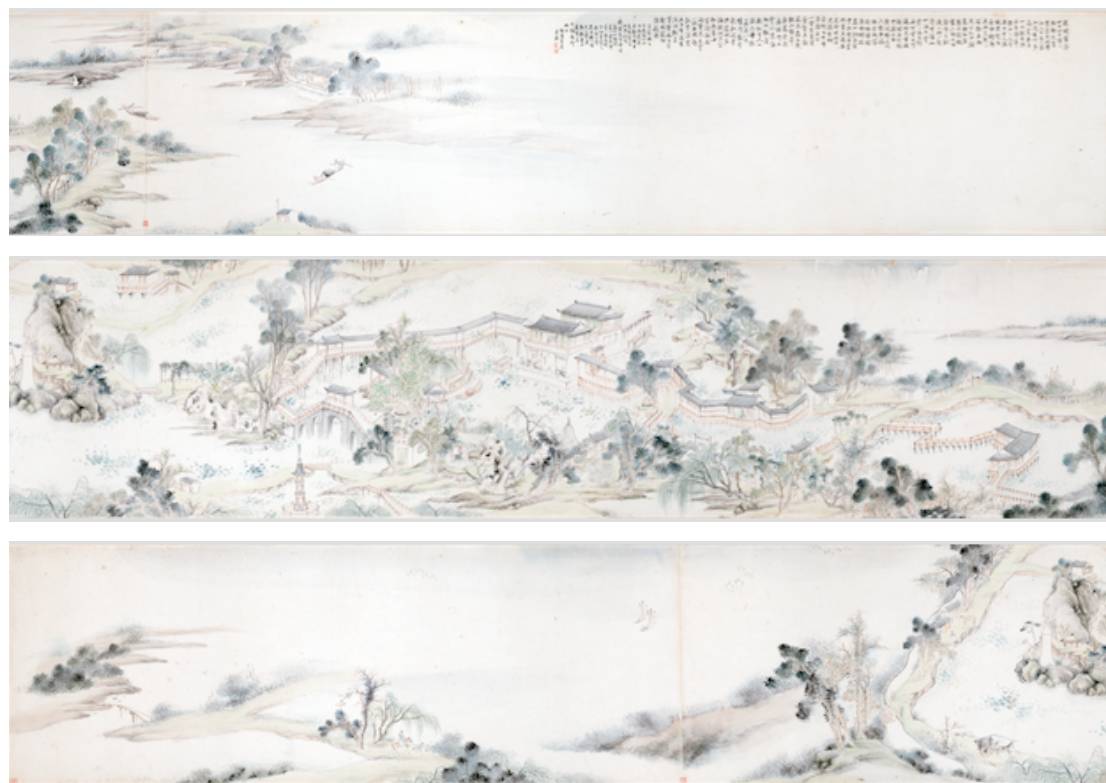


Figure 84 “Haishan xianguan”. Xia Luan. 1848. Kept in Guangzhou Fine Arts Museum. It is here cut in three pieces to facilitate viewing: the painting should be seen from top right to bottom left.

The Hong merchant's gardens as exemplified from Pan and Wu's case studies are therefore not representative of what was considered the most elegant taste of the late imperial China. They are not even the most refined examples of ponds found in Guangzhou at the period. For example, Pan Shicheng, a salt commissioner and cousin of the Henan Pan family, built the sprawling Haishan xianguan garden 海山仙馆 in the area circa 1830.<sup>837</sup> Pan Shicheng was very involved in scholarly activities: he notably published a voluminous anthology of texts

<sup>835</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 172.

<sup>836</sup> Congzhou Chen, *说园: 中英文本 (On Chinese gardens, bilingual edition)* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2007), p. 81.

<sup>837</sup> Mo, p. 347.

named after the garden.<sup>838</sup> According to the painting by Xia Luan 夏銓 (ca.1820-1854) made in 1848 and kept in Guangzhou Fine Arts Museum, the Haishan xianguan was constituted of a series of buildings bordering lakes and connected by corridors (Figure 84 and Figure 85).<sup>839</sup> The accuracy of the painting has been in part confirmed by three of the earliest set of extant photographs of China: Jules Itier's 1844 daguerreotypes (Figure 86).<sup>840</sup> The Haishan xianguan's series of lakes appear much closer to what could be observed in Jiangnan or in the northern imperial gardens in the same period.



Figure 85 Detail of the main building in “Haishan xianguan”. Xia Luan. Guangzhou Museum of Fine Arts

Two preliminary hypotheses can be drawn regarding the use of geometric walled ponds in the two case studies. The Hong merchants' gardens can be seen as representative of their owner's merchant background: despite their ambitions of reaching a higher social status, their gardening taste did not quite match with those of scholars in Jiangnan. Another possibility is

<sup>838</sup> Shicheng Pan, *海山仙馆丛书 (Collectaneum of the Studio of the Immortals from the Seas and the Mountains)* (Guangzhou, 1845).

<sup>839</sup> This reproduction also shows the painted part, two thirds of the scroll is covered in calligraphed poems. Reproduction of this painting is reserved, credits belong to 广州艺术博物院藏

<sup>840</sup> Jules Itier explains how he took these views in Pan Shicheng's home in Jules Itier, *Journal d'un voyage en Chine en 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846* (Paris: Chez Dauvin et Fontaine, 1848), pp. 37–39.

that the few gardens that are well described pictorially, are not representative of the style of gardens inside the Pan and Wu Henan residences. As the pictorial sources usually represent gardens located in Huadi, it could be that they are pleasure grounds with a less elaborated layout than that of their main gardens in Henan. In this case, any conclusions about the Hong merchant's taste should not be based on the sole conjectural plan of the Fuyinyuan (Figure 65) or on the British Library paintings of Pans' garden (Figure 30 and Figure 31).



Figure 86 “Maison d'un notable à Canton”. Jules Itier. November 1844. Daguerreotype. Musée Français de la Photographie, Essonne.

What is certain, however, is that there were geometric-shaped walled ponds inside most of the four famous gardens of Lingnan, which were built outside of the city by upper members of local lineages. For example, the main surviving scenery of the Qinghuiyuan in Shunde is centred on a rectangular walled pond (Figure 87).<sup>841</sup> Moreover, the main scenery of the Yuyin shanfang in Panyu is focused on a geometric pond (Figure 88) crossed by a covered bridge, very similar to the one in the Fuyinyuan (Left side Figure 89). This part of the pond

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<sup>841</sup> Photographs taken at an unknown date (circa 1980s) by R. Stewart Johnston for preparation of his book Johnston.

was also reproduced in the subsequent Beiyuan Restaurant in city centre Guangzhou (Right side Figure 89). In the Museum of Chinese Gardens and Landscape Architecture (MCGALA) opened in Beijing in 2013, is reproduced to scale the half of the Yuyinshanfang that contains the bridge.<sup>842</sup> Only the Liangyuan contained a more irregularly shaped pond: it is perhaps not surprising that the Liang family also owned a large collection rocks, another important element for a scholarly garden.<sup>843</sup>



**Figure 87 Left: “6/33”. Right: “6/37”. Photographs representing the Qinghuiyuan in Shunde. R. Stewart Johnston. Circa 1980s. Johnston archives , Needham Institute, Cambridge.**



**Figure 88 Left: “6/43(2)” Right: “6/43(1)” Photographs representing the Yuyin shanfang in Panyu. R. Stewart Johnston. Circa 1980s. Johnston archives, Needham Institute, Cambridge**

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<sup>842</sup> ‘The Museum of Chinese Gardens and Landscape Architecture: South China Garden - Yu Yin Mountain Garden’ <<http://www.gardensmuseum.cn/en/3-2-3.aspx>> [accessed 29 October 2017].

<sup>843</sup> Qi, pp. 62–64.



Figure 89 Left: Current aspect of the Yuyin shanfang in Panyu, 2009. Right: The Beiyuan restaurant in Guangzhou, inspired by the Yuyin shanfang, 2009

### *Architectural elements*

Whether located on the sides of courtyards or inside the scenery, buildings are one of the essential elements of gardens in China. The architectural element provides protection from the sun or rain, allowing the owner or visitor to view the scenery. It can be a space to eat, play a game, have a conversation or perform one of the Chinese arts. In turn, buildings become a part of the scenery when seen from afar.<sup>844</sup>

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<sup>844</sup> Gournay, 'Le Jardin Chinois (The Chinese Garden)', p. 131.



Figure 90 Marble boat in the imperial garden Yiheyuan (Summer Palace), Beijing, 2009

Water-based and waterside buildings appear frequently in the two case studies. Water-based kiosks such as the one seen in Cree's watercolour (Figure 71) or in the Fuyinyuan's main pond are a form of *ting* 亭 and can be found across China.<sup>845</sup> According to contemporary photographs and paintings, there were quantities of hexagonal or octagonal-shaped kiosks in late imperial Guangzhou gardens. These shapes are not sufficiently rare in other regions to warrant a lengthy discussion here.

Waterside pavilions are usually categorised as *xie* 榭 and are also found in gardens across China.<sup>846</sup> The boat-shaped building is a specific form of *xie*, of which there are broadly two types. The *chuanting* 船厅 can be translated as 'boat hall' and is a form of boat-shaped building especially prevalent in gardens around Guangzhou.<sup>847</sup> In other parts of China, surviving examples of boat-shaped buildings tend to look more obviously like boats.<sup>848</sup> This second type of buildings built fully on the water, or with two or three sides overlooking the

<sup>845</sup> Ji, p. 70. Jun, p. 57.

<sup>846</sup> Ji, p. 70. Jun, p. 58.

<sup>847</sup> Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition), p. 87.

<sup>848</sup> Guanping Liu, '岭南古典园林 (Ancient Lingnan gardens)', *Guangdong Landscape Architecture*, 1985, 1–11 (p. 5).

water, are called *fang* 舫 (stone boat).<sup>849</sup> The most well-known example of a self-standing boat-shaped building is probably the Marble Boat in the Yiheyuan or Summer Palace in Beijing (Figure 90). There are also other examples, notably in the Xuyuan in Nanjing (Left side Figure 91), or in the Shizilin in Suzhou (Right side Figure 91). All of these are relatively late examples and of a rather ostentatious nature.



Figure 91 Boat-shaped buildings in Jiangnan region. Left: Stone boat in Xuyuan, Nanjing. Right: Stone boat in Shizilin, Suzhou. 2009

The *chuanting* or boat-hall is a less obvious form of boat-shaped building found in different regions of China. A boat-hall suggests the idea of a travelling via a boat, instead of literally representing one. The boat-hall encourages the garden's visitor or owner to return to the simple life of a fisherman, and to imagine freely gliding along the current in the 'boat'.

Although *chuanting* buildings appear frequently outside of Guangdong, in the gardens of Guangzhou and surroundings, boat halls are found recurrently:

Because of the big size of the garden and a spacious lake surface, the stone boat in the gardens of North China and Jiangnan are usually placed on their own so that, if viewed from far away, it looks like a real boat mooring at the bank. But for the gardens of Lingnan, due to the small size of the land and lake, the 'boat hall' usually has one side by the pond and the other side connected to other buildings [...]. The appearance of the boat hall is not the exact imitation of a boat, rather, what such a building pays attention to is the taste instead of the shape.<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> Jun, p. 58.

<sup>850</sup> Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition), p. 87.

The fact that the boat-hall is often a storied building is particularly adapted to Guangzhou, where the land was expensive and therefore multi-storied constructions were more frequent than in other parts of China. In the third section of the Wu case study, it was demonstrated how the Fuyinyuan in Huadi probably contained a boat hall on the side of the main pond scenery. In Tianyu's painting of the Fuyinyuan (Figure 38), and in the export painting sold by Bonhams Auction house (Right side Figure 58) the boat hall on the left side is represented as very ornamented and colourful. When compared with an export watercolour kept in the British Museum, it seems clear that the Fuyinyuan's boat hall was meant to represent an adorned flower boat (Figure 92). It is possibly the case with other boat halls in and around Guangzhou.<sup>851</sup> Many of the boat-halls in the four gardens of Lingnan were used as women quarters because of their multi-storied nature: the ladies of the house could observe without being seen, and the staircases were often difficult to find so as to guarantee their intimacy.<sup>852</sup>

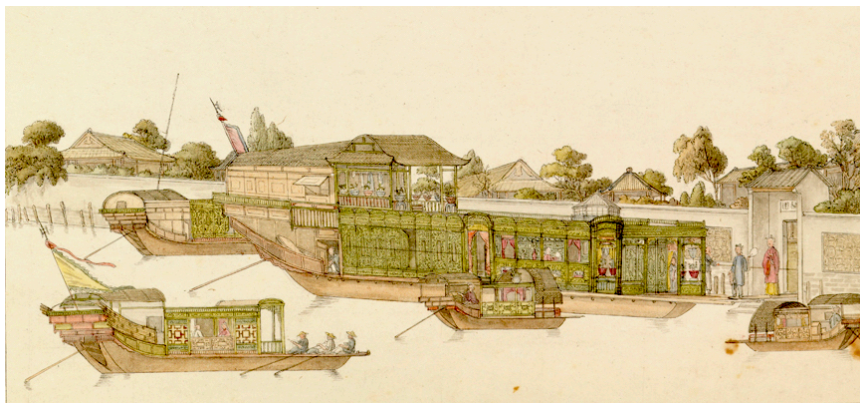


Figure 92 Detail of “Flower boat”, Reeves Collection, export watercolour. British Museum ref: 1877.7.14.965

Other contemporary pictorial sources also contain buildings that can be identified as boat halls. On the right side of an albumen print titled “Garden, Canton” and attributed to John Thomson stands a pavilion built at least partially on top of the water (Figure 93). The long shape and location of the building and the elaborate woodcarvings around the edges of the windows suggest a boat hall.

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<sup>851</sup> Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition), p. 87.

<sup>852</sup> Qi, p. 176.





Figure 93 "Garden, Canton". Attributed to John Thomson, c.1866. Getty Research Institute, reference: 84.XP.728.7



Figure 94 Left: The boat-hall in Keyuan, Dongguan, 2009. Right: The boat hall in Qinghuiyuan, taken from the other pond in the garden. Date unknown (before 1982) in *Classical Chinese gardens*

There are several examples of surviving boat halls in gardens around Guangzhou where the buildings are located similarly as the Fuyinyuan's example, along the main body of water. In the Keyuan in Dongguan, the boat hall is located on the side of the lake (Left side Figure

94).<sup>853</sup> In the Qinghuiyuan, the boat hall overlooks the main pond (Right side Figure 94) and can be seen from the secondary pond.<sup>854</sup> Both are rectangle-shaped buildings with two stories.<sup>855</sup>

In general, in Guangzhou the ‘boat shape’ of *chuanting* is understated, which shows that the garden design was subtle enough to suggest the idea of a boat rather than display the image of one. The Hong merchants’ used this local architectural element to display their taste, in what is perhaps the most elegant part of their gardens.



Figure 95 Door in the Shizilin, Suzhou. 2009

Another architectural element frequently found in gardens of China is a wall pierced by openings. However, in the Wu case study, a specific type of wall with an opening is found: a short screen wall pierced by a door located. There are two screen walls pierced by doors

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<sup>853</sup> Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition), p. 87.

<sup>854</sup> Qi Lu, 岭南园林艺术 (*Art of Lingnan gardens*) (Bilingual edition), p. 86.

<sup>855</sup> This photograph of the Qinghuiyuan from an unknown date precluding more recently alterations was found in Yun Qian, *Classical Chinese Gardens* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Company, 1982), p. 145.

found in the Fuyinyuan: one with an octagonal door located on the promenade before the covered bridge, and another located between the water-based kiosk and the series of rooms used to welcome visitor.

The short screen wall is an interesting architectural element from the point of view of self-representation. This is a feature whose function can be linked to *fengshui*, in order to stop evil spirits to enter a place. In Chinese gardens the use of walls pierced by doors without obstruction is also meant to interrupt visually the scenery: the opening frames the scenery beyond the door and enhances the visitor's experience.<sup>856</sup> Although doors and windows are commonly used as elements to structure and frame the garden space across China, usually these openings are opened in a complete wall. For example, the wall pierced by a four-lobed door in the Shizilin, Suzhou (Figure 95) closes the courtyard completely.

The short size of the walls in the Fuyinyuan might be attributed to their proximity to water, but their functionality seems reduced because the visitor can still see the rest of the scenery on one or two sides of the wall. The oddity of this feature is better understood through the example of a landscape scenery sold by Martyn Gregory. Several women are represented crossing a screen wall through a door on the left side (Figure 96).<sup>857</sup> The wall is clearly not complete, as the same garden scenery can be seen on both sides of the door. It is possible that it has a function related to *fengshui* that is unique to this region.

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<sup>856</sup> Antoine Gournay, 'Le système des ouvertures dans l'aménagement spatial du jardin chinois (Openings as elements of the spatial layout of Chinese gardens)', *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident*, 2000, pp. 61–64.

<sup>857</sup> "China and the Chinese. Oswald Carr - RA Canton 1859". Owner was Oswald Carr (1836-1868), who either purchased or commissioned it from the artist. Leaf from "album of 34 landscapes of mountain and river views with Chinese figures in pen and ink and grey wash, 17 interiors and garden scenes in black pen and ink outline touched with grey wash, and 8 figure drawings in black pen and ink outline with grey wash" Reference ND1044 .C5 1982. Martyn Gregory Gallery, *Hong Kong and the China Trade: Historical Pictures by Chinese and Western Artists 1770-1930* (London: Martyn Gregory Gallery, 1997), p. 78.

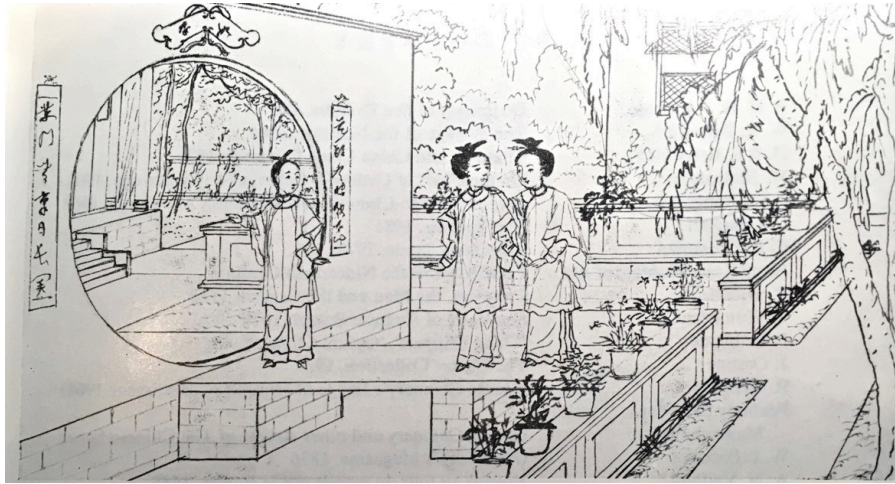


Figure 96 “China and the Chinese. Oswald Carr - RA Canton 1859” in Martyn Gregory Gallery’s Martyn Gregory Gallery, *Hong Kong and the China Trade: Historical Pictures by Chinese and Western Artists 1770-1930*

The use of such a short screen wall is a particularly inventive way to create a surprising scenery in a small space. As far as I am aware, only in Guangzhou are those short screen walls seen in such disposition. This element can be considered a local invention in the sense that it adapts an already existing architectural element, the screen wall, to the conditions of a small urban garden in sub-tropical weather. I would argue that this shows that garden builders in Guangzhou were able to compete with other regions in terms of creativity, and that the value of such an invention cannot be only judged by its presence or not in Jiangnan gardens.

Several other examples of screen walls with doors can be found in contemporary pictorial sources. In an export painting titled “Howqua's Garden” kept in the Hong Kong Museum of Art, two short screen walls pierced by different shapes of doors are represented in succession (Figure 97). The paintings’ screen walls are located in a similar position as those in the Fuyinyuan: on a pathway near a pond. Another example is found in a detail of a Chinese wallpaper in Saltram estate in Plymouth (UK), that was probably made in Guangzhou.<sup>858</sup> The screen door can be seen on the left side in the background of this detail (Figure 98) and in a similar location near the water.

<sup>858</sup> Photo of Saltram (Plymouth), Study, collage of prints and pictures probably hung 1740s–50s. Probably made in Guangzhou. Image courtesy of Emile de Bruijn, sent by email.



Figure 97 “Howqua's garden”. Attributed to Guan Lianchang. Mid-19th century. Hong Kong Museum of Art, reference AH1980.0005.034



Figure 98 Detail. Chinese wallpaper, in Saltram estate, Plymouth (UK). Credit: Emile de Bruijn.

There are at least two photographs taken by Westerners that represent short screen walls pierced by doors located in Guangdong in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. One example is an albumen print attributed to John Thomson. Titled “View of a garden showing a moon gate with a footbridge in the foreground, Canton, China” it has been annotated with the date of 1869 and is kept in the Canadian Centre for Architecture (Figure 99). The composition focuses on a short screen wall with a round door, located in an unnamed Guangzhou garden. In another photograph kept in the Basel Mission, a screen wall, this time with an octagonal-shaped door, separates a lotus tank from the rest of a courtyard (Figure 100).<sup>859</sup>



**Figure 99** “View of a garden showing a moon gate with a footbridge in the foreground, Canton (now Guangzhou), China”. Attributed to John Thomson. 1869. Albumen silver print. Canadian Centre for Architecture. Reference: PH1987:0309

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<sup>859</sup> A view taken by Karl Christ Gutmann in Guangdong Province. Taken between 01.01.1897 and 31.12.1902. Black and white positive, paper print and gelatin-silver. Basel Mission 21, reference A-30.17.056

A-30.17.56



Figure 100 “A distinguished Chinese in his lotus garden”. Karl Christ Gutmann. Circa 1897-1902. Basel Mission reference A-30.17.056

### *The (almost) absent rocks*

In general gardens in Guangdong contain fewer rocks than is common in Jiangnan and in northern imperial gardens. The main reason behind this lack of rock is to be attributed to the prohibitive cost and time-consuming logistics of bringing rocks such from their place of production. The most popular type in Jiangnan and in the northern imperial gardens was the Taihu rock, but in Guangdong other types of rocks more readily available can also be found: for example, the Yingshi mentioned in the Wu case study.

Rocks do not appear very frequently in the two case studies. The Fuyinyuan’s rockery as seen in Tianyu’s painting is one of the most important ones (Figure 68). It is possible that this rockwork is represented in one of Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore’s picture: taken in an unnamed ‘Houqua’s house’, the view shows a blurry rock element in the background through an octagonal door (Figure 101).



Figure 101 “Courtyard in Howqua House” Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore. Circa 1869. National Anthropological Archive U.S.A. Reference: NAA INV 04503100

The most detailed written description of rockworks in the case studies is related to the Pan gardens: British naturalist John Potts who visited Guangzhou in 1821, visited the Squire (Pan Youwei)’s garden and mentioned a large rockwork. The structure is said to span the whole length of the pond, which itself takes much of the space in the garden: “He has representations of Rocks in various forms which are built of a kind of [illegible] and indeed the appearance of the house and garden has more the appearance of a grotto than any thing I can compare them to. [There is] a stagnating pond overhung with the grotesque work above mentioned...”<sup>860</sup>

Besides the Pan and Wu gardens, contemporary written sources show that there were enough rocks in Guangzhou gardens to catch Western visitor’s attention. For example, Pfeiffer wrote around 1847 that “There was also no scarcity of rocks, both single and in groups, ornamented with flower-pots”.<sup>861</sup> Charles Taylor also mentions rockworks in relation to his visit to Guangzhou:

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<sup>860</sup> Royal Horticultural Society. John Potts, Rough journal, Rare Books Room Shelf 122. Classification 910POT. 12<sup>th</sup> of November 1821.

<sup>861</sup> Pfeiffer, pp. 111–12.



The rocks are piled up and cemented together with a kind of plaster, which becomes, in a little time, as hard as the rock itself. Sometimes these piles of artificial rock-work are twenty feet high — not always solid masses, but oftener so built up as to form arches and crevices, caverns and grottoes, nooks and corners, of every shape that can be thought of — the more odd and strange, the more beautiful in native estimation. Then these rocks have paths winding about in all directions, inside and out, up flights of steps and down, often forming an intricate labyrinth.<sup>862</sup>

This specific aspect of Guangzhou gardens requires an in-depth research, but the scattered pictorial sources that were found until now give hope that such a study is indeed possible. There are a few rocks represented in contemporary pictorial sources, but they are sometimes difficult to match with a precise location. An exceptional series of stereographs taken by Pierre Joseph Rossier around 1860 provides examples of rockworks linked to precise locations. One of such is a large rockwork located in the Temple of Longevity (Figure 17). The quality of the photography is however not good enough to determine the type of rock with certainty.

Lu Qi dedicated a small section to rocks in his book *The private gardens of Lingnan*.<sup>863</sup> Rocks were an important if not essential aspect of gardens in China from the Song dynasty on.<sup>864</sup> During the Ming dynasty rocks became fully part of the luxury consumption that gardens represented for upper classes Chinese.<sup>865</sup> Finally, in the Qing dynasty “maps of the city of Suzhou represent the garden sites by the conventional representation of the piled-up rocks of the ‘artificial mountains’ ” as if rockworks were essentially synonymous to the idea of gardens.<sup>866</sup> The absence of rocks is an important factor in a scholarly evaluation of a garden’s worth and might explain the lack of research on Guangzhou gardens. A systematic research on the topic might help bringing more awareness on these local gardens in general.

To sum up this discussion chapter, it appears that the gardens of Pan and Wu shared some common features with local Guangzhou gardens of the time. The gardens fulfilled the needs of their owners and reflected the Hong merchants’ social ambitions. When it comes to the

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<sup>862</sup> Charles Taylor, p. 64.

<sup>863</sup> Qi, pp. 179–93.

<sup>864</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 73.

<sup>865</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 97.

<sup>866</sup> Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, p. 164.

function of self-representation, the gardens of Pan and Wu might not have corresponded to what was considered as elegant gardening in the late Qing dynasty. It is difficult to determine whether this discordance is due to the lack of pictorial sources on the larger residential gardens of the two families, if it the logical result of a failed attempt to join the literati social rank, or if the Hong merchants just wanted to use their wealth as they saw fit. One of the most striking gardening elements revealed through the two case studies is the prominence of potted flowers in Guangzhou gardens. Although such practice would probably have been considered as vulgar in Jiangnan gardens, the use of potted plants in colourful displays arguably represent one of the most creative aspects of Hong merchants' gardens. The practice is made especially noteworthy in the case of the Pan gardens, whose potted plants were exchanged with Western naturalists and obtained through the Junk Trade with East Asia.

## CONCLUSION

The gardens of the Pan and Wu were the reflection of the social, economical and cultural history of Guangzhou during the Canton System and its aftermath. The intertwined story of the Pan and Wu's gardens span a period of more than a century, from a peak in garden building in Guangzhou to a progressive decline. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the city was simultaneously at the forefront of the Chinese Empire's global interactions, and engaged in a fast-tracked development of its local cultural identity. The instauration of the Canton System had an impact on the development of Guangzhou garden-making, by contributing to the necessary accumulation of wealth for luxurious residences to be built in the city. The sudden prominence of Guangzhou also meant that the numbers of officials that came from across China to serve as officials in the city increased. As a result, contemporary research into local history was greatly accelerated, while the head Hong merchants sponsored such local cultural endeavours. In turn it meant that high profile scholars such as Tan Ying would leave extensive comments on the Wu family's gardens, insuring that the latter were recorded in the same way as scholar's gardens.

The two case studies have allowed in-depth analysis of the relationships between Western and Chinese merchants in Canton System Guangzhou. By putting the Hong families at the centre of the narrative, rather than the Western traders, this research intended to counter the Eurocentrism displayed in most Western studies of the Canton System period. The Hong merchant's residences and gardens were the background of a flourishing friendship and respect between different nations. The Pan and Wu gardens were used to host Western guests on the occasion of luxurious chopsticks banquets, as an unofficial form of Sino-Western diplomacy. It is undeniable that the Hong merchants held the upper hand in such a relationship, and this thesis provided an overdue insight into their personal lives as exemplified by their gardens.

When Sino-Western relations soured as a consequence of the opium trade, access to the merchant's gardens was also altered in consequence. After the occupation of Guangzhou during the Opium Wars, the combination of increasingly resentful local inhabitants and the possibility to explore further the Chinese territory meant that most Western visitors moved to

Beijing, Shanghai or Hong Kong.<sup>867</sup> For foreign visitors to Guangzhou, the Hong merchants' gardens merely became one of the city's touristic sights.

The Hong merchant's gardens that had been described with admiration under the Canton System, were received with increased derision in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Sino-Western tensions rose. The link between Guangzhou gardens and *Chinoiserie* was part of the problem: the tiny, intricate urban gardens were seen as artificial and grotesque. After Westerners gained access to gardens in Beijing and around Shanghai more easily, Guangzhou gardens progressively disappeared from Western descriptions of China. As a result, despite the historical prominence of Guangzhou in both the histories of East-Western encounters and modern China, late imperial Guangzhou gardens have not obtained a proportional place in the modern scholarly history of gardens in China, either in Chinese or in Western languages.

The fact that William Chambers based his Chinese designs on gardens in Guangzhou is barely recognised in the field. Yet, if Western visitors had had access to Jiangnan at the same period, it is very unlikely that local private garden owners would have provided such generous access to their private space. Western naturalists would also have struggled to find such plant variety as they found with the help of the Hong, who sat at the centre of global exchanges in East Asia.<sup>868</sup>

Before this thesis, the Hong merchants' gardens were a virtually untouched topic in Western languages publications, despite the large amount of sources available. The reasons for this oversight were explained in Chapter 2 and 3: it is very likely that the mercantile aspect of the Hong merchant's gardens were part of the reason why Chinese scholars did not engage more with the subject, and Western scholars have tended to follow uncritically Chinese scholars' judgement in terms of taste. Despite being located in a region traditionally considered as peripheral, the Hong merchants' gardens were created at a peak in the urban history of Guangzhou. As the third largest Chinese city and its first harbour, detailed local urban historical studies of Guangzhou are overdue. The two case studies demonstrated that Guangzhou local gardens certainly deserve to be researched as thoroughly as Jiangnan or northern imperial gardens, and that more studies on Guangzhou garden history studies will be

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<sup>867</sup> See Frances Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese: Treaty Port Life in China 1843-1943* (London: John Murray, 1998).

<sup>868</sup> Richard and Woudstra, pp. 496–97.

forthcoming. The Hong merchants were as central to the social, economical and cultural life of Guangzhou that the Anhui salt merchants were to that of Yangzhou.

Furthermore, Pan Zhencheng 潘振承 (Pan Khequa I) and Wu Bingjian 伍秉鑑 (Houqua) were truly exceptional as individuals: they circumvented the obstacles of the Canton System to enrich themselves and their families, then improved their social standing. In each of the case studies, it was demonstrated that the Pan and Wu families could only afford their opulent residences with gardens thanks to the business cunning of the Hong merchants in their midst. When other Hong merchants were left bankrupt, both of the Pan and Wu head merchants held onto their fortune by finding unique trading assets to keep their business afloat through the vicissitudes of the period.

As a result they were both able to leave a sizeable estate to their heirs, Pan Youdu 潘有度 and Wu Chongyao 伍崇曜. The Pan's Tongwen/Tongfu trading company endured under Pan Khequa II's guidance, whereas Wu Chongyao dealt less astutely with the consequences of the Opium Wars for his family's fortune. By the third generation after their brilliant forebears, both families had a much looser grip on the Sino-Western trade. Nonetheless their ancestor's ambition for social elevation had been partially successful and several family members had obtained various official posts.

Although Hong merchants in general never became important enough to enter the mainstream of Chinese history, Pan Zhencheng and Wu Bingjian were the exception to the rule.<sup>869</sup> Despite their prominence in the Sino-Western and Junk Trade, the two heads of the Hong merchants are still difficult to document in Chinese gazetteers because they were not as prolific as their descendants when it came to writing poems or publishing anthologies. Without the Western accounts of their characters, much of what is known about them would have disappeared.

Several of the gardens' functions were clearly the result of the Hong merchants' strive for social mobility. Pan Zhencheng and Wu Bingjian's made tireless efforts to educate their descendants, as the study of the gardens' function revealed. The latter in turn used their forebear's fortune to collect objects of art and rare books, and build extravagant gardens in

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<sup>869</sup> Cheong, p. 14.

Henan and Huadi. Those residences with gardens hosted the expanding Pan and Wu families, and hosted gatherings of contemporary scholars of the calibre of Xie Lansheng and Zhang Weiping.

The two families made great efforts to distinguish themselves when using their gardens for self-representation. Ultimately, the Pan and Wu might not have been entirely successful in their endeavour: as the available pictorial sources on their gardens show, the latter displayed the hallmarks of mercantile pursuits as exemplified by numerous potted plants. In the Huadi garden that belonged to both families in succession (Dongyuan then Fuyinyuan), the pond was built in geometrical masonry, instead of the irregular rocky banks that were considered elegant in the capital and in Jiangnan. Even the Pan Youdu's cousin Pan Shicheng demonstrated a more accurate understanding of what a scholar garden should appear at the time in the layout of his Haishan xianguan.

Despite this assessment, the Haishan xianguan would certainly not have allowed the same insights into local gardening culture. Thanks to the numerous Western sources documenting the gardens of Pan and Wu in Panyu County, the first systematic research on local historical Guangzhou gardens during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries could be conducted. The Pan and Wu case studies allowed the identification of at least four gardening elements found in other contemporary gardens in the region: geometric walled ponds, boat halls, short screen walls pierced by doors, and potted flowers. The creativity displayed by the Hong merchants and other residents of Guangzhou in their gardens is definitely worthy of further research.

Both families' gardens also revealed a specific aspect that had a significant impact beyond their own family: the Pan facilitated global plant exchanges and the Wu sponsored the compilation of important local history publications. Beyond the field of garden history, the present research's findings should notably be of prime interest to botanists of China researching precise aspects of plant cultivation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. After presenting the two case studies at several conferences, it was repeatedly suggested that the body of pictorial data uncovered would allow for a thorough investigation of potted flowers in late imperial Guangzhou. The numerous early photographs of plants in Huadi nurseries and the Fuyinyuan can be used to analyse in detail the local practices in terms of topiary and dwarfing techniques. The display of potted flowers in the Hong merchants' gardens is therefore the most innovative aspect uncovered in this thesis.

I will conclude by discussing the future of the field of Chinese garden history. There is hope that Guangzhou studies will benefit from the recent renewal of interest in early photographs of China. In future research, Guangzhou could be used as a case study to visualise what Chinese cities looked like before their destruction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of conflicts and rampant urbanisation. As such there is hope that the Fuyinyuan can be used as the subject of a 3D visualisation, similar to the Guangzhou Factories project started by Chen Song-chuan while in Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.<sup>870</sup>

It is hoped that the wealth of pictorial sources unveiled in this thesis will also inspire further research in the fields of global history and travel literature. The interactions between American traders and the Wu family, that have so far been mostly studied from the angle of economic history, would deserve a more nuanced examination.<sup>871</sup> The Bryant Tilden manuscript kept in the Peabody Essex Museum would also be a rich topic for a monograph and efforts to publish large extracts of it should be encouraged.

After hearing Sarah Easterby-Smith's presentation at the John Bradby Blake symposium at the Oak Spring Garden Foundation in Upperville, Virginia in May 2017, I started to look into the British interest for botany and plant collections when visiting Guangzhou under the Canton System.<sup>872</sup> There is the scope for a detailed comparative study between nursery practices in Britain and in China at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and examining the impact of Joseph Banks' plant collectors on the development of the Huadi nurseries. As a result, Sino-Western exchanges of botanical knowledge and plants during the Canton System will be the object of my next research project.

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<sup>870</sup> ntuwebteam and Chen Song-chuan, *Chinese Mandarins versus European Merchants* <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDy2\\_U7gWUM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDy2_U7gWUM)> [accessed 31 October 2017].

<sup>871</sup> John D. Wong.

<sup>872</sup> Easterby-Smith.





## **ANNEXES**

## ANNEXE A Pan family

Main Name in Chinese	Dates	Generation & Branch	Names in English
Pan Zhencheng 潘振承	1714-1788/9	Ancestor	Puan Khequa (I), Poankeequa, Khequa. Ponkeiqua
Pan Seguan 潘瑟官	d. 1765 or 1777		Pan Sequa
Pan Zhenwen	d. 1770		
Pan Youneng 潘有能	1742-1764	1	
Pan Youwei 潘有为/為	1744-1821	2	Squire: "Puan Youwei (the second brother, who died this year, the Squire)" EIC G/12/273, 1821/10/11, p.102
Pan Youxun 潘有勳 / 勳	d. 1780	3	
Pan Youdu 潘有度	1755-1820	4	Pan Kequa II , Puan Kequa, Pan Zhixiang (actual registration name acc to BL)
Pan Youyuan 潘有原		5	
Pan Youjiang 潘有江		6	
Pan Youke 潘有科		7	
Pan Zhengheng 潘正亨	1779-1837	1	
Pan Zhengmian 潘正綿/綿		2	
Pan Zhengang 潘正綱 / 綱		4	
Pan Zhenchang 潘正常	1787-1812	4	

Main Name in Chinese	Dates	Generation & Branch	Names in English
Pan Zhengwei 潘正炜/煒	1791-1850	4	Puankhequa (III). Pontingqua?
Pan Zhengyi 潘正义 / 正義		5	
Pan Zhengheng 潘正衡	1787-1830	5	
Pan Zhengzhen 正贞 / 正貞		6	
Pan Zhengwei 潘正威		N/A	Tingguan, Tinqu
Pan Changyao 潘长耀	?-1823	N/A	Conseequa
Pan Shizheng 潘师征 / 師徵		4	
Pan Shikang 潘仕康		5	
Pan Shu 潘恕	1810-1865	5	
Pan Dinggui 潘定桂	1811-1840	(5) 6	
Pan Shicheng 潘仕诚	1804-1873	Cousin	Puntinqua, Po-ting- qua, Putinqua, Pontinqua, etc.
Pan Baolin 潘宝琳		4	
Pan Guangying 潘光瀛	1838-1891	5 & 6	
Pan Feisheng 潘飞声 / 飛聲	1858-1934	5	
Pan Shiguang 潘仕光 (BL)			
Pan Zhengyu 潘正裕	1818-91		
Pan Yizeng 潘仪增	1858-		



## ANNEXE B. Wu family

Main Name in Chinese	Dates	Generation & Branch	Names in English
Wu Chaofeng	1613-1693 (Wong) -1694 (Eberhard)		
Wu Guoying 伍国莹	1732-1810 (Wu genealogy), 1731-1800 (Mo),	Gen 4	Sometimes called Howqua (I) but actually not a Hong merchant.
Wu (Guo)zhao 伍國釗/国钊	1734/5-1802	Gen 4, Cousin	Geowqua
Wu Shouchang 伍受昌			Woo Show-chang
Wu Bingyong 伍秉鏞	1764-1824	5th Gen, 1st Branch	
Wu Bingjun 伍秉钧	1767-1801	5th Gen, 2d Branch	Puiqua; do not confuse with Poyqua, Poiqua, Puqua or Poqua.
Wu Bingjian 伍秉鉴/鑑	1769-1843	5th Gen, 3d Branch	Houqua, sometimes called Houqua II, (Also called Puiqua after his brother died) Woo Pingkien, etc
Wu Bingzhen 伍秉鈺	1770-1835	5th Gen, 4th Branch	
Wu Xiguang 伍锡光	1818-1847	6th Gen, 1st Branch	
Wu Yuanzhi 伍元芝	1789-1829?	6th Gen, 3d Branch	
Wu Yuanlan 伍元兰 / 蘭	1793-1820?	6th Gen (2d Branch)	
Wu Yuan'e 伍元莪	1795-1825	6th Gen, 3d branch	

Main Name in Chinese	Dates	Generation & Branch	Names in English
Wu Yuanhua 伍元华 / 華	1801-1833	6th Gen, 3d branch	Sometimes called Houqua III
Wu Chongyao 伍崇曜	1810-1864	6th Gen, 3d branch	Sometimes called Houqua IV, Woo Shaouyung
Wu Yuansong 伍元菘	1816-1843	6th Gen, 3d branch	
Wu Chonghui 伍崇暉 / 暉	1828-1880	6th Gen, 3d branch	
Wu Yuankui 伍元葵	1810-1866	6th Gen, 4th branch	
Wu Guanlan 伍观澜 / 觀瀾	1785-1852	6th Gen, cousin	
Wu Shaotang 伍绍棠	1834-1890	7th Gen, 3d	
Yizhuang 懿庄 / 莊 (5th uncle? Written by Wu Chuoyu)		7th Gen, cousin	
Wu Zhangmian 伍长绵 / 伍長綿	1819-1841	7th Gen, 2d	Wu Zhanggeng 伍长庚 / 長庚
Wu Tingzhao 伍廷诏	1830-1865	7th Gen, 4th	
Wu Zhaoji 伍肇基	1803-1828	7th Gen, cousin	
Wu Zhangyue 伍张樾 / 伍張樾	1829-1882	7th Gen, 3rd	
Wu Youyong 伍有庸			
Wu Jiayu 伍家裕	1875-?	Cousin	
Wu Shouchang 伍受昌			Woo Show-chang

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“Chinese wallpaper”. Saltram Estate, Plymouth, UK. Photograph, credit Emile de Bruijn.

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## Netherlands

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"Flower boat". Attributed to Lai Afong. Taken in the surroundings of Guangzhou, late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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### **Oak Spring Garden Foundation**

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### **Peabody Essex Museum**

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E83532.16 “Howqua's garden”. (One of a pair of paintings). Tingqua or Studio of Tingqua. Mid-nineteenth century, gouache on paper. 10 7/16 x 13 3/4 inches (26.5 x 35 cm)

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