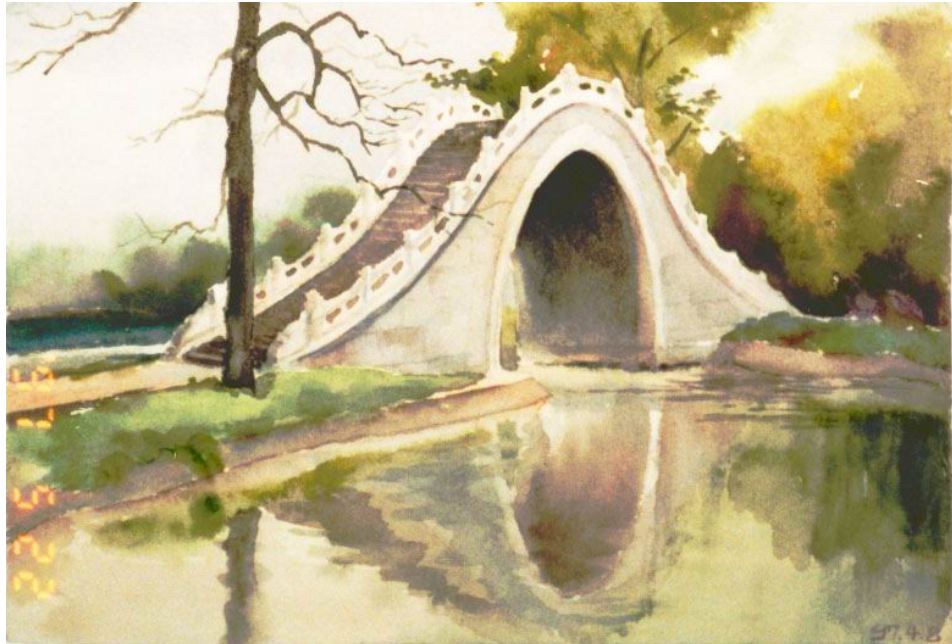


**'Breaking and Repairing':
Conflicting Values in the Historic Gardens of China**

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This thesis aims to bridge—a gap in knowledge and information, but while it provides foundations for the structure it does not aim to plug the gap. As a result this is a philosophical thesis rather than practical conservation treatise.
Bridging a gap is more resourceful than filling a gap

(Source: Jade-band Bridge at the *Baohu* Park, Hefei, watercolour by author, 8th April, 1997)
This bridge was built in 1987 in Baohe Park, a public park laid out in 1985, on the site of the historical city moat (the river seen in the painting). In my youth, I crossed this bridge from home to the Children's Palace for after-class calligraphy club; when I grew up, I crossed this bridge to the university; later, I crossed this bridge to the provincial library... it is part of my life, and therefore, my heritage.

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¹ The Chinese names in this paragraph and the next are written in Chinese custom, that is, surname first, and first name(s) after. But in the thesis, to avoid confusion, the Chinese names appeared in footnotes are first name(s) first, and then the surname.

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...

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Abstract

This thesis is about the values embodied in gardens, as seen through an investigation of the conflicting values which have changed the position of China and Chinese historic gardens through the 20th century.

The story starts from an imperial garden built in the early 18th century, Yuanmingyuan, where the Eastern and Western civilisations met, learned from and fought each other, all on the basis of their contrasted value systems. The conflict not only broke Yuanmingyuan, but also broke the Chinese imperial system as well as the traditional value system, generating a sequence of political movements and pushing the Chinese towards values that allow dialogue between sides (East and West, Tradition and Modern).

The second story, about imperial altars, presents the conflict in values between Chinese modern and traditional beliefs. It examines two different regimes: the Republican and Nationalist eras in the first half of the century, and the Communist era which followed it, examining how they have interpreted the meanings of imperial altars, as radical materialisation moves to reformative cultural reconstruction. This story shows that long standing values are not easily replaced by modern ideologies.

The third story, Suzhou gardens, is about the conflicting of values between individuals and the nation. It reveals how Suzhou gardens, which were established as a spiritual and physical home for Chinese literati, have been transformed into a national icon of Chinese garden art, only for today's Suzhou gardens to lose the essence of the culture which gave birth to them.

The last story, about Huizhou gardens, focuses on the 21st century, when tourism supports local villagers in the restoration of their derelict gardens; but it is also a time in which China has promulgated heritage conservation principles which adopt an internationally validated spirit of authenticity and integrity. This is a story about the conflict between the values of modern conservation philosophy and of those of vernacular garden tradition, and how they have suppressed and contributed to the continuity of garden culture.

By studying the changing of values through a series of conflicts and alterations, this thesis concludes that sustaining garden culture as a whole, rather than the conservation of a select few 'historic' or 'heritage' gardens, is better for the continuity of human tradition.

Keywords: attitudes; treatment; 20th century, heritage; garden conservation; garden culture; gardening ethic

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List of Abbreviations

CCP	Chinese Communist Party 中国共产党
CCPAO	Central Committee for Protection of Ancient Objects 中央古物保管委员会
CNP/KMT	Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) 中国国民党
CRGASS	Committee for Restoring Gardens and Ancient Sites of Suzhou 苏州市园林古迹修整委员会
LPAO	Law of Preservation of Ancient Objects 古物保存法
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PRC	the People's Republic of China
SMCCR	Suzhou Management Committee of Cultural Relics 苏州市文物管理委员会
SPMCCRA	Suzhou Protection and Management Committee of Cultural Relics and Ancient Sites 苏州市文物古迹保管委员会
SRCC	Society for the Research in Chinese Architecture 中国营造学社
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHS	World Heritage Site
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites

Foreword

My journey towards a PhD started in 2003, the year I finished my Masters dissertation. In that dissertation, I studied Huizhou gardens, a vernacular garden type which had scarcely attracted much scholarly interest at that time. I drew the conclusion that Huizhou gardens have an intrinsically formal nature. This finding excited me, since the contemporary understanding of Chinese gardens is that 'Chinese gardens are naturalistic in contrast to Western formal gardens'. The finding of formality in Chinese gardens intrigued my passion for research and urged me to explore further, with key questions hanging in mind, 'What does Chinese formality mean? Are East and West indeed poles apart?'

Meanwhile, there was another question, also about Huizhou, 'how to save Huizhou gardens from the edge of disappearing?' At the time when I did my field survey (in the early 2000s), although archives and chronicles indicated a large number of gardens in Huizhou, what disappointed me was that few of them had actually survived. (Figures 0.1, 0.2) After understanding the value of Huizhou gardens, I felt a mission to do something for them.



It was extremely hard, however, to start from scratch on the 'formal gardens' in China, especially thinking about the range of gardens and walled landscapes I need to explore (temples, family shrines, tomb gardens, imperial gardens, official gardens, neo-Confucian influenced private gardens and so on). In 2004 I did a garden survey in five regions of China, stretching from the north to the south, and from the east to midland, and collected nearly 50 examples. (Figure 0.3, 0.4) At this point, an imperial garden *Yuanmingyuan* came into my view. It was a unique example compared with other imperial gardens, showing a clear sense of order from a seemingly natural contour.



Figure 0.3 (left) *Ke Yuan* (Ke Garden) (1850-), Guangdong;

Figure 0.4 (right) Imperial Collage (1306-), Beijing.

To find and understand the formality in Chinese gardens was my initial goal. These are two of the examples I collected in 2004 (source: photos by author, September 2004)

In 2005, there was an intense year-long debate which involved both professionals from a wide area of subjects and the general public of all ages, caused by a water-proof membrane installation scheme for the lakes of Yuanmingyuan. This revealed the sensitive values of Yuanmingyuan, which made both my supervisor and

me think it a case study deserving to form the content of the whole thesis. So I focused on all my attention on Yuanmingyuan, using it as a mirror to reflect the relationship between garden and ideology (*Reconstructing Yuanmingyuan: A Mirror of Changing Attitudes to Cultural Heritage in China*). I started to collect all the materials I could find on Yuanmingyuan, and only then realized how important this garden once was, and still is, in terms of garden aesthetics, East-West value conflicts, as well as Chinese interpretation to the past and to the West.

However, in 2006 when I finished data collection and was about to write up, another finding again shifted my topic. A book (developed from a PhD thesis) entitled *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, in which Yuanmingyuan and the other examples are investigated, tells a story which is very similar to that I wished to draw in the Yuanmingyuan story. So again, I had to change my direction, and the most workable way was to extend the number of case studies.

By this time, that is April 2006, I got my (nearly) final topic: *The Attitudes and Approaches towards Historic Gardens in China 1910s-2000s*. The key question shifted from garden and ideology to a more philosophical quest, that is, why do we conserve (or not conserve) gardens? So, after three years wondering and exploring, I came back to the initial goal of garden conservation.

Without hesitation, the Huizhou gardens were the first choice as an additional case study, and then the Suzhou gardens, since they are commonly acknowledged as an 'icon' of Chinese gardens. Imperial Altars came slightly later, after I did some general research on historic gardens in 1900s-1949, where the materials on imperial Altars almost occupied half of the contents, making me realize their significance in the early 20th century. So I cut them out and made it a separate chapter, that is, a case study.

At the beginning of this research, I acted as a garden conservation academic, being equipped by various national and international conservation laws and regulations. I aimed to hold a critical view on China's treatment of its garden heritage in the 20th

century and today. Besides library work, this also required study about current Chinese thought about and how they treat their gardens. Therefore, in the summer of 2006, I conducted 27 interviews with the people whom I defined as the 'decision makers' of Yuanmingyuan, Suzhou gardens and Huizhou gardens. All the interviews were audio recorded (55 hours in total), word-by-word transcribed (over 530,000 words in total) and analysed by using the software Nvivo 8. However, when incorporating them into the thesis, I found it rather awkward to put the seemingly 'scientific' results into the story, because after listening to them and trying to think in their shoes, I did not any more view my interviewees as 'objects' to be examined and judged, but rather as 'teachers'. From each of them, I learned their view of gardens and their experiences of working with these gardens, and why the conservation of gardens had never been ideal. These interviews deserve a separate place, where they are allowed to speak on their own, in an unabridged context. Therefore, I didn't include the interview analysis in this thesis, although I did use some materials to build up the story, and my thesis (idea) is partly formed by their opinions.

Another contribution of these interviews was that they changed my viewpoint on heritage conservation, or rather, broke my initial boundaries (identity) as a 'garden conservation professional'. I began to feel less sure about my previous ethics on conservation and heritage, which I adopted from Western principles. The clear difference between the Chinese (especially the people who are not trained as conservation professionals) and the Western view of conservation hangs on their values. So, before I was able to judge, I needed to learn more. I needed another move.

So, here I am—

Introduction

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The idea of this thesis is to reveal the transformation of Chinese values in the 20th century through the mirror of garden heritage. Although a 'heritage' study, the aim of this thesis is not to *judge* the treatment of heritage in China (certainly there are many pitiful misuses and losses of heritage), but rather, through exploring how the heritage is valued and treated, to *understand* the relationship of heritage with its contemporary environment (political, social, economic, cultural and so on), to explore meanings of heritage to its people (that is, how heritage is valued by various groups of people), and whether there is a common bond between heritage and human nature (that is, whether there is real need or desire for heritage), and ultimately to uncover a Chinese response to the values of heritage and a possible future for heritage conservation in the context of sustainability as well as increasing the quality of life.

Current heritage and conservation studies, as seen from the perspective of the international charters (such as the *Florence Charter* and the *Burra Charter*, the Australian charter which has had an international influence) and national conservation principles (such as *Conservation Principles* by the English Heritage and the *China Principles*) mainly focus on the preservation of historical fabric, and the management of change in order to realise the maximum value of heritage. However, most of these conservation ideas have originated from the perspective of conservation professionals which determines that conservation is a prerequisite for heritage. In some circumstances the dominance of this perspective leads to expensive conservation approaches which are not affordable by participants and therefore fail to be realised, while in other circumstances heritage is alienated from its original context, making the heritage industry an all consuming culture in itself.

By observing how heritage is manipulated in the real world, in this case in 20th century China, this thesis aims to set 'heritage' free from its professional conservation prerequisite. It will then explore the reasons behind the changing appearance of heritage. This might help to deal with the conflicting values which sometimes coexist in heritage, but have not been properly addressed by current conservation charters, and to establish an ethic for heritage conservation, or rather cultural continuity, based on a wider societal perspective.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key question for this thesis is about values: what are the values of historic gardens to different groups at different times? How have historic gardens been shaped and reshaped by value conflicts during the 20th century? And what can be learned?

In order to tackle these issues, three categories of questions will be explored.

The first category is of descriptive questions: what happened to historic gardens during the 20th century, with respect to political ideology, cultural policy, garden management and research and so on?

The second category is analytical: what are the differences between the ancient and 20th century values of historic gardens? What do these differences consist of? Why did they occur? What can be learned from the differences? What are the constant features? What do they reveal?

The third category is philosophical: are historic gardens relevant to us today and tomorrow? What is the essence of garden heritage to the Chinese psyche? And, in terms of a sustainable living, what is the value of gardens that we should carry forward in aiming for cultural continuity?

METHODOLOGY

This is a historical study with a practical perspective on heritage conservation and a philosophical view of sustainable living.

The materials for this thesis were collected in various ways.

Firstly, library resources and other published sources, including texts, illustrations and manuscripts. They are the main source of information for understanding the cultural and historical context, and also supply part of the sources which help to build up an insight into detailed case studies.

Secondly, first hand sources collected from site visits to gardens. These were carried out through a period of six months' field work in Beijing, Suzhou and Huizhou in 2006 and 2007. The materials collected on site include photography, sketch drawings, survey plans, and audio recordings with garden owners, notes after informal talks with the locals and so on.

Thirdly, first hand sources collected from interviews and questionnaires. In 2006, the author interviewed 27 professionals, managers and officials associated with the case study gardens. Over 55 hours' audio recordings were made and transcribed (532,500 words in total). In 2007, twelve comprehensively designed questionnaires were handed to local garden owners of Huizhou which were followed up by informal talks about issues that had emerged from their answers on the questionnaires. The aim of interview and questionnaire survey was to achieve an understanding of the current view of historic gardens, which are unlikely to be acquired from published sources.

In summary, this research is built upon a wide range of sources including texts, illustrations, sites and people. All translations from Chinese are by the author, unless otherwise noted.

THESIS STRUCTURE AND FRAMEWORK

The thesis consists of four parts:

Firstly (chapter 1) an introduction and a review of Chinese traditional values.

Secondly (chapters 2-5) the main body of the thesis, which is constructed by four case studies.

Thirdly (chapter 6) a summary of the changing values of various types of historic gardens in China; and discussion of an ethic through which garden culture might be sustained in the 21st century

Fourthly (appendixes) giving further information related to the case studies.

Given the general context of conservation thinking related to gardens in the West during the last hundred years, it is important to provide an understanding of how this was perceived differently in China. This is done by means of a series of case studies. In order to reveal the full range of values, different aspects of garden heritage are explored.

The case studies are: the Qing imperial gardens and palaces Yuanmingyuan, imperial altars (as designed landscapes) in Beijing, classical gardens in Suzhou, and vernacular gardens of Huizhou. In each case, both the traditional values of these gardens and designed landscapes and their values in the 20th century are studied, with different emphases in each case.

Yuanmingyuan, a national heritage site and the most studied Chinese garden in the world has, since its birth, been both artistically and politically the most significant imperial garden complex in China. The study of its history, from the 1700s to the 1900s, is mainly from the perspective of the emperors as both Confucian intellectuals and rulers of the Chinese. The emperors' views of Chinese and Western values are embodied, and may be studied, in the construction and interpretation of Yuanmingyuan. In 1860, and then in 1900, Yuanmingyuan was looted and destroyed by fire started by Western forces after unsuccessful attempts to resolve Eastern-Western value conflicts manifest in confrontations related to trade and other issues. Although no longer a garden complex, the argument about and remodeling of

Yuanmingyuan continued throughout the 20th century. These changes are studied to reveal how a new set of values overtook the original values of Yuanmingyuan which brought this ‘dead’ garden complex back to life, as a heritage with little material authenticity which has nonetheless functioned as a carrier of its nation’s sentiments towards the West.

With the Imperial altars, the study of their traditional values focuses primarily on spirituality. Confucianism, the dominant ideology or philosophy in China since the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), takes consideration of both human society and the supreme force beyond human power, known as *tian* (天), or Heaven. Imperial altars are a physical representation of the Confucian belief about the universe, where Heaven stays on top, human society stays under and in a hierarchical order, with the emperor on top of the human hierarchy functioning as a communicator between Heaven and human beings. In order to consolidate the universal order, a set of rituals were set up and practiced by emperors and their subjects at imperial altars at selected times of the year as a way to show human beings’ subordination to Heavenly power. However, such belief systems were shaken by modern science and politics and finally destroyed in the first decade of the 20th century, following the collapse of the Chinese empire. Imperial altars lost their owners and meanings, so have been given various new uses and meanings, which have however shifted frequently. The changing landscapes of these altars reflect a confused nation after revolution—with a traditional hierarchy being destroyed while various new ones have not been fully in power. The study of imperial altars will focus on the 1910s to the 1950s, although their history throughout the 20th century, when China was an experimental field for various politics and ideologies, will be investigated.

The third case study is of the gardens of Suzhou. If the story of imperial altars is about the ideological shift at the national level, and the conflicts between different ideologies, then this story is about the conflicts between individuals and the nation. This study aims to explore the meaning of gardens to individuals, and how this meaning has been destroyed and new meanings instilled when private property has been taken over by the state. The focused time span is 1949-1950s and after, when the most significant change to have taken place in China is the devaluation of individuality and the enhancement of collective and national identity.

The last story is of the Huizhou gardens, which have not been as well-known as the others. Huizhou gardens are a vernacular garden group which were developed in

Huizhou area and have a history of about a thousand years. The Huizhou garden culture was mainly destroyed in 1950s as a result of socialist reform (which can also be seen in the Suzhou garden case studies) but has been regenerated, since the beginning of the 21st century as a consequence of the development of tourism. Therefore the study of Huizhou's gardens focuses on the first decade of the 21st century and aims to say how, when the 20th century had destroyed and distorted much of our garden heritage and culture, it can be restored. This study also questions the current conservation perspective of professionalism, and attempts to explore the role of local people as real force for culture, that is, the heritage for tomorrow.

Also, the four case studies each have a different emphasis on garden types. The imperial altars and Yuanmingyuan are about imperial gardens and landscapes, where the emperor as holder of the mandate of the supreme ruler of Heaven is devoted to maintaining the Heavenly order and the order of human society, as seen through the garden examples. The Suzhou and Huizhou gardens are initially private gardens, where individuals built and maintained gardens as means of both spiritual fulfillment and as material resources.

However, the four case studies share Confucian values in common. Chinese traditions are often seen as never-changing in comparison to the West, and it is true that the coherence of Chinese philosophies is stable over a long history compared with western history, where philosophies and ideologies are ever changing, marking each historical period with its own characteristics. Chinese history has mostly seen continuity in its central ideology and philosophy, even though it has been ruled by different ethnic groups at different times. This long lasting philosophy is Confucianism. For the last twenty centuries it has served as the basis of a morality-based polity and economy that remains central to the Chinese mind, today as it has in the past. By taking this into consideration, one can better understand the reasons behind this phenomenon: why change is so broadly embraced by all circles in China (from officials to the general public, from professionals to academics).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

20th century China

Why look at 20th century China? The personal reason (and a lazy answer) is, I am a Chinese person who has lived through the late 20th century.

The academic reason is that China in the 20th century experienced a huge shift, from a Heaven controlled state to a human controlled state. This is comparable to the transformation of Renaissance Europe, when the power of man challenged that of God for the first time. At the beginning of the 20th century, China began to experience the intensive revolution which took it so quickly from a traditional system towards a modern state. In this sense, 20th century Chinese history is a condensed version of half a millennium of European history. The lessons we gain from a study of China are also of value to the wider world today.

Gardens

Gardens—a dictionary definition

The term ‘garden’ is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as ‘an enclosed piece of ground devoted to the cultivation of flowers, fruit, or vegetables’ or ‘ornamental grounds used as a place of public resort’.¹

The Chinese definition of ‘garden’ similarly refers to it as a place for planting trees, flowers and vegetables or feeding and keeping animals, often surrounded by hedges. Additionally it refers to the gardened tumuli of emperors and their wives.²

The origin of the word ‘garden’ in China is found in the words *You* (囿) and *Pu* (圃). *You* is an enclosed place where trees were planted for production and animals were fed for hunting. *Pu*, as *Shuowen jiezi*—an authoritative dictionary of vocabulary

¹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 2nd edn, 20 vols (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1989), VI, p. 366.

² See *Ci hai: suo yin ben* (辞海: 缩印本 The great encyclopedia dictionary of the Chinese language: in reduced size print), ed. by Zhengnong Xia (夏征农) and others (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 1989), p.861.

written in Eastern Han times explained, is a plot of land for vegetables.³ Since then the word has also been used for tree and flower nurseries.

Other words related to gardens are: *yuán* (园) and *yuàn* (苑) and, combined with various definitive words to signify different types of gardens, orchard (*guoyuan* 果园), vegetable gardens (*caiyuan* 菜园), courtyard (*tingyuan* 庭园), tomb gardens (*lingyuan* 陵园), hunting park (*yuanyou* 苑囿) and so on. Generally, garden is translated as *huayuan* (花园), which means the garden designed for a beautiful view and pleasurable purposes, in which flowers and plants are inevitable. Combining all these terms, garden in general is a designed outdoor space for certain purposes.

The modern definition of garden in China expands in both function and types. In *The Chinese Encyclopedia*, garden refers to a broader range of places, including both enclosed gardens and open parks.⁴ As to the form of gardens, in modern China for example, in 1928 'garden' was regarded as included in architecture, which was separated from scenic and historic landscapes. In the late 20th century, however, many modern studies on Chinese gardens include a broader range of designed landscapes as gardens, such as village landscapes and scenic sites.⁵

Reviewing Chinese garden books today, however, one may find different meanings of the word garden. Some people focus on specialized man-made enclosed spaces,⁶ while others wish to accept all kinds of designed landscapes as gardens.⁷

One must bear in mind, however, that although this study's title uses the term 'gardens' of China, it is actually impossible to cover all Chinese gardens in one thesis. Firstly, the definition of China is still a term under development and about which people argue.⁸ Secondly, Chinese gardens, according to popular thinking, are the

³ Shen Xu (许慎 c.58-147AD) (compiler), Xuan Xu (徐铉 916-991) (editor), *Shuowen Jiezi (fu jianzi)* (说文解字 Exegesis of characters, with word checklist) (Beijing: Cathay Publishing, 1963), p. 129. *Shuowen Jiezi* is the earliest surviving Chinese dictionary originated in 100AD. It has been amended several times along history and the original version has long time being lost. The version (1963) used here was based on the edition made in 1873 by Changzhi Chen 陈昌治 and re-printed in 1963.

⁴ See 'Architecture, garden and town planning section' in *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* (中国大百科全书 The Chinese Encyclopedia) [on CD-ROM], 4 discs, No. 4, (Beijing, 2000).

⁵ One of examples is: Guxi Pan (潘谷西), *Jiangnan lijing yishu* (江南理景艺术 Art of landscape design in Jiangnan) (Nanjing: Southeast University Press, 2001)

⁶ See Wei-quan Zhou (周维权), *Zhongguo gudian yuanlin shi* (中国古代园林史 The history of Chinese historical gardens), 2nd edition, (Beijing, 1999).

⁷ See Duo Wang (王铎), *Zhongguo gudai yuanyuan yu wenhua* (中国古代苑园与文化 Chinese ancient gardens and its culture) (Wuhan: Hubei Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2003), p.7.

⁸ The argument on the definition of China see Zhaoguang Ge (葛兆光), 'Chongjian guanyu zhongguo de lishi lunshu—cong minzu guojia zhong zhengjiu lishi, haishi zai lishi zhong lijie minzu guojia' (重建關於「中國」的歷史論述—從民族國家中拯救歷史, 還是在歷史中理解民族國家? Reconstructing a historical

Northern imperial gardens and *Jiangnan* (The Lower Yangzi River Delta) private gardens, mainly of the Ming and Qing periods. But besides these, there have been others which have emerged and faded away, including different types of gardens in other regions of China and at other times before the Ming and the Qing. Due to the loss of material evidence and sometimes 'ignorance' of those less culturally 'high' cases, most garden types in Chinese history have been neglected. Therefore, what people today get about 'Chinese gardens' is a filtered image. But in order to keep this research on a manageable scale, four cases have been selected to represent four different types of Chinese gardens. They are far from enough to show the whole situation of Chinese gardens, but similar methods to those employed here could be used for further studies based on this one. And hopefully this is the time to remedy the shortcomings of the public's perception of 'Chinese gardens'.

*Meanings of the Garden: a personal reflection*⁹

Gardens are humans' living place, providing shelter and food, and later, visual amenity and meanings. Gardens are a representation of nature, and at the same time art and culture.¹⁰ Gardens are constructed both physically and spiritually, and are home for both the body and the soul. Therefore, the meanings of gardens should be explored from various perspectives: physical, mental and spiritual. Garden can also be read as a metaphor, through which the values and principles of gardens can mirror a general value towards a society and, furthermore, a worldview. For example, from the French formal gardens and fountains, one can deduce the social values and fashion at the time (human power controls natural force); from a Dutch landscape, one can see their honest view of function and the efficient use of natural resources and technology; from the Japanese dry mountain-and-water garden, one can be stunned by a silent spiritual world; from a Chinese pleasure garden, one can be enchanted by the joy of life emerging from mixing nature with culture, material with mental elements.

Gardens have human scale (a scale which is compatible to human's perception), that is, they are not as large as the cosmos or as tiny as bacteria, so humans can see

discourse on 'China'—to save history from a Nation State, or to understand a Nation State from history?), *Twenty-First Century*, No. 90 (2007), 90-103.

⁹ This section is based on the author's personal view, inspired amongst others by David Cooper, *A philosophy of gardens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁰ David Cooper, *A Philosophy of Gardens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

their gardens with normal eyes, and experience gardens with the senses they are naturally given (for example, just use your nose, you can smell the scent of roses; with your ears, you can hear the song from birds and bees...but you cannot comprehend the cosmos or see bacteria in this way). So everybody, by nature, is able to enjoy gardens.

Gardens, however, are not a basic need that humans must have. Often connected with a sense of luxury, gardens are believed to be able to contribute to our quality of life. According to David Phillips' theory on quality of life and sustainability, the pursuit of quality of life may have a negative impact on environmental sustainability, so a balance needs to be achieved between them.¹¹ Gardens, which serve both quality of life and sustainability, can provide a platform upon which we can discuss such issues.

Historic gardens, garden heritage, garden culture

Historic Gardens

'Historic garden' is a recent notion which was not used by the Chinese until the early 2000s when Chinese academics introduced the Florence Charter.¹²

Because this research aims to review the treatment of historic gardens throughout the 20th century until 2007, it is helpful to use this term in its current meaning, even though it would not have been applied since during the 20th century.

Basically, *historic* means historically important, which contains two meanings. First, it is aged (ancient/old); second, it embodies values. A two-thousand-year old Chinese dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* defines *gu* (古 ancient; old) as 'ten generations', with one generation in ancient China covering 30 years, this means that ancient/old means over 300 years.¹³

In the modern era, the time span is shortened. To be 'ancient' or 'historical' in an early 20th century Chinese dictionary means 'not going with contemporary fashions' which

¹¹ David Phillips, 'Quality of life and sustainability', *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2008), pp. 103-113.

¹² Ji Bian (边际), 'Lishi mingyuan baohu guihua yanjiu' (历史名园保护规划研究 A Study about the Conservation Planning of Historical Garden) (unpublished master's thesis, Tongji University, 2007), p. 3.

¹³ Shen Xu (许慎 c.58-147AD) (compiler), Xuan Xu (徐铉 916-991) (editor), *Shuowen Jiezi (fu jianzi)* (说文解字 Exegesis of characters, with word checklist) (Beijing: Cathay Publishing, 1963), p. 50.

implies anything which is not then in fashion is historical.¹⁴ The recent trend appears to be that modern and contemporary things are also accepted as ‘historical’, as for example some industrial buildings constructed in the 1950s and after.

In 1930, the first modern Chinese law on preserving cultural heritage defined ‘historic’ as ‘rare in number, and having significance in artistic, archaeological or scientific (biological) values.’ Interestingly, this definition avoids defining a clear time scale by which to contrast historical and unhistorical.¹⁵

In 2002, the definition of historic gardens and parks was, for the first time written in law in China, saying that a historic garden is ‘a garden that has a long history, is highly celebrated, represents traditional garden art and is designated as a protected cultural heritage site’.¹⁶ Another regulation published in the same year also claims that a historic garden must be a national, provincial or county-level protected area of cultural significance. If a garden is not designated as cultural heritage, it cannot be described as a historic garden.¹⁷ This makes the difference between historic gardens and traditional gardens: historic gardens have to be a cultural heritage site, while traditional gardens are any garden with a traditional character, regardless of their age or values.

But this research has not limited its objectives to historic gardens only. In one case, the study of Huizhou gardens, it also examines the vernacular garden tradition and culture.

The historic gardens examined in this thesis, therefore, are not restricted by their age, but rather, by their values. Wherever they come from (location and time), however,

¹⁴ The Chinese definition of *gu* (ancient/historical), as explained in the Chinese dictionary *Ciyuan* (Origin of Words), is 古: 谓时代之久远者也。不趋附流俗曰古, 如人品之言古道, 文字之言高古。[...] 古道照人, 古道可风, 古貌古心 (谓容貌心情皆有古人之风也), from *Ciyuan* (辞源 Origin of Words) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1915) p. *chou* 3-4, *chou* 7 (丑三~四, 丑七)

¹⁵ ‘Guwu baocun fa’ (古物保存法 Methods of Preserving Ancient Objects), *Zhonghua minguo guomin zhengfu gongbao* (中华民国国民政府公报 Bulletins on The National Government of Republican China), No. 40 (Item 485) (1930), (Taipei: Civil Office of National Government of Republican China (中华民国国民政府文官处), 1972), p. 1.

¹⁶ The Chinese texts are ‘历史悠久, 知名度高, 体现传统造园艺术, 并被审定为文物保护单位的园林’, in *Chengshi lvdi fenlei biao zhun* (城市绿地分类标准 Norms and Standard of the Category of Urban Green), CJJ *ting* (汀) 85 — 2002 (2002). Quoted from Ji Bian (边际), ‘Lishi mingyuan baohu guihua yanjiu’ (历史名园保护规划研究 A Study about the Conservation Planning of Historical Garden) (unpublished master’s thesis, Tongji University, 2007), p. 3.

¹⁷ The Chinese texts are ‘历史名园一定是国家级、省(自治区)级、市(区)级或县级文物保护单位, 没有被审定为各级文物保护单位的园林, 不属于历史名园’. *Yuanlin jiben shuyu biao zhun* (园林基本术语标准 Standard on elementary norms on gardens), CJJT91 — 2002 (2002). Quoted from Ji Bian (边际), ‘Lishi mingyuan baohu guihua yanjiu’ (历史名园保护规划研究 A Study about the Conservation Planning of Historical Garden) (unpublished master’s thesis, Tongji University, 2007), p. 3.

they share one characteristic: they are traditional-styled gardens, that is, they inherit the traditional art and techniques in garden making.

So what are the differences between traditional and modern? The answers are various. But for this thesis it is that they are divided by their view of the relationship between humans and Nature, or the cosmos. The traditional view sees humans as subjects of a superior force (such as God in Christianity, and Heaven in ancient China), while the modern view sees humans as responsible for themselves.

Garden Heritage

Garden heritage has different meanings in different sources. Basically, there are two views in terms of heritage.

One is that it refers to what has been inherited from the past, which is tangible (material) and has positive values.¹⁸

The other view sees heritage in a wider sense including both tangible and intangible things. This view is presented in the contemporary Chinese conservation category, which distinguishes between tangible and intangible heritage (including people, skills, techniques, craftsmanship and so on).¹⁹

But 'heritage' has not been clearly defined in the heritage conservation principles adopted in China. Although in 2000 (amended in 2004) China promulgated its first comprehensive conservation guidelines entitled *Conservation and Management Principles for Cultural Heritage Sites in China*, these do not give a definition of the term. But from the context it can be deduced that heritage is something of value which therefore deserves to be carried on from one generation to the next. But what are the values? We can think about this question from another perspective.

From a point of view of biological evolution, no living beings can live forever, but their genes are passed on to the next and succeeding generations. The following generation is never an identical copy of its predecessors. They have both inherited

¹⁸ Zhihua Chen (陈志华), 'Shixi chuantong yu yichan' (试析传统与遗产 An experimental analysis on tradition and heritage), *Beichuang ji* (北窗集 Collected works from the North-window ('North-window' means Chen's north-facing studio—author's note)) (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 1988), pp. 87-92.

¹⁹ For example, Chinese Academy of Art & Ministry of Culture, P.R.China, *Intangible Cultural Heritage in China*, <<http://www.ihchina.cn/main.jsp>> [accessed 6th February 2010]

and changed parts, adapted to suit their contemporary environment. The valuable inheritance in this sense therefore includes two parts: inherited features and the ability to adapt. The former provides identity ('where did we come from'); the latter provides ability to survive.

This 'biological' view of heritage may also suit cultural heritage. 'Genes' are knowledge, skills and (sometimes) objects, and 'adaptability' is the 'change to suit contemporary needs'.

Garden Culture

'Culture' has a very broad range; its dictionary definition says culture is 'the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time'.²⁰ There is no specific mention of garden culture in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the *OED* or the *Oxford Companion to Gardens*, which might suggest that garden culture is no more than a part of 'culture', not requiring separate definition.

Although definitions of historic gardens, garden heritage and garden culture are given above, these definitions are reexamined at the end of this thesis in the light of the research findings; these definitions here are merely a starting point.

Value

According to the *OED* (as the item '*value* n. 6. a. '), a *value* is 'the relative status of a thing, or the estimate in which it is held, according to its real or supposed worth, usefulness, or importance. In *Philos.* and *Social Sciences*, regarded esp. in relation

²⁰ This definition is from Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary. The comprehensive definitions (relevant to this context) by *OED* are: 'The cultivation or development of the mind, faculties, manners, etc.; improvement by education and training' [culture, n. III 5.a.]; 'the devoting of attention to or the study of a subject or pursuit' [culture, n. III 5.c.]; 'refinement of mind, taste, and manners; artistic and intellectual development. Hence: the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively' [culture, n. III, 6.]; 'chiefly as a count noun. The distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviour, products, or way of life of a particular society, people, or period. Hence: a society or group characterized by such customs, etc.' [culture, n. III, 7. a.]; 'with modifying noun: a way of life or social environment characterized by or associated with the specified quality or thing; a group of people subscribing or belonging to this'. [culture, n. III, 7. b.]; 'the philosophy, practices, and attitudes of an institution, business, or other organization'. [culture, n. III, 7. c.]

to an individual or group; *gen. in pl.*, the principles or standards of a person or society, the personal or societal judgement of what is valuable and important in life.' So a value is *relative*, and can be different from group to group, from person to person. The same thing may have different values to different groups of people or at different times.

Values are often revealed by people's attitudes and approaches, such as in this thesis.

CHINESE VALUES: A TRADITION

Chinese values, manifest in different schools of philosophy as well as practical knowledge, are an exhaustive subject in itself. What is presented here is not a complete account of the whole topic, but rather, a re-digestion of a select few elements directly relevant to this thesis's topic. This will underpin an understanding of the values of the Chinese at large and a historical base from which the changes of values during the 20th century may be understood. It may also be a bridge towards understanding the Chinese values of the 21st century.

The selected subjects for discussion are: the Chinese way of thinking, revealed from their world view (Oneness, yin-yang, Five Elements); fengshui as an example of the practical knowledge; the Chinese philosophies (Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism) and in particular the Confucian way of maintaining universal structure.

Chinese Understanding of the Universe & Chinese Way of Thinking: Oneness, Yin and Yang, Five Natures

Oneness

In the Chinese etymology, Oneness (or one) is *yi* (一), *yi* represents the 'unity, principle of numeration; it figures the primordial unity, source of all beings; at the very

beginning (of the universe), *Dao* (道 way) emerged from the One. Then Heaven and Earth were created, and myriad of things turned out. The One is therefore the mother of all things (惟初太始 道立于一 造分天地 化成万物 一也者 万物之本也).²¹

This shows that the Chinese accept that the Universe is an integrated whole. In this system, humans are part of Nature; nature in turn has an influence on the human body and mind.

Yin & Yang

Within this oneness comes *yin* and *yang* (or to use a western term, 'Dualism'), two fundamental forces and materials in the Universe. *Yang* represents the bright, dry, masculine aspect of the Universe; and *yin* the dark, moist, feminine aspect. This conception (probably formed around the 6th century BC) is dominant in the minds of the traditional Chinese, and appears in a wide range of subjects from philosophy such as Daoism and Confucianism to practical skills such as fengshui and Chinese medicine.²²

Once there are two forces and two kinds of matter, the transformation (or say, change) appears. Yin and yang are not absolute. Each has its opposite involved in itself. And the forces of yin and yang are ever changing, which can again be seen in the Daoist yin-yang pattern: if we cut the pattern with numerous parallel lines, we may find, in each section, that the portion of yin and yang is always different from the next.

Although the most common perception of yin-yang is represented in the image on the right (Figure 1.1 (right)), another image is provided here (Figure 1.1 (left)), which better explains the meanings of yin-yang. The differences between the pattern on the left and that on the right are: firstly, only two colours are involved (representing two opposite forces or matters) in the pattern on the right; but because of the reduced degree of contrast between black and white in the left pattern, it reveals a myriad of colours (different states of grey), representing the complexity of the nature of things. Secondly, in the left pattern, there is no clear boundary between yin and yang, nor a

²¹ S. J. L. Wieger, *Chinese Characters: Their origin, etymology, history, classification and signification. A thorough study from Chinese documents* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965), p.26. This book was first published by the Catholic Mission Press in 1915

²² Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 6, Part 6, P.42-3.

boundary encircling them. This aims to show that the boundary of yin and yang cannot be precisely defined, or *measured*.

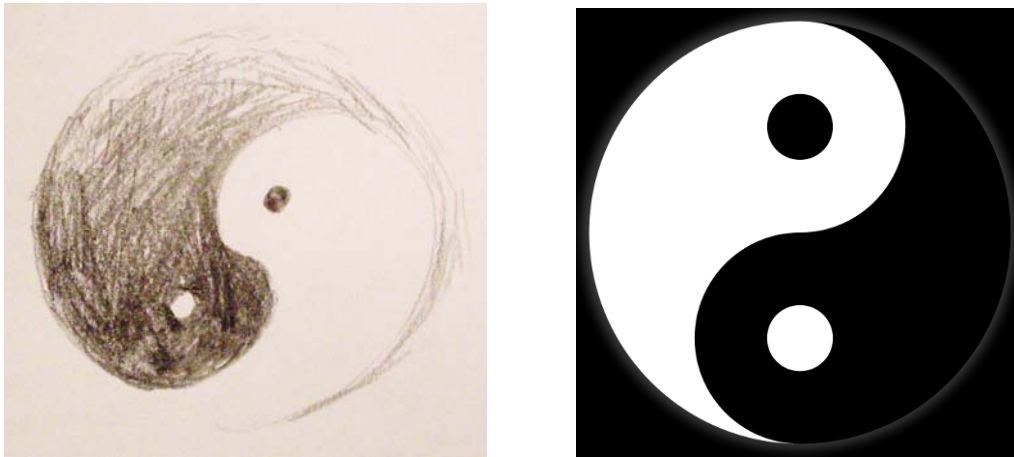


Figure 1.1 (left) the author's interpretation of yin and yang; (right) a common pattern adopted by many published sources. The redrawing of the yin-yang pattern (left) better explains the meanings of yin-yang: firstly, it reveals a myriad of colours (different states of grey), representing the complexity of the nature of things. Secondly, it shows that the boundary of yin and yang cannot be precisely defined, or *measured*. (Sources: (left) pencil drawing by author; (right) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Yin_and_Yang.svg> [accessed 2nd February, 2010])

Wuxing (Five Natures)

If things cannot be precisely defined or measured, how can they be learned and used by people? The Chinese solution is: to categorise them in groups based on their nature (in comparison: the western method is to measure and define, the more precisely the better). Therefore, the Chinese approach employs *wuxing*, commonly translated as Five Elements, or 'Five Goes' in its Chinese original. Other translations include: Five Phases, Five Stages, Five Movements, and so on. These different translations indicate that, what is being considered in categorisation is not only elements, but also their movements, forces or energies. In this instance, the category of *wuxing* covers everything in the Universe. Let's call it Five Natures. It is not the unique identity that forms the individuals, but rather, it is the similar nature of things that unite myriad individuals into a system of oneness. *Wuxing* theory provides a system of categorisation for helping to distinguish the nature of things, as well as a model for how different natures support or suppress each other. (Figure 1.2)

Correlations of the Five Elements					
	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Direction	East	South	Center	West	North
Season	Spring	Summer		Autumn	Winter
Celestial emblem	(Azure; Blue) Dragon	Vermillion bird (red bird; vermilion phoenix)	Yellow Dragon (ox or buffalo)	White Tiger	Black Tortoise (Dark Warrior)
Animal type	Scaly (Fishes)	Feather (Birds)	Naked (Human)	Hairy (Mammals)	Shell-covered (invertebrates)
Domestic animal	Sheep	Fowl	Ox	Dog	Pig
Musical note (instrument)	<i>Jue</i>	<i>Zhi</i>	<i>Gong</i>	<i>Shang</i>	<i>Yu</i>
Taste	Salt	Bitter	Sweet	Acrid	Sour
Organ (Viscera)	Spleen	Lung	Heart	Liver	Kidney
Sense organ (orifice)	Eye	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ear
Number	8	7	5	9	6
Number and Heavenly Stems (yin)	8 <i>ji</i>	2 <i>ding</i>	10 <i>yi</i>	4 <i>xin</i>	6 <i>kui</i>
Number and Heavenly Stems (yang)	3 <i>jia</i>	7 <i>bing</i>	5 <i>wu</i>	9 <i>geng</i>	1 <i>ren</i>
Color	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Emotion	Anger	Joy	Desire	Sorrow	Fear

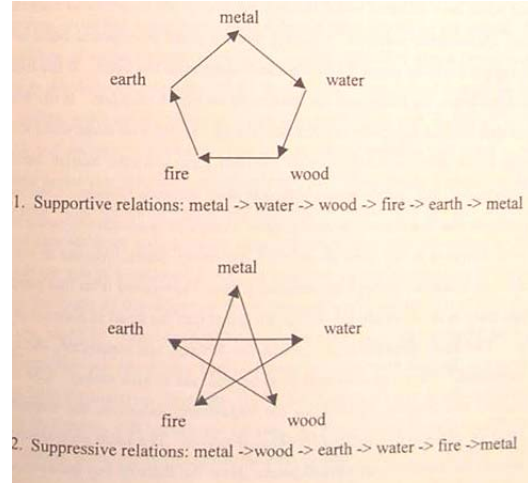


Figure 1.2 Examples of the category of Five Elements (left), and the relationship among them. (Source: Juwen Zhang (trans.), *A Translation of the ancient Chinese The Book of Burial (Zang Shu) by Guo Pu (276-324)* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2004), pp. 48-49)

The Chinese view of the Universe (its elements and movements) is built upon this abstracting and symbolic way of thinking. This way, although not as precise as the modern scientific understanding of the Universe, provides a quick (and economical) way to capture the nature of things and the relationship among them, which helps to establish the balance of the environment. At a practical level, it developed into various schools of fengshui (dealing with the living environment) and Chinese medicine (dealing with the human body—the inner environment). At a theoretical level, it is a part of both Confucianism and Daoism, expressing the true essence of Chinese values.

Fengshui: A Practical Theory Embedded Chinese World View and Way of Thinking

What is Fengshui?

Fengshui, written in Chinese, is 风水 (wind water). According to a dictionary, *fengshui* is ‘the art-science of sitting man-made constructions so that they fit in with the forces

of nature rather than clash with them.’²³ The term fengshui first appeared in Chinese literature in the 4th century, ‘when *qi* rides with the wind, it disperses; when it reaches water, it ends. The ancients were able to condense the *qi* and keep it from dispersion, to move it and to make it cease. Therefore, they called it *fengshui* (wind-water)’ (气乘风则散，界水则止。古人聚之使不散，行之使有止，故谓之风水).²⁴ In this instance, fengshui is related to wind and water, which transports and stops *qi*. So we can interpret *fengshui* as ‘using wind (to move *qi*) and water (to stop *qi*) to manipulate *qi*’.

But what is *qi*? Etymologically, *qi* means ‘air’ derived from ‘cloud’. Although the existing translation of *qi* includes ‘vital force’, ‘material principle’ and many other similar forms, there is still room left for discussion (or, a new interpretation).²⁵ If we return to its etymological roots, as well as the signifier of *qi* in the Chinese literature above, it might make more sense to see *qi* as ‘cloud’, or, *a clump of warm air with floating water drops*. When it meets wind, the cloud moves; when it meets water bodies (such as a lake), the cloud is cooled down, thus forms into rain and falls. Therefore, the key elements of *qi* are; heat and water. We can use *steam* to visualise *qi*. Steam provides both energy (heat) and matter (water), and together they form a *resource*. By this stage, we get to the alternative interpretation of *qi*: *qi* is the resource which contains both energy and matter. But let’s look at ‘wind’ again. Wind is the flowing air, and the force of flow is also caused by heat (solar heat). In this instance, wind and heat symbolically are identical.

According to the ideas above, the relationship of fengshui, wind and water can be exhibited as the formula below:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{fengshui} &= \text{wind/heat (energy)} + \text{water (matter)} = \text{steam (hot air + floating water drops)} \\ &= \text{resources} \end{aligned}$$

In short, fengshui is the ancient wisdom of handling *resources*.

²³ *China: A cultural and historical dictionary*, ed. by Michael Dillon (Curzon Press, 1998), p.101.

²⁴ Juwen Zhang (trans.), *A Translation of the ancient Chinese The Book of Burial (Zang Shu) by Guo Pu (276-324)* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2004), pp. 58-59.

²⁵ About various translations of *qi*, see Juwen Zhang (trans.), *A Translation of the Ancient Chinese The Book of Burial (Zang Shu) by Guo Pu (276-324)* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2004), p.42.

Use of Fengshui

The method of fengshui is through practical guidance which is used in many areas, such as the selection of the locations of a tomb (also known as *yin*-house, that is, the house for the dead) or a house (*yang*-house, the house for the living), a village or city, as well as the arrangement of various features of a house, a village, a city and so on. It is said fengshui has a role in garden design. But the available written evidence is very limited. One source surviving today is *Sakuteiki*, the earliest garden book in Japan, which discusses the principles of garden making. *Sakuteiki* addresses the use of fengshui in garden design, and points out that this idea originated from China.²⁶ In China, the evidences that we have discovered include an imperial garden *Gen Yue* in the 12th century, a private garden in Beijing dating from the 16th century, and 18th century imperial garden Yuanmingyuan.²⁷

Meanings of Fengshui

The meanings of fengshui in the built environment can be seen as: by understanding the place, its form, resources and energy flow, one can choose the right place to live; by arranging the elements and features to let them fit each other as well as the place (of which the theoretical base is yin-yang and the Five Elements theories), it is believed that a balance is achieved in the living environment, which is of benefit to the people who live there. Also, in some cases, if the environment is not ideal and little improvement can be made physically, the fengshui master would provide a remedy by installing special objects (such as a charm, a mirror) of magic power, believed capable of turning the bad fengshui into good. Although from a modern perspective this last method sounds less convincing than the others, if thinking about the values of psychological indication, we may see its meaning in the achievement of satisfaction by changing perception instead of physical substance.

²⁶ Jiro Takei and Marc P. Keane, *Sakuteiki: Vision of the Japanese garden* (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2001), pp. 86-87. *Sakuteiki* is believed to be written in the 11th century.

²⁷ The information on the private garden influenced by fengshui is provided by Alison Hardie, in a personal talk in December 2009. the name of the garden is *Shao Yuan* (勺园), and the original source from *Dijing jingwu lue* (帝京景物略 a brief view of sceneries in imperial capital). In terms of fengshui design in Yuanmingyuan, see Chunlin Yang (杨春林), 'Yuanmingyuan fengshui wenxian kao' (圆明园风水文献考 In search of fengshui records of Yuanmingyuan), in *Ji'nian yuanmingyuan jianyuan sanbai zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* (纪念圆明园建园三百周年国际学术研讨会论文集 Proceedings of the international seminar in memory of the 300th anniversary of the construction of Yuanmingyuan) (Beijing, 2007)

To conclude, fengshui is a practical tool for handling the environment. It is about finding and constructing balance, both the balance of all features in the living environment, and the balance of the inner environment (human mind), as well as the balance of the two (people and the living environment). By giving special meanings to the dwelling place, it creates sacredness and arouses attention, or care, of the home. In this way an attachment between people and the place is established. There is something for modern architects and planners to learn from ancient fengshui ideas.²⁸

Three Religions: Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are the three main religions, or philosophies, as some prefer to describe them, in China.²⁹ However, their influence and focus does not run in parallel, nor are their disciples separated into distinctive groups. For most Chinese, one can be a Confucian, a Daoist and a Buddhist at the same time. Since the beginning of the first millennium though, Confucianism has been the dominant thought system of state governance and intellectuals. However, there is hardly an explicit definition of what Confucianism is, since it has grown by absorbing ideas from other doctrines along the way.

This section offers a discussion of the shared platform of Chinese religions and the core values of Confucianism, from which the identity of Chinese culture can be recognised, as well as the main ideas and values which shape Chinese gardens. These will be examined from two points of view: firstly, how the Chinese view humanity and the cosmos (the relationship of human power and abstracted non-human power); secondly, how the Chinese view human society (behaviour and attitudes of humanity in the interactions of daily life).

But first of all, a brief description of each school might help to clarify matters in a little more depth.

²⁸ As Kingston said, 'What we've lost in the west is the specialness of things. We just move into a new house with no respect for the land or the building, or each other. We've lost the sacredness of life.' from Karen Kingston, *Creating Sacred Space with Feng Shui* (London: Piatkus, 1996), p. 169.

²⁹ Buddhism is believed as philosophy in certain realm; Daoism has developed into two branches, one of which is religion, and the other is philosophical thinking.

Daoism

Daoism works on the sphere of physical world (Nature). It values the nature which is untouched by knowledge or other form of culture as its greatest model. Daoism sees humanity and the universe as an integrated whole. As one of numerous beings in Nature, a human being is born with true nature imbedded. But when they grow up, such nature is often distorted by external influences. Therefore, keeping life simple, desires natural, and learning from nature are the ways to recover the lost true nature of human beings.

Daoism holds negative attitudes towards human technology, and thinks that technology inventions, although they save human labour, distort the human heart's nature and turn it into a machine.³⁰

Confucianism

Confucianism focuses on the ethics of humans and human societies. How should an individual behave and how should a society be organised in order to achieve a harmonious living environment? The supreme Law (Heavenly Law) which Confucianism developed is used to guide human society; and this Law is gained by observing Heavenly phenomenon (astrology) and their interpretation by ancient Sages. Most of the Confucian treatise is about how to maintain human society according to the instructions given by superior authorities, often Heaven and Ancestral Sages.³¹

Confucius declared that man could improve himself by his own efforts, so giving a basis for the valuing of education, including self-education. 'Confucius accepted the world as redeemable. He viewed the political realm in moral terms and accepted the power-based hierarchical relations that emerge from the political realm as a resource for transformation. An individual must develop as a moral being within the human relationships that bind one to society.' Confucianism accepts imperfection, since

³⁰ The story is about an old man fetching water from well, told in *Zhuangzi, waipian, tiandi di shier* (庄子外篇 天地第十二 Zhuangzi, the twelfth chapter, Heaven and Earth)

<http://www.zhuangzi.com/zzb/zbb/0712_012.asp> [accessed 6th February 2010]

³¹ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 67.

nobody can be a perfect and fully-moral being, even Confucius himself.³²

Buddhism

By accepting that 'life is suffering', Buddhism works with heart and mind as the place where suffering originates. Buddhism points out that the universe(s) and all phenomena and things within are the production of one's mind, and therefore are empty by nature. Emptiness means that everything is ever changing and that things can never stay as they were. But this emptiness is relative rather than absolute, that is, a thing or phenomenon is not that thing or phenomenon in the past and future, but is the thing or phenomenon now (or, it can be said as the non-existence of past or future and the existence of now). Before a person realises emptiness is the true nature of the universe, they may be suffering from various desires. Once they understand the correct conception of reality, the desire is to disappear, taking suffering with it.³³ Therefore the universe in the Buddhist eye is a subjective universe determined by the individual mind. Whatever mind and heart a person has, so is the world they live in.

In summary, Daoism focuses on the physical world (both that of Nature and that of the human body); Confucianism deals with a 'human and gods' world, that is, a physical and spiritual world (all the gardens in this thesis are more or less based on Confucian values); Buddhism relies on the duality of spirit and mind and therefore sees the physical world as merely a reflection of the heart.

Chinese religions, or philosophies, ways of thought, deal with the life in this world. People start from Confucianism, and family always stands as the basic element upon which values are set.

One can turn to Buddhism or Daoism to seek satisfaction if society fails to respond to one's efforts, for example in a lack of respect at work. In that case, what is valued moves from the family and society to oneself.

³² *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 10.

³³ Weiqun Yao (姚卫群), *Fojiao rumen: lishi yu jiaoyi* (佛教入门: 历史与教义 Introduction of Buddhism: history and principles) (Taipei: Wunan Tushu Chubangongsi, 2005), pp.147-148.

Integration of Three Religions/Philosophies

The idea of the relationship between the universe and human beings in Taoism and Confucianism probably existed long before the schools of Taoism or Confucianism were established. Buddhism, holding a different view on the universe, came into China at about the beginning of the first century. From the 5th century Buddhism gained more influence in China. Different schools, or branches, developed and were accepted by both the imperial court and the public. In the 11th century, Confucianism absorbed Buddhism's doctrine on the heart and the Daoist view of Nature and developed into Neo-Confucianism. Therefore, the three religions or thoughts are mingled and provide a balanced and flexible belief system for the Chinese. Confucianism teaches us how to behave in society (family-state); Daoism teaches how to keep simplicity and enjoy oneself the most by appreciating Nature; Buddhism provides a shelter where one can find peace by retrieving oneself to their mind-world without mortal desire. It is the combination of all these three religions that has built the Chinese world view. It is common to see books on three doctrines lying on a scholar's bookshelf, and to see temples of all three doctrines juxtaposed in an emperor's palace complex.

Heaven and Human Beings

Heaven and Nature

The term Nature has a different meaning in China from that in the Christian countries of the West. Nature in Chinese eyes is both physical and spiritual, and involves both natural elements and human beings. The following quotation gives an explanation:

Nature—defined as heaven—is the manifestation of morality. The human and natural realms are linked by a moral order and one may ascertain the divine in nature through self-cultivation. This transformative process is an ongoing, lifelong endeavour that aims to heighten one's perception of the moral order and to embody it in one's actions. It is not a goal-oriented effort to know things about the natural realm as in the Western context, but a never-ending quest to be something more than what one has already become. By behaving in a manner increasingly reflective of the cosmic moral order, an individual helps

to reproduce on earth the morality of heaven.³⁴

Heaven and Human Beings

Heaven (天 *Tian*), written as a Chinese pictorial character, is 天. It is composed of ‘一’ on the top and ‘大’ at the bottom. 大 (big) consists of a man (人) with his arms (一) opened. The ‘一’ on the top of ‘大’ refers to the thing that stands higher than Man. Altogether, ‘天’ means ‘above Man’. The derived idea, as explained by all the commentators, is ‘that of *physical or moral superiority*. [...] Placed above them, heaven governs men’. According to this fundamental notion, any superior, says the *Erya* (尔雅), the oldest extant Chinese dictionary or encyclopaedia which dates from the 3rd century BC, is the Heaven of his inferior.³⁵

The way that ancient Chinese comprehend Heavenly Law is through the observation of natural phenomena, especially astrology. This can be seen from a Chinese character *shi* (示 guide), used as a part of many Chinese characters which have a meaning of spiritual, holy or sacred. *Shi* (示) means ‘influx coming from Heaven; auspicious or inauspicious signs, by which the will of Heaven is known to mankind’ (天垂像 见吉凶 所以示人也). ‘The two horizontal lines ‘二’ are the old form of the character ‘上’ *shang*, which means ‘high, superior’; here they mean ‘Heaven’; the three vertical lines ‘小’ represent what is hanging from Heaven, that is, the sun, the moon and the stars, which reveal to men the transcendent things’ (三垂 日月星也 观乎天文以察时变 示神事也). The actual meaning for *shi* (示) is ‘to teach’.³⁶

The Chinese phrase *tian ren he yi* (天人合一) has been frequently quoted by modern scholars (both in China and abroad) and been interpreted as ‘Nature and Man are united’, aiming to show the Chinese love of Nature. However, this interpretation is a misleading deviation from its original sense. Here, an etymological investigation is provided to examine this phrase word by word, and therefore to uncover its true

³⁴ *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 3.

³⁵ S. J. L. Wiegner, *Chinese Characters: Their origin, etymology, history, classification and signification. A thorough study from Chinese documents* (New York: Raragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965), p.26.

³⁶ The interpretation is from the ancient Chinese dictionary *Shuowen jiezi*; the English translation was given by S. J. L. Wiegner, *Chinese Characters: Their origin, etymology, history, classification and signification. A thorough study from Chinese documents* (New York: Raragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965), p.29.

meanings.

The meaning of 'Heaven' has been explained above as a 'physical or moral superiority', a definition much broader than that of Nature. In terms of 'Man' (人 *ren*), Chinese dictionary definition is, 'a man, represented by his legs; the one who stands upright. Man is the most prestigious character in Nature, and the flourishing *qi* of the Five Natures (人 天地之性最贵者也 五行之秀气也)'.³⁷ This definition shows that, in the Chinese view, although being part of Nature, *man is superior to any other features and lives in Nature.*

Therefore, the correct translation of *tian ren he yi* is: *Heaven and Man are united into One.* This means that through understanding Heaven (that is, Heavenly Law) and following it, Man and Heaven can be united. Man has the ability to understand Heavenly Law and therefore to achieve the power of ruling over human society and manipulating the Earth's resources. This provides us an understanding why education is considered to be so important (it is a way to achieve the Heavenly Law), and why a Chinese emperor can be accepted by his people as holding the mandate of Heaven.

Human Society: Self, Family and State

Modern Westerners tend to 'express discomfort with the notion of hierarchy and authority' and tend to think 'those characteristics should be overcome by reason'.³⁸ But these are core words for Confucian society.

Within the hierarchy of the state, there are many miniature hierarchies of family, where individuals have different status, normally the eldest male member at the top and the youngest female member at the bottom. However, this does not mean the people at the lower level are less satisfactory than those at the higher level. As Weiming Tu said, 'Hierarchy can be viewed as a dynamic concept. For example, those low in the social hierarchy may seek fulfilment in the proper conduct of their

³⁷ S. J. L. Wiegner, *Chinese Characters: Their origin, etymology, history, classification and signification. A thorough study from Chinese documents* (New York: Raragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965), p.73.

³⁸ *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmánek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 7.

lower role'.³⁹

Therefore, in a Confucian China, what is valued the most is not individuality, but stability of the hierarchy, both family and the country. 'One is taught the virtues of self-sacrifice for long-range gratification and discouraged from seeking immediate gains. [...] Lessons one learns about one's role and responsibility in the family have ramifications for the broader social and political contexts.'⁴⁰

The state is seen as 'a mechanism for exerting social control and establishing and maintaining moral order',⁴¹ of which the Confucian education system helps to impose unified values (Table 1.1). Besides, literature and art also present a significant role in strengthening morality and value unification. In this instance, the function of literature and art has never been as pure entertainment, but rather as tools of education. They provide the 'basis of mutual obligations that guide correct, humane, harmonious relations'.⁴²

Table1.1 Text books for Confucianism studies since the 12th century⁴³

Sequence of learning	Subjects (title of classics)	Main teachings
1	<i>Da Xue</i> (Great Learning)	Holistic links between self, family, community, and state; the inseparability of morality and politics, and the dichotomy of inner and outer, as manifested in self-transformation and political leadership
2	<i>Lun Yu</i> (Analects)	Commonsense notions about how to be human
3	<i>Meng Zi</i> (Mencius)	How to be masters of culture, as well as the basis of moral authority in the state
4	<i>Zhong Yong</i> (Doctrine of the Mean)	Inner resources for cultivation

³⁹ *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 7.

⁴⁰ *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 8.

⁴¹ *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 11.

⁴² *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 7.

⁴³ The reference of this table comes from: *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 6. These four books are core texts of Confucian canons. Learning at young age, every Chinese who wants to go through state examination is required to know these books by heart and to use this in generating opinions without diverging from Confucian values.

TWENTIETH CENTURY ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES TO CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CHINA

Conservation ethics are shaped by the way in which a person or society perceive life, the world and themselves. The traditional Chinese world view sees human history as a cyclical process rather than a linear progression. Therefore, not authenticity of individual features, but harmonisation of an ensemble, sets the fundamental standard of 'authenticity'.⁴⁴ This view makes reconstruction, rather than preservation, morally feasible as a conservation method. Before the 1930s, such denial of authenticity's value dominated architecture and garden management in China. If resources were available, old structures and features were periodically renewed and changed in order to maintain structural stability and visual perfection.

During the 1930s, Liang Sicheng (梁思成 1901-1972), who had become an influential conservationist after an architectural training in the USA, introduced Western conservation philosophy and popularised an emphasis on material authenticity as 'restoring the old as the old'. This was a play on the traditional notion of 'restoring the old as the new'.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the nationalist government and local gentry also promoted heritage preservation for the sake of building up a national identity, but these efforts were soon interrupted by war. In the different context of mass production and industrialisation in the communist era during the late 1950s and early '60s, the government ordered cultural objects to be listed and protected. Yet later on, from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s, this was annulled during the Cultural Revolution which gave far less significance to, and changed the national perception of, cultural heritage. It was not until 1982 that some historic values were restored when China promulgated a new law on heritage conservation entitled *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* (1982, revised 1991 and 2002).⁴⁶ This was primarily motivated by the desire to promote tourism to China, and included imperial palaces, temples, as well as some traditional villages with buildings and gardens. It also offered the possibility for regional governments to organise their own

⁴⁴ Derk Bodde, *China's Cultural Tradition: What and Wither?* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1957)

⁴⁵ Yong Cui (崔勇), *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe yanjiu* (中国营造学社研究 On Study Society for Chinese Architecture) (Nanjing: Southeast University Press, 2004)

⁴⁶ Standing Committee of the National Peoples Congress, People's Republic of China 1982, *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* (Beijing, 1982, revised in 1991, and 2002)

policies for heritage conservation.⁴⁷ In 2000 China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage, assisted by ICOMOS (Australia) and the Getty Conservation Institute from the U.S.A., drafted its first conservation regulations following international standards in *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (The China Principles)*. These were promulgated in 2004 as national guidelines for heritage conservation and management and they reinforced authenticity and integrity as the key issues of conservation ethics.⁴⁸ Unfortunately the *China Principles* do not reflect the diverse nature of heritage sites and their contemporary value to society, which both the *Florence Charter* and the *Burra Charter* have as a core interest.⁴⁹ Instead, they define conservation as 'all measures carried out to preserve the physical remains of sites and their historic settings' and therefore return the meaning of conservation to preservation based protection, maintenance, technical intervention and management. This conservative approach is potentially counterproductive when dealing with landscape, which is always in a process of change. The *China Principles* were followed by *Methods of Conservation and Management of World Cultural Heritage*, which concentrated on the most significant heritage sites.⁵⁰ From 2006 onwards the government ordered the second Saturday of each June to be Cultural Heritage Day, aiming to generate popular interest and promote care of cultural heritage.

Since the early 1980s the focus in China has been on economic development and much of the urban expansion resulting from this has been to the detriment of heritage. If the cost of preserving historical buildings and gardens turns out to be greater than that of razing them and building anew, the decision is generally for the cheaper option, particularly as decision makers are mainly government officials rather than architectural and conservation professionals. This view of built heritage as a hindrance to economic development is one that persists: for the officials in charge, the faster they demolish old structures and begin new projects, the faster they are able to progress in their careers.⁵¹

⁴⁷ For example, Standing Committee of the Provincial Peoples Congress of Anhui province, People's Republic of China, *Anhuisheng wannan guminju baohu tiaoli* (安徽省皖南古民居保护条例 Regulations for the conservation of ancient housing of Southern Anhui province) (Hefei, 1997, revised 2004)

⁴⁸ China ICOMOS, *Principles for the conservation of heritage sites in China (The China Principles)*, (Chengde: China ICOMOS, 2000, revised 2004)

⁴⁹ Australia ICOMOS, *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter)* (Canberra: The Australia ICOMOS, 1999); ICOMOS-IFLA, *Historic Gardens (The Florence Charter)*, (Florence: ICOMOS-IFLA, 1982) <http://www.international.icomos.org/charters/gardens_e.htm> [accessed 15 January 2010]

⁵⁰ State Culture Administration of People's Republic of China, *Shijie wenhua yichan baohu guanli banfa* (世界文化遗产保护管理办法 Methods of Conservation and Management of World Cultural Heritage Sites) (Beijing, 2006)

⁵¹ Michael Meyer, *The last days of old Beijing: life in the vanishing backstreets of a city transformed* (New York: Walker & Company, 2008), pp. 177-178

LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS ON THE THESIS

While it was intended that this thesis should provide a broad perspective on the historic gardens in China, there are inevitable gaps in the range of case studies investigated. The thesis has been limited in scope to four case studies, though other possible case studies might have revealed additional values, so this study should be seen as an initial exploration of this domain.

The thesis has investigated gardens in mainland China, especially in the Jiangnan area and Beijing. However, Chinese gardens also spread in a larger territory which adopted Chinese culture as the main culture, for example in Taiwan, which shares its Confucian culture with the Chinese mainland. Due to time limitations and constraints on travel, the Chinese gardens in Taiwan were not included in this exploration, though it would have been interesting to compare them with those of communist China to see how ideology has affected tradition.

East-West Encounters on the Land of Perfect Brightness:

Imperial Gardens of Yuanmingyuan

This chapter, using Yuanmingyuan as a mirror, presents Chinese attitudes towards the west, as well as towards its own values and traditions, first through the Qing emperors' eyes, and then through the 20th century people's vision of Yuanmingyuan. Literally meaning 'the Garden of Perfect Brightness', Yuanmingyuan was a political centre from its establishment as an imperial garden-and-palace complex in 1720s until its destruction in 1860. Five emperors had built, expanded and maintained Yuanmingyuan and made it a true wonderland and the best known Chinese garden in the world. Constructed in the heyday of China, the design of Yuanmingyuan reveals the Qing emperors' values, which were also a model for the wider population. The European palaces within Yuanmingyuan, which were built in the mid and late 18th century, reflect the Qing emperors' attitudes towards Western culture, which was very different to the Chinese one. The destruction of Yuanmingyuan in 1860, led by Anglo-French armies, was a consequence of the East-West collision of values, which heavily impacted the Qing Empire and led to the fall of China. In the 20th century, various debates and proposals for the reconstruction of Yuanmingyuan reflect Chinese changing values during a time of healing and reformation, when China's tradition was being reconstructed, and so was the Chinese view towards the West: as a teacher, a foe, and a partner.

BUILDING THE GARDEN OF PERFECT BRIGHTNESS: YUANMINGYUAN IN THE 18TH CENTURY

Yuanmingyuan and the Qing Emperors: a Brief History

Early Qing Emperors and Their Gardens in the Outskirts of Beijing

There were continuous mountain ranges lying at the northwest of Beijing, adjacent to rivers and brooks and covered by luxuriant vegetation. The air was fresh, the water was clear, the view was green, the *fengshui* was auspicious. All these effects made this area an ideal place for gardens. There has been a long history of the local gentry and imperial families building their gardens and dwellings here.

In 1644 the Manchurians conquered China and overthrew the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD) ruled by Han Chinese, and founded in its place the Qing dynasty (1644-1911 AD). The Manchurians originally lived on the grasslands of the far north east, where the weather was cooler and the prospect was greener. They led a pastoral-agrarian lifestyle, and took pride in feats of strength, horsemanship, archery and hunting. All these were so different from the climate and lifestyle in Beijing, where the summer was too hot and the winter too bare, especially in the inner city, given the location of the Forbidden City.

During the reign of *Kangxi* (康熙 1654–1722, r. 1661–1722), second emperor of the Qing Dynasty, an imperial garden-and-palace complex *Changchunyuan* (畅春园 Garden of Joyful Springtime) was built in the northwest suburb of Beijing, initially as a summer palace to avoid the unpleasant summer climate in the Forbidden City and to improve the Emperor's living conditions. Emperor Kangxi spent most time working and living in Changchunyuan instead of at the Forbidden City, to which he only returned in wintertime, when Changchunyuan was too cold to live in, or for ritual ceremonies. After that, the use of gardens for their main accommodation became a tradition which was continued by later emperors.

Yuanmingyuan as Princely Garden: 1700s-1722

Emperor Kangxi had Changchunyuan built as his living quarters and for state administration. He bestowed their own private gardens on each prince. His fourth son Prince *Yinzhen* (胤禛, who later became the Emperor *Yongzheng* 雍正, 1678–1735, r. 1723–1735), was given the garden of Yuanmingyuan.

There is no evidence to prove the precise time when Yuanmingyuan was first built. According to the surviving documentation, Emperor Kangxi bestowed the name ‘Yuanmingyuan’ in 1709.¹ Two years before, however, Kangxi had already been invited to a banquet at this garden.² So it is believed the Yuanmingyuan was built no later than 1707.³

According to Prince Yinzhen’s description, Kangxi was an austere emperor (austerity is defined as a virtue in Confucian ideology). He had his garden Changchunyuan built on the remains of a garden of the Ming Dynasty, though reducing the land usage to limit the cost of the project. Taking his father as a model, Prince Yinzhen was very careful with his garden expenditure. ‘Hills are arranged on raised land, rivers and ponds are made on low land [...] natural features are borrowed (that is, to make the most use of existing natural features instead of relying on artificial construction) in order to save human labour [...] Flowers and trees flourished beside the fences and riverside, birds and fishes were seen to live happily everywhere in the garden’.⁴ As a result, Yuanmingyuan in its early stages was a simple but lively garden full of natural interest.

¹ *Rixia Jiuwen Kao* (日下旧闻考 The search for old news in Beijing), ed. by Minzhong Yu (于敏中) (Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 1983), also see Emperor Yongzheng’s writing named *Yuanmingyuan ji* (圆明园记 Records of Yuanmingyuan), where he wrote, ‘The garden was named Yuan Ming Yuan by my father. He wrote the words on a wooden tablet to be hung over the entrance, and presented it to me. When he came to the garden I received him joyfully. Trees, flowers and streams, all seemed glad for his coming.’ Emperor Yongzheng, ‘Shizong Xianhuangdi Yuzhi Yuanmingyuan Ji’ (世宗宪皇帝御制圆明园记 Emperor Yongzheng’s Imperial Records on Yuanmingyuan) (abbreviated as *Records on Yuanmingyuan*), *Yuanmingyuan Sishijing Tuyong* (圆明园四十景图咏 Paintings and Poems on Forty Scenes of Yuanmingyuan), (Beijing: World Publishing, 2005).

² *Shengzu renhuangdi shilu (Kangxi shilu)* (圣祖仁皇帝实录 (康熙实录) Authentic Records on Emperor Kangxi), ed. by [Qing] Qi Ma (马齐) and Shi Zhu (朱轼)

³ Enyin Zhang (张恩荫), ‘Luelun Yuanmingyuan Zaoqi Xingxiang (略论圆明园早期形象 A brief discussion on the early aspect of Yuanmingyuan)’, *Yuanmingyuan Yanjiu* (圆明园研究 Yuanmingyuan studies), 2005

⁴ Emperor Yongzheng, “Shizong Xianhuangdi Yuzhi Yuanmingyuan Ji (世宗宪皇帝御制圆明园记 Emperor Yongzheng’s Imperial Records on Yuanmingyuan)” (abbreviated as *Records on Yuanmingyuan*), *Yuanmingyuan Sishijing Tuyong* (圆明园四十景图咏 Paintings and Poems on Forty Scenes of Yuanmingyuan), (Beijing: World Publishing, 2005).

In his *Records of Yuanmingyuan*, Prince Yinzhen said that he believed the name of Yuanmingyuan which had been given by his father referred to a virtue which his father hoped he would achieve. 'With perfection integrated into the soul, a gentleman will be at his best. With brightness shining on everything, his initiative will be brought into full play'.⁵ Later in the *Postscript on Yuanmingyuan*, Emperor Qianlong (乾隆 the fourth son of Emperor Yongzheng, 1711-1799, r. 1736-1795) again emphasised this interpretation, 'The meaning of Yuan, round or perfect, and Ming, bright, is the golden mean of a gentleman. My Imperial Grandfather bestowed this name on the garden, and it was respectfully received by my Imperial Father as his motto'.⁶

Yuanmingyuan in Emperor Yongzheng's Time: 1723-1735

In 1722, Emperor Kangxi died in Changchunyuan after appointing Yinzhen as his successor. In 1723, Yinzhen became Emperor Yongzheng (雍正 1678–1735, r. 1723–1735). Strictly following Confucian morals and rituals, Emperor Yongzheng had three years of mourning for his departed father, living in the Forbidden City instead of gardens in order to have a plain life without entertainment. But meantime, he commissioned extension work at Yuanmingyuan in order to convert this princely garden into an imperial garden and palace complex. In the spring of 1725, as soon as the mourning period finished, Emperor Yongzheng moved back to the newly expanded Yuanmingyuan. Thereafter Yuanmingyuan took the place of Changchunyuan and became the new Summer Palace, although actually it was occupied most of the year rather than only in summer.

There are no relevant illustrations of Yuanmingyuan in the 1720s. A recent conjectural plan was mainly based on surviving textual documents and a 20th century survey of garden remains. According to this plan, the size of the Yuanmingyuan was about 200 hectares, with around 30 named scenic sites.⁷

⁵ Xiuzhi Liu and Alison Hardie, 'The garden of perfect brightness at the height of its splendour: Translated from Wang Wei, Yuan Ming Yuan', *Studies in the history of gardens and designed landscapes*, 2005, Vol. 25, No 1. p. 4.

⁶ Hope Danby, *The Garden of Perfect Brightness: the history of Yuan Ming Yuan and the Emperors who lived there*. (London: Williams and Norgate Ltd, 1950), p.12.

⁷ Enyin Zhang (张恩荫), 'Qing wudi yuzhi shiwen zhongde yuanmingyuan shiliao' (清五帝御制诗文中的圆明园史料 the Yuanmingyuan archives from Imperial poems of Five Emperors in Qing Dynasty), *Yuanmingyuan bianqianshi tanwei* (圆明园变迁史探微 History of the Change of Yuanmingyuan) (Beijing: Beijing gymnasium college Press, 1993), p.65.

Unlike the other imperial gardens in China, the layout of Yuanmingyuan resembles a miniature map of China, with the 'Nine Continents' of China ('Nine Continents' is used to symbolise China) being represented as the nine islands at the centre of the garden complex, with a square lake (named 'Benign Sea') at the east to represent the East Sea of China, and hills in the northwest corner to indicate the plateau in Northwest China.

The garden buildings and other features at Yuanmingyuan, however, kept their simple style. In the *Records of Yuanmingyuan*, Emperor Yongzheng explained what had been altered in 1723-5 extension project:

Buildings, hills and valleys were kept as in their previous forms. The only thing that was added was rows of houses for Ministry and the Hall of Audience for my court administrations. They were located to the south of the garden.....Within the garden there were grain fields and cottages, vegetable gardens and groves. I could expect the harvest in autumn from seeing the vast plain of grains in summer.⁸

It is not difficult to understand the intention of introducing farmland into imperial gardens, since agriculture had been the foundation of the country.

Yuanmingyuan in Emperor Qianlong's Time: 1736-1795

In 1736, at the age of 25, the most loved son of Emperor Yongzheng inherited the throne and became Emperor Qianlong (乾隆 1711-1799, r. 1736-1795). Qianlong was an energetic, ambitious, intelligent emperor. During the sixty years of his reign, he expanded and stabilised the territory of China, and also showed great interest in building imperial gardens, including *Yiheyuan* (颐和园 Joy and Harmony Garden), the well known Summer Palace in Beijing today. It was during his reign that Yuanmingyuan achieved its pinnacle.

Although it had seemed to be a tradition for the new emperor to make his own imperial garden instead of using the previous one, Qianlong continued living in Yuanmingyuan, because 'no better place is as benign and suitable for the emperor than Yuanmingyuan...and [using the existing garden but not building a new one]

⁸ Emperor Yongzheng, "Shizong Xianhuangdi Yuzhi Yuanmingyuan Ji (世宗宪皇帝御制圆明园记 Emperor Yongzheng's Imperial Records on Yuanmingyuan)" (abbreviated as *Records on Yuanmingyuan*), *Yuanmingyuan Sishijing Tuyong* (圆明园四十景图咏 Paintings and Poems on Forty Scenes of Yuanmingyuan), (Beijing: World Publishing, 2005).

demonstrates my heart's wish to follow my late father's virtue of simplicity'.⁹ It might also be because of the special meaning of Yuanmingyuan to him. It had been there that he had spent his youth and first met his grandfather Emperor Kangxi, who immediately loved this boy and indicated that he should be his future successor.

Qianlong's contribution to Yuanmingyuan involved the alteration of Yuanmingyuan proper and the making of *Changchunyuan* (长春园 Garden of Prolonged Springtime) and *Qichunyuan* (绮春园 Garden of Variegated Springtime) annexes.¹⁰

Before 1744 various projects were implemented within the boundaries of Yuanmingyuan as Yongzheng had known it. Qianlong had some complexes added, some buildings luxuriously decorated with colourful glazed tiled roofs and carved marble railings and staircases. Some mechanical devices from the Europe had been introduced to add a sense of fantasy in this imperial garden, such as chiming clocks [in Yongzheng's time], weathercocks and even an indoor automaton to cool the air.¹¹

After 1744, Qianlong started to add more land for the development of Yuanmingyuan. At the east of Yuanmingyuan, he had a village removed to make a new garden as his retirement retreat, although that was still over half a century ahead. This garden was named Changchunyuan to commemorate *Changchun xianguan* (长春仙馆 Immortal villa of Prolonged Springtime), the garden-and-house complex of Yuanmingyuan where he lived as a prince. By 1751, Changchunyuan was basically finished. As with Yuanmingyuan proper, it was composed of dozens of little garden complexes, each of which was connected or separated by rivers/canals and hills.

In 1747, Qianlong decided to have a European style palace and fountains made at the north edge of Changchunyuan. This project took four years to finish, and was followed by further architectural features and planting in 'European' styles completed over the next three decades, which ultimately turned the north border of Changchunyuan into a 'European styled palace-and-garden' complex, known as Xiyanglou (西洋楼 Western-Ocean Palaces).

⁹ Emperor Qianlong, 'Yuanmingyuan Houji' (圆明园后记 Postscript of Yuanmingyuan), *Yuanmingyuan Sishijing Tuyong* (圆明园四十景图咏 Paintings and Poems on Forty Scenes of Yuanmingyuan), (Beijing: World Publishing, 2005).

¹⁰ although the imperial garden of Emperor Kang is also named *Changchunyuan* (畅春园 Garden of Joyful Springtime), when written in Chinese, these two names are different.

¹¹ The use of western items such as weathercock and clocks is recorded on the illustrations of the forty scenes of Yuanmingyuan. *Yuanmingyuan Sishijing Tuyong* (圆明园四十景图咏 Paintings and Poems on Forty Scenes of Yuanmingyuan), (Beijing: World Publishing, 2005).

Between 1766 and 1772, after a few southern tours that had brought him fresh ideas on gardens, Qianlong recreated some famous Jiangnan gardens and landscapes recreated in Changchunyuan and Yuanmingyuan proper, which steadily enriched the garden collection of gardens at Yuanmingyuan.

In 1770s, the other compound *Qichunyuan* (绮春园 Garden of Variegated Spring), to the southeast, was officially incorporated into Yuanmingyuan. Together with Changchunyuan, these three areas were called the Yuanmingyuan complex or, just Yuanmingyuan. They altogether covered 352 hectares. (Figure 2.1)

Unlike Changchunyuan, Qichunyuan was composed of a few private gardens taken from the properties of princes and officials. Qianlong did not give much attention to this annexe; neither did he spend much time here. Because it was a combination of different private gardens, the plan, compared with Yuanmingyuan proper and Changchunyuan, showed less structure and the boundary was more irregular.

As a great connoisseur, Qianlong could hardly restrain his ambitions to make bigger and better gardens. However, according to Confucian principles, which must be obeyed by every Chinese emperor, a virtuous leader should not indulge in entertainment and luxury life too much; otherwise he will lose the energy he needs to rule his people. Also, the huge costs of garden making disobeyed his forefathers' simple way of life. In order to keep his hobby of garden making in line with these moral obligations, he made an explanation in the *Postscript on Yuanmingyuan*, 'for the sake of Court affairs, the emperor should have a place for beauty and pleasure. If [the place is] appropriately built, the emperor can improve himself and shape his character'. Also, as a way of saving future costs, he advised his descendants dwelling at Yuanmingyuan not to build any further gardens.¹²

¹² Emperor Qianlong, 'Yuanmingyuan Houji' (圆明园后记 Postscript of Yuanmingyuan), *Yuanmingyuan Sishijing Tuyong* (圆明园四十景图咏 Paintings and Poems on Forty Scenes of Yuanmingyuan), (Beijing: World Publishing, 2005).

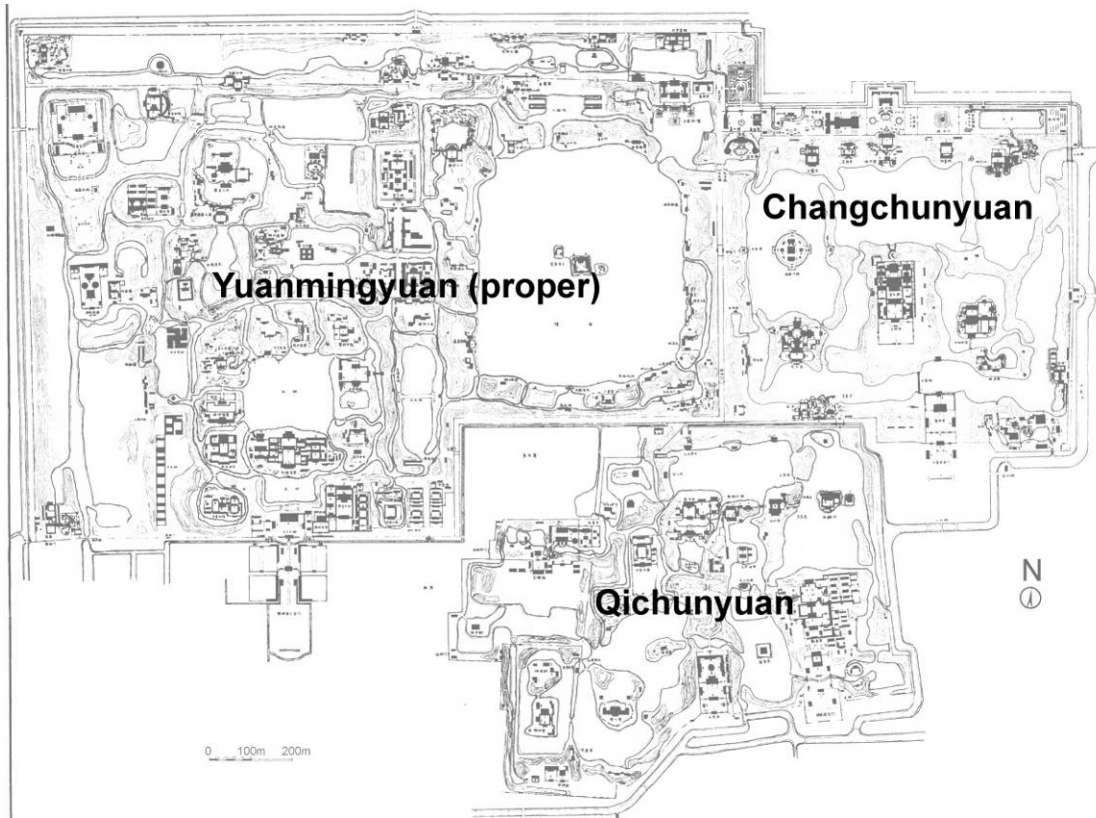


Figure 2.1 Map of Yuanmingyuan. This conjectural map was based on the references of the survey maps of 1933 and 1963, the textual and pictorial archives in Qing Dynasty and so on. (Source: Chongyi He (何重义) and Zhaofeng Zeng (曾昭奋), 'Yuanming changchun qichun sanyuan zongpingmian tu' (圆明 长春 绮春三园总平面图 The complete plan of the gardens of Yuanming, Changchun and Qichun) (1979), in *Yuanmingyuan yuanlin yishu* (圆明园园林艺术 The Garden Art of Yuanmingyuan) (Beijing: Science Press, 1995)

Yuanmingyuan as a Reflection of the Qing Emperors' Vision of China

Of the three compounds of Yuanmingyuan, Yuanmingyuan proper and Changchunyuan were built from scratch, while Qichunyuan was based on a number of existing princely gardens. Therefore the designs of Yuanmingyuan proper and Changchunyuan are a better basis for the interpretation of their owners' (as well as designers') vision of an ideal model for living.

Forty Scenes at Yuanmingyuan: Moral Landscapes

Many of the scenes at Yuanmingyuan were modelled on or inspired by the best gardens in southern China, where garden art was considered to have achieved the peak of its development. Others were inspired by the imperial collection of paintings, patterns and symbols of Buddhism and Taoism, and imaginary landscapes of the immortal world. The grounds served as a stage ground for court affairs, with the buildings as palaces, dwellings, studios, libraries, Buddhist temples, ancestral shrines and theatres. They also included space for archery and horse riding, and even an artificial market for the amusement of the imperial family in playing out a pretended 'real' life. Additionally a large area was allotted for the production of grain and silk in order to emphasize the significance of agriculture as fundamental to the basic principle for the survival of the nation.

The gardens were planned and supervised by the emperors themselves, who became great connoisseurs and arbiters of good taste, in consultation with the most capable artists. They employed the best craftsmen in the country, and by 1743 Yuanmingyuan was referred to as the 'garden of gardens' by its European observers. It retained this international reputation as an oriental fantasy throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹³

From the poems by Qianlong and the notes added by his ministers, it can be seen that the origins of the Forty Scenes were inspired by various themes. Some ideas came from Chinese paintings and literature, some symbolically represented principles from Confucianism, Daoism or Buddhism, and some borrowed scenes from man-made or natural landscapes. Altogether they presented an ordered Chinese view of a highly idealized world. The designed scenes at Yuanmingyuan acknowledged natural beauty, Manchurian life on horse-back and Chinese agricultural life (farm-houses and rice fields, fish ponds), as well as the care of the spiritual world (ancestral shrines, Buddhist temples, immortal islands and so on). (Figure 2.2)

¹³ Jean Denis Attiret, *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des missions étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Guérin, 1749), the English translation by Joseph Spence [alias Sir Harry Beaumont], *A Particular Account of the Emperor of China's Gardens near Peking* (London: R. Dodsley, 1752).



Figure 2.2 'Study Room Under Green Phoenix Trees', one of the forty scenes of Yuanmingyuan. The painting was from the album *Paintings with Poems of Forty Scenes in Yuanmingyuan* (1744). (Source: *Yuanmingyuan Sishijing Tuyong* (圆明园四十景图咏 Paintings and Poems on Forty Scenes of Yuanmingyuan), Beijing: World Publishing, 2005)

Formality at Changchunyuan: Ordered Nature

Changchunyuan was constructed on Emperor Qianlong's orders to be his residence after retirement. It was built on a square site with 860 metres on each side, and surrounded by high walls. These walls were almost invisible from inside the garden, where the view towards the land outside Chuangchunyuan was screened by the long and continuous artificial hills built in front of the wall. Various garden complexes, many of which were modelled on literati gardens in *Jiangnan*, sit here and there on

the islands and riverside.¹⁴ Although hills and rivers were naturally shaped, the Changchunyuan was dominated by a sense of formality, revealed in the order which may be seen in its plan. The structure of the garden was delicately organized to achieve a balanced order. Firstly, the main north-south axis controlled the whole plan. Along this axis was located the main gate, the main hall and building complex, the largest lake and the central building group of the European palaces. Secondly, almost all garden buildings, islands and lakes were arranged symmetrically, although not geometrically, based on the south-north axis. Thirdly, the arrangement of hills was indeed rational instead of 'natural'. They functioned as walls to screen views and to separate the garden complexes. (Figure 2.3)

This may be understood as an example of 'Chinese formality', not ruled by straight lines and geometrical forms, but operating through the ordering of structure and balance control. In general, by organising natural elements and informal garden complexes into a well ordered frame, the emperor achieved domination over nature.

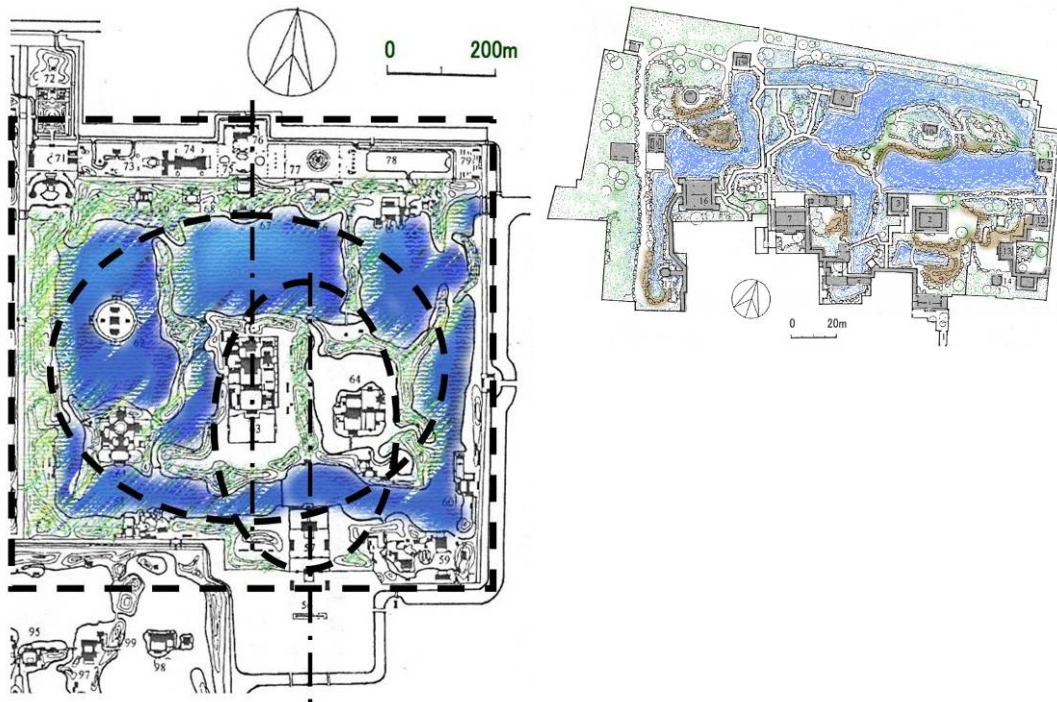


Figure 2.3 (left) Plan of Changchunyuan (an extension to Yuanmingyuan proper), which adheres to a hidden formality obscured by the detailing; (right) Literati garden *Zhuozhengyuan* (拙政园 Humble Administrator's Garden) in Suzhou, which is more informal in layout, and symmetry is intentionally avoided. (Sources: analyses by author, original plans from (left) Chongyi He (何重义) and Zhaofeng Zeng (曾昭奋), 'Yuanming changchun qichun sanyuan zongpingmian tu' (圆明 长春 绮春三园总平面图 The complete plan of the gardens of

¹⁴ Jiangnan gardens, locating in southeast China, were mostly private gardens made by people who had a substantial knowledge of literature and art. The Jiangnan gardens were famous for their spirit of following nature and the irregular forms, which were very different from the formal gardens in Europe.

Yuanming, Changchun and Qichun) (1979), in *Yuanmingyuan yuanlin yishu* (圆明园园林艺术 The Garden Art of Yuanmingyuan) (Beijing: Science Press, 1995); (right) Dunzhen Liu (刘敦桢), *Suzhou gudian yuanlin* (苏州古典园林 Classical Gardens of Suzhou) (Beijing: Zhongguo Jianzhugongye Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 304-306.)

THE WESTERN-OCEAN PALACES AND THE CHINESE ATTITUDE TO THE WEST: MID 18TH TO EARLY 19TH CENTURY

A Brief View of Westerners in the Chinese Court

There have been intermittent contacts between Chinese and Western civilisations in the last 2000 years. The Han dynasty (202 B.C.-A.D. 220) and the Roman Empire knew each other; the Silk Road developed the trade between China and Rome, as well as many Central Asian countries along the road. In the Tang period (618-907), Nestorian Christianity and Mohammedanism entered China; In the Yuan period (1271-1368), the famous Marco Polo travelled to China and met Kublai Khan, the founder of the Yuan dynasty. Since that time, western priests have appeared in the Chinese imperial court, and the Chinese empire also sent voyagers exploring the ocean who reached the eastern coast of Africa.¹⁵

But the convergence of Chinese and Western history could not have occurred before the Age of Discovery, and the direct confrontation of the two civilisations could not have occurred before the Industrial Revolution which commissioned in Great Britain in the late 18th century.¹⁶ By this time Europe had developed geographical knowledge and technical skills to be able to reach the East, and wanted to spread Christianity and expand its trade market.

China has retained a similar political, social, economic milieu for almost 2000 years before the 20th century. 'The polity was a dynasty ruled by an imperial family; the

¹⁵ Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Six edition) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 6-7.

¹⁶ Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Six edition) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 7.

economy was basically agrarian and self-sufficient; the society centred around the gentry; and the dominant ideology was Confucianism.¹⁷

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) was the first westerner to be invited into the Forbidden City. In 1601 he arrived in Beijing and was introduced to the Ming Emperor (Ming dynasty: 1368-1644). He introduced western science and technology to China, including Euclid's Elements, hydrological instruments, the chiming clock, world map, and music instruments and so on. The Emperor was fascinated by these items, but he ignored the one which Ricci wanted to promote the most—the Bible.

After the fall of the Ming dynasty, Jesuits kept their contacts with the Qing emperors, though the Chinese emperors' interests lay in western science and inventions, and religions had only rarely been successfully propagated in China.

When China entered the 18th century, stability and prosperity fostered by the Qing Empire came to fruition, and experienced a steadily booming economy.

Construction of Xiyanglou

From the 16th century, European Jesuit missionaries were sent to China and some of them worked in the Imperial court. Under their influence, Western science and religions were gradually introduced to China. In the 18th century, the Qing emperor's interest in the West moved from scientific and religious areas to the arts and mechanics. Besides paintings, which borrowed oil-painting skills, Western architecture and garden art were also put into practice. The European palaces (西洋楼 *Xiyanglou*, literally translated 'The West-Ocean Palaces') emerged in such an environment.

It is said that Emperor Qianlong was shown a picture of a European fountain one day in 1747, which stimulated his great interest and desire to own such a fantasy.¹⁸ He asked the Italian Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766, in China 1715-1766), his most beloved missionary, who worked as a court painter at the time, if he could find a person to make a fountain. The emperor's question soon turned into command and

¹⁷ Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Six edition) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 6.

¹⁸ Michele Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, 'Europomania at the Chinese Court—the Palace of the Delights of Harmony (1747-1751), Architecture and Interior Decoration', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, Vol. 65, 2000-2001, pp. 47-60.

the French Jesuit P. Michel Benoist (1715-1774, in China 1744-1774), a mathematician and astronomer, was chosen to be a hydraulic mechanist. After seeing the model made by Benoist, Qianlong decided to build a palace with fountains and gardens, all in European style. He commanded Castiglione to draw up the plans and wall paintings, probably later joined by the French artist Jean-Denis Attiret (1702-1768) and Ignaz Sichelbarth (1708-1780);¹⁹ Benoist supervised the construction of the fountains; the French botanist Pierre d'Incarville (1706-1757) was in charge of the gardens; the French clockmaker, Gilles Thiebault, made the ironwork. Chinese artisans executed all the construction work. Emperor Qianlong himself took one of the most important roles in shaping Xiyanglou, since each plan needed to be submitted for his inspection. He frequently made alterations to these plans, from changing brass balustrades to glazed ones to giving a name to each building.²⁰

By 1751, the first palace, Xieqiqu (谐奇趣 Palace of Harmonious Wonder), was complete, with fountains to its front and rear, a cistern for storage of water for fountains to the west, an aviary to east and a labyrinth to the north. These first building efforts further stimulated the emperor's interest in the exoticism of the foreign style. A second project began in 1756 and was finished by 1759, which expanded Xiyanglou greatly along the northern border of Changchunyuan [Garden of Prolonged Springtime]. The last building, Yuanyingguan, was added in 1783. It strengthened the central north-south axis of Changchunyuan and was used for displaying a collection of occidental souvenirs which was continually extended. Altogether Xiyanglou had an area of 7 hectares, with the land lying in a T-shape. (Figure 2.4)

In 1786, a portfolio of twenty copperplate engravings was made to capture the glories of Xiyanglou. Based on sketches prepared by the Manchurian court artist Yi Lantai, who is assumed to have been a disciple of Castiglione, the views depict Xiyanglou as a mannered hybrid of Chinese and Western styles.²¹ In the gardens, carved marble forms supported rustic rocks, clipped junipers accompanied naturally shaped pines; bricks, not hedges, shaped the labyrinth. Although some elements can be traced to

¹⁹ *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol one: 635-1800*, edited by Nicolas Standaert (Leiden: Brill, 2001). p. 830.

²⁰ Rich details of the imperial orders on Xiyanglou construction and decoration can be seen in *Yuanmingyuan* (圆明园), ed. by the First National Archives of China, (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1991).

²¹ For additional details on the hybridity of Castiglione's design of Xiyanglou, see Victoria M. Siu, 'China and Europe intertwined: a new view of the European sector of the Chang Chun Yuan', *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 19, 1999, pp. 376-393; and Michele Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens 'Europeomania at the Chinese Court—the Palace of the Delights of Harmony (1747-1751), Architecture and Interior Decoration', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, Vol. 65, 2000-2001, pp. 47-60.

precedents loosely drawn from the Italian Baroque, the styles of the Xiyanglou can neither be attributed to a particular school nor a particular European country. While exotic features dominated the landscape of Xiyanglou, layers of trees and walls prevailed along with Chinese roofs, the sole elements visible beyond its walls. Just as Chinoiserie once represented the Chinese fashion in Europe, Xiyanglou was an inversion of that fashion: Europomania at the Chinese court.

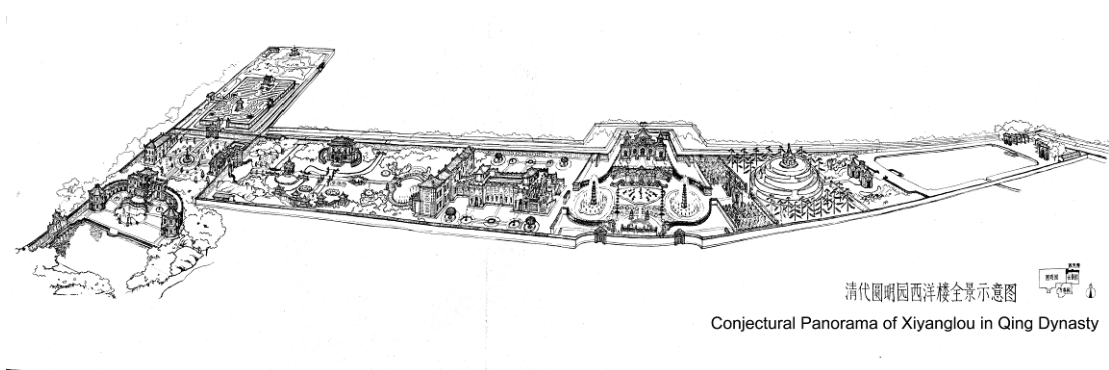


Figure 2.4 Xiyanglou, Conceptual Panorama in the Qing Dynasty. (Source: Yufeng Jin, 'Yuanmingyuan Xiyanglou Pingxi' (Analysis of the Xiyanglou in Yuanmingyuan), *Yuanmingyuan*, vol. 3 (Beijing: China Architecture and Building Press, 1984))

Uses of Xiyanglou

The purpose of building Xiyanglou, as Emperor Qianlong explained in a poem, was 'to make such features to be able to assemble the ambassadors and impress them', or in other words, to show off China's abundance in everything in the world, even the 'exquisites of the West'.²² The archives also showed the Portuguese, Dutch, British and other foreign ambassadors and missionaries and even the Tibetan Panchen Lama were invited to view the fountains at Xiyanglou. But in the later years of Qianlong's reign, the fountain works gradually decayed due to lack of repair after Benoist's death.²³ Succeeding emperors never had the same strong interest as Qianlong in this exotic challenge. Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796-1820), wrote some poems

²² Emperor Qianlong, 'Ti Zelantang' (题泽兰堂 Notes on Zelan Hall)", *the Fifth Book of Imperial Poems of Gaozong*, Volume 94 (1796)

²³ The fountain features decayed quickly after being made. By the end of 18th century, for example, the leakage of cistern and water features and the mechanical damage turned the automata back to human-powered works.

which make it clear that he did not admire the marvellous works of his ancestor; he made ironic remarks on both the problematic mechanical works and the Western people and thought which had also given him problems.

Besides diplomatic use, Xiyanglou was also a place for the emperor's recreation. From the original records of the emperor's daily life, Qianlong paid many visits to Changchunyuan after Xiyanglou was built. A record of the punishment of garden officials, for example, mentions Qianlong's sudden visit to Xiyanglou to view the fountains.²⁴

Xiyanglou was also used for storage. The palaces contained giant collections of the emperors' exotic treasures. Xieqiqu, Haiyantang and Yuanyingguan were all stuffed with different goods, from arms to toys. Yuanyingguan was said to have been built for the exhibition of the Gobelin tapestries sent from the French court in 1767.²⁵ According to a visitor's account, the palace was so packed with souvenirs sent by foreigners and collected by the emperor that they could hardly move within the palace.²⁶

Xiyanglou was also a place for enjoying and keeping all non-Chinese culture. For example, there were Italian musical events and concerts held in Xieqiqu. The Chinese singers were castrati trained by the Jesuit missionaries. Also, two plaques of Islamic doctrines were found at the Belvedere, which was once used as a mosque by Qianlong's Muslim concubine. It was also said that this concubine lived in *Yuanyingguan* (远瀛观 View Over the Sea), a palace in the Xiyanglou, but this is questioned by some researchers.²⁷

²⁴ '104, Fulong'an deng zou xieqiqu kuishui jiang yuanchen changgui yichu zhe' (二零四, 福隆安等奏谐奇趣亏水将苑臣常贵议处折 No. 104 The account of Fulong'an et al's advice on punishing garden official Changgui for the water shortage in Xieqiqu), in *Yuanmingyuan* (圆明园), edited by China First National Archives, (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1991), pp.132-133.

²⁵ Osvald Siren, *The Imperial Palaces of Peking* (Paris: Librairie Nationale D'art et D'histoire, 1926), p. 49.

²⁶ *Le Yuanmingyuan: Jeux d'eau et Palais Europeens du XVIIIe Siecle A La Cour de Chine*, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations (Paris, 1987)

²⁷ 'Changchunyuan oushi jianzhu tushi' (长春园欧式建筑图释 Illustrated explanation of European style buildings of Changchunyuan), ed. And trans. by Guoxian Shen (申国羨), in *Yuanmingyuan ziliaoji* (圆明园资料集 Yuanmingyuan reference collection) (Beijing: Shumu Wenxian Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 56-83 (68, 74).

The Emperor's View of Automata as a Reflection of the Contrast Between Eastern and Western Values

The Emperors' Poems on Xiyanglou

There were five Qing emperors who lived in Yuanmingyuan, and most of them wrote hundreds or even thousands of poems which related to the views and life in the gardens. However only a little over a dozen of the poems were specifically about Xiyanglou, which may be considered just as indicative as the contents of the poems in revealing the values held by the emperors. Although small in number, these poems are especially valuable since they revealed the increasing misunderstanding between China and Western countries. In 1793 and 1816, Britain sent two diplomatic teams to seek trade communication with China. However, not being interested in the British proposal, and being angered by British ambassadors' failure to observe Court rituals correctly, the Chinese emperors' attitudes towards the West took a great U-turn, and vice versa, which ultimately led to wars. Following are the translation of six imperial poems (including the comments made by the emperors) and one Qing court document, which provide a hint of the reasons for these conflicts, through Chinese emperors' attitudes towards the material culture and technology of the West.²⁸

Table 2.1 Statistics on Imperial poems on Yuanmingyuan and Xiyanglou²⁹

Emperors	Poems on Yuanmingyuan	Poems on Xiyanglou
Qianlong (r. 1736-1795)	Nearly 2,300	1
Jiaqing (r. 1796-1820)	Nearly 1,900	11
Daoguang (r. 1821-1850)	300	1
Xianfeng (r. 1851-1861)	About 70	unknown

²⁸ English translation by author. Original Chinese texts from Enyin Zhang (张恩荫), 'Qing wudi yuzhi shiwen zhongde yuanmingyuan shiliao' (清五帝御制诗文中的圆明园史料 the Yuanmingyuan archives from Imperial poems of Five Emperors in Qing Dynasty), *Yuanmingyuan bianqianshi tanwei* (圆明园变迁史探微 History of the Change of Yuanmingyuan) (Beijing: Beijing gymnasium college Press, 1993), pp. 228-229.

²⁹ Data from Enyin Zhang (张恩荫), 'Qing wudi yuzhi shiwen zhongde yuanmingyuan shiliao' (清五帝御制诗文中的圆明园史料 the Yuanmingyuan archives from Imperial poems of Five Emperors in Qing Dynasty), *Yuanmingyuan bianqianshi tanwei* (圆明园变迁史探微 History of the Change of Yuanmingyuan) (Beijing: Beijing gymnasium college Press, 1993), pp. 228-229.

Notes on the Hall of Zelan 题泽兰堂³⁰

(Made in the 60th year of Qianlong's reign (1795), transcript from the Fifth Book of Imperial Poems of Gaozong³¹, Volume 94.)

The name of the library is Zelan,
[It is] plainly constructed without decorative paintings.
The aromatic books offer eternal reading.
The cane windows prevent a mild chill
The plants [around] represent an admirable emotion
The water features provide a marvellous display
[When] overseas ambassadors arrive for the celebrations,
[I will] have them assembled [here] and to let them admire.

Commentary: The water features are situated to the north of the hall. They originated in the eighteenth year of Qianlong's reign, when the ambassadors of Portugal came to the capital presenting tribute. I learned from them that water features and displays were highly admired in their country. As China is such a vast country abounding in wealth, and water features are merely one type of exquisite, I ordered F. Giuseppe Castiglione, a westerner living in the Capital, to make such features to be able to assemble the ambassadors and impress them. The year before last the British ambassadors came to the capital to pay tribute. [I] also asked them to view [the water features]. They were greatly surprised and much impressed. Last winter, the official of Guangdong Changling and Zhugui presented the report that the ambassadors from Holland, Desheng³² and others, asked for permission to come to the capital to pay tribute and celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of my reign this year. In view of their sincere hearts full of admiration and thirst for their cultivation from ten-thousand miles away, I granted them permission. (They) arrived in the Capital last December and will join in this New Year's court celebration in January. During the banquet, they will then be commissioned to view the water features on site. I will let them know that what I am delighted with is the subjects' sincerity of hoping to be cultivated. If thinking of the tributes of their national products only, then there's nothing special that can't be found in the vast land of China. So I have not considered the water features as so precious from the outset.

Background information: In 1793 the English embassy sent by the King of Great Britain successfully arrived in China for the first time to congratulate the Emperor Qianlong on his 80th birthday, and "being desirous of cultivating the friendship of the Emperor of China and of improving the connection, intercourse and good correspondence between the Courts of London and Peking, and of increasing and extending the commerce between their respective subjects".³³

³⁰ *Zelan*: name of a plant, known in English as *Herba Lycopi*.

³¹ *Gaozong* is the temple name of Emperor Qianlong after his death.

³² *Desheng* is the Chinese name of an ambassador of the Netherlands.

³³ Baring was the chairman of the East India Company and the patron of the embassy. Before the embassy's departure, he wrote a letter to the Emperor Qianlong which was passed on by the General office of Canton 广东总督衙门 to report the visit.

Viewing the water features at Harmonious Wonder 观谐奇趣水法

(Made in the 1st year of Jiaqing's reign (1796), from the First Book of Poems of Renzong³⁴, Volume 1.)

The line of buildings and towers were made in European styles.
It is believed that the reason for this is the good reputation and cultivation of Kangxi.

The stream of water is pumped to flow,
The underground bronze mechanism is of exquisite quality.
The breathtaking water crashing on the stone were carried by a thousand men.

The falling drops from the white rain are measured by ten-thousand Hu³⁵
From the exquisite hand-made features I know of their obedience.
My broad territory is impregnable like a fortress of gold.

The View Over the Sea 远瀛观

(Made in the 3rd year of Jiaqing's reign (1798), from the First Book of Poems of Renzong, Volume 19.)

Machines carry water into the stone pool.
Ten-thousand Hu of Jade-like drops fall.
Intuitive understanding that the Emperor Kangxi has extended his fame and cultivation broadly
Around the world there is the same culture whether in desert or on sea.

Harmonious Wonder 谐奇趣

(Made in the 3rd year of Jiaqing's reign (1798), from the First Book of Poems of Renzong, Volume 23.)

Water is transferred from the roof,
Controlled carefully.
No matter how intricate the water features are,
Leakage still needs to be prevented.
Waves are piled up to thousands of layers,
Drops are measured as numerous Hu
Circuitous pipes extend far away
Irrigated water originates from the distant.

³⁴ *Renzong* is the temple name of Jiaqing after his death.

³⁵ *Hu* is a Chinese measure of grain used in former times. In Qing times, one *Hu* was equivalent to 5 Chinese Dou, 50 Chinese Litres or half Stone

It ends in the valley in a torrential flow, whilst beginning as a tiny stream.
The view of the water features brings together many wonders,
Hidden in this is a basic principle.

Poem on the View over the Sea 远瀛观歌

(Made in the 8th year of Jiaqing's reign (1803), from the First Book of Poems of Renzong, Volume 48.)

There stand irregular marble stages and arrays of pearl-jade trees;
Wonderful scenes are displayed through the glass windows.
Open all the windows to let fresh air in;
Envelop the jade screen and purple phoenix with the fog of incense.
The bright view of the palace is prepared for overseas visitors;
The ancestor's thoughts have covered more than nine continents.
Coming and looking around the hall brings me close to my forefathers'
upbringing;
They controlled the land strictly, the older they were the more successful they
became.

The View Over the Sea 远瀛观

(Made in the 23rd year of Jiaqing's reign (1818), from the Third Book of Poems of Renzong, Volume 53.)

Throughout history it has always been costly to strictly control the far land.
Those English have a character that is hard to subjugate.
They come firstly for benefits
If treated mercifully, they will have no fear and become greedier.
[They were] too unimpressionable to obey the Chinese rituals
[They] disgraced their king's honour and should be driven out
How can the Grand Emperor give importance to material treasures?
What I am proud of is virtues and careful dominance only.

Commentary: It is important to be strict when educating and governing the distant lands of the empire. My poem said that China has an impressive manner. How can it be even slightly degraded? Those English ambassadors are vulgar and ignorant, greedy and stubborn. Also they did not follow the [proper] rituals, thereby disgraced the mission of their king. Based on the reasons above, [I] refused their tributes and had them repatriated. Herein lies the principles for managing the state: 'treating rituals as great treasures, treating virtuousness as measure of a governor'

Background information: In 1816 British ambassadors came to China again. After the failure of the Macartney embassy in 1793, Britain sent another mission, led by the Earl Amherst (William Pitt Amherst, 1773-1857). This visit

ended by the procedural obstacles in the imperial audience. If the previous visit had not yet given the Emperor Qianlong a bad impression, this one totally ruined the image of the British in Jiaqing's mind. From the British side, equally, they were disappointed in the unchangeable nature of the Chinese Emperor.

These poems reveal that in Emperor Qianlong's eye Xiyanglou was like a Disneyland, one of his many art collections, which he often proudly presented to foreign ambassadors and guests in order to show his wealth and power. But in Emperor Jiaqing (the son of Qianlong) 's opinion, Xiyanglou was rather an example of the unreliability of Western technology and therefore a constant reminder of the stronger Chinese values. This inevitably widened the gap between China and the West, and ultimately contributed to the wars in the mid 19th century.

Imperial Document on Mechanical Maintenance of Fountains at Xiyanglou

Apart from imperial poems, a historical document regarding the water storage system at Xiyanglou also reveals the Chinese attitude towards technology.

[...] It has been reported that when the Western styled water features at Harmonious Wonder were completed in the 16th year of Qianlong's reign, three mules were bought to pull the water carts, which had been reported to the Emperor by the Minister in charge. The average cost for feeding mules each year was 213 Liang of silver. (one Liang equals about 0.05kg). The waterwheel for the water features at the Building of Eleven Spans was man-powered and required 14 gardeners everyday, and fees for their meals were 30 Wen per person per day. The minister in charge and others asked for permission to use winches and employ labourers to operate them instead of the mules and water carts which were often faulty. After the proposal was agreed upon and executed, labourers began carrying water from the well. Winches were also then set up at the Building of Eleven Spans. The gardeners operating the waterwheels were also fired at the same time. The employees carrying water on both sites cost a maximum of 140 Liang of silver, and a minimum of 100 Liang annually. Comparatively, this method provided a more cost-effective and convenient solution.³⁶

This illustrates two perspectives. Firstly, the Chinese view of modern technology. Since it seems against the principles of Chinese philosophy (Zhuangzi) in terms of simplicity, the mechanical works are devalued as a toy which is not suitable for an

³⁶ '104, Fulong'an deng zou xieqiu kuishui jiang yuanchen changgui yichu zhe' (二零四, 福隆安等奏谐奇趣亏水将苑臣常贵议处折 No. 104 The account of Fulong'an et al's advice on punishing garden official Changgui for the water shortage in Xieqiu), in *Yuanmingyuan* (圆明园), edited by China First National Archives, (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1991), pp.132-133.

emperor to indulge in (however, in Xu Guangqi's *Nongzheng quanshu*, the hydraulic mechanical works were applied in agriculture tools). Also, because Chinese emperors see the products of modern science and technology as merely 'play-things', a person with good morals should not indulge himself in such 'tricks'. Secondly, the way in which the Chinese measure efficiency. When the fountains were damaged, the repair fees are higher than workers' wages, so the repair was given up and human labour was employed to carry water instead.

Meanings of Xiyanglou

Although occupying only one fiftieth of the land of Yuanmingyuan, Xiyanglou has a significant place in history. Leaving the political significance of its destruction for later, the making of Xiyanglou offered a unique case of Chinese "Europomania" and the treatment of Xiyanglou reflected emperors' changing attitudes to the West.

Xiyanglou was the first attempt at representing a "European" style garden and palaces in Chinese imperial gardens. In the early studies on Xiyanglou, it was treated as a bizarre work in art history and a failed imitation of European gardens and buildings. But later studies have explored its special values and given it a higher reputation.³⁷ As Philippe Guillemin said, Xiyanglou was born from a strong will to combine and improve two cultures. This combination arose not a consequence of the negative response to the emperor's commission, but rather from the strong will of the Jesuit designers.³⁸

The making of Xiyanglou, to the emperor, shows Chinese attitudes to western influences. Firstly, the emperor's interests in the West focused mainly on art and mechanical devices in Qianlong's time.³⁹ Secondly, Xiyanglou showed the emperor's open mind in accepting western art. But one should keep in mind that layers of trees and walls dominated the exotic features and that the European palaces were covered with Chinese roofs—the sole elements visible beyond its walls. Also, after the

³⁷ Daniel Rabreau and Marie-Raphael Paupé, 'Un Style Original ou les "Gouts Reunis"', in *Le Yuanmingyuan: Jeux d'eau et Palais Européens du XVIII^e Siècle A La Cour de Chine*, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations (Paris, 1987), pp. 14-18.

³⁸ Philippe Guillemin, 'Avant-propos', in *Le Yuanmingyuan: Jeux d'eau et Palais Européens du XVIII^e Siècle A La Cour de Chine*, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations (Paris, 1987), p. 3.

³⁹ In Kangxi's period, the Jesuit missionaries who often served in the court were mainly scientists and they introduced modern theories on mathematics, physics, astrology etc. However, since Qianlong's time, although the Jesuits tried to introduce modern science and western thought to the emperor, only their art skills were really appreciated and used by the emperor.

hydraulic works decayed, instead of repairing the machine, labourers were hired to carry water by hand, which somehow ended the Jesuits' endeavour of introducing "advanced" techniques and thoughts to China.

The attitudes and approaches towards automata reveal that Chinese values had not changed since ancient times; it is civilisation rather than material goods that are valued by Chinese rulers. As a moral-centred society, the state is seen as a mechanism for exerting social control and establishing and maintaining moral order.⁴⁰

In conclusion, the design and construction of Xiyanglou was a unique case reflecting both the European Jesuits' and the Chinese emperor's interest in and capacity to manage cultural difference. The maintenance and use of Xiyanglou, however, reveals the unbridged gap between eastern and western values, which ultimately led to the destruction of this once unique collaboration.

DESTRUCTION OF YUANMINGYUAN AND FALL OF CHINESE EMPIRE (1860-1911)

Destruction of Yuanmingyuan 1860

From the late 18th century onwards, Britain had been seeking to trade freely with China. But two diplomatic attempts in 1793 and in 1816 both failed because the Chinese emperors believed China was self-sufficient so that there was no need for British products. British merchants developed an opium market and gained huge profits, but in the mid 19th century, the opium trade in China was prohibited by the Chinese government. This caused two Anglo-Chinese Wars, also known as the Opium Wars, first (1839-1842) between China and Britain and the later (1856-1860) with France joining in to claim rights of Christian dissemination in China. China lost both wars. As a result, a series of peace treaties, drafted by the British and the French, were signed to open China to both free trade and Christianity. However, these treaties were not taken seriously by the Chinese. They were signed as a

⁴⁰ *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, ed. by Weiming Tu, Milan Hejtmanek, Alan Wachman (Honolulu, The East-West Center, 1992), p. 11.

gesture of seeking peace in accordance with Chinese 'tai-chi' methods (never confront an anti-force directly; instead, follow the direction of that force and to gradually change it into the opposite direction when opportunity appears) of dealing with problems, which was however interpreted by the west as a lack of honesty.

In order to protect British trading benefits and French missionaries' safety and the freedom of Christian dissemination in China, in the autumn of 1860 Anglo-French armies marched into Beijing, ostensibly to establish a 'dialogue' with the Chinese emperor, but in reality to affect a show of force. However, shortly before they arrived Yuanmingyuan, the emperor had fled to his remote summer palace in Chengde, a place about 230 kilometres from Beijing. The Western armies encountered only an empty palace housing imperial treasures—Chinese and foreign—collected over the centuries. These treasures were too great a temptation for the allied force, and on 7th October after only a day's hesitation, the French troops started looting, followed by British troops (many of the Chinese collections are now at Fontainebleau and in the British Museum).

But more severe damage to Yuanmingyuan was yet to come, of which the cause was a hostage event which had taken place a few weeks earlier. On 18th September, 37 British and French soldiers, officers and a British newspaper journalist were seized on the way back from negotiations with the Qing delegation. They were imprisoned in several places, one of which was believed to be Yuanmingyuan. After nearly one month's imprisonment, nearly half died from brutal treatment and the others were left injured. This event put Lord Elgin in "the most difficult and critical point of his career. He knew that some punishment must be imposed to make the Chinese understand their responsibilities"⁴¹ Since the emperor was absent and there were no Chinese armies they could find to fight with, the best solution to Elgin was to destroy the emperor's most loved garden. Before doing so, Lord Elgin wrote a letter to the chief of the Qing delegation to show the 'righteousness' of his decision. He said that burning Yuanmingyuan was "as a punishment inflicted on the Emperor for the violation of his word, and the act of treachery to a flag of truce; that as the people were not concerned in these acts no harm would befall them, but the Imperial Government alone would be held responsible."⁴²

⁴¹ Hope Danby, *The Garden of Perfect Brightness—the history of Yuan Ming Yuan and the emperors who lived there* (London: Williams and Norgate Ltd, 1950), p.199.

⁴² Henry Brougham Loch, *Personal Narrative of Occurrences During Lord Elgin's Second Embassy to China in 1860* (London: John Murray, 1900, 3rd Edition.), p.169.

On 18th October, one day after the funeral of British hostages, Lord Elgin ordered the burning of Yuanmingyuan, although his French ally disagreed. The fire continued for two days. By the evening of 19th, most of the buildings, including Xiyanglou, had been destroyed. At the same time, other imperial gardens (including the Summer Palace Yiheyuan) were also looted and damaged in the fire.

A few months after Yuanmingyuan's destruction, Emperor Xianfeng died in his remote palace at Chengde at the age of 30, leaving a toddler son who would become Emperor *Tongzhi* (同治 1856-1875, r. 1862-1874), a short-lived and powerless child. The mother of Emperor Tongzhi, Empress Dowager *Cixi* (慈禧太后 1835-1908), controlled the court administration in the following half century.

The destruction of Yuanmingyuan forced the Qing court to sign further peace treaties which ultimately secured trade freedom and the legality of Christianity in China. Since then China has opened its door to the West. After this expensive lesson the Chinese view of the West changed significantly. Instead of being seen as 'barbarian', western civilisation was recognised for its strengths, first in military technology, and then in modern science and politics (especially the British system of constitutional monarchy, which greatly interested the Chinese empire and became a model for the Qing Empire's reformation). Students were sent abroad to receive a modern education and training; officials were sent on tours in western countries to investigate the political and social administration systems. The conflict of eastern and western values ultimately gave birth to a new principle, 'Chinese learning for essential principles and western learning for practical application' 中学为体 (body, essence, foundation) 西学为用 (use, function, application, form).⁴³

Yuanmingyuan in the Late Qing Era: 1860-1911

Since most imperial gardens in western Beijing were either damaged or destroyed, the Imperial family was confined to the Forbidden City. Once the unrest had settled, however, the desire for fresh air drew them to consider the plight of their gardens. In 1866, Emperor Tongzhi expressed his desire to restore Yuanmingyuan, suggesting

⁴³ This phrase is raised by Zhang Zhidong (张之洞 1837-1909) in 1873. Zhang Zhidong was a Chinese classicist and provincial official, one of the foremost reformers of his time. Source from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2008), article 'Chang Chih-tung'.

that this could be funded through donations from officials at all levels.⁴⁴ However, due to the difficult economic situation in which China then found itself, restoration did not start until 1873.⁴⁵ Even then the work ground to a halt after a mere nine months due to a lack of resources and timber for building purposes. As a result, Yiheyuan, another Imperial garden that had sustained less damage, was simpler in layout and therefore more manageable, was restored and became the new residence of the Imperial family. Nevertheless, between the 1880s and the late 1890s, some restoration work at Yuanmingyuan continued, organised by the Empress Dowager Cixi, who restored a number of buildings and gardens for her private use in which she herself decorated the interiors. But the gardens were no longer the main interest and were visited only occasionally by Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Tongzhi, who would then spent half a day to enjoy the remaining splendour.

In 1900, Yuanmingyuan and Yiheyuan again suffered damage in a war, and although Yiheyuan was repaired within a two-year period, there was no further repair work at Yuanmingyuan.⁴⁶ In 1904, the Administrative Department of Yuanmingyuan, the imperial body responsible for the site, was abolished and the site was taken under the care of the Administrative Department of Yiheyuan. At this time various garden features were moved to Yiheyuan to replace damaged and lost ones, and some areas were leased to peasants for agricultural production. The reorganisation of the administration was a response to social and political pressures that considered the traditional hierarchy as outmoded and demanded a more responsive approach. As a result of the great depression and chaos the imperial family made a number of gestures to appease the public; for example in 1905 Empress Dowager Cixi agreed to donate one Imperial garden *Leshanyuan* (乐善园 Garden of Happiness and Mercy) to become the agricultural experimental factory as well as a public zoological garden 'Ten-thousand-Animal Garden', today's Beijing Zoo.

⁴⁴ The year of the restoration project being raised is not a certainty. Some scholars think it was 1867.

⁴⁵ 'Chang Chih-tung', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2008).

⁴⁶ Looking at the plan of Yuanmingyuan and Yiheyuan, it is not difficult to understand why the Yiheyuan is easier to restore than Yuanmingyuan: although they have similar size of area, most of Yiheyuan was composed by lakes and hills, the building area was relatively small; however, Yuanmingyuan was a man-made garden complex on the flat area, with over 100 building complexes and scenic sites on it. Therefore, to restore Yuanmingyuan would cost much more.

YUANMINGYUAN REINTERPRETATION AND RECONSTRUCTION (1912-2000S)

Yuanmingyuan as a Lost Imperial Property

Early Republican Era: 1912-1927

The modernisation of China accelerated after the 1911 Revolution which caused the abdication of the last Qing Emperor. A Republican government was soon established, aiming to create a democracy. Various gardens and temples belonging to the former emperor were taken over and adapted into public parks, but Yuanmingyuan was retained as the former emperor's property, as it was thought to be at an inconvenient location for easy access as well as uneconomical to prepare for this purpose.⁴⁷ Yuanmingyuan soon disappeared from general consciousness, being visited only by foreigners and well-educated Chinese who came to experience nostalgic sentiments.⁴⁸ The little guarded site was also stripped of its material valuables by the local gentry and institutions, who took away ornamental rocks and sculptures which had survived previous lootings to decorate their own gardens (these stoneworks from Yuanmingyuan gave a sense of antiquity, dignity and power to their new locations), or even to build their gardens on the land of Yuanmingyuan. Walls were dismantled and stone re-used elsewhere; surviving trees were cut down for firewood.⁴⁹ Although Yuanmingyuan was still the property of the former Emperor, there was no adequate enforcement to prevent its complete disintegration, as by that stage he had more urgent matters to contend with.

⁴⁷ Between 1912 when the emperor abdicated and 1924 when the former emperor was deprived of all imperial property, various imperial gardens, temples and altars were gradually opened to the public. This includes imperial gardens of Yiheyuan (opened in 1914), North Sea (opened in 1924), Middle and South Seas (adapted into Presidential Offices from 1912 and opened as public parks from 1928), Prospect Hill (opened in 1924), imperial altars of Altar of Soil and Grain (opened as Central Park from 1913), Altar of Agriculture (partly converted into South City Park in 1915), Altar of Heaven (opened as public museum park from 1918), Altar of Earth (adapted into Capital City Park in 1924), Temple of Ancestors (opened as Peace Park from 1927). These Imperial landscapes quickly formed the foundation of public parks in Beijing. People enjoyed themselves via visiting the aged buildings and trees, as well as newly built swimming pools, ice-skating grounds and various modern facilities in the parks.

⁴⁸ In early 20th century, the records of Yuanmingyuan appeared as poems, essays, pictures/photos and paintings. Jin Xun, for example, is such a representative. As a descendent of the architect family who had served in the Qing court, Jin Xun was passionate to represent Yuanmingyuan on paper. From early 1920s till c 1965, he drew some hundreds of conjectural plans and pictures of the whole Yuanmingyuan and various garden groups within. Most of his drawings were based on his personal collections of original plans and drawings left by his family, as well as his survey on the relic sites. Jin Xun's works later became influential pictorial evidence for reinterpreting Yuanmingyuan.

⁴⁹ Da Xiang (向达), 'Yuanmingyuan lijie qishinian shuwen' (圆明园罹劫七十年纪年述闻 Narratives on Yuanmingyuan in memorising its 70th anniversary of destruction), in *Yuanmingyuan—lishi, xianzhuang, lunzheng* (圆明园—历史 现状 论争 Yuanmingyuan—history, contemporary situations and arguments), ed. by Daocheng Wang (王道诚), (Beijing: Beijing Press, 1999), pp. 417-428.

Chinese Nationalist Party era: 1928-1949

Until the early decades of the Republic, China was still a family-minded nation. Political power was scattered among various local and regional forces.⁵⁰ In 1928, the Chinese Nationalist Party (CNP) came to power. Their philosophy was that nationalist ideology would strengthen the Nation. Cultural heritage therefore became a central focus as this provided a tangible national identity, and various laws and directives were issued to preserve cultural heritage, including historic gardens and landscapes.⁵¹ Besides, local organisations were also founded, supported by officials, merchants and scholars, to protect cultural heritage, such as the Society for the Research in Chinese Architecture (SRCC) (中国营造学社 *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe*, 1930-1946), founded by Zhu Qiqian, a high-rank governmental official and wealthy businessman; the Society consisted of an Archival Department and a Construction Department, whose main work was recording and preserving historical architecture and craftsmanship.

In 1930, the first concern to preserve Yuanmingyuan was expressed. Written by Xiang Da (向达 1900-1966), a Chinese historian, this article, 'Narratives on Yuanmingyuan in remembering the 70th anniversary of its destruction' was published on the most popular Chinese newspaper *Dagong Bao* (大公报 *L'Impartial*). Xiang Da argued that the government should preserve the remains of Yuanmingyuan as evidence of both Chinese garden art and of Western vandalism towards China.⁵² This article achieved responses from both the government and the general public. In 1931, an exhibition of surviving features from Yuanmingyuan and archival material was held in Central Park, Beijing, and, in just two days, attracted over 10, 000 people.⁵³ Not long after, in 1933, a survey team was sent by the Beiping (Beijing) Municipal Bureau of Civil Engineering to measure and record the site of

⁵⁰ Tingfu Jiang (蒋廷黻 1896-1965), *Zhongguo jindaishi dagang* (中国近代史大纲 Framework of Modern History of China) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Education Press, 2006), p. 2. The book was written in 1938.

⁵¹ For details about conservation laws in the Republican era, see 'Chapter three, Imperial Altars'.

⁵² Da Xiang (向达), 'Yuanmingyuan lijie qishinian shuwen' (圆明园罹劫七十年纪年述闻 Narratives on Yuanmingyuan in memorising its 70th anniversary of destruction), in *Yuanmingyuan—lishi, xianzhuang, lunzheng* (圆明园—历史 现状 论争 Yuanmingyuan—history, contemporary situations and arguments), ed. by Daocheng Wang (王道诚), (Beijing: Beijing Press, 1999), pp. 417-428. The purpose of making the article is 'on the one hand to alert the nations, on the other hand to show how the civilised countries have respected international laws'

⁵³ 'Yuanmingyuan yiwu yu wenxian zhi zhanlan' (圆明园遗物与文献之展览 Exhibition on Yuanmingyuan remained objects and documents), *Journal of Society for the Research in Chinese Architecture* (中国营造学社汇刊), Vol. 2, No. 1 (1931), pp.1-6 (1).

Yuanmingyuan. This record, known as *Survey map of the landform of Yuanmingyuan remains*, was the first plan of the Yuanmingyuan site after destruction produced by measured survey, and has provided an invaluable record of surviving archaeological features then since. (Figure 2.5)

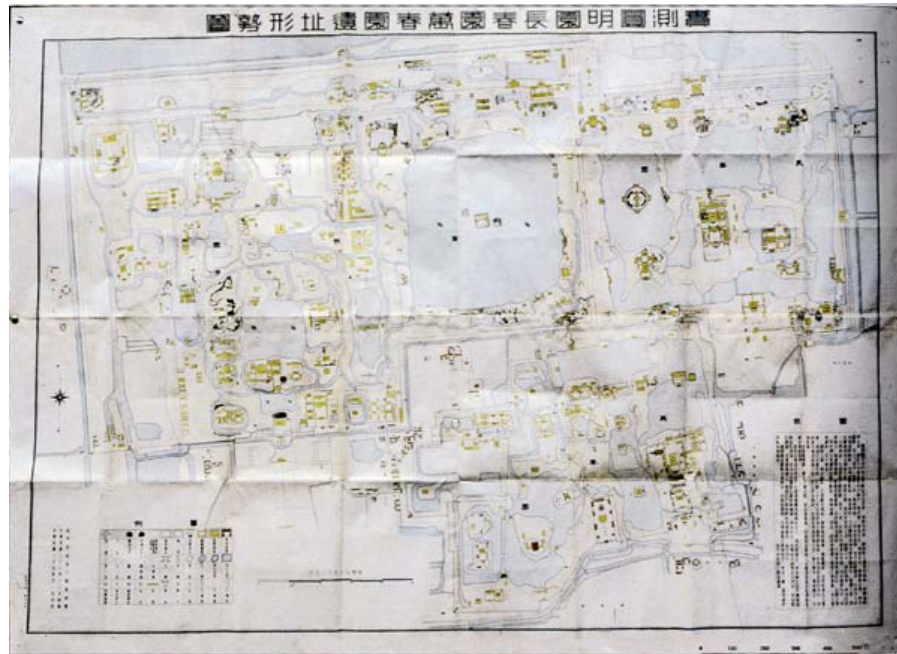


Figure 2.5 *Survey Map of the Landform of Yuanmingyuan Remains*, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Engineering (1933) On the map there was a note explaining the survey methods and purpose, "... To survey the boundary and the site of Yuanmingyuan. The ruins were excavated to search for remains. Based on the excavation, the accurate locations of buildings were marked on the map. The whole project took several months to finish...Although the Yuanmingyuan is disappearing, with this map, people can achieve a rough understanding of this garden complex." (Source: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Engineering, *Site Survey of the Relics of Yuanmingyuan*, (1933) provided by the Archives of School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, 2005)

Meanwhile, the SRCC also carried out a documentary survey on Yuanmingyuan. In 1933, Liu Dunzhen, Director of the Archival Department of SRCC, published an article entitled 'Archives on the restoration of Yuanmingyuan in *Tongzhi* era', which concentrated particularly on the 1870s Yuanmingyuan restoration. This research is the first academic study on Yuanmingyuan archives.⁵⁴

Although the exhibition, site survey and publication on Yuanmingyuan aroused the public memory of Yuanmingyuan, there is little evidence to show that Yuanmingyuan

⁵⁴ Dunzhen Liu (刘敦楨), 'Tongzhi chongxiu yuanmingyuan shiliao' (同治重修圆明园史料 Archives on the restoration of Yuanmingyuan in Tongzhi era), in *Journal of Study Society for Chinese architecture*, Vol. 3&4 (1933).

was officially considered as national heritage, nor were there any attempts to restore the gardens or to preserve the site. On the contrary, in 1934, part of the land of Yuanmingyuan was reallocated to Tsinghua University as an agricultural experimental field (although it was never used for such purposes because of the outbreak of the war). In the late 1930s and 1940s, China fell into a period of war, with eight years of Sino-Japanese war, followed by domestic wars between the Communist and Nationalist parties. Yuanmingyuan was forgotten, and the site was occupied by war refugees, who turned the land into villages and agricultural fields.

Yuanmingyuan as Symbol of National Humiliation

Political Values and Land Use of Yuanmingyuan 1949-1976

The 1949 revolution once again brought peace to China which, now entitled the People's Republic, pursued socialism and communism as the national ideology. In order to decrease class inequality, the Land Reform Movement was launched, in which the poor were given land for production which was taken from the rich, who became labourers too. Gardens were considered as a luxury, and were seen as symbols of feudalism and capitalism. Therefore during the initial phase of the People's Republic, many private gardens were levelled and all evidence of them was erased by new houses, factories and working units. Those gardens that survived were converted into public parks, workers' and cadres' sanatoria and governmental offices under the general slogan of 'let the old serve the new'.

Yuanmingyuan was also subject to the Land Reform. There was increased agricultural production; its land was allocated to schools, factories and others. Unlike other gardens, however, the history of Yuanmingyuan ultimately preserved it from total elimination, since it remained a national symbol. In 1951, Premier Zhou Enlai, when attending the opening ceremony of a middle school that was built on the site of the Main hall of Yuanmingyuan, suggested that the remaining land of Yuanmingyuan should be retained and the gardens restored.⁵⁵ As China was burdened with the Korean War at the time this suggestion was seen as evoking a brighter future.

⁵⁵ This record originally appeared in the personal memoir in 1979, and since then has been heavily quoted because it is the first announcement of restoration from the national leader of P.R.China. As the memoir said, Premier Zhou said 'imperialists burned down Yuanmingyuan, we (socialists and communists) can restore it in the future when things getting better'. Liangyong Wu (吴良镛), 'Houji' (后记)

In 1953, Wang Wei, a history student at Peking University, published an article entitled 'Yuanmingyuan' in *Guangming Ribao* (光明日报 *Guangming Daily*), a leading intellectuals' newspaper, in which he appealed for the protection of the Yuanmingyuan site and that it should be made into a People's Park. He proposed an exhibition about Yuanmingyuan which would present it as a 'masterpiece created by Chinese labour-working people', as well as the 'luxury and rotten life of Feudal emperors' and as evidence of 'foreign bandits' barbarian guilt.⁵⁶ This is probably the first re-interpretation of Yuanmingyuan in the support of class struggle. And since then, the idea of viewing Yuanmingyuan ruins as evidence of a national humiliation was to be repeated and strengthened time and time again.⁵⁷

Although the significance of Yuanmingyuan was continuously confirmed and even enhanced, no action was taken during the following two decades due to continuing political and social campaigns, which diverted attention from them as well as causing a lack of resources. Between 1958 and 1962, the Great Leap Forward followed by the Great Disasters saw more utilitarian uses for the garden: there were new forestry plantations, while the larger areas were converted to agricultural land in order to provide sustenance to hungry people. During this period, the Yuanmingyuan site was partly planted with fast-growing trees in obedience to the 'Afforestation of Motherland' decree, and cultivated in terraced fields under the 'In Agriculture learning from Dazhai' slogan, and as the city grew this land was redistributed to build various factories and small farms.⁵⁸ The Cultural Revolution that followed caused additional damage to Yuanmingyuan. Its sense of amenity was entirely denied and the site served production purposes alone. Undulating areas were terraced in order to increase agricultural production, while elsewhere remaining building bricks were dug up from the ground for contemporary construction purposes. By 1980 sixty percent of the area was occupied by various working units, and the original landform had been changed in an ad hoc manner.

postscript), in *Yuanmingyuan de Guoqu, xianzai he weilai* (圆明园的去、现在和未来 *Past, present and future of Yuanmingyuan*), Department of Civil Engineering at Tsinghua University, 1979)

⁵⁶ Wei Wang (王威), 'Yuanmingyuan' (圆明园), *Guangming Daily*, 17th and 18th October, 1953 (when is the 93 years anniversary of the burning down of Yuanmingyuan).

⁵⁷ Treating imperial gardens as 'the work made by the labouring people' first appeared in an article by Liang Sicheng in 1948, and after that, this idea was broadly accepted, and under such argument, various garden heritage were kept and used for the wellbeing of labouring people and as an evidence of the wisdom of Chinese people.

⁵⁸ The Forestry Movement was launched in 1958, aiming to gardenise the landscapes and build the new image of a socialist China. The Dazhai model was popularised in early 1970s during Cultural Revolution. It calls for painstaking work and an economical use of land such as terracing hillside to make it into agriculture fields. Both movements promote an ideology of conquering nature with human's power. For further reading, see Jijun Zhao and Jan Woudstra, "'In Agriculture, Learn from Dazhai", Mao Zedong's revolutionary model village and the battle against nature', *Landscape Research*, **32:2** (2007), pp.171-205.

Economic Exploitation and Patriotic Obligation 1978-1999

With the death of its initiator Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution drew to an end in 1976. After a few years' adaptation and exploration, the new leaders of China reformulated their goals for developing science and the economy, and launched the 'Two-civilisation Establishment', that is, material civilisation and spiritual civilisation. Traditional gardens, which had been claimed to be 'rotten culture', were appreciated again as satisfying people's physical and spiritual needs and were opened to the public. This new context brought changes to Yuanmingyuan, which was now treated as a district park. An Administrative Department was founded by the Haidian District Government of Beijing in 1976. Various plans and proposals were raised to restore and utilise Yuanmingyuan. The Administrative Department of Yuanmingyuan selected the site of Xiyanglou, the European palaces, as the starting point. By reassembling the archaeological remnants, particularly marble found both on site and in other places to which they had been removed, an anastylosis of monuments was established.⁵⁹ With little research being undertaken, authenticity in the spatial and structural character of Xiyanglou was scarcely considered at this point, which, however, did not stop the re-assembled ruins functioning as a memorial of national humiliation and as tangible evidence that 'the country will be beaten by others once it falls behind'.⁶⁰ (Figures 2.6, 2.7)

⁵⁹ Anastylosis is an archaeological term for a reconstruction technique whereby a ruined building or monument is restored using the original architectural elements to the greatest degree possible. [wikipedia]

⁶⁰ Wei Wang (王威), *Yuanmingyuan* (圆明园) (Beijing: Beijing Art and Photography Press, 2000), p. 105.



Figure 2.6 Anastylosis of monuments—reassembling architectural fragments found in Beijing University at their original place in Yuanmingyuan (1977) (Source: ‘Yuanmingyuan’, *China Pictorial*, 1981, No. 5)

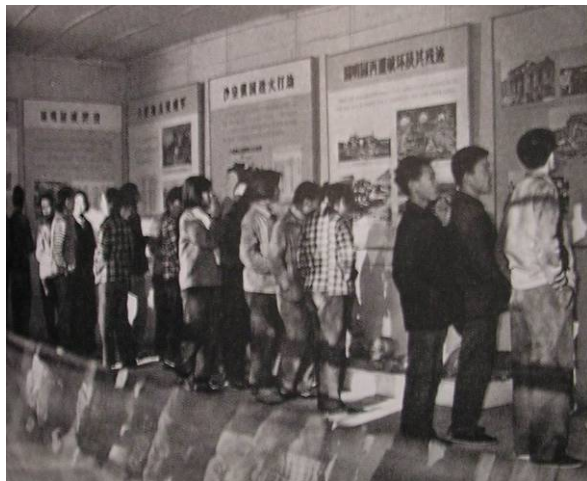


Figure 2.7 Students visiting the exhibition hall in Yuanmingyuan (1980s) (Source: ‘Yuanmingyuan’, *China Pictorial*, 1981, No. 5)

An increase in the number of visits and demand for the site soon required a better plan. The first integrated plan for Yuanmingyuan was made by the Department of Architecture at Tsinghua University in 1979. It was initiated by a proposal raised earlier that year by the National and Municipal Committees of Construction who

wished to enhance the economic value of Yuanmingyuan, proposing tourist hotels in Yuanmingyuan. After several months' archival research and field work, the Town Planning team at Tsinghua University argued against these proposals in a carefully worded report. Instead they offered a vision of Yuanmingyuan as a "park of cultural relic site". Based on this concept, a new plan was produced that showed how Yuanmingyuan might benefit good social values by restoring part of the buildings and the recreation of the landscapes for the people's cultural and recreational interest, retaining some damaged areas for patriotic educational purposes. The plan shows that most of the restoration proposals were based on a conjectural plan for the site drawn by Jin Xun in 1965. However, the arrangement of buildings was adapted to fit its new purpose as a public park.

There were, however, a number of practical constraints that had to be resolved prior to any work taking place. Besides the estimated cost of over 10 million Yuan RMB with a cash strapped government, there was the issue of having to dispossess over 2,000 people who had made their living from the land. A holistic approach would neither be fast, nor would it be a decision that could be taken lightly.⁶¹

In 1984, in order to clear the land for use as a park, over 800 peasants farming on Yuanmingyuan were appointed by the district government as workers (which means, their status was changed from 'peasants' to 'city residents'. This ensures better social wellbeing) of Yuanmingyuan Tourism Development Limited Company, a business entity founded by the district government. This idea of 'cooperative tourism development' was thought of as 'original and creative', since China at that time was still under the planned economy system, and the gap between peasants and city residents was huge. This also opened a new era of Yuanmingyuan development.⁶²

For the first time since the last academic research had been published half a century before, Yuanmingyuan again received academic, or rather, diplomatic, interest from both Chinese and French governments. In 1983, the French government sent a research team to Beijing to study Xiyanglou. According to the recall of Michele Pirazzolit-Serstevens', leader of that French team,

It is the *Zhongguo Yuanmingyuan xuehui chouweihui* (中国圆明园学会筹委会 Preparatory Committee of the Yuanmingyuan Society of China) which asked for collaboration with French specialists on Xiyanglou, [of the] Yuanmingyuan.

⁶¹ *The past, present, and future of yuanmingyuan 圆明园的去现在和未来*, edited by Department of Architecture at Tsinghua University (Beijing: Tsinghua University, 1979). (inner-print documents)

⁶² Wei Wang (王威), *Yuanmingyuan (圆明园)* (Beijing: Beijing Art and Photography Press, 2000), p. 96.

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked me to head a mission to Beijing in Autumn 1983 and to create a French team comprising art historians and architects to cooperate with Chinese experts in studying the European Palaces. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs sponsored our team until 1989. The Chinese side very soon stopped doing research and preferred to make reconstructions without preliminary researches. The French ministry suppressed its sponsorship for that reason. Since 1984 the French team has done research on the site's history, on architecture (surveys 1984, 1985), plans, a 1/500 model (1985), restitutions (1985-1988), collecting and studying old photographs (a PhD by Regine Thiriez, published in 1998 'Barbarian Lens, Western Photographers...', Gordon and Breach Publishers), search for Western models...⁶³

Debates and Practices between 'Restorationists' and 'Preservationists' (1980s-1999)

"Restore, restore! Return me the Land of splendour!" This is from a poem written by Zhang Aiping (张爱萍 1910-2003), Deputy Chief of People's Liberation Army, Minister of National Defence and Vice Premier of P. R. China at that time, who chanted this poem after visiting the Yuanmingyuan ruins in 1980.⁶⁴ "I love ruins." So said Gough Whitlam, former Prime Minister of Australia (1972-1975), who visited the site of Yuanmingyuan ruins in 1976.⁶⁵ These two voices well represented two distinctive views of Yuanmingyuan, or rather, the meaning of Yuanmingyuan.

During the 1980s and '90s there were two principal groups with opposing views of Yuanmingyuan; the 'Restorationists' who aimed to restore the garden for economic benefit and public interest, and the 'Preservationists' who intended to retain the ruins for patriotic sentiment, that is, to keep a national humiliation in memory and educate future generations about it. The debate between these groups helped to keep the plight of the gardens in the public eye; in 1983 the Development Plan of Metropolitan Beijing designated Yuanmingyuan as a Public Relics Park in response to the demands of the Preservationists, while in 1984-5 the largest of the lakes in Yuanmingyuan was cleaned out and refilled to serve as a boating lake, apparently as a response to the demands of the first group. In 1988 Yuanmingyuan was designated as *Protected Site of Cultural Heritage with Outstanding National Significance* (that is, National Heritage) This established the official status of the site, but it also created an awareness of a lack of interpretation of the site, so that it was proposed in 1994 to

⁶³ From personal email with Professor Michele Pirazzolli-Serstevens, received 13 Dec 2005.

⁶⁴ Aiping Zhang (张爱萍), 'To the tune of Ru Meng Ling' (如梦令) in 'Poems and Ci on Yuanmingyuan' (圆明园诗词), *Yuanmingyuan* (圆明园), Volume I, (Beijing: Chinese Architecture Press, 1981). p. 10.

⁶⁵ Geremie R. Barme, 'The Garden of Perfect Brightness, A Life in Ruins', *East Asian History*, No. 11 (June 1996), pp. 111-160 (158).

create a miniature Yuanmingyuan in the southwest corner. For this reason, archaeological excavation was hastily carried out in this area in order to establish the impact of the proposals, and record surviving details. However, the miniature project was later cancelled due to the change of governmental leaders in Beijing, who resented being presented with a miniature pastiche involving destruction of actual remnants. The continued interest in visualisation of the gardens ultimately led in 1997 to the reconstruction of ten groups of gardens and buildings which was carried out at a distant location in Zhuhai, a modern city developed in an area of industrial expansion in southern China. The area of this New Yuanmingyuan covered some 193 hectares, but while copying some of the building groups and their setting, they also responded to the existing character of the new site, and therefore did not recreate the entire layout as such.

The pressure on Yuanmingyuan continued with the possibility of a restoration plan being raised again the following year by a group of academics and the general public. However, the political notion of Yuanmingyuan as a lesson in national humiliation appeared to remain firm. In the spring of 1999, a letter of proposal opposing restoration was submitted to the National Political Consultative Conference, produced and signed by its 49 committee members, many of whom were academics and professionals, which again postponed the restoration scheme.

Compromise: Creating a Relics Park (2000-)

Although continuing to argue about the interpretation of Yuanmingyuan, both restorationists and preservationists recognised the necessity of rescuing the site from being further disturbed or abused by the residents or the working units on it. In May 1999, Beijing Municipal Government appointed the Beijing Research Institute of Urban Planning and Design to make a plan for the site, which was published as the *Master Plan for Yuanmingyuan Relics Park*. In August 1999 and March 2000, this *Master Plan* was twice discussed and generally approved by both the government and the specialists from various subjects, and became the first legal plan for Yuanmingyuan relict site.

The *Master Plan* defined the state of Yuanmingyuan ruins as 'historical evidence of Imperialists invading China and making China into a colonial and semi-colonial place, a patriotic educational base, a key protected site of cultural heritage with national

significance, a park which aims to preserve the relict site'⁶⁶ Without any acknowledgement of Yuanmingyuan as a historic garden, preserving the relics was the initial priority. Also, having been produced as a compromise between those with different opinions, including those advocating the newly fashionable 'authenticity' and also appealing for the return of the garden's beauty, the Master Plan made the compromise of preserving 90% of the buildings as ruins as well as aiming to restore the original landforms and plantings.⁶⁷

However, the approaches to these ideals lacked thoughtful consideration. By dividing the project into three special plans, that is, plans for archaeological excavation, for architectural conservation and for landform and planting restoration, implementation was carried out in haste in order to be ready in time for opening by 2008, when the Olympic Games was to be held in Beijing.

Since 90% of the buildings on the site were to be kept as ruins, and only 10% to be reconstructed, though on an unknown basis, the architectural conservation scheme was actually executed by archaeology based teams after they had finished the excavations. In dealing with the considerable amount of brick and stone building bases, the basic methods were to reassemble the original fabrics and fill in the missing parts with distinctive material. In this way the material's authenticity was believed to be retained. Meanwhile, based on very limited pictorial and textual resources, landscape architects produced planting designs. However, in order to respond to the solemn state of the ruined site, some colourful flower beds were later adapted into plain-colour species.

However, the construction did not go smoothly for long before more debates were generated in 2005. Along with the landform restoration scheme, waterproof membrane was laid at the bottom of lakes and canals of Yuanmingyuan to prevent water seepage. This was discovered by a visitor and broadcast through the media, described as an 'ecological disaster'. Although soon after a hastily ordered assessment declared the safety of the waterproof materials, the issues of public participation (democracy), environmental sustainability and management within

⁶⁶ *Yuanmingyuan yizhi gongyuan guihua* (圆明园遗址公园规划Master Plan of Yuanmingyuan Relics park), from Yuanmingyuan Park Official Website <<http://www.yuanmingyuanpark.com/zy/ymyyizhiguohua.htm>> [accessed 30th November 2005]

⁶⁷ China ICOMOS, *Principles for the conservation of heritage sites in China (The China Principles)*, (Chengde: China ICOMOS, 2000, revised 2004)

legislation evoked fierce public debate. Also, the partly finished restoration work was questioned for its unsatisfactory state in terms of its aesthetics and amenity.⁶⁸

After one year's halt in the restoration project, in mid 2006, the state government again approved the *Master Plan's* continuation in the expectation that it would be mostly finished in five years' time. A few months later, the media revealed an off-site reconstruction scheme made by a private enterprise. The spokesperson of this scheme said, 'let Yuanmingyuan Relics Park speak of history after 1860, and let the new Yuanmingyuan speak of history before 1860'. Will this be a happy ending, drawing a conclusion to the debate about Yuanmingyuan? Or merely another reconciliation between the ideal and reality?

CONCLUSION

Yuanmingyuan today represents a 'protected site of cultural heritage with outstanding national significance', a 'national education base of patriotism', and also a district park to serve the people.⁶⁹ None of these values reflects its former artistic accomplishments, which were so highly praised by Qing emperors, overseas travellers, and those who cared for this garden. The desire to restore Yuanmingyuan has never diminished, but this was either blocked by emotional sentiments with respect to the derelict land, or rejected by preservationists based on the value of archaeological building remnants.

The history of Yuanmingyuan reflects the history of Chinese politics, as well as a Chinese view towards Western culture. At the time when Yuanmingyuan was constructed, China stood tall in the world, and was confident with its traditional culture and values. The Qing emperors had interests in adopting western art and architecture, but refused to value either western knowledge or religions. It was not

⁶⁸ In early summer of 2006, Li Changchun (李长春), member of Politburo of the Communist Party of China, visited the site and made the speech that 'conservation of cultural heritage needs to be close to the contemporary situation, close to the life, and close to the common people'. See Changchun Li (李长春), 'Jiaqiang wenwu baohu fajue guanli he liyong' (加强文物保护、发掘、管理和利用 Strengthening the conservation, excavation, management and use), *Xinhua Net*, (29th April 2006) <http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-04/29/content_4489339.htm> [accessed 1st May, 2006]

⁶⁹ Beijing Municipal Research and Design Institute of Urban Planning (北京市城市规划设计研究院), *Yuanmingyuan yizhi gongyuan guihua* (圆明园遗址公园规划 Plan of Yuanmingyuan Relics Park) (Beijing, 2000).

until the destruction of Yuanmingyuan that China was forced to open its eyes to the rest of the world. This has been followed by a century's reformation and revolution, during which China developed a comprehensive view of itself and towards the West. The conservation of Yuanmingyuan, indeed, has been shaped by Chinese attitudes to the West: the appeal of preserving ruins in the 1980s aimed to remember the West as an enemy; but 20 years later, the same evidence justified preserving material authenticity, a value learned from the West. Yuanmingyuan was the cultural product of politics, and so is the conservation of Yuanmingyuan.

From Landscape of Gods to Landscape of Man:

Imperial Altars in Beijing

Like most ancient civilisations in the world, the ancient Chinese believed in a superior force over human power. There is a long history of religious and ritual ceremonies in China, with generous numbers of spiritual places built and comprehensive ritual practices established to accommodate and worship gods. In Beijing alone at the beginning of the 20th century, there were over 1300 temples and altars.¹ But this number dropped sharply as a consequence of the Chinese transition to modernity, firstly from the late 1920s onwards and then in the 1960s and '70s. Today, fewer than a hundred temples and altars survive in Beijing. Of these the majority are occupied by modern institutions or have been converted into museums, parks etc. Only a handful are used for their original purpose, whether as Buddhist, Taoist or Confucian temples, with some that have been dedicated to sages and heroes. There were seven imperial altars (six served emperors and one the empresses) in pre-20th century Beijing. All of these survive in that they have not been built over, but they have all been altered in different ways and none which still commemorate their original deity have been preserved. Five altars are now public parks, one is an architectural museum and the smallest, which was once used by empresses, is left unused.

This chapter explores the plight of the six imperial altars in Beijing that used to serve

¹ Wuyi Xi (习五一), 'Jindai Beijing simiao de leixing jiegou jixi' (近代北京寺庙的类型结构解析The Analysis of the Types and Structures of Beijing's Temples in the Modern Times), *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* (Studies in World Religions 世界宗教研究), No. 1 (2006) <<http://qkzz.net/Announce/announce.asp?BoardID=14300&ID=415162>> [accessed 17th February, 2008]

the emperors.² Once ritual places for the state religion, these altars were maintained for and used by Chinese emperors from the 15th century till the early 20th century. The sites, which are surrounded (or used to be surrounded) by two boundary walls and are lushly covered by evergreens, were solemn and tranquil, and elaborately embedded with symbolic meanings reflecting the Chinese view of cosmology. In 1911, however, a series of revolutions pulled down the imperial system, which had been established in 221 BC. Traditional beliefs and ideology were challenged, dismissed and finally removed to give way to modernity. By investigating the history of development of these altars as sacred places and forbidden landscapes of imperial China, to public parks, then agricultural land, heritage sites and museums in the 20th century, it is possible to illustrate a picture of changing Chinese beliefs and ideologies. It is also possible to examine how much of these altars, valued as national and international heritage today, has survived in anything like an authentic state.

LANDSCAPE OF GODS—IMPERIAL ALTARS BEFORE THE 20TH CENTURY

Altars, Rituals and Chinese Beliefs

Altar, or *tán* (坛) in Chinese, is ‘a sacrificing ground’ as defined by *Shuowen jiezi*, the oldest surviving Chinese dictionary dating to 100 AD.³ Altars and temples are different in form and content. Generally speaking, temples are roofed while altars are open to

² The only altar which has not been made into parks is the Altar of Silkworm, the smallest imperial altar among the seven. However, the location of this altar was in the Western Park, an imperial park just next to the Forbidden City. This altar was constructed in Qing Dynasty for the empress and her female attendants to pray for and sacrifice to the god of silkworms.

³ The printed Chinese text for the definition of *tán* (坛 altar) was: 壇祭場也从土亼聲 (An altar is a sacrificing ground, made from earth and pronounced as *tán*). Shen Xu (许慎 c.58-147AD) (compiler), Xuan Xu (徐铉 916-991) (editor), *Shuowen Jiezi (fu jianzi)* (说文解字 Exegesis of characters, with word checklist) (Beijing: Cathay Publishing, 1963), p. 289. The form of the traditional character 壇 shows it was made by earth (土, means earth or soil, as the left part of the character), although later bricks, enamelled tiles or bricks and stones were also used in altar making.

the sky; besides Buddhist and Taoist temples, temples are also for deified humans such as ancestors, sages and heroes, while altars are for natural gods, or, in rare cases, for legendary human figures.⁴

The Chinese believed that gods (or spirits) had exclusive power to control nature and human fates. Until the early 20th Century such beliefs were only rarely questioned. There are two sources of gods, one deriving from natural elements (such as the sun, the moon, stars, mountains, rivers) and phenomena (such as thunder, droughts, flood), and the other from the dead people of importance (such as ancestors, famous people in history) The worship of Nature and ancestors has a history almost as long as Chinese civilisation. The earliest material evidence for ritualistic practice can be traced back to the period between 7000 and 5700 BC, when Neolithic humans at the lower region of the Yellow River were already able to produce wine, music and scripts for ritual purposes.⁵

In the documented history of China, the earliest ritual building called *ming tang* (明堂 Bright Hall), emerged between four to five thousand years ago. The *ming tang* was built on flat ground surrounded by sets of circular walls and ditches. The building itself was a raised open structure supported by timber columns, covered by a thatched roof, and connected to the ground by a flight of stairs. On specific days the king sacrificed here to the gods of Land and Grain and prayed for a good harvest. By Shang times (c.1600 – c.1100BC), ritual places became more comprehensive; by this stage there were roofed halls for sacrificing ancestors and the God of Grain, and open terraces for sacrificing to the God of Land.

During Confucius' life (551-479 BC) his ideology encouraged development of elaborate theories and practices on rituals. Confucius regulated and interpreted

⁴ Zuo Chen Liu (刘祚臣), *Beijing de tanmiao wenhua* (北京的坛庙文化 The Altar and Temple Culture in Beijing) (Beijing: Beijing Press, 2000), pp. 3-5.

⁵ Archaeological findings in Jiahu, Henan Province, China show that, between 7000 BC and 5700 BC, the Neolithic human beings might have already developed their ritualistic practices. See Juzhong Zhang, Garman Harbottle, Changsui Wang, Zhaochen Kong, 'Oldest playable musical instruments found at Jiahu early Neolithic site in China', *Nature*, **401** (1999) 366-368 (p. 368); Helen R. Pilcher, 'Earliest handwriting found? Chinese relics hint at Neolithic rituals', *Nature* (published on line 30 April 2003) <<http://www.nature.com/news/2003/030428/full/news030428-7.html>> [accessed 27th February 2008].

ancient rituals. After his death, his thoughts were collected and recorded by his disciples into the book *Li Ji* (礼记Book of Rites), a collection of Confucius' discourses on the rules of propriety or ritual ceremonies. Later it was believed that 'more may be learned about the religion of the ancient Chinese from this classic than from all the others together'.⁶

In *Li Ji*, rituals were regulated into five categories, known as the rituals of sacrifice, of wedding, of funeral, of archery, and of visiting. Among them the most important rituals are the imperial sacrifices to the gods of Heaven, Earth, Land and Grain.⁷ According to *Li Ji*, these sacrifices must be held not in temples, but at altars, because 'the great *she* (社Land) altar of the Son of Heaven was open to receive the hoarfrost, dew, wind, and rain, and allow the influences of heaven and earth to have full development upon it. For this reason the she altar of a state that had perished was roofed in, so that it was not touched by the brightness and warmth of Heaven'.⁸

From the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), Confucianism was authorised as the state ideology and it kept its dominance by and large until the last Qing dynasty (1644-1911 AD). It was especially after the 12th century that Neo-Confucianism, an improved Confuciansim adopted ideas from Daoism and Buddhism, turned into the utmost philosophy influencing everything from the culture of politics to daily social behaviour.

As a result an understanding of the Confucian Canon on rituals is helpful in explaining the significance of imperial altars in Beijing. This provides us with an understanding of the meaning of cosmos and also explains to us why sacrifice is of importance.

⁶ *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 27, *The Li Ki* (Liji), Books I-X, trans. by James Legge, ed. by F. Max Muller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), p. 13.

⁷ *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 27, *The Li Ki* (Liji), Books I-X, trans. by James Legge, ed. by F. Max Muller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885)

⁸ *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 28, *The Li Ki* (Liji), Books I-X, trans. by James Legge, ed. by F. Max Muller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), p. 425.

Neo-Confucianism's Interpretation of Rituals

In Neo-Confucianism, the abstract concept of the 'Law of Heaven' (*tianli* 天理) is seen as the fundamental principles. All beings on Earth are bound to follow this Law. This Law denotes balance (that is, *yin* and *yang*) and movement (that is, following the natural sequence). Therefore, all beings are connected and reflect each other. *Li* (礼 rituals) provides the practical guidelines, which aims to show people the right way to follow the Law.

There is a distinct hierarchy of sacrifice. Different *Li* can be practised by different people. Sacrifice to Heaven, Earth, Sun and Moon can only be carried out by emperors, while the sacrifice to Land and Grain is practised by the people within different social levels, each has respective altars for sacrifice.⁹ The emperor pays his sacrifices at the National Altar of Land, the local governmental officials at local Altar of Land, while every 100 homes have their own Altar of Land also. The Altar of Agriculture, used solely by emperors before the Qing Dynasty, is also sanctified to receive sacrifice from various levels of society. This serves to teach local officials the harshness of husbandry.

Altar sacrifice is the most important of the five types of *Li*, and sacrifice to Heaven and Earth by the emperor is the most significant. By practicing this *Li*, the emperor shows himself to the state as the model for following the *Li* so that all his subjects due to practice the *Li* should do so. From this it may be concluded that from a Chinese perspective altar sacrifice represents the core values of Chinese culture.

By sacrificing to Heaven at the suburban altar, the emperor presents himself to the whole nation as the model of observance and reverence to his ruler—the God of

⁹ In *Liji*, it says 'the Son of Heaven sacrifices (or presents oblations) to Heaven and Earth; to the (spirits presiding over the) four quarters; to (the spirits of) the hills and rivers; and offers the five sacrifices of the house,--all in the course of the year.', see *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 28, *The Li Ki (Liji)*, Books XI-XLVI, trans. by James Legge, ed. by F. Max Muller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), pp. 207-9; 'Liji jishuo' (礼记集说 A collection on the remarks of the Book of Rites), interpreted by Hao Chen (陈澧), in *Sishu wujing (Zhongce)*, (四书五经(中册) Four books and five classics, middle volume) (Beijing: Zhongguo Shudian, 1985), pp. 23-24.

Heaven. As a consequence, all his subjects learn to be observant and reverent to their ruler—the emperor.¹⁰

Apart from the purpose of regulating government, imperial sacrifice serves as a prayer for a good harvest, which is vital to agriculture and therefore the nation. The gains from agriculture largely depend on climate, particularly on water and sun, so praying for good weather to various nature gods is always essential. This is another responsibility for the sovereign who had to pay great reverence to the deities. For example, in order to pray for rain during droughts, the emperor was to fast for three days followed by a walk to the Altar of Rain (located at the Altar of Heaven compound) on his own two feet, rather than being carried.

Imperial Altars in Beijing

After Beijing was first established in the 11th century BC as part of the kingdom of *Yan* (燕国) it was the Capital of Liao (907-1125 AD), Yuan (1271-1368 AD), Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing (1644-1911 AD) dynasties. The current city of Beijing was mostly laid out by a Ming emperor in 1420, with later alterations made by Qing emperors. The imperial altars were first built in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) for state religions, on a different location to those surviving today.

In 1420, the Ming emperor Yongle (永乐 1360-1424, r.1403-1424) had three altars built in Beijing when he moved the Capital from Nanjing to Beijing, namely the Altar of Soil and Grain, the Altar of Heaven and Earth, and the Altar of Mountain and River. In 1530, considering contemporary altars not 'authentic', the Ming emperor Jiajing (嘉靖 1507-1567, r. 1522-1566) restored the ancient ritual system and altered the imperial

¹⁰ In *Liji*, Confucius said, 'It was by those rules that the ancient kings sought to represent the ways of Heaven, and to regulate the feelings of men. Therefore he who neglects or violates them may be (spoken of) as dead, and he who observes them, as alive. [...] Therefore those rules are rooted in heaven, have their correspondencies in earth, and are applicable to spiritual beings. They extend to funeral rites, sacrifices, archery, chariot-driving, capping, marriage, audiences, and friendly missions. Thus the sages made known these rules, and it became possible for the kingdom, with its states and clans, to reach its correct condition'. *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 28, *The Li Ki* (Liji), Books I-X, trans. by James Legge, ed. by F. Max Muller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), p. 367.

altars. The number of altars increased to seven, with the Altar of Heaven and Earth being separated into two altars: the Altar of Heaven and the Altar of Earth, and three altars were added: the Altar of Sun; the Altar of Moon and the Altar of Silkworm. The Altar of Mountain and River was incorporated into the Altar of Agriculture. This arrangement was retained afterwards and was accepted by subsequent Ming and Qing emperors.

The altars were incorporated within the formal layout of Beijing, the centre of which was formed by the Forbidden City. This was surrounded by the Imperial City Wall, which was then encircled by the Inner City Wall and the Outer City Wall (which, though only half finished, was connected to the southern side of the Inner City Wall). A straight north-south axis through the Forbidden City divided the city and city walls symmetrically into two. The Emperor's administration hall and hall of residence were located in the middle, with a straight avenue emerging from it, connecting the Forbidden City with the southern gate of the Outer City Wall. The Altar of Heaven and the Altar of Agriculture were located on either side to east and west of the southern gate. The Altar of Soil and Grain, located immediately south of the Forbidden City, was on the west side of this axis. The Altars of Sun and Moon were outside the Inner City to the east and west on a cross axis. The Altar of the Silkworm was centrally to the north inside the imperial city, with the Altar of Earth to the north of the Inner City. (See Figure 3.1)

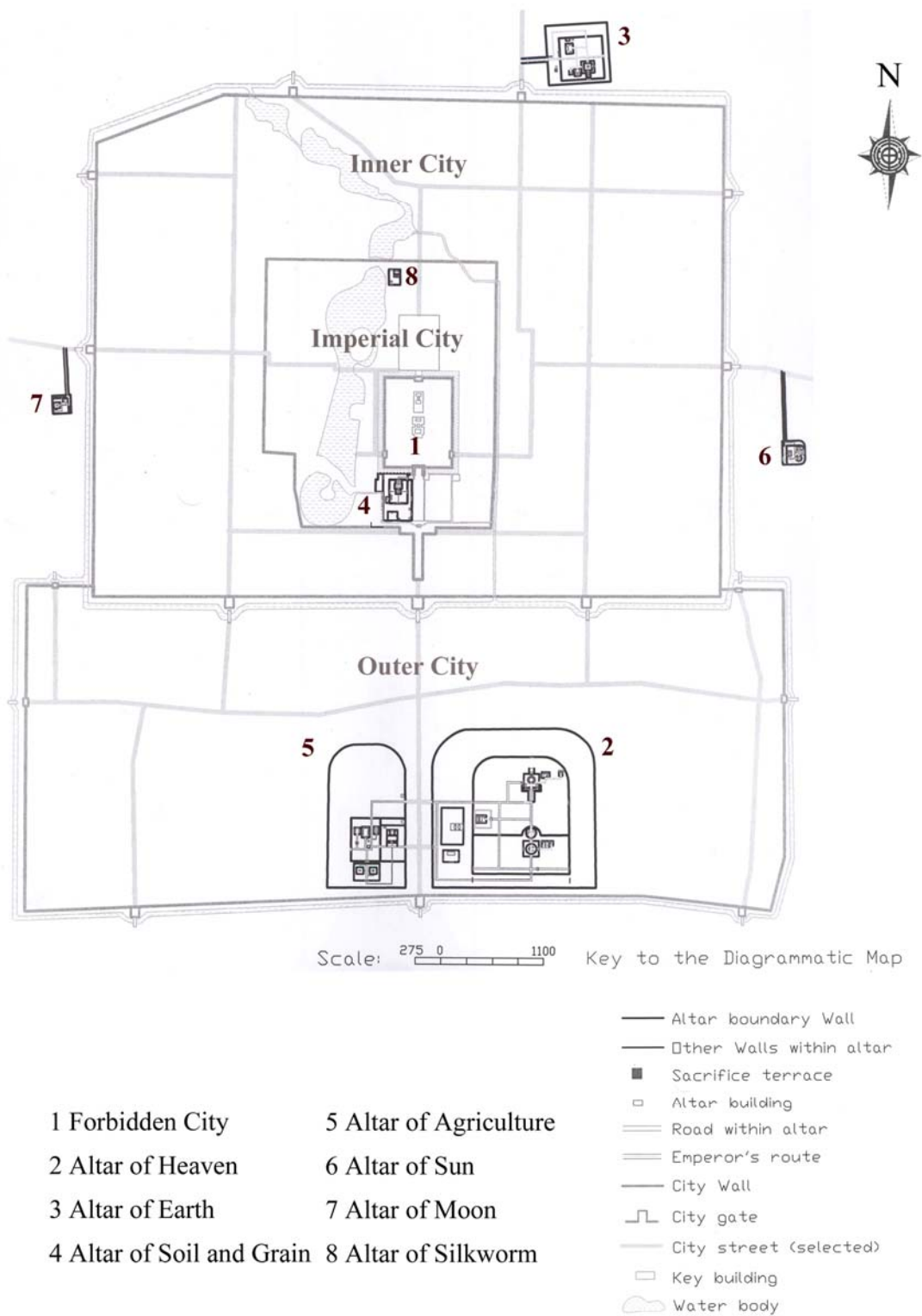


Figure 3.1 Location of Imperial Altars in Qing Dynasty City of Beijing. (Source: drawn by author, the map of the city of Beijing based Beijing lishi ditu ji (北京历史地图集 Atlas of Beijing Historical Maps), ed. by Renzhi Hou (侯仁之) (Beijing: Beijing Press, 1988), the layouts of imperial altars based on Yangshi Lei (样式雷)'s manuscripts of imperial altars in Qing Dynasty, provided by National Library of China)

The location and orientation of these altars, as well as the individual layout and designs of structures were all determined by imperial rituals, thus reflecting the Chinese view of an integrated world of human society and Nature gods.

The layouts of the altars, compared with those of Chinese gardens at large, were formal. Walls and pavements were arranged orthogonally; buildings and terraces connected with each other by axes; and evergreen trees were planted in regular delineations. All these characteristics provided an air of solemnity, while the fact that they were only open to the emperor and his entourage provided an element of mystery. (Figures 3.2, 3.3)



Figure 3.2 Aerial picture of the Altar of Heaven. Cypress and pine trees are planted in a regular method. (Source: Zhewen Luo (罗哲文), *Zhongguo diwang yuanyou* (中国帝王苑囿 Imperial Parks and Gardens in China) (Beijing: Patent Press, 2002))

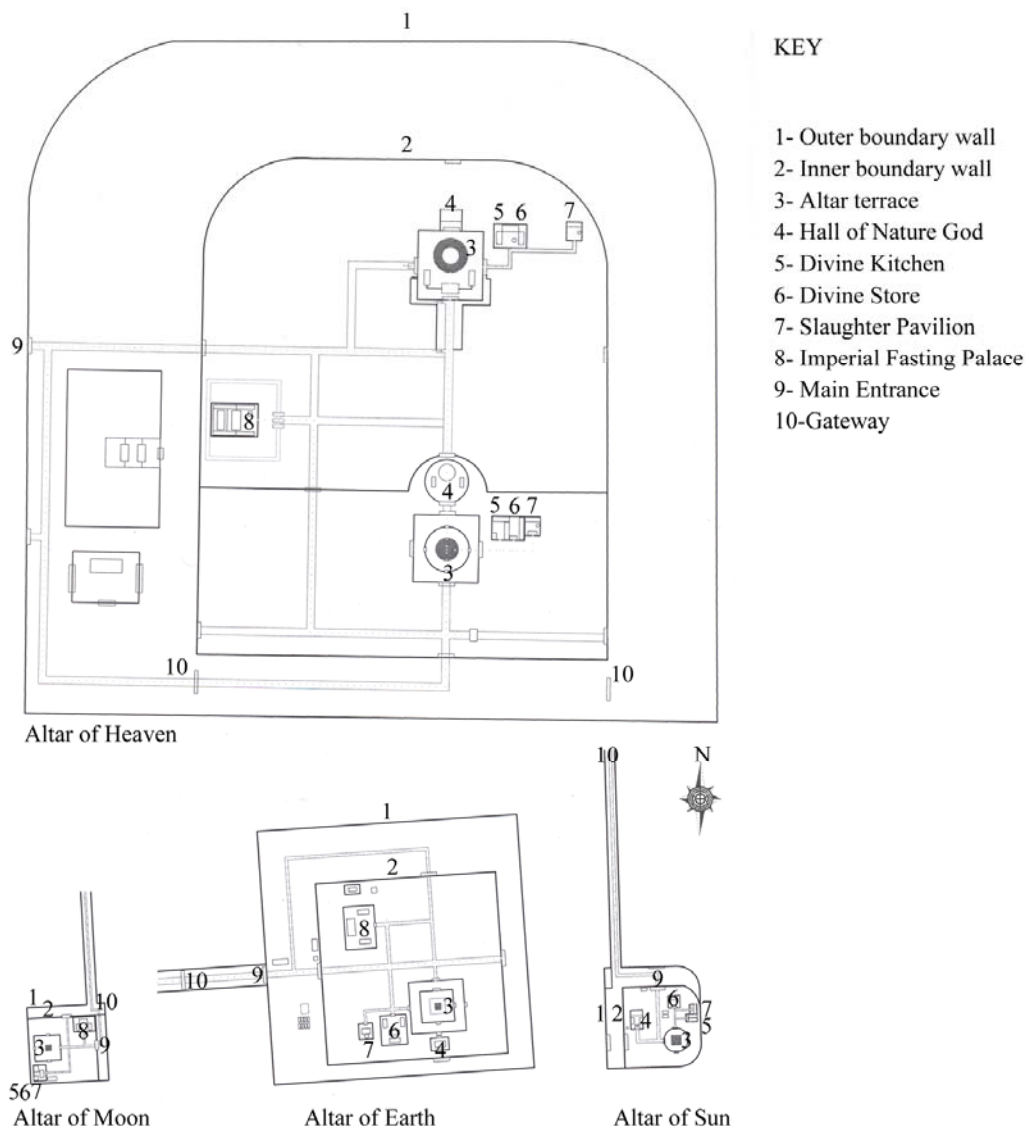


Figure 3.3 Plans of four imperial altars, which show similarity in altar features, symbolism in architecture design. The huge variation in coverage reflects the significance of respective gods. (Source: drawn by author, based on Yangshi Lei (样式雷)'s manuscripts of imperial altars in Qing Dynasty, provided by National Library of China)

Despite the fact that the layouts were originally defined by rituals, the altars have been changed over time in response to the needs and ideas of various emperors. Originally, the Book of Rites regulated the Altar of Heaven as well as the Altar of Earth. These had been built separately and were used for worship at different times, but in the Ming Dynasty the emperor Yongle thought it improper to separate the Heaven God and the Earth God since 'Heaven God and Earth God, like father and mother, should stay together'. As a result in 1420 he ordered the Altar of Heaven and Earth to be built, and decreed this arrangement to remain forever. However, after some generations, a successor in 1530 believed this order distorted the authorised rituals and needed to be rectified. Therefore, he built the Altar of Earth at the north, and returned the Altar of Heaven and Earth into the Altar of Heaven, in the process adding a new sacrificial terrace added in the south solely for Heaven God. The existing rectangular-shaped Divine Hall was soon demolished and rebuilt in a circular shape to represent Heaven (the Chinese believed Heaven to be round and the Earth square). A decade later, due to modifications to the road system, the Altar of Heaven was expanded towards the west and an extra boundary wall added, which provided the arrangement which can still be appreciated today. (Figures 3.4, 3.5)

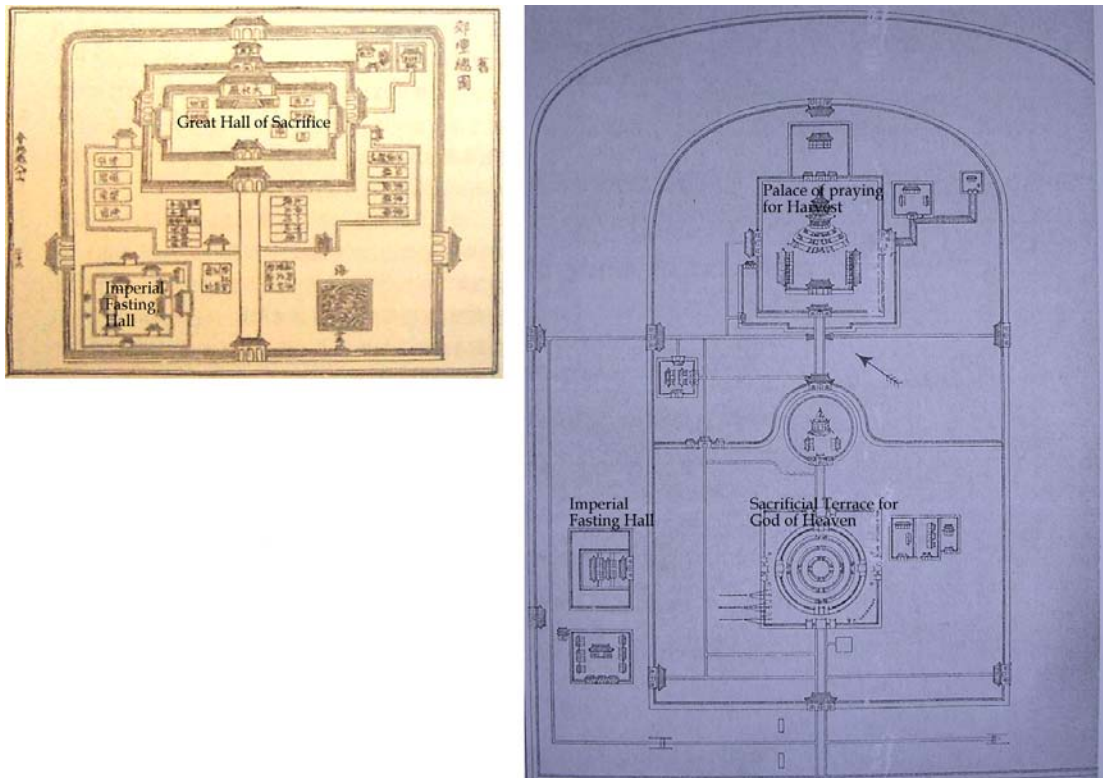


Figure 3.4 Historical drawings of the Altar of Heaven in Ming Dynasty (left) and in Qing Dynasty (right). The layouts show major changes happened in both Altar features and the coverage of the land. (Sources: Xi'nian Fu (傅熹年), *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shilun* (中国古代建筑十论 Ten Treatises on Chinese Ancient Architecture) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2004), and Hugh Casson, 'The Temple of Heaven, Peking', *Architecture Review*, No. 12 (1955))

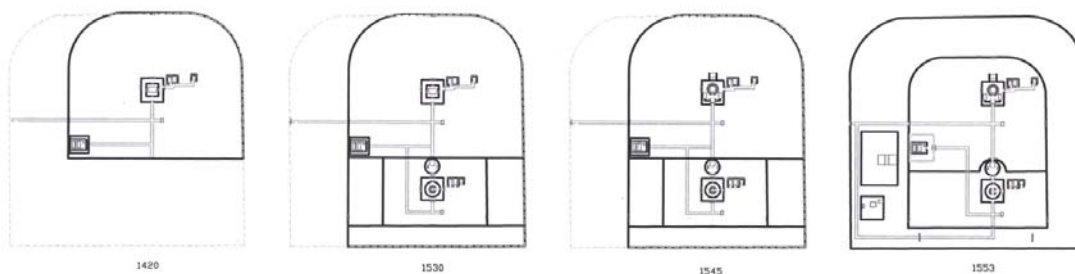


Figure 3.5 Conjectural plans of the Altar of Heaven in Ming and Qing times. They show the development and alteration of the Altar. (Source: drawn by author, with reference from Xi'nian Fu (傅熹年), *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shilun* (中国古代建筑十论 Ten Treatises on Chinese Ancient Architecture) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2004))

The Altars of Heaven, Altar of Earth, Altar of Sun and Altar of Moon were places for sacrificing to Nature gods on a specific day of the year. The Altar of Agriculture and the Altar of Silkworm were for agricultural ancestors (as well as for legendary gods). The male takes responsibility for agriculture and the female for feeding silkworms and making clothes. So they needed to sacrifice to their respective gods in order to secure good rewards. The present day altars were laid out in Ming and Qing times. In consideration of the *yin-yang* theory and practical considerations, the Altar of Agriculture was arranged to face south thus mirroring the Altar of Heaven on the other side of the central north-south axis, providing a balanced composition. Before becoming the Altar of Agriculture, it was referred to as the Altar of Mountains and Rivers. After the sacrificial revision in 1530, the Mountain and River gods were moved to the Altar of Earth as associated gods, whereas the Altar of Agriculture was included in the site with a new terrace built for the purpose. The Altar of the Silkworm, during the sixteenth century located outside the city wall, was relocated inside the imperial western garden, immediately alongside the Forbidden City. In this way the empress and her attendants could pay sacrifice without having to face the public— something much frowned upon at this time.

Progression of Imperial Sacrifice

Due to the very complicated rules and processes and extreme significance of the imperial sacrifices, a special branch of government known as the Ministry of Rites was set up for governing ritual issues, including selecting sites, constructing altars and temples, managing time and people to attend, and approaches to sacrifices and so on. The biggest sacrifice was the annual sacrifice to the God of Heaven, which was undertaken on each winter solstice; the second most significant was the sacrifice to the God of Earth on the summer solstice; the spring and autumn equinoxes were for the God of Sun and the God of Moon respectively; the sacrifice to the God of Soil and Grain was taken on a special day of each spring and autumn (known as the day of

Soil); and the first day of the spring ploughing was the time for sacrificing to the god of Agriculture, similarly for the empress sacrificing to the God of Silkworm. Such arrangements were seen as following the order of Nature.

The sacrifices differ from each other due to the meanings and significance of the respective gods; also the rites of sacrifice were sometimes altered by the emperor (following discussion with and agreement from his cabinet). However, these sacrifices share basically similar routines and processes. Following is the example of imperial sacrifice at the Altar of Agriculture, as practised by Qing emperors.¹¹

Sacrifice to the God of Agriculture

The sacrifice and ceremony was held on the 'benign twelfth day of the third moon' (in March or April). One month before the sacrifice, the Ministry of Rites prepared a list of attendees and presented it to the emperor. Three days before the sacrifice, the emperor was presented with the written notes of the process of the rites of farming ceremony. One day before, the farming instruments and seeds were sent to the Forbidden City for the emperor's viewing, and then taken back to the Altar of Agriculture.

On the day of sacrifice, from 3 am, the guards cleaned up the avenue (which is located on the north-south axis and connects the Forbidden City and the Altar of Agriculture). Curtains were set on both sides of the road to screen the emperor and sacrificial team from the public.

At half past seven in the morning, the emperor, wearing the sacrificing robe, was to depart for the Altar of Agriculture, accompanied by a large group of officials and guards preceding and following him. (Figure 3.6)

¹¹ The following section on the sacrifice rituals at the Altar of Agriculture is based on the sources from *Beijing xiannongtan shiliao xuanbian* (北京先农坛史料选编 Selected archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing), ed. by Editorial Committee of Selected archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing (Beijing: Xueyuan Chubanshe, 2007), pp. 352-354.

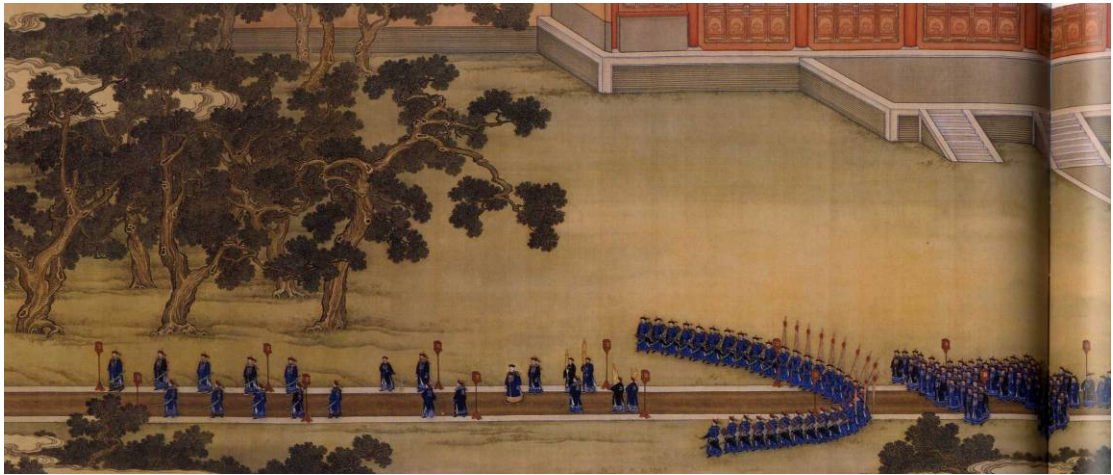


Figure 3.6 Officials and guards in front of the team at the Altar of Agriculture, awaiting the emperor's arrival. (Source: detail from 'Emperor Yongzheng sacrifices at the Altar of Agriculture' (1723-1735), in *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, ed. by Evelyn S. Rawski and Jasica Rawson (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006), pp. 126-127.)

Before the emperor arrived, the official of the Ministry of Rites 'invited' the tablet of the god of Agriculture from the Divinity Hall (where the tablet is stored) to a tent set on the Altar for the sacrifice day. The tablet and tent faced south. The music and dancing team stayed to the south of the Altar. (Figure 3.7)

The emperor arrived at the east gate of the Altar of Agriculture. He descended from the ritual cart, took ablution, and then was guided to the Altar. His subordinates (that is, officials) stayed under the Altar (with their location fixed according to their governmental status).

A bonfire was lit, the smoke serving as a signal of invitation to the god. The music 'Eternal Harvest Movement' (永丰之章) was played to welcome the arrival of the god. The emperor offered incense, knelt down three times and kowtowed (touching the ground with his forehead while his knees were bent and his hands touched the ground) nine times towards the tablet of the God of Agriculture. Then the music stopped.



Figure 3.7 Tent for sacrifice on the Altar of Agriculture. The people in red robe are musical and dancing team; the people in blue robe are officials. (Source: detail from 'Emperor Yongzheng sacrifices at the Altar of Agriculture' (1723-1735), in *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, ed. by Evelyn S. Rawski and Jasica Rawson (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006), p. 117.)

Now it is time for offering. In the first offering, the music 'Time of Harvest Movement' (时丰之章) was played, and the sacrificial food and wine were offered in front of the tablet in sequence. Then the music stopped. The Emperor and all the attendants knelt down. The officiating person read felicitations in appreciation of the God of Agriculture and asking for a good harvest. Then there were the second and the third offerings, with meat, wine and grains provided to the god. After the sacrificial meal was 'received' by the god, all sacrifices (food, silk for example) were then removed and buried in a special pit not far from the altar. Each of these processes was accompanied by the appropriate music.

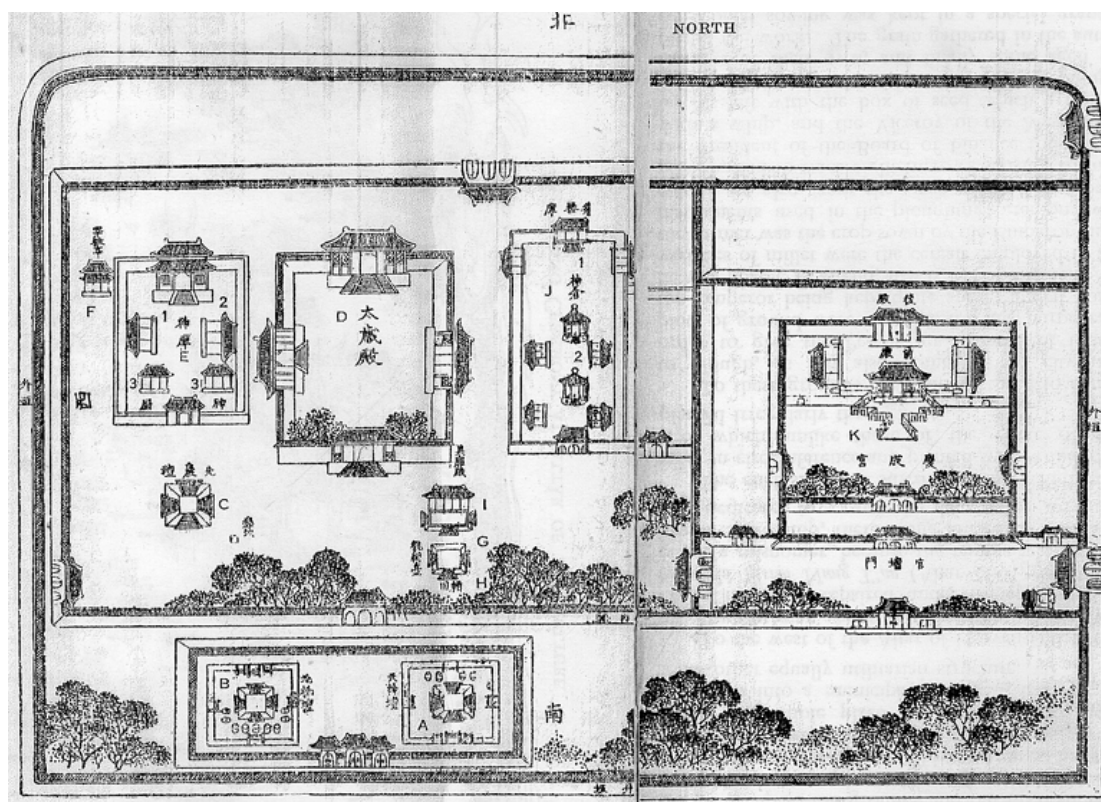
When the sacrifice was completed, the emperor went to the Temple of Jupiter (the planet Jupiter is also an important god in Chinese beliefs) offering incense and paying worship.

After the worship, the emperor took off the ritual robe and replaced it with the dragon robe in the changing hall, indicating the shift in his status: from a subordinate of superior gods back to the highest ruler of man.

Meanwhile, at the imperial farming field (a strip of land in the south of the Altar of Agriculture), the imperial ploughing ceremony was being prepared. Musical teams, selected old gentlemen and honoured farmers waited by the ploughs and buffalos. The emperor was to plough in the centre of the field (a plot of about 890 square metres), accompanied by three dukes and nine ministers, who were to plough at the eastern and western sides of the emperor.

The Minister of Rites invited the emperor to the ploughing ceremony. The emperor came out from the changing hall. With a whip in his right hand and a plough in his left, the emperor started to till the soil, accompanied by two white-haired gentlemen conducting buffalos and two honoured farmers handling the plough. Meanwhile, the gongs and drums were played and 'Thirty-six Grains' was sung. Officials were watching beside the field. The emperor ploughed the field for three returns, and the

assistant minister of the Board of Revenue and Population spread seeds behind the emperor. (Figures 3.8, 3.9)



Key to the map:

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| A | Altar of gods in Heaven | G | Watching Farming Terrace |
| B | Altar of gods on Earth | H | Imperial farming field |
| C | Altar of god of Agriculture | I | Costume Hall (changing hall) |
| D | Temple of Jupiter | J | Divine Grain Store |
| E | Divinity Hall | K | Celebration Hall |
| F | Slaughter Pavilion | | |

Figure 3.8 Layout of Altar of Agriculture in Qing Dynasty (Source: L. C. Arlington and William Lewisohn, *In Search Of Old Peking* (Peking: Henri Vetch, 1935), p. 112.)

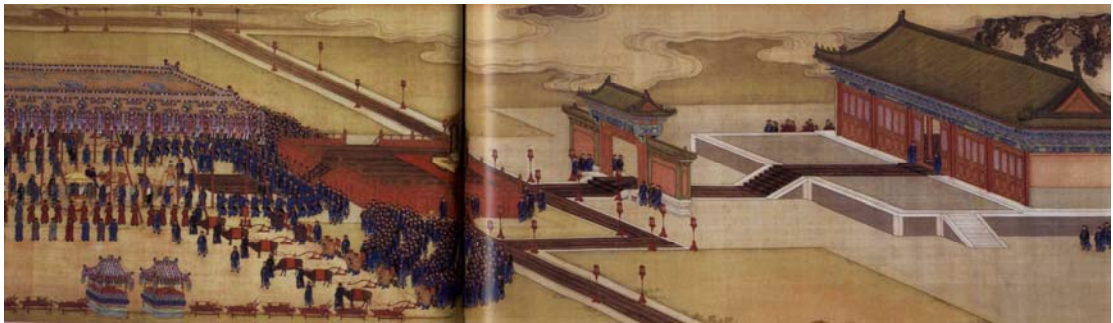


Figure 3.9 Details from *the Emperor Yongzhong engaged in ritual ploughing* (source: *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, ed. by Evelyn S. Rawski and Jasica Rawson (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006), pp. 118-119.)

Then, the emperor stepped to the 'Watching Farming Terrace' to watch dukes and ministers farming. Each duke ploughed five returns, and minister nine returns. After the dukes and ministers' farming, the remaining work was done by the city and county officials, honoured farmers and old gentlemen.

After the ploughing was finished, the Minister of Rites announced the ending of the farming ceremony. The music 'Blessing Peace Movement' was played. The emperor went back to the Forbidden City, followed by his team of officials. The honoured farmers and old gentlemen were given rolls of cloth as rewards. The harvest from the imperial farming field was used for sacrifices at imperial altars.¹²

Ritual ceremonies at imperial altars played a significant role in consolidating spiritual beliefs as well as political control. They were maintained by Chinese emperors of different dynasties. Among them, Qing emperors, although not Han Chinese in origin, took ritual ceremonies more seriously than previous Ming emperors, who sometimes sent princes or ministers to handle sacrifices for them. Except for the sacrifices to the Sun and Moon gods, which ceased in 1813, the imperial sacrifices at the other altars were continued by each Qing emperor until the end of the Empire. The practice of ritual ceremonies at imperial altars has dual meaning. On the one hand, it instilled a sense of fear in the emperor's and officials' minds and reminded them of their subordinate status towards a world beyond their dominance; on the other hand, by performing at imperial altars, the emperor sanctified his ruling status and stabilised the hierarchy of society.

¹² Yongbin Tang (汤用彬) and others, *Jiudu wenwu lue* (旧都文物略 Sketch of cultural property in old Capital) (Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 2000), p. 41. The book first published in 1935.

LANDSCAPE OF MAN (I): TRANSITION OF IMPERIAL ALTARS IN 1912-1949

Background*Changing Empire and Introduction of Public Parks: Mid 19th century-1911*

The mid 19th century Opium Wars with the British, later French, had ended with the defeat of China, revealing the backward nature of the Chinese military and industry. This backwardness was believed to have been caused by China's scientific and technological disadvantages. In order to catch up with the world, the Qing court initiated a self-strengthening movement, which aimed to promote practical applications modelled from the West. From the 1870s, modern industry and commerce rapidly developed, fostering a new generation of Chinese elite, mainly businessmen, governmental officials and military officers. These new elites had generally been well educated in traditional Chinese studies, and had a certain knowledge about western culture. They played influential roles in Chinese politics and economics, in that they saw the West as a positive model and pushed for social and political reform. They contributed significantly to social and political reform.

From the 1860s onwards, various treaty ports and concessions designated to different countries were established and settled with foreigners from Japan, America, Russia and Western Europe. They constructed a distinct living environment in which public parks held a central position, thereby introducing the first public parks in China. The first public park was established by the British in their concession in Shanghai in 1868 and finally opened to the Chinese in 1886. It was initially closed to Chinese people, an issue disputed by the Chinese elite and some westerners.¹³ Thus even before its opening, another public garden was constructed in Shanghai solely for Chinese use.

¹³ *Jindai zhongguo shehui wenhua bianqianlu* (近代中国社会文化变迁录 Records of the Changing Social Culture of Modern China), Vol. 1, ed. by Zhiqin Liu (刘志琴) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Press, 1998), p. 579; Vol. 2, p. 531.

In Beijing, there were no public parks established despite various proposals to do so. In 1907 there was a plan to adapt Shichahai, a lake area next to Western Gardens, as a public park. But this was turned down by the Qing court because it was considered too close to the imperial family, and there were concerns that the water would be polluted or the water level would be uncontrollable since Shichahai functioned as a reservoir for both the Forbidden City and Imperial Western Gardens. In 1906, the Qing court donated a more remotely located imperial garden for public use, the princely garden *Leshanyuan* (Garden of Happiness and Mercy 乐善园). The garden was handed to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as an agricultural experiment ground, including an antique gallery, a botanical garden, a zoological garden and a silk museum on the site, utilising both old houses on the site and constructing new buildings in European styles. In 1908, *Leshanyuan*, known at that time as the Agricultural Experimental Factory, opened to the public, and was renamed *Wanshengyuan* (Gardens of Ten-thousand Animals 万牲园). It has been recognised as the first public park in Beijing, setting the precedent of charging a moderate entrance fee.¹⁴

The opening of *Wanshengyuan* was intended to show a positive step towards establishing a constitutional monarchy, which had been launched by the Qing court in 1906. In 1911, the Qing Imperial Cabinet was formed. The Qing court statesman Yuan Shikai was appointed Prime Minister and held responsibility for military power.

From Empire to the Republic

At the time when the Qing Court sought reformation, a series of revolutionary individuals and groups emerged of which Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen 孙中山, 1866-1925) was one of the key figures. Unlike the constitutionalists, Sun and other

¹⁴ For details of the opening of imperial gardens as public parks, see Mingzheng Shi, 'From imperial gardens to public parks: the transformation of urban space in early twentieth-century Beijing', *Modern China*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1998), 219-254.

revolutionists declared their intention to 'expel the Manchus and revive China, establish the Republic, and equally divide land ownership', which later developed as 'Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism', known as the 'Three Principles of the People'.¹⁵

In 1911, after the Xinhai Revolution was launched by a military troop of Sun's party, revolutionaries took control over the southern part of China, forming the Republican government in Nanjing on 1st January 1912 with Sun Zhongshan elected as the first Provisional President of Republican China. Meanwhile, the Qing emperor and the Cabinet led by Yuan Shikai still controlled northern China. In order to unify the nation, Sun Zhongshan contacted Yuan Shikai secretly and negotiated that Yuan might become President if he could convince the Emperor to abdicate, which is what happened. Under Yuan's pressure, in February 1912, the Qing government announced the Imperial Edict for Abdication, and the prerequisites involved that 'the emperor is to be treated as a foreign monarch', 'the imperial family is to retain accommodation in the rear quarters of Forbidden City and reside at *Yiheyuan* (the Summer Palace) when the accommodation there is ready', and 'private property of the imperial family is to be protected by the Republican government'.¹⁶ As a consequence, the former emperor kept the ownership of imperial gardens including Western Gardens (*Xiyuan*西苑, located at the west of Forbidden City), Prospect Hill (*Jingshan*景山, located north of Forbidden City) and the Summer Palace (at Western Suburb of Beijing). Many Imperial temples and altars were confiscated by the Republican government and declared national property.

In March 1912, Yuan Shikai became the Second Provisional President of the Republic of China, settling the capital in Beijing. Yet his attempt to rebuild the monarchy failed with his death in 1916, and the autonomous government and decentralized political power established the character of the early Republican era.

¹⁵ Three Principles of People is known as 'Nationalism, Democracy & Socialism'.

¹⁶ For Xinhai Revolution, see Article 'Chinese revolution (1911-1912)', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2008).

In 1924, a coup launched by the warlord Feng Yuxiang finally expelled the emperor from the Forbidden City and revised the prerequisites, announcing that the emperor would no longer have any more privilege than an ordinary person, and that all imperial property would transfer to the Republican government. With the former emperor losing his privileges and land property, all imperial gardens and palaces were taken over by the government, with some of them opening to the public.

Transition of Imperial Property

Because of the uncertainty associated with these shifts in power, not all imperial gardens were immediately form into public possessions. The imperial altars in Beijing were the first to be transferred, followed by imperial pleasure gardens and imperial temples. These were gradually opened to the public or were used as Republican governmental offices. Although a coup in 1924 drove away the former emperor and requisitioned all imperial property, shortly afterwards, the new government returned the Summer Palace to the emperor. The final shift of ownership happened in 1931, when the former emperor left Beijing to build a 'Manchurian Kingdom' in northeast China. (Table 3.1)

Table 3.1 List of the transferral of imperial palaces, gardens, temples and altars¹⁷

Type	Name	Transformation of ownership or use
Palace	Forbidden City	1912 front part opened; 1924 the whole palace opened to the public
Altars	Altar of Soil and Grain	1913 converted and opened as Central Park
	Altar of Agriculture	1915 partly converted into South City Park
	Altar of Heaven	1918 opened to the public
	Altar of Earth	1925 converted and opened as Capital City Park
	Altar of Sun	c. 1912 transferred to republic government
	Altar of Moon	c. 1912 transferred to republic government
	(Altar of Silk)	(Within North Sea)
Gardens (pleasure gardens)	Three Seas / Western Gardens	1913 transferred to republican government; 1925 North Sea opened as public park; 1928 Middle and South Seas opened as public park
	Jingshan (Prospect Hill)	1924/5 opened as public park
	Yiheyuan (Summer Palace)	1914 opened by the imperial family; 1924 transferred to national property
	Yuanmingyuan	c. 1924 the land transferred to national property (?)
	Jingmingyuan (Jade Spring Hill)	n/a
	Jingyiyuan (Fragrant Hill)	n/a
	Bishu shanzhuang (Summer Mountain Resort)	1912/3 transferred to republican property
Temples	Temple of Ancestors	1924 converted into Peace Park; 1928 turned back to Temple of Ancestors and was used and administrated by Palace Museum
	Temple of Confucius	Functions continued. 1916 had some alteration, 1933 some features were moved to Nanjing (new capital)
	Yonghe Lamasery	n/a
	Temple of Former Emperors	Used by Normal School. Layout changed

¹⁷ Table by author, with the source from Yongbin Tang (汤用彬) and others, *Jiudu wenwu lue* (旧都文物略 Sketch of cultural property in old Capital) (Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 2000), p. 41. The book first published in 1935.

Converting Imperial Altars: from Forbidden Land to Public Parks 1912-1928

The Xinhai Revolution overthrew the Manchurian Empire and established Republican China in 1912. Because both the imperial system and the last emperor, no longer the Son of Heaven, were gone, the sacrifice performances built up for sanctifying and strengthening the emperor's power also drew to an end. Most imperial properties such as imperial palaces, gardens, altars and temples were taken over by the Republican government, either immediately or with several negotiations. As for the imperial altars, by 1913 all six altar sites became national property.¹⁸ The maintenance people employed by the imperial department were withdrawn from the site. Without care, the altars gradually fell into a state of decay.

Claiming New Use of Old Altars

The management of former imperial temples and altars was co-administered by the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Education in the early Republican era. From the very beginning, these altars and temples attracted the interest of various groups. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry wished to use the land for agricultural experiments and a tree nursery, while President Yuan Shikai, attempting to be a new emperor, wished to keep the altars so that the old ritual ceremonies could be re-established later.

In spring of the first year of Republican government (1912), the Committee Board of Beijing City Council submitted an application to the Ministry of Interior to make the Altars of Agriculture, Heaven and Earth public parks. In one letter written by the Committee Board, for example, it said, 'previously because of ritual ceremonies, the

¹⁸ The altar of Heaven, Altar of Earth, Altar of Sun, Altar of Moon, and the Altar of Agriculture were immediately handed over to the Republican government. But for the Altar of Soil and Grain, because it is situated at the front entrance of the Forbidden City, kept as the former emperor's residence until 1924, for the safety reasons (maybe also symbolic meanings), the imperial family had hoped to keep the Altar of Soil and Grain as their private property. Several negotiations were made between the Republican Ministry of Interior and the Imperial family before the final shift of the property rights.

Altar was kept as forbidden land. Today the polity has changed, which asks for pragmatic ways of doing things. [For this instance,] rather than closing the land and letting it be neglected, it is better to open it for visiting and sharing the land with all people. Also, there are many buildings and trees remaining, which makes it easy to repair and adapt the site into a public park...'¹⁹

However, almost at the same time, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry rented the empty grounds of three altars (Altars of Agriculture, Heaven and Earth) as agricultural, forestry and animal husbandry experimental fields.²⁰ Considering the appeal of the Committee Board of Beijing, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry made their argument: 'in the future, trees will be extensively planted and grown up. Birds will be raised and fishes are displayed. The site will then be a place where people can enjoy themselves, recreate and breathe fresh air. In this way, both agriculture and public health are to be improved. That is indeed no different from a public park'.²¹

Debates continued half a year before a final compromise was made. As a result, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry got permission to lease the lands between the outer and middle walls of the Altars of Agriculture, Heaven and Earth as agricultural experimental fields; Beijing City Council was granted permission to build a public park at the Altar of Agriculture, with no original buildings and trees to be sacrificed unless further agreement was given by the Ministry of Interior; the Temple of Heaven was to be established as the Department of Preserving Ancient Objects and temporarily open to the public for 10 days after the new year of 1913.²²

¹⁹ 'Shen neiwubu zongyishihui chengqing jiang xiannongtan gaijian gongyuan qingshi zunyou' (申内务部据总议事会呈请请先农坛改建公园请示遵由 To the Ministry of Interior, Reasons of adapting the Altar of Agriculture into a Public Park), 29th May, 1912, no. 18 (Nanjing: Number Two Historical Archives of China (中国第二历史档案馆))

²⁰ 'Jinchengzhe zhun nonglinbu qingbogei tiantan ditan xiannongtan sanchu sizhou kongdi dangji chengming' (谨呈者准农林部 请拨给天坛地坛先农坛三处四周空地当即呈明 to whom submit the application: granted Department of Agriculture and Forestry being given the empty lands surrounded the Altar of Heaven, Altar of Earth and Altar of Agriculture), 4th October 1912, no. 21 (Nanjing: Number Two Historical Archives of China (中国第二历史档案馆))

²¹ Nonglinbu (农林部 Department of Agriculture and Forestry), 14th October 1912, no. 28 (Nanjing: Number Two Historical Archives of China (中国第二历史档案馆))

²² Mingzheng Shi, 'From imperial gardens to public parks: the transformation of urban space in early twentieth-century Beijing', *Modern China*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1998), 219-254.

Altar of Heaven: Sanctity Retained

Although the imperial sacrifices at the altars drew to a full stop, not so for the rituals. Being turned into the national property, the imperial altars were firstly administered by the Ministry of Education. But two years later, they were transferred into the newly founded Ministry of Rites.²³ On the winter solstice of 1914, after a careful preparation, President Yuan Shikai performed a sacrifice to the God of Heaven at the Altar of Heaven. It was the first state sacrifice since the 1911 Revolution, and was seen as an attempt by Yuan to restore the imperial system.²⁴ However, due to the sudden death of Yuan in 1916, this sacrifice was actually the only state sacrifice to Nature gods in the Republican period. The sacrifices to the God of Heaven ceased, but the perception of the Altar of Heaven as a sacred place remained. After Yuan's death, China experienced a decade of chaos with power frequently shifting from one group to another—each holding a different political view. In order to solidify Republican principles, in 1913 (and again in 1917), members of Parliament assembled at the Hall of Prayers for Good Harvests in the Altar of Heaven to draft the first constitution for Republican China. The reason for choosing the Altar of Heaven as the venue was obvious—to sanctify the constitution by setting its birthplace in a sacred place, by so-to-say 'borrowing power from Heaven'. Although this constitution was never put into effect due to the frequent changes of government, the gatherings to write it were considered to be of importance in 1929, shortly after the Chinese National Party (CNP) came into power. The CNP government had the side hall of the Hall of Prayers arranged into the Memorial Gallery of Constitutions, which was kept open for public visiting until 1950, one year after the start of the Chinese Communist era.²⁵

²³ *Beijing xiannongtan shiliao xuanbian* (北京先农坛史料选编 Selected Archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing), ed. by the Editorial Board of Selected Archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing (Beijing: Xueyuan Chubanshe, 2007), pp. 345-346.

²⁴ *Tiantan zhi* (天坛志 Chronicle of the Altar of Heaven), ed. by Editorial Board of Beijing Chronicles (北京市地方志编撰委员会) (Beijing: Beijing Press, 2006), p. 74.

²⁵ *Tiantan zhi* (天坛志 Chronicle of the Altar of Heaven), ed. by Editorial Board of Beijing Chronicles (北京

As one of the best sites in Beijing, the Altar of Heaven has never been short of visitors. Before the official opening in 1918, foreign visitors had already been permitted to enter the site with a special ticket issued by the Ministry of Diplomacy.²⁶ Also, on the New Year's Days of in 1912 and 1913, the Altar of Heaven was also briefly opened to the public for free as a national celebration. Various entertainment facilities and activities were set up temporarily in the altar land, which was colourfully decorated with banners and lanterns, somehow like the temple fair of traditional Chinese custom. People came to visit the site, but not all were happy to see the opening of the Altar of Heaven. To some people's eyes, the loss of divinity in the Altar of Heaven signified the loss of celestial order.²⁷ From such views, we see that valuing the Altar of Heaven as a sacred place has been more or less preserved by some Chinese people.

In the period of Republican China, the Altar of Heaven mostly maintained its historical fabric and ritual meanings, first for the restoration of state sacrifice, later as a symbol of national power and the tourist site of the most significant ritual and historical values. However, not all the imperial altars were given the same treatment. Most imperial altars, being seen to possess physical value in their land and fabrics, were recognised as possessing far more value than as religious place alone.

The sacrifice to Heaven was seen as being of little value by the new generation of scholars (who had received a modern education) in the 20th century. However, the order of the human world has only been recently built; while the order of Heaven has existed long term. Since ancient times the belief in gods and sets of rituals have developed. Sovereigns of China always sacrificed to Heaven in the suburbs to show their fidelity. This ritual has been maintained in China for thousands of years and has never been replaced by others, as seen from a contemporary writing:

The Altar of Heaven in Beijing was first planned in the early Ming Dynasty. It

市地方志编撰委员会) (Beijing: Beijing Press, 2006), p. 20.

²⁶ *Tiantan zhi* (天坛志 Chronicle of the Altar of Heaven), ed. by Editorial Board of Beijing Chronicles (北京市地方志编撰委员会) (Beijing: Beijing Press, 2006), p. 246.

²⁷ Shengpei Li (李升培), *Tiantan guji jilue* (天坛古迹纪略 A brief record of historical sites of the Altar of Heaven) (Beijing: 1928), pp. 1-2.

functioned for three purposes: sacrificing to Heaven, praying for harvest, and praying for rains. It was not only a place for respecting Heaven, but also for taking people's livelihood into consideration.

In the 20th century, science is flourishing, meanwhile various religions and their methods of worship have also spread over the world. This actually indicates that what Heaven (God) sees is from what people see, what Heaven (God) hears is from what people hear. *Respecting Heaven is indeed respecting people; establishing rituals is indeed to show to the God of Heaven that the people's livelihood is respected. These are implicit meanings by ancient sages.*

The Altar of Heaven in Beijing was first built during Ming Jiajing time (1522-1566). Architectural professionals from all over the world admire its rich histories and grand layout. Because of this, the Altar of Heaven *attracts endless foreign guests to visit. The Altar of Heaven is indeed the most important historical site in China.* I have the honour to administer the Altar. Afraid of its decay, I had the wilds cut, groves planted, roads paved, cracked stairs repaired. I made this record to exhibit to the people of the world who appreciate heritage that the exceeding grace of the Altar of Heaven should never be neglected.²⁸

This shows how the meaning of the Altar of Heaven was reinterpreted in 1920s. Sacrificing to Heaven was seen as embedding democratic ideas because the Altar of Heaven is for praying for a good harvest, which is equivalent to people's livelihood. Therefore, the Altar of Heaven was given contemporary meanings as evidence of ancient idea of democracy. This narrative also indicates the significance of tourism values to the Altar of Heaven.

From Altar of Soil and Grain to Central Park

The first altar to be transformed into a public park, however, was the Altar of Soil and

²⁸ The Chinese texts are '祭天之举为二十世纪新学家所弗道，然人道迹，天道远，神道设教自古已然，伊古以来，主中国者必郊天以致诚，此礼也。中国数千年来传之弗替[...]天坛规划创自前明祭天一也祈谷二也常雩三也盖不独敬天鉴，亦所以重民事甚盛举也，二十世纪科学昌明矣而宗教家祈祷之式亦遍各国而从同，然后知天视，自我民视，天听，自我明[民]听，敬天即所以重民。立制本旨盖昭对天神，以表示其尊重民生之诚意，古之圣哲，殆未明言之已而，京师天坛之制起自嘉靖朝，其构造之古，规模之宏，今日各国之建筑专家莫不崇拜而企慕之，故外宾之瞻仰天坛者，日不绝踵，此诚我中华最足注重之古迹也，升培泰综坛务俱古迹之间就圯颓也，既除其荒芜，植其林荫，平其路，陞复泐斯记以诏语中外博古君子倘亦大雅所弗我遐弃者'。 Shengpei Li (李升培), *Tiantan guji jilue* (天坛古迹纪略 A brief record of historical sites of the Altar of Heaven) (Beijing: 1928), pp. 1-2. Li is the last City Mayor of Beijing in the Republican era.

Grain. It opened to the public in 1914 under the new name of the Central Park. It is also the first public park made in Republican Beijing, and the best park (that is, the most visited and best managed park) of the city until 1949.

As with many newly established regimes, the revenues of the Republican government were never enough to fulfil the extra needs of a public park, despite its importance being repeatedly declared by those who had experience of modern western life and saw it as a model for China.²⁹ Zhu Qiqian was one of these people who eagerly pushed to make Beijing a modern city—by building it a public park first. Zhu Qiqian was former director of the city police bureau in the imperial government, and was then appointed as the Minister of Interior for the Republican government. Having had a traditional Chinese education and travel experience in many western countries, Zhu Qiqian had strong interests in Chinese traditional culture and art, and great passion for a modern life style. His seat in central government, a broad social network and his personality all contributed to the making and management of the Central Park.

Since neither the land nor the finance was readily available to establish a brand new park, Zhu Qiqian carefully selected the Altar of Soil and Grain as the park site. Its location was perfect for a public park—in the centre of the down town and neighbouring a few other historical attractions including the Forbidden City (which opened in 1924 as the Palace Museum). Also, the land had been covered with mature trees and also had historical constructions, both of which were attractive to encourage people to visit. Once government permission to use the land had been obtained, in fewer than twenty days the Altar of Soil and Grain was opened as the Central Park. All that had been done was the construction of a new gate (main entrance for the Central Park) on the south outer wall facing the busy Chang'an Street, re-paving of a few roads with lime stone from the main entrance to the inner altar wall and several other features of historical interests, and the removal of the weeds and rubble on the site.

²⁹ About the account of Republican government's emphases on city infrastructure development (transportation, street cleaning...) rather than a public park in the 1910s, see Mingzheng Shi, 'From imperial gardens to public parks: the transformation of urban space in early twentieth-century Beijing', *Modern China*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1998), 219-254 (p. 234.)

Zhu Qiqian made the full use of his social network, and managed to obtain a free labour force, helped by his friends in charge of the National Land Force.

On the first day of opening, although the grounds of Central Park was still more like an Altar than a park, it attracted over 10 thousand citizens who came to see the rich display of imperial ritual instruments and the famous imperial altar. More than 200 policemen were sent to keep order and over 20 local “water chambers” (fire brigades) were stationed on site to prevent fire.³⁰

In the following few years, the Central Park opened on Saturdays, Sundays and special holidays only and closed 5 days a week for further construction work.³¹ In order to reduce the cost, recycled building materials and ornamental features became the major source for the Central Park development. The long corridor was constructed with timbers from the Thousand-pace Corridor in front of the Tian’anmen Gate, which had formed the first enclosure for an awesome imperial palace and had just been demolished for more convenient city transportation. Many amenity rocks and a carved stone pavilion were carried from Yuanmingyuan, once the best imperial garden which had been burned down in 1860 and neglected since then. A gateway was removed from the Dong’an Street to make an immediate focus when entering the park. In order to echo the ritual meanings of the Altar, a Pavilion named ‘Practicing Ritual Pavilion’, once at the Imperial Ministry of Rites in the Forbidden City, was also moved to the Central Park—facing the main gate of the enclosure of the Altar terrace at its south and sitting on its north-south axis. Local gentry and friends of Zhu Qiqian also donated various garden features to the Park. A regional governor of Hebei Province sent a pair of bronze lions as the ‘Gate Beasts’ for the newly constructed South Gate.³² These lions were later identified as cultural heritage from the Ming Dynasty. Two citizens in Beijing donated a fountain and a Maxim Pavilion respectively, both in European

³⁰ *Zhongshan gongyuan zhi* (中山公园志 Chronicles of the Zhongshan Park), ed. by Zhongshan Park Administration (Beijing: China Forestry Press, 2002), p. 78.

³¹ From 1917, the Central Park opened daily 6 am-10 pm.

³² Gate beasts are a common decoration for the entrance of Chinese buildings and gardens. The lions and the Qilin (an imaginary animal which was believed a son of Dragon) are the most common figures as gate beasts.

Classical style and carved in stones. (Figures 3.10, 3.11)

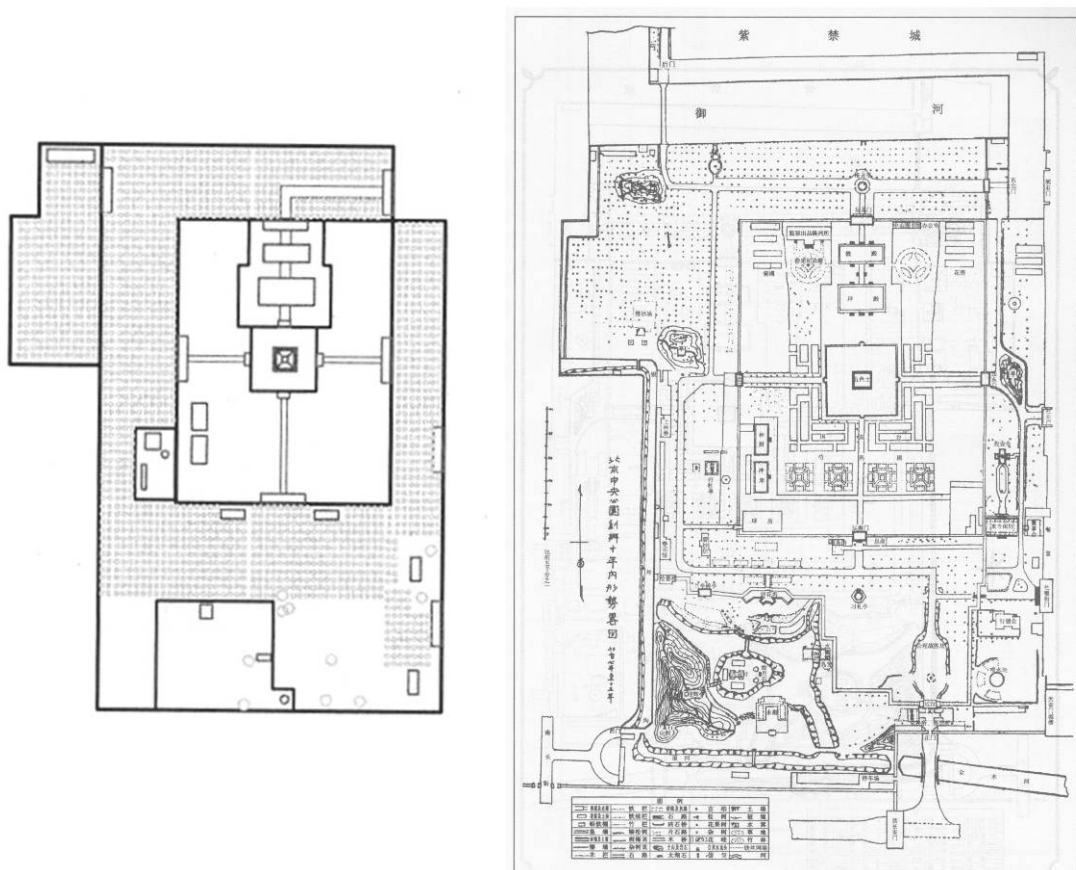
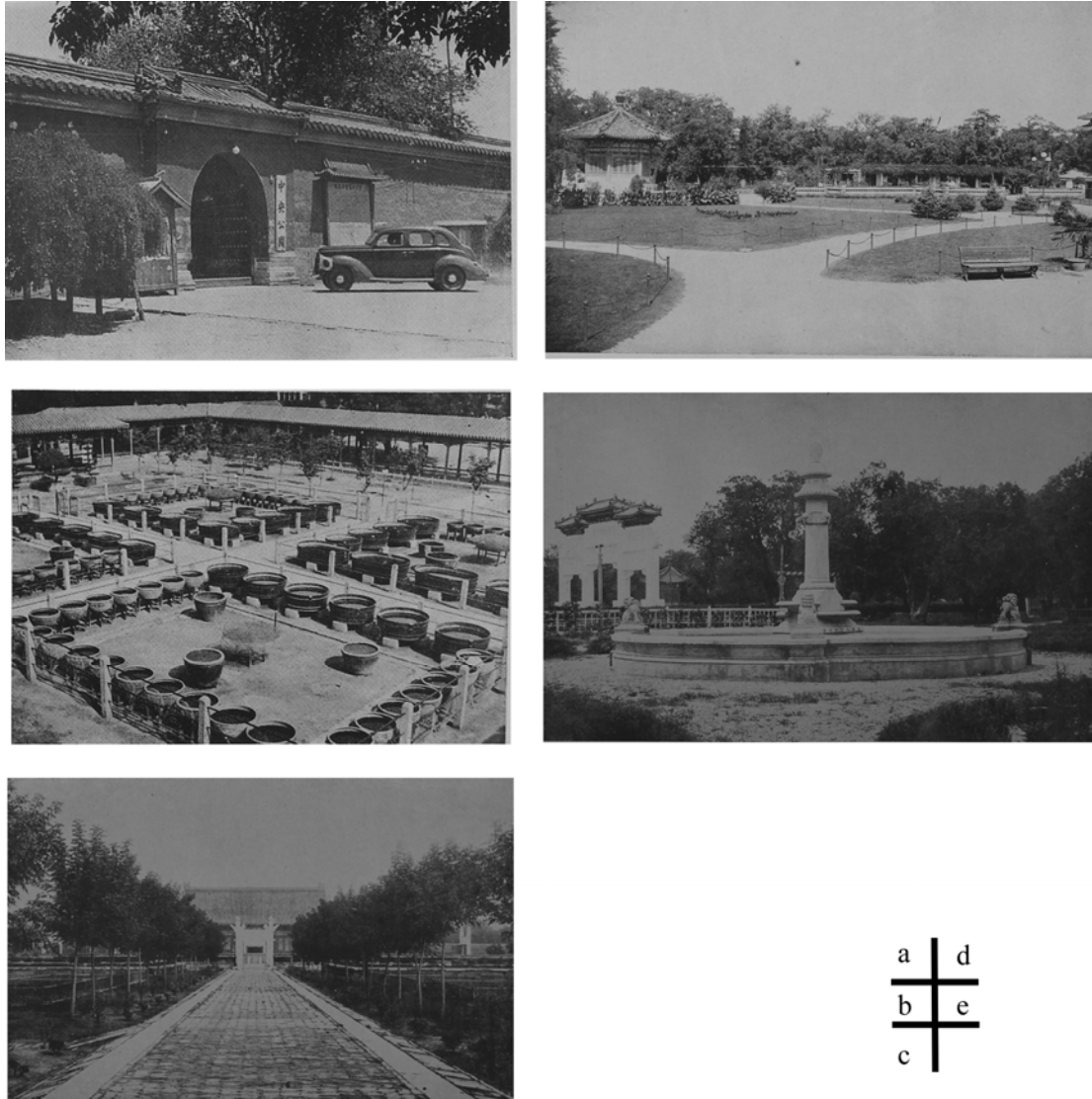


Figure 3.10 Layout of the Altar of Soil and Grain in Qing dynasty (left) and the plan of Central Park in 1924 (right). (Source: *Zhongshan gongyuan zhi* (中山公园志 Chronicles of the Zhongshan Park), ed. by Zhongshan Park Administration (Beijing: China Forestry Press, 2002))



- a- South Gate (main entrance) of the Park
- b- Goldfish yard
- c- Road towards the Altar Terrace
- d- Lawn and park chairs immediately inside the main entrance
- e- Park features-the fountain and the gateway

Figure 3.11 Central Park in 1920s and 1930s (Sources: *Zhongyang gongyuan nianwu zhounian jijiankan* (中央公园廿五周年纪念刊 Journal of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Central Park) (Beijing: Central Park Committee, 1939))

Besides using recycled and donated garden features, Zhu Qiqian also collected a considerable amount of money for park development by setting up an executive board. By paying a substantial membership fee, any individual or corporation could enter the board and have a say in the park's administration. The list of members of the executive board shows that most of the members were local gentry, intelligent, wealthy and keen to support the public parks. In this way, the Central Park not only achieved funding, but also achieved a team well qualified to manage the park's affairs. An increased budget brought further construction on the site. By 1917, a mountain and water garden appeared at the southwest corner of the park. Previously the site had been a dry land full of wild grasses. After surveying the contour, Zhu 'had the water introduced from the city moat outside the wall, and had the pond dug and earth arranged into island and hills...'³³ On the bank of the irregular lake were peacock cages and a fish-display yard—all beloved items of traditional Chinese taste. The mountain and water garden brought in an airy ambiance and more things to enjoy in the park, but also sacrificed the solemnity of the former altar landscape and a few historical constructions. Apart from this construction, other newly adopted features and facilities included a big lawn within the South Gate, formally laid out flower beds, children's playground, sports centre (for ball games), a roller-skating rink, a public library (which located in the former Divinity Hall) and several restaurants, tea houses and wine shops and so on, most of which were constructed outside the inner altar wall, and left the central sacrificial space more or less preserved.

The land between the inner and outer altar walls was gradually filled up, mixed with historical features and modern constructions, Chinese and Western methods of recreation. The Central Park was welcomed enthusiastically by the local residents and tourists. It was listed the best park in Beijing,³⁴ also a popular place for friends meeting and social gatherings. All sorts of people found their place here, as described

³³ *Zhongshan gongyuan zhi* (中山公园志 Chronicles of the Zhongshan Park), ed. by Zhongshan Park Administration (Beijing: China Forestry Press, 2002), pp. 78-79.

³⁴ Yongbin Tang (汤用彬) and others, *Jiudu wenwu lüe* (旧都文物略 Sketch of cultural property in old Capital) (Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 2000).

by an eye witness in 1935: 'among the college students were prostitutes; in the middle of prostitutes were merchants; mixed among the merchants were concubines; and next to them were gentlemen, and professors...a long row in a confusing mixture.'³⁵

The names of the architects, or people who planned the Central Park, are unknown yet due to limitations on access to archives, but there is no doubt Zhu Qiqian played the most significant role in transferring the altar into a park. His idea was recorded in a few articles written by himself, where he explained his vision of the park as a place with poetic elegance, and to be enjoyed by people of all circles.³⁶ He made the most use of existing conditions and gradually added new attractions, and also occasionally changed or removed the less popular ones based on his deep understanding of Chinese taste, therefore allowing the immediate opening of the park and continuous enrichment in the following decades, and most of all—keeping the park attractive to all the people at all times.

The majority of the Central Park's income was collected from entrance fees and from commerce set in the park (such as beverage sales, boating and the like). Other financial sources came from the housing rents, membership fees of the executive board, donations from private or governmental organisations and individuals. Unlike the public park in the West sponsored by the government, the Central Park was self-sponsored. It successfully managed to achieve a financial balance, which most other parks at the same period failed to do.

From Altar of Agriculture to South City Park

Inspired by the great success of the Central Park, in 1915 the land within the inner wall of the Altar of Agriculture was opened by the Ministry of Interior, renamed as the

³⁵ *Remaking the Chinese city: modernity and national identity, 1900-1950*, ed. by Joseph W. Esherick (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, c.2000), p. 128. Original words by Shi Tuo, 1935.

³⁶ Qi Qianzhu (朱启钤), 'Zhongyang gongyuan ji' (中央公园记 Records of Central Park) (1925), in *Zhongshan gongyuan zhi* (中山公园志 Chronicles of the Zhongshan Park), ed. by Zhongshan Park Administration (Beijing: China Forestry Press, 2002), p. 266.

Altar of Agriculture Park. Flower beds were set along the main road. Over 140 deer were transported from the former Imperial Mountain Villa of Summer Retreat, over a hundred miles away from Beijing, to the Altar of Agriculture to make a deer park (or precisely speaking, a deer enclosure, since they were fenced within a limited area). Meanwhile, the *Historical Property Preservation Department* (古物保存所), founded two years earlier and located at the side halls of the Grand Hall of Divinity, was also opened for public visiting. It displayed ritual instruments collected from all imperial altars, as well as agricultural instruments from various periods—reflecting the theme of ‘agriculture’.

Meanwhile, the north part of the outer wall land was let by the government to a private enterprise and was made into an entertainment ground called ‘Southern City Entertainment Garden’, the contents of which included a tea house, a restaurant, an opera hall, a wine house, a grocery stall and a football pitch.³⁷ Two years later, the Entertainment Garden and the Altar Park were grouped together and renamed as the Southern City Park, managed by that private enterprise. However, the Southern City Park was not as popular as the Central Park, even though the entrance fee was only half of that of the Central Park. In 1921, the management of Southern City Park was taken back from the private enterprise and the outer altar land was again ‘leased’ by the national government for residential quarters, markets, a sports college and a stadium. The inner altar and its surroundings, covered with ancient cypress, were kept open with the name of ‘Southern City Park’ until 1949. Therefore, since the 1920s, the Southern City Park reduced its function as a recreational ground and basically served as a museum.

³⁷ *Beijing xiannongtan shiliao xuanbian* (北京先农坛史料选编 Selected Archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing), ed. by the Editorial Board of Selected Archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing (Beijing: Xueyuan Chubanshe, 2007), pp. 249-251.

From Altar of Earth to Capital City Park

There was another effort to make a public park for the citizens in Beijing in 1925, by Xue Dubi (薛笃弼), Mayor of Beijing. This park aimed to provide a healthy and educational place for the city's citizens and aimed to improve the standard of civilisation. The idea and process of making the Capital City Park can be examined through the article written by Xue Dubi when the construction work finished.

Capital City Park is located outside Anding Gate of Northeast City Wall. It is the site of Altar of Earth in the Qing Dynasty and was forbidden land at that time. Since the Republic was founded, agriculture and the silk industry have been promoted, so part of the site was handed over to the Agriculture and Forestry Institute and was planted with trees. But other parts of the site still remain uncultivated, though military troops are occasionally stationed there.. Due to the lack of maintenance, the original buildings have partly decayed, overgrown with wild trees and plants, almost turning the site into derelict land. In the 14th year of the Republic (1925), I was appointed Mayor of Beijing. I saw that the site covered a huge area, flourishing with trees. Rather than waiting for its decay, it is better to reuse the site. Therefore, I asked the Ministry of Interior to reassign the site to the municipal government of Beijing so that it can be converted into a public park. [When it was approved,] weeds and diseased trees were cut down, buildings were repaired, roads were expanded and flattened, a new name was given to the site, *Jingzhao Gongyuan* (京兆公园 Capital City Park). In the park, pictures were painted on the walls, telling traditional Chinese moral stories. In the north of the park there is the World Garden (世界园 *Shijie Yuan*), where the world map was made on the ground, with stones indicating mountains, lawn indicating oceans, flowers and trees forming country boundaries and flags marked with country names. The capital cities, business ports, railway lines and navy lines were all marked clearly on the map. Entering the World Map Garden, one can take the world situation all in one view.³⁸

Apart from the World Map Garden, which obviously is a highlight of the park, other constructions included a sports ground, three pavilions, the Public Library (using the Divinity Hall) and the platform for public announcements (the Altar of Sacrifice). To Xue Dubi, education is thought to be the key purpose for establishing Capital City Park. 'All kinds of facilities were expected to promote education by public recreation

³⁸ 'Preface', Ji Liu (刘骥), *Jingzhao gongyuan jishi* (京兆公园纪实 Authentic records of the Capital City Park) (Beijing: [unknown publisher], 1925)

and entertainment'.³⁹ Motto and slogan boards were erected everywhere, some with vivid illustrations, from the sports ground to the World Map Garden, from the pavilion to the public library. But compared with Zhu Qiqian in making the Central Park, Xue Dubi was less concerned with the real requirements of the public than with what he thought ought to be provided for them. Also, there was a lack of aesthetic consideration in the Capital City Park. Even though the entrance fee was affordable and much cheaper than the Central Park, it hardly drew as many visitors as the Central Park, and the income never met that required to sustain the park. When Xu Dubi left his occupation of Mayor of Beijing and the financial funding of the park ceased, the park was soon neglected and the stylish constructions quickly became derelict. (Figures 3.12, 3.13)

³⁹ 'Preface', Ji Liu (刘驥), *Jingzhao gongyuan jishi* (京兆公园纪实 Authentic records of the Capital City Park) (Beijing: [unknown publisher], 1925)

III. Imperial Altars

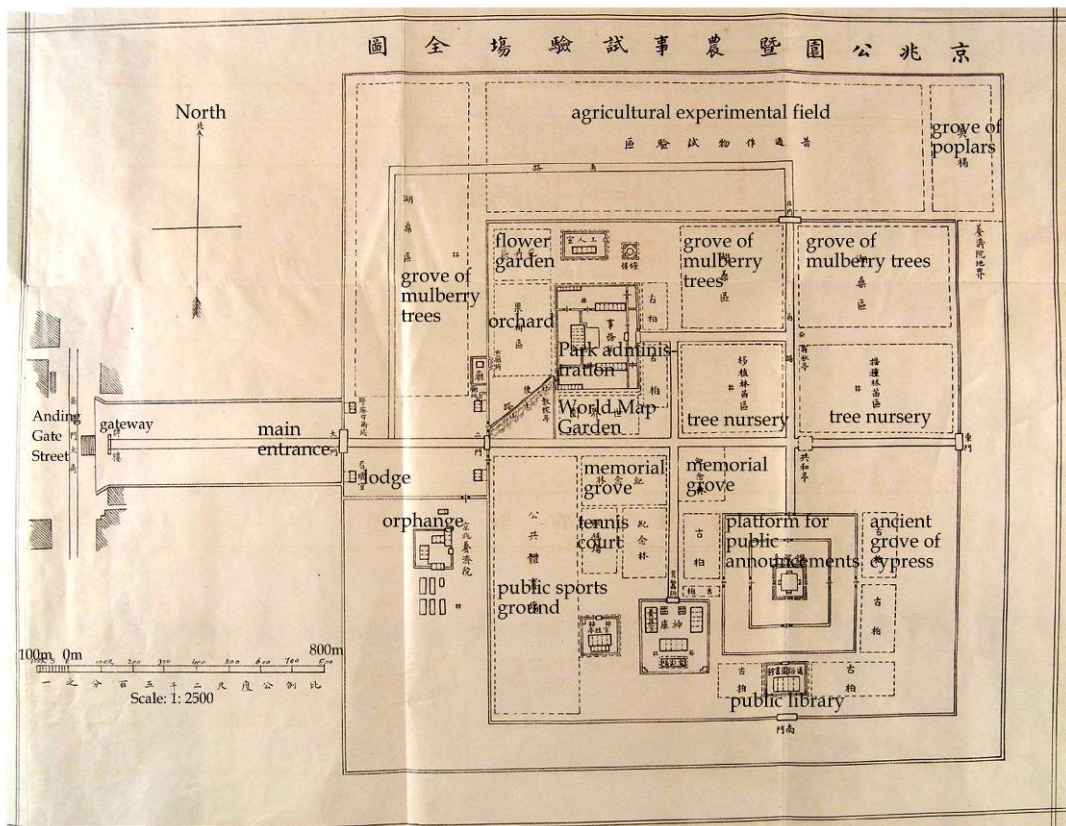
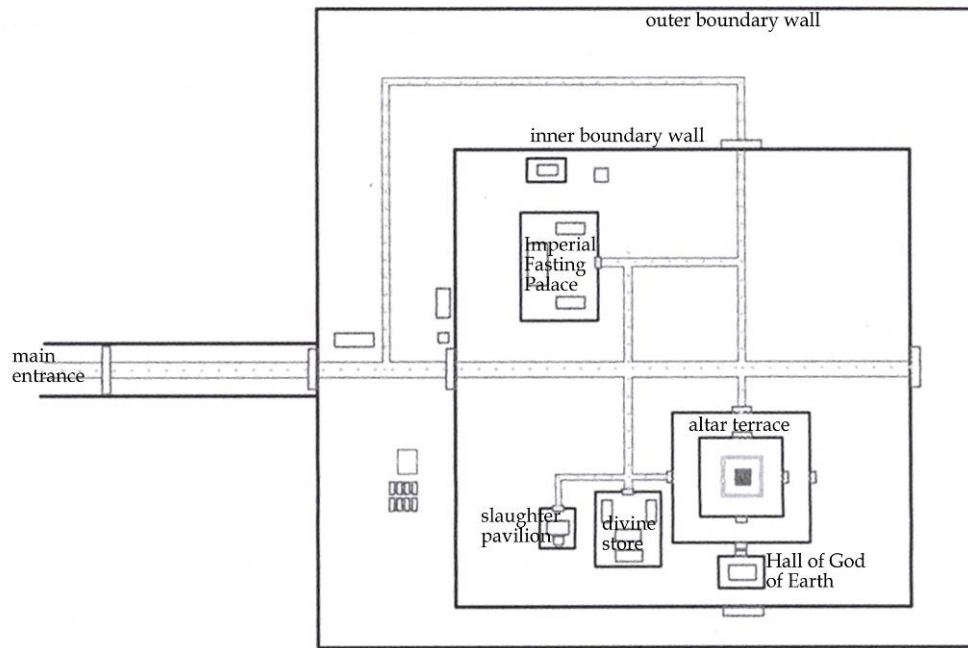


Figure 3.12 Layout of the Altar of Earth in Qing dynasty (above) and the Plan of the Capital City Park (below) (Sources: (above) drawn by author based on Yangshi Lei archives at the National Library of China; (below) Ji Liu (刘骥), *Jingzhao gongyuan jishi* (京兆公园纪实 Authentic records of the Capital City Park) (Beijing: [unknown publisher], 1925))



- a- Trustees committee of Capital City Park
- b- Inner Gate of the Park
- c- Park Avenue
- d- Newly constructed Pavilion, with a motto board on each side
- e- Public sports ground
- f- World Map Garden

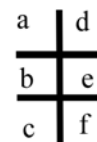


Figure 3.13 Capital City Park in 1925 (Source: Ji Liu (刘骥), *Jingzhao gongyuan jishi* (京兆公园纪实 Authentic records of the Capital City Park) (Beijing: [unknown publisher], 1925))

The Altar of Sun and the Altar of Moon, relatively small in area and less significant in ritual meaning, were neglected. Apart from occasionally stationed military troops, the sites were left with little care and maintenance for most of the time.

In general, between 1912 and 1928 imperial altars were valued as both cultural properties and spatial resources. By 1928, four of the six imperial altars had turned into public parks, and three of them functioned partly as experimental forestry fields. The Altar of Heaven was mostly intact, preserving its historical buildings and landscapes due to the ritual and cultural significance embedded within the site, but the other three altars, considered less important in historical and ritual values, were all changed both spiritually and physically. The imperial sacrifice to the Nature gods ceased and ritual instruments were removed from their original stores. Historical buildings were occupied by various private and public institutions, open grounds were filled in with garden and park features and tree nurseries. The Altar of Soil and Grain was successfully transformed into and maintained as a public park, providing a variety of choices in recreation and entertainment. This was the only self-sponsored park among the four. The Altar of Agriculture, although partly opened as a public park, lost most of its outer altar land for economic purposes. The Altar of Earth was hastily made into a modern park functioning mainly for educational purposes, but soon returned to derelict land because of economic difficulties.

Preserving Imperial Altars as National Essence (国粹 *guocui*) and Tourism Resources 1928-1937

Background

In 1928, the Chinese Nationalist Party (CNP, *Guomindang* 国民党), after a slow development in southern China lasting decades, was finally strong enough to take over the republican government in Beijing and centralise the political leadership of China. In fear of the opposition forces in the north, they moved the capital to Nanjing

(lit. Capital of South) and renamed Beijing (lit. Capital of North) as *Beiping*—Peace in North.

The new leader Jiang Jieshi (蒋介石Chiang Kai-shek), successor of Sun Zhongshan (孙中山Sun Yat-sen), adopted Sun's *Three Principles* as the Party line. However, among those three, only nationalism was really enforced. Unlike previous republican governments taking the Western modern image as the model for China, Jiang Jieshi highlighted the values of 'national essence' and devoted himself to restoring Chinese confidence, and therefore a united nation, through reviving Chinese culture.⁴⁰ Under his regime, various laws and regulations were established to protect historic monuments and sites, which were seen as representative of Chinese culture. Surveys and studies were carried out by both governmental organisation and independent societies. The decade between 1928 and 1937, the year when the Sino-Japanese war broke out, was therefore a pinnacle of heritage conservation in China.

The Nationalist government also held a different attitude toward traditional culture. Instead of highly appraising the western model and viewing Chinese culture as backward, as had been done in the early Republican era, the CNP tried to re-establish national confidence and identity through support from the Chinese tradition. A series of regulations and directions were promulgated to help distinguish 'good' from 'bad' culture. By doing this, the Chinese culture was assumed to be improved and matched to contemporary needs.

Another issue that interested contemporary government in cultural property was its economic value. The move of the Capital from Beijing to Nanjing in 1928 brought an economically harsh time for Beijing (*Beiping*) due to the evacuation of central

⁴⁰ During the early Republic, western culture and ideology were promoted. As the contrast, traditional Chinese culture and custom turned to a negative symbol. Before 1928, the concept of 'nation' was not generally recognized by the Chinese. See 'Although the Chinese were a "single pure race", China was only a "sheet of loose sand", and unless she became a nation she was doomed. Therefore the main emphasis of the new China must be on "nationalism"'. Victor Purcell, *The rise of modern China* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul for the Historical Association, 1962), p. 19. Similar idea also appeared in Tingfu Jiang (蒋廷黻 1896-1965), *Zhongguo jindaishi dagang* (中国近代史大纲 Framework of Modern History of China) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Education Press, 2006), p. 2, in which he said 'Contemporary China has little sense of nation...' Therefore, building the sense of nation is helpful to centralise the political power, as well as enhance national confidence.

government offices. In order for the city to recover from an economically stagnant situation, national and local government sought a new image for Beijing as the 'City of Culture', which aimed to attract tourists and make it in reality a 'City of Tourism'. Therefore historical buildings and sites were surveyed and preserved, including the imperial altars.⁴¹

In 1935, the Beiping government edited the *Sketch of Cultural Property in the Old Capital* (旧都文物略), a chorography of cultural heritage in Beiping. Unlike previous records which lacked accuracy or integrity, this book included 12 categories, and over 300 cultural properties (both tangible and intangible). Among these, temples and altars, gardens and famous sites were all concerned with garden and landscape heritage.

Laws and Regulations on Heritage Preservation

During the reign of the CNP, one law and several regulations concerned with built heritage conservation were passed. They are *Regulations on the Preservation of Scenic and Historic Sites and Ancient Objects* (1928), *Regulations for the Supervision of Temples* (1929), *Law of Preservation of Ancient Objects* (1930), and some detailed implementation regulations.⁴²

In 1928, the Ministry of the Interior published the *Regulations on the Preservation of Scenic and Historic Sites and Ancient Objects* (*Mingsheng guji guwu baocun tiaoli* 名胜古迹古物保存条例), in which two major categories were defined as 'scenic and historic sites' and 'ancient objects'. 'Scenic and historic sites' includes lakes and mountains, architecture and construction, and relict sites. 'Ancient objects' includes

⁴¹ A good study of Beiping in 1928-1936 and its shift of identity is by Madeleine Yue Dong, 'Defining Beiping: Urban Reconstruction and National Identity, 1928-1936', in *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950*, edited by Joseph W. Esherick (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), pp. 121-138, which has been used in writing this paragraph.

⁴² Ignatius T. P. Pao (包遵彭), *Guwu baocunfa* (古物保存法 Chinese Protective Legislation on Cultural Properties) (Taipei: Zhonghua congshu bianshen weiyuanhui (中华丛书编审委员会), 1966), p. 3.

ten groups such as stelae and caplets, ancient trees and plants, statues and sculptures, ritual instruments and so on. In this categorisation, historic gardens were covered by the regulations, but scattered in different groups: scenic sites and landscapes were within the “lakes and mountains” group, ancient temples, altars and walled gardens were within the ‘architecture and construction’ group, and old trees and other features were ‘ancient objects’. Prompt repair was recommended for buildings. It also asked regional and local governments to establish committees for the preservation of historic sites and objects and make appropriate regulations.⁴³

Regulations for the Supervision of Temples (Jiandu simiao tiaoli 监督寺庙条例) were made by the national government in 1929, which mainly aimed to regulate the management and protection of properties of various temples, including temple buildings and various religious instruments, art works and other goods belonging to the temples.⁴⁴

In 1930, *The Law of Preservation of Ancient Objects* (LPAO, Guwu baocun fa 古物保存法) was promulgated by the Legislative Court of the central government and executed the next year. It was the first law on preserving cultural heritage in Republican China and included fourteen articles. Article One gives a definition of ancient objects as ‘all the ancient objects concerned with archaeology, history, ancient biology and other culture.’ In addition, further definition of ‘important ancient objects’ is provided by separate regulations. According to this law, all the ancient objects belonging to central or local government and various organisations had to be recorded by photography and filling the necessary form. In respect of privately owned property, only ‘important ancient objects’ needed to be reported and recorded.

In 1934, because ‘ancient objects in the country have been damaged continuously,

⁴³ *Zhonghua minguo xianxing fagui daquan* (中华民国现行法规大全 Complete volumes of validated laws and regulations of the Republican China), ed. by Commercial Press (Wuhan: Hubei Library, 2005), p. 366.

⁴⁴ *Zhonghua minguo xianxing fagui daquan* (中华民国现行法规大全 Complete volumes of validated laws and regulations of the Republican China), ed. by Commercial Press (Wuhan: Hubei Library, 2005), p. 367.

which has caused a huge loss in national spirit', the Central Committee for Protection of Ancient Objects (CCPAO, Zhongyang guwu baoguan weiyuanhui 中央古物保管委员会) was founded to promote heritage conservation.⁴⁵ Directly under the Executive Court of the National Government, CCPAO was the highest governmental organisation for protecting Chinese cultural property. Committee members included leading archaeology professionals appointed by the Executive Court, and governmental representatives from the Ministries of Education and the Interior, various national research academies and national museums. This team no doubt secured a high academic standard as well as political privilege. Soon after the CCPAO was founded, Wang Jingwei (汪精卫) and Jiang Jieshi (蒋介石), Director of Executive Court and Head of CNP respectively, co-published an announcement to various regional governments, military departments, universities and academies aimed at strengthening the importance of heritage protection. The announcement says, 'by studying the past, the future can be seen; by inheriting the past, the future can be explored [...] the heritage we were given by our ancestors embeds their wisdom. They are both valuable to historian and academic, and good for inspiring art works...in order to carry on the culture, we need to understand the culture first; in order to revive our nation, we need to understand our history'.

Between 1934 and 1936, CCPAO's output was prolific. Various detailed regulations and implementations were produced; branch committees were set up in Xi'an and Beijing, both ancient cities rich in heritage. Laws on cultural property conservation in other countries were translated and introduced, including those in Italy, France, Belgium, Great Britain, Switzerland, Egypt, Japan, Soviet Russia and the Philippines.

However, demands for accurate recording of historic property were not followed up. Two years after the announcement, only six reports had been submitted, in which only one was concerned with gardens (Qinghua University submitted nine photos of stone

⁴⁵ Jingwei Wang (汪精卫) & Jieshi Jiang (蒋介石), 'Announcement', 30th Nov., 1934, in *Zhongyang guwu baoguan weiyuanhui yishilu* (中央古物保管委员会议事录 Meeting Records of the Central Committee of Protection of Ancient Objects), Vol. 1 (1935), p. 39.

carvings at Yuanmingyuan).⁴⁶ Reasons might include the possibility that academic values and willingness did not match society's interests. For example, photography was expensive at that time, which meant a substantial cost for making records. Also, once a private property was reported, its owner would lose the freedom to sell or change it.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Nationalist Party's disputes with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Japan became more severe and political struggles caused monetary problems. From 1936, in order to reduce the governmental budget, CCPAO was combined into the Ministry of Interior, a branch of the Executive Court. The lack of administrative status as well as financial support affected the effectiveness of CCPAO. Very soon, in 1937, the war between China and Japan broke out. This virtually caused all conservation work in China to be halted.

Recording Imperial Altars

On 19th June 1928, the department of Altars and Temples in Beijing, a branch established and directly controlled by the Ministry of Interior of the new government, took up the stewardship of altars in Beijing. On 3rd July, the department sent an official letter to the organisations at these altars and temples and asked for a survey of existing historical features, including historical buildings, ritual instruments, ancient trees, land and all the other items. In merely two days, the Altar of Earth, Altar of Sun and Altar of Moon submitted their reports, using the survey made ten years before. The department soon found out this trick and asked for a more serious attitude toward this survey. Four weeks later, having collected the surveys of five altars (lacking surveys of the Altar of Soil and Grain and that of Agriculture) and eleven temples and shrines, the department submitted the final report to the Ministry of Interior. This was

⁴⁶ 'Zhongguo guomindang diwuci quanguo daibiao dahui neizhengbu gongzuo baogao' (中国国民党第五次全国代表大会内政部工作报告 Working reports of Ministry of Interior on the National Congress of CNP), *Geming wenxian* (革命文献 Material on Chinese Revolutionary History), Vol. 71, (Taipei: Zhongguo Guomindang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui (中国国民党中央委员会 1977), p. 304.

the first full survey of the altars since 1918. Table 3.2 is made based on this report, which is to reflect the altars situation in 1920s.

Table 3.2 Historical remains of imperial altars in Beijing 1928 (as reported)⁴⁷

<i>Name of altar</i>	<i>ancient trees</i>	<i>Historical buildings and constructions</i>	<i>Ritual instruments</i>
Altar of Heaven	(documents missing)		
Altar of Earth	480 (including 38 dead) remaining. Pine and cypress were dominant species, besides there were 36 elms and 42 pagoda trees.	Mostly remaining. 119 rooms, ⁴⁸ borrowed by 3 institutes as offices space and a few occupied by military troops. 21 constructions	149 items left, some of which damaged
Altar of Sun	424 remaining. Including 416 pine and cypress, 6 pagoda trees, 2 apricot trees.	Mostly remaining. 49 rooms, a few were inhabited by street cleaners.	19 items
Altar of Moon	253 (including 43 dead) remaining, 8 removed. Over half of the trees were cypress, and over 70 pine trees, and 11 elm, mulberry and pagoda trees.	Mostly remaining. 41 rooms, in which military troops were stationed in March 1928, causing some damage. 2 constructions	30 items left, some of which damaged
Altar of Soil and Grain	(No report)		
Altar of Agriculture	(No report)	Mostly remaining. 143 rooms, some occupied by various organisations. 19 constructions.	(No report)

After the survey of altars, temples and shrines, in the winter of 1928 the Ministry of Interior of the National Government promulgated the *Decree of Standards on Retaining and Abandoning Spiritual Shrines* (神祠存废标准令) to regulate worship.

⁴⁷ '1928 nian Beiping tanmiao zhuangkuang shiliao' (1928 年北京坛庙状况史料 Archives on the situation of altars and temples of Beijing in 1928), *Beijing dang'an shiliao* (北京档案史料 Beijing Archives), No.3 (2003), pp. 83-98.

⁴⁸ 'Room' is a traditional method to calculate the coverage of buildings. One room is the space between two pillars along the width of a building, regardless the number of pillars in its depth. For example, a building of 5 bays (i.e. 6 pillars in width) has 5 rooms.

The Decree separated shrines into four categories: shrines for sages (this included twelve sages including Confucius and Mencius), shrines for religions, shrines for ancient gods, and shrines for demons (or rather, un-authorised gods). The Nature gods worshipped at the imperial altars belonged to the third category, which was characterised as ‘meaningless to the present and should be abolished’.⁴⁹

Ordered by the Ministry of Interior, the ‘Institute for Administering Altars and Temples’ 管理坛庙事务所 was established at the Altar of Agriculture. The sacrificial instruments from all the other imperial altars were collected and stored in the former Hall of Divinity, which had been just adapted as an exhibition gallery. New ceremonies were also launched at the imperial altars to replace the old. In 1930, the first National Tree-planting Day was held at the Altar of Agriculture, taking the place of the imperial farming ceremony.⁵⁰

After the survey, in 1933, special funding was given to restore the key sites including the Altar of Heaven, Altar of Agriculture, and Altar of Earth. The local organisation in charge of the altars also raised money for the altars’ restoration. In 1935, 25,000 Yuan was raised to restore the Altar of Earth. The Capital City Park (renamed as Citizen Park in 1928) was closed and the facilities which had been added in 1925 were removed. Soon after, the land re-opened to the public under the name of the Altar of Earth. This fitted well with the new Mayor’s determination to make the city into a ‘Cultural Capital’, which was to be achieved through his ‘Plan for the Beijing Tourist District’. So, in the 1930s, these imperial altar landscapes had a very different focus from that of the early Republican era. Instead of erasing imperial sites or modernising them for new purposes, they were to be preserved as emblems of Beijing and Chinese culture.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Kristofer Schipper (施舟人), ‘Daojiao zai jindai zhongguo de bianqian’ (道教在近代中国的变迁 Changes of Taoism in Modern China), from *Library of the Western Belvedere* 西观藏书楼 <<http://www.xiguan.net/Schipper/010.htm>> [accessed 3rd February, 2008]

⁵⁰ *Beijing xiannongtan shiliao xuanbian* (北京先农坛史料选编 Selected Archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing), ed. by the Editorial Board of Selected Archives on the Altar of Agriculture in Beijing (Beijing: Xueyuan Chubanshe, 2007)

⁵¹ Madeleine Yue Dong, ‘Defining Beijing: Urban Reconstruction and National Identity, 1928-1936’, in

Also from this period, having lost their divine status, plans were made to use the altars for more profitable uses. For example, the open land of the Altar of Heaven was largely let for agricultural and forestry uses; the Altar of Moon was turned into a middle school, which was also the case for many temples in China, driven by the policy of 'readjusting temples into modern schools'.⁵²

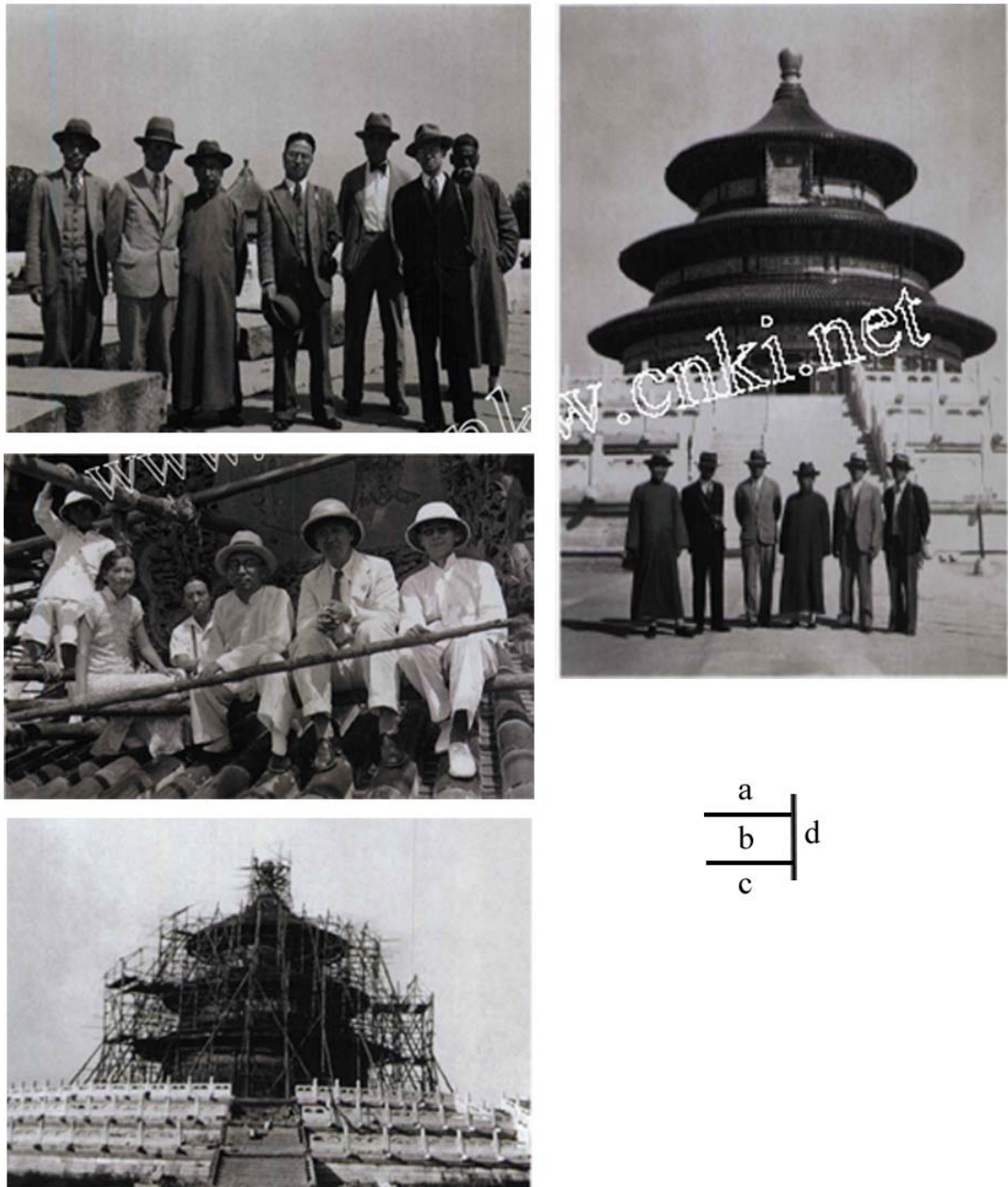
Apart from the Altar of Soil and Grain being successfully transformed into a public park, other attempts with the Altar of Agriculture and the Altar of Earth failed. Responsibility for their management was returned to the central government. The change of stewardship, functions and arrangement of imperial altars from 1912 to 1937 indicates a return of older values of imperial altars: from a modern judgement of educational values in culture and history back to their traditional ritual and customary significances.

Of the six imperial altars, the Altar of Heaven, due to its significance in culture and history, received far more attention than other altars. In the mid 1930s, the national government launched two restoration schemes on historic sites in Beiping, both of which listed the Altar of Heaven at the beginning. The buildings, terraces, walls, and roads were all repaired and restored by specialist committees. When they were checked by the Cultural Objects Organisation Committee, it was concluded that 'the construction methods match the original methods, all the works are strong, good looking, smooth and tidy'.⁵³ (Figure 3.14)

Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950, ed. by Joseph W. Esherick (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), pp. 121-138 (p. 132)

⁵² 'Beijingshi tanmiao diaocha baogao (fu zhengli banfa)' (北平市坛庙调查报告 (附整理办法) Report on the Survey of Beijing Temples and Altars (with methods of organization provided)) (17 May, 1934), quoted from Yanwei He (何岩巍), 'Qingmo minguo guojia tizhi de zhuanxing yu Beijing simiao lishi bianqian' (清末民国国家体制的转型与北京寺庙历史变迁The Transformation of National Political System and the Historical Change of Temples in Beijing in Late Qing and Republican Era), *Beijing Cultural Heritage and Museums* (北京文博) (c. 2006) <<http://www.bjww.gov.cn/2006/4-12/171059.shtml>> [accessed 13 December, 2007]

⁵³ 'Jiudu wenwu zhengli weiyuanhui zhi gongzuo' (旧都文物整理委员会之工作 the work of Organisational Committee to Cultural Properties in the Former Capital) (Nanjing, 1937), *Geming wenxian* (革命文献 Material on Chinese Revolutionary History), Vol. 59 (Taipei: Zhongguo Guomindang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui (中国国民党中央委员会), 1972), pp.184-185.



a
b
c

d

a-Opening of the restoration scheme on 9th May 1935
b-Architectural Professionals working on the roof of the Praying Hall
c-Praying Hall under restoration
d-Newly restored Praying Hall and the investigator team

Figure 3.14 Restoration of the Altar of Heaven in 1935. (Source: Yong Cui (崔勇), 'Record on Renovation of Heaven Temple in 1935', *Archicreation*, No. 4 (2006))

Restoring Imperial Altars

Among the restoration projects undertaken in Beijing, one of the key issues was to restore altars and temples in Beijing, through efforts to revive rituals and customs.⁵⁴ From 1928 the CNP began to restore rituals and customs in various ways. That year, the national government asked the Ministry of Interior to organise a special committee for regulating rituals for both public and official ceremonies. Besides, organisation and regulations were established to regulate the management and leasing of altars and temples. During the early Republic, these altars and temples were either adapted into public parks, or occupied by the military service or let to schools and offices. In 1934, the Ministry of Interior removed military troops from altars, took back rights to use them from their tenants, and collected rents for altar and temple owned land to support restoration projects.⁵⁵

Due to the respective situations of altars, not all the altars were to be restored. For example, the Altar of Soil and Grain continued in use as Central Park (in the meantime named Zhongshan Park) because of its successful management and political significance. But the Altar of Earth, not receiving the same interest from the citizens, was returned to the status of an altar and opened as a museum. The Altar of Heaven also received a major restoration in 1936. Undertaken by an architectural design institute led by Yang Tingbao, a prominent Chinese architect at that time, this restoration was seen successful in both strengthening the structure and renewing aspects of the construction.⁵⁶

The management system of the Altar of Soil and Grain (the Central Park) was

⁵⁴ Xianzhou Du (杜仙洲) and Zequan Tong (佟泽泉), 'Zhongguo wenwu yanjiusuo de lishi ji guancang tushu ziliao' (中国文物研究所的历史及馆藏图书资料 History and collections of China Cultural Heritage Research Institute), *Zhongguo wenwu yanjiusuo qishinian 1935-2005* (中国文物研究所七十年: 1935-2005 Seventy years of China Cultural Heritage Research Institute 1935-2005), ed. by China Cultural Heritage Research Institute (中国文物研究所) (Beijing: Cultural Heritage Press, 2005), pp. 304-309 (304).

⁵⁵ 'Zhongguo guomindang diwuci quanguo daibiao dahui neizhengbu gongzuo baogao' (中国国民党第五次全国代表大会内政部工作报告 Working Reports of Ministry of Interior on the 5th National Congress of CNP), *Geming wenxian* (革命文献 Material on Chinese Revolutionary History), Vol. 59 (Taipei: Zhongguo Guomindang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui (中国国民党中央委员会), 1977), p. 296.

⁵⁶ Yong Cui (崔勇), 'Record on Renovation of Heaven Temple in 1935', *Archicreation*, No. 4 (2006)

reformed in 1928, changing from trustees to a committee directly guided by the municipal government. The committee members, 30 people in total, were selected from the former trustees and governmental officials. In the 1935 *Sketch of Cultural Property in the Old Capital*, in the catalogue of gardens, Central Park was listed as the first, because at the time it was the place most loved by Beiping citizens as an outdoor recreational and gathering place. Other imperial gardens and parks were also opened to the public.⁵⁷

The main buildings and walls in the Altar of Agriculture, once South City Park but disused since 1920, were restored in 1934. The remaining land of the Altar of Agriculture was merely a quarter of the original area.⁵⁸

The Altar of Earth, or the Capital City Park, was assigned to the Civil Engineering Bureau (under Beiping Municipal government) for its management from 1928, and was renamed Citizen Park. However, their management of Citizen Park was not very successful. Military troops were frequently stationed in the park; the Agricultural Experimental Factory and the Fourth Provincial Agricultural Experimental Factory occupied part of the land for tree nurseries. Neither of them wished to return the land to park use. So for Citizen Park, 'only the name remained'.⁵⁹ In 1935, park facilities were removed, and the Citizen Park was officially turned back to the Altar of Earth. Damaged altars and walls were restored and it was opened as a tourist site as the Altar of Earth.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Yongbin Tang (汤用彬) and others, *Jiudu wenwu lue* (旧都文物略 Sketch of Cultural Property in Old Capital) (Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 2000), pp. 59; 62.

⁵⁸ Yongbin Tang (汤用彬) and others, *Jiudu wenwu lue* (旧都文物略 Sketch of Cultural Property in Old Capital) (Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 2000), p. 42.

⁵⁹ Yongbin Tang (汤用彬) and others, *Jiudu wenwu lue* (旧都文物略 Sketch of Cultural Property in Old Capital) (Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe, 2000), p. 40.

⁶⁰ Xinghua Zhao (赵兴华), *Beijing yuanlin shihua* (北京园林史话 History of Beijing Gardens) (Beijing: China Forestry Press, 2000), p. 253.

Imperial Altars in War Time 1937-1945

The period between 1937 and 1949 was one of the hardest times in the Republican China. Between 1937 and 1945, China had eight years of war with Japan, which caused a dramatic worsening in the national economic situation. The war was ended with the end of the Second World War when Japan lost on the international battlefield. Then there were three years of civil war between the Chinese Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party. This war ended with the defeat of the CNP; the CCP finally controlled political power in mainland China. CNP settled in Taiwan, taking with them leading intellectuals, funds and cultural heritage resources.

In 1937, Japan had occupied Beijing and established a puppet government aiming to build a 'Great East Asia Region', but not to destroy Chinese society. After a short closure for administrative transition, most historic gardens and parks reopened to the public. Apart from the general public, soldiers became the most frequent visitors because they were offered concessionary tickets at half price.

As a place to educate the public, public parks and gardens were always closely connected with political propaganda. During the Japanese occupation, cherry blossom trees were sent from Japan and planted in many historic gardens as a mark of 'friendship between China and Japan'. The puppet government used public parks as places to advertise their ideologies, opening the public parks for free on special days of ceremony and organising special activities (such as sporting events) to attract the public.

Although subsidies were much less available than before the war, small scale maintenance was continued at selected sites such as the Forbidden City and Middle and South Seas. But some 'less' important sites were closed and turned to other uses. For example, in 1938, one year after the Sino-Japanese war broke out, the Altar of Earth was closed to the public. The Fourth Provincial Agricultural Experimental Factory was also moved out. All the land ownership was taken over by the colonial

government and distributed to refugees, who built their houses and farms on the land.⁶¹

Generally speaking, there was not much damage to the imperial altars in the early years of Japanese occupation. But when World War II came to an end and Japan had lost on the battlefield, looting and demolition of some historic features occurred. Trees were chopped down to make space for military use, bronze ritual features and statues were recycled to make weapons. At the Altar of Heaven, for example, many trees at the south of the altar were chopped down to make way for an airstrip.⁶² Damage was also reported to buildings and trees at other altars.

Heritage Protection 1945-1949

Architectural Perspective on Gardens as Cultural Heritage

In 1944, before the final battles of the Sino-Japanese War in China, the Chinese National Government founded the *Committee for Preserving Cultural Objects in War Areas* to protect immovable heritage from being destroyed during the war. Liang Sicheng (architect) was invited to make a protection list, which came out in 1945 as *Chinese Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Objects in War Areas—List of Monuments* (Zhanqu wenwu baocun weiyuanhui wenwu mulu 战区文物保存委员会文物目录). Although the list was not actually used because of the surrender of the Japanese armies, it provides a perspective of what was considered important in 1945. Four years later, shortly before the final battle between CCP and CNP, Liang Sicheng was again asked to edit a list for immovable cultural objects considered for protection, this time commissioned by the CCP. Working with the Architecture Research Institute

⁶¹ Xinghua Zhao (赵兴华), *Beijing yuanlin shihua* (北京园林史话 History of Beijing Gardens) (Beijing: China Forestry Press, 2000), p. 253.

⁶² But in other sources, it is said the removing trees for airstrips is done by the CNP in 1948. see Chunmao Wang (王春茂), 'Tiantan haojie' (天坛浩劫 The Catastrophe of the Altar of Heaven), *Jinghua yuanlin congkao* (京华园林丛考 Exploration of Beijing Gardens), ed. by Historical Records Office of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (Beijing: Beijing Kexue Jishu Chubanshe, 1996), p. 484.

(co-organised by Tsinghua University and SRCC), Liang and his team provided *Brief List of Key Architectural Cultural Objects in China* (*Quanguo zhongyao jianzhu wenwu jianmu* 全国重要建筑文物简目) in March 1949.

In both lists, status of varying importance was given to various sites, from four stars representing the most important while no star meant 'of general importance'. These are the first cultural heritage lists in China which give differentiated status to the various sites listed.

In the list made in 1945, 400 monuments and sites were listed, most of which were religious temples, pagodas, caves and sculptures. Other types included tombs, palaces and gardens. As to listed gardens, there were eight private gardens in Suzhou, and five in other towns and cities nearby. Listed imperial gardens and landscapes included: The Forbidden City (three stars); Western Gardens (one star); Prospect Hill (no star); Summer Palace (no star); Jingmingyuan (Jade Hill) (no star); Summer Mountain Resort and temples (one star); Prince-Gong's House and Gardens (no star); Altar of Soil and Grain (adapted as Central Park) (no star); Altar of Agriculture (no star); Altar of Heaven (two stars); and Altar of Earth (no star). So, altogether 20 gardens and four imperial altars were on the list. All these were located either in Beijing or *Jiangnan* (Lower Yangzi Delta). None of the private gardens was marked by any star (which means they had the lowest importance among the list), nor did the best preserved imperial garden at the Summer Palace. Although Forbidden City, Western Gardens, Summer Mountain Resort and temples, Altar of Heaven had stars, that was mostly because of the importance of the buildings and constructions rather than the landscaped view and space.⁶³

The List of 1949 included mostly the same properties as the one in 1945. The number of listed monuments and sites was increased slightly, but listed gardens were reduced to twelve. The list of gardens in Beijing did not change, but their status was greatly

⁶³ Sicheng Liang (梁思成), *Liang Sicheng quanji* (梁思成全集 Complete Collection of Liang Sicheng), Vol. 4 (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 2001), pp. 225-293.

enhanced. Gardens in Suzhou and surroundings changed totally: the thirteen gardens on the 1945 List were all absent in this list, but a further two gardens were added. Also, the school garden Academy of White Deer Cave was for the first time considered as an important cultural object.⁶⁴

These two lists reflected an architect's perspective on cultural heritage. They also represented the situation of historic monuments and sites in China in the 1940s and show that in the 1940s, small private gardens were never considered 'historic'; the representation of Chinese gardens mostly focused on the imperial gardens in Beijing and private gardens in Suzhou.

Argument on Preserving Cultural Heritage after Sino-Japanese War (1945-1949)

Although the government promoted the conservation of cultural objects, different voices were also heard from society at large, especially during the post-war period when the poor economic situation meant that people's livelihoods were in great difficulty. In 1948, *Dagong bao* (大公报/*L'Impartial*, then was a very popular newspaper in China) published an article 'Cultural objects, old books and writing brush' by Zhu Ziqing (朱自清 1898-1948), a well-known literatus and professor in Chinese literature at Tsinghua University. By negatively valuing traditions and expecting new culture to bring hope to China, he argued that, 'cultural objects, old books and writing brushes are the same things, they are all heritage, history and old culture'. He criticised those who preserve 'national essence' for the purpose of reviving traditional culture: 'we are different from the older generations, preservation is just for keeping things intact, letting them stay like fossils, but not reviving them.' Another reason he gave for not preserving heritage was that, 'beautifully restored ancient buildings composed a strong comparison with the reality of war turbulence and starvation, which is ironic and stings people's hearts'. For these two reasons, he 'disagreed to put too much effort

⁶⁴ Sicheng Liang (梁思成), *Liang Sicheng quanji* (梁思成全集 Complete Collection of Liang Sicheng), Vol. 4 (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 2001), pp. 317-365.

into preserving historic objects, too much strengthening Beiping as a cultural city. However, “maintaining historic sites by enhancing operating and utilising cultural buildings” with no extra expense, it is acceptable.’⁶⁵

Reacting to Zhu Ziqing, Liang Sicheng wrote the article ‘Cultural Objects in Beiping must be organised and preserved’. Speaking as an architectural professional, he analysed the reasons for preserving heritage buildings in Beiping. He presented the view that ‘if we assume the cultural buildings in Beiping are useless historical sites and don’t restore them anymore...in 20 to 30 years, all these palaces, temples, altars and gateways are going to decay...which is an unhappy image and pressure to most citizens...cultural objects not only provide people with an pleasant environment, but also stimulate national confidence’. Besides spiritual/sentimental values, historic sites also contributed pragmatic values to new city development. For example, a balanced distribution of imperial gardens, temples and altars could well function as public green spaces, and many old buildings could easily adapted for modern use under professional guidance and supervision.⁶⁶

Zhu and Liang’s argument also reflected the two parties’ ideologies as well as their respective views on cultural heritage. Liang held similar ideas to the CNP, which was conservative thinking and tried to revive China by enhancing Chinese culture. Zhu, highly praised by the CCP, represented the CCP and socialist thought. Compared with the elites’ sentiments about cultural heritage, they cared more about the general public livelihood. Cultural heritage was, they argued, to be used for modern purposes rather than taking China back to its traditions.

⁶⁵ Ziqing Zhu (朱自清), ‘Wenwu, jiushu, maobi’ (文物 旧书 毛笔 Cultural objects, old books and writing brushes), *L’Impartial* (大公报), 31st March, 1948.

⁶⁶ Sicheng Liang (梁思成), *Liang Sicheng quanji* (梁思成全集 Complete Collection of Liang Sicheng), Vol. 4 (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 2001)

Summary

In general, in the first half of the 20th century, the imperial altars were treated in two distinct ways: in terms of their spiritual values (as cultural heritage) and for their material value (as public park, production grounds and so on). The ritual elements, historical buildings and constructions were preserved and exhibited for museum purposes, and the massive area of land was reused for public parks, forestry and agriculture fields, living quarters and the like. Such separation focused attention on the protection of cultural objects, and created more value for the altars. But also because of this separation, the integrated landscapes of the altars were disturbed and destroyed.

LANDSCAPE OF MAN (II): TRANSITION OF IMPERIAL ALTARS IN 1949-2000S

**“Let the Old Serve the New”—Materialising Imperial Altars in Mao’s Era
1949-1978**

From Religions to Superstitions: De-sanctify Imperial Altars

Although Chinese cosmology has been challenged by the modern scientific Western world view from the beginning of 20th century, the thorough destruction of the Chinese traditional view of Nature was only completed after 1949, when Mao Zedong successfully launched another revolution and established the socialist regime known as the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The PRC is solely led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which adopts Marxism as its theoretical foundation. In Marx’s view, religions were an undesirable distraction from communist aims. Therefore the CCP regarded itself as ‘scientific materialists’ and denied the existence of any supernatural or divine power. The only authorised belief for the members of CCP is Marxism (in China, the belief was adopted as Marx-Leninism in 1950s, and Marx-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thoughts since the mid 1960s) rather than any religions.

Being converted to be a Chinese Marxist in the 1920s, Mao Zedong saw religions as one of the ‘four thick ropes binding the Chinese people’. ‘The supernatural system (religious authority), ranging from the King of Hell down to the town and village gods belonging to the nether world, and from the Emperor of Heaven down to all the various gods and spirits belonging to the celestial world’ was said by Mao to be the embodiment of the feudal-patriarchal system and ideology.⁶⁷ This view, first announced in 1927 in his famous ‘Investigation of the peasant movement in Hunan’,

⁶⁷ See Mao Tse-tung, ‘Report on an investigation of the peasant movement in Hunan’, in *Selected works of Mao Tse-tung*, 1.44, quoted from *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 15. (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) p.619. The four ropes, representing the bonds of four kinds of authority, are: the state system (political authority), the clan system (clan authority), the supernatural system (religious authority), and for women, the men (the authority of the husband). these four authorities—political, clan, religious, and masculine—are seen as the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology by Mao Zedong.

set the foundation of the CCP's policy on religions during the socialist reform of the People's Republic of China. Religions since then were seen in China as anti-Marxist and superstitious and therefore needing to be suppressed.

Guided by this policy, the suppression of religions was launched in the 1950s and reached its peak during the Cultural Revolution (1965-1976). Most temples and shrines were destroyed, or converted to non-religious uses such as army barracks, warehouses and so on.⁶⁸ The imperial altars, having no way of protecting their spiritual meanings, were therefore seen in terms of their material value, for their land and building resources and artistic and scientific values in architecture.

Reinterpreting Imperial Altars: Science, Art, Patriotism

The imperial altars were damned for the religious meanings they embodied, but meanwhile they were conceived as heritage. In 1957, the Altar of Heaven and the Altar of Soil and Grain were designated as sites to be protected for their historical and cultural values at the city level in Beijing (北京市文物保护单位). In 1961, the Altar of Heaven became the major site to be protected for its historical and cultural values at the national level. These seemingly contradictory views were reconciled by reinterpreting the values of imperial altars.

In an introductory book in 1953, for instance, the values of the Altar of Heaven were described as:

On the one hand, it [that is, the Altar of Heaven] is a representative of imperial feudalism and superstitious culture. In order to destroy and erase these old cultures, it is necessary to understand why the old cultures are bad. Studying the Altar of Heaven is a starting point. On the other hand, the architecture of the Altar of Heaven is unique and has high scientific values, it can therefore help stimulate new culture for national evolution [...] also, because American and British troops once occupied the Altar of Heaven and used it as the headquarters during the wartime in 1900, it is therefore also a site connected

⁶⁸ Joseph A. Adler, *Chinese Religions* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.110.

with national humiliation. [For this instance,] the Altar of Heaven must be remembered when fighting [Western] Imperialism.⁶⁹

Regardless of the reasons behind these words—were they really what the author believed or merely an excuse to legitimise his book?—it reveals the values seen in the Altar of Heaven during the early communist era in China. Here, the religious values embodied in the Altar of Heaven were labelled ‘superstitious’ (*mí xìn*迷信), or ‘blinded worship’, a term opposite to ‘science’, which was highly appreciated in contemporary China and was seen as the way to Chinese modernisation. It was believed that the creation of the Nature gods and the superstitions relating to them was due to the underdevelopment of science in old China.⁷⁰ Therefore, for a ‘scientific’ socialist China, such beliefs were obviously unsuitable and needed to be replaced. As a consequence the intangible values of the site were stripped of their religious meanings and instead patriotic and educational meanings were added. The religious meanings were seen as evidence of the backwardness of feudal and imperial systems. The tangible values were especially highlighted for their outstanding achievement in art, architecture and science. Scientific value, newly attributed to the Altar of Heaven, has successfully stimulated public interest since then. Even today, visitors can be seen gathering in the Altar of Heaven testing such ‘scientific wonders’ by standing on a special stone in the courtyard of the Hall of Heavenly Emperors and clapping, or speaking and listening to each other by standing at the two ends of the circle wall. It is said one can hear three echoes of the claps for the former and, for the latter experiment, the voice can be heard clearly by being continuously reflected by the curved wall. However, if those were designers’ intention was left unchecked.⁷¹

⁶⁹ ‘Preface’, Liang Jin (金梁), *Tiantan zhilüe* (天坛志略 A Brief Record of the Altar of Heaven) (mimeograph at the National Library of China, Beijing, 1953)

⁷⁰ Liang Jin (金梁), *Tiantan zhilüe* (天坛志略 A Brief Record of the Altar of Heaven) (mimeograph at the National Library of China, Beijing, 1953), p. 73.

⁷¹ A series of scientific assessments on the audio phenomena at the Altar of Heaven have been carried out by Chinese professionals since 1953. But no evidence shows whether such phenomena are designed or merely accidental. Details see ‘Shengxue xianxiang yanjiu’ (声学现象研究 Studies on Audio Phenomena), in *Tiantan zhi* (天坛志 Records of the Altar of Heaven), ed. by Editorial Board of Beijing Chronicles (北京市地方志编撰委员会) (Beijing: Beijing Press, 2006), pp. 270-273.

Returning to the designation of the Altar of Heaven as cultural heritage, its official description in the evaluation of the site made in 1961 is: 'magnificent in scale, unique in style, it achieved celestial judgements in architectural and artistic values'. That for the Altar of Soil and Grain says, 'the Altar of Soil and Grain kept the regulation and style of the Ming Dynasty architecture; the Hall of Prayer was the original building with a history of over 500 years. It is one of the oldest examples of architecture surviving in Beijing.'⁷² These judgements show that by the late 1950s, the form and spirit of imperial altars had been split and reformulated. The emphasised values of the imperial altars had shifted from the symbolic meanings of power and divinity, which being highly valued in history, to their material achievement in architecture.

Imperial Altars for Working People: From Recreational Park to Production Grounds

When Beijing was again chosen to be the capital of the People's Republic of China, a new development plan was needed for the city. In 1953, the first Five Year Plan was launched, which stimulated the city's development. That year, with the help of Soviet specialists, the Master Plan for Adapting and Expanding Beijing was presented for discussion. Among a few planning principles, one was about heritage buildings. It said, 'preserving a historical building should not be taken as a premier consideration if its existence obstructs city development.'⁷³ Such argument paved the way for careless treatment of the imperial altars, which occurred soon after. When the sharp increase in population in Beijing resulted in the shortage of land and housing, and thrift in the city's development was invoked, a compound use of still available land and old buildings became the way out. The imperial altars, with both considerable land and building resources, were valued for their material worth alone, more than at any other

⁷² Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, *Beijingshi diyipi wenwu baohu danwei mingdan* (北京市第一批文物保护单位名单 List of the first batch of Protected Cultural Heritage of National Importance in Beijing) <http://www.bjww.gov.cn/wbdw/view_sb.asp?pic=北京市第一批文物保护单位名单&page=2#> [accessed 25th November 2007]

⁷³ Fenxuan Xue (薛凤旋), *Beijing: you chuantong guodu dao shehuizhuyi shoudu* (北京: 由传统国都到社会主义首都 Beijing: from a traditional capital to a socialist capital) (Hongkong: Hongkong University Press, 1996), p.81.

period.

The starting point for the treatment of the sites of imperial altars in P. R. China was to use them as urban green and public parks. Apart from the Altar of Heaven and the Altar of Soil and Grain, which had been grown in 'matured' parks in Republican era, the Altar of Earth, the Altar of Sun and the Altar of Moon were also made into public parks in the 1950s to meet the new model for a socialist city.⁷⁴

Equality was seen as one of the main characteristics of a socialist country, which was to be represented in the city plan as well. Influenced by the model of the Soviet Union, where cultural and recreational parks are part of the welfare services provided for all citizens, the new plan asked for cultural and recreational space to be available in each district of Beijing. However in 1949 Beijing, there were only four parks still open, and they were located either in the central town or in the western suburbs; there were no parks in the districts where working people lived. Because of this the Altar of Sun, Altar of Moon and Altar of Earth, respectively located at the east, west and north of the city wall, became ideal places for developing as parks for working people's recreational purposes.⁷⁵ But the Altar of Agriculture, having been open as a park for over 30 years, was closed after 1949. Considering its location, which was just next to the Altar of Heaven Park, it must have appeared superfluous as another public park. The land of the outer altar ring was soon fully packed by residential development, school, commercial buildings, and a new stadium named Altar of Agriculture Stadium.

In 1954, the Altar of Sun was planned to be "constructed as a cultural and recreational park serving the local residents". The next year, Beijing People's Municipal Committee (北京市人民委员会) decided to convert the Altar of Moon into a public park. By enclosing more land from neighbouring sites, the area of both the Altar of Sun Park

⁷⁴ The construction of Beijing since the early 1950s was learned from the Soviet model, in which the city was planned as various functional units. Each unit needs to have their green spaces such as a public park. See Fenxuan Xue (薛凤旋), *Beijing: you chuantong guodu dao shehuizhuyi shoudu* (北京: 由传统国都到社会主义首都 Beijing: from a traditional capital to a socialist capital) (Hongkong: Hongkong University Press, 1996), pp.79-87.

⁷⁵ Min Li (李敏). *Zhongguo xiandai gongyuan: fazhan yu pingjia* (中国现代公园——发展与评价 Modern parks of China: development and evaluation) (Beijing: Beijing kexue jishu chubanshe, 1987), p.17.

and the Altar of Moon Park were enlarged over three times, from 6.7 ha and 2.4 ha each to 21.15 ha and 7 ha respectively. In 1957, 22 years after ceasing to be a public park, the Altar of Earth was also assigned to the Beijing Municipal Landscape Bureau to be developed as a public park. Having lost most of its outer ring for building purposes, the new park with coverage of 35.5 ha was still slightly bigger than the Capital City Park in the 1920s.⁷⁶

In the making of public parks, the historical fabric was not considered of importance. In the Altar of Sun Park, for example, partly collapsed walls were entirely demolished, because restoring them would be more expensive. The altar terrace was repaved as an area for dancing and later erased. The altar land was mostly levelled and planted with trees—a method of making parks which was believed more economical than constructing any other park features, while it also conformed to the policy of ‘greening the motherland’. Therefore, during this period, the park was a woodland-like area. With voluntary work by the public and soldiers, various types of trees including arborvitae (侧柏), poplar (杨), willow (柳), pagoda tree (槐), hackberry (朴), wind spindle tree (卫矛), fortune fontanesia (雪柳) and others were planted densely and in a ‘natural’ manner (that is, not in formal arrangement).⁷⁷

The renovation of the Altar of Moon Park, sponsored by 80,000 Yuan of RMB, meant for the re-erection of a pavilion from another site, repairing park roads, launching an illuminating system and installing park benches. It also included the planting of a substantial number and species of trees.⁷⁸

In 1958, the new slogan ‘landscaping combined with production’ was coined. At the Altar of Sun Park, nearly a thousand trees were chopped down and replaced by fruit

⁷⁶ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 129.

⁷⁷ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 129.

⁷⁸ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 132.

trees. The altar parks therefore turned into orchards and were closed or partly closed to the public in order to protect the fruit from being stolen. A few years later, when these fruit trees were discovered to be unsatisfactory in both productivity and aesthetic standard, they were gradually replaced by evergreens again. As statistics show, for example, in the Altar of Sun Park 34,000 trees were planted whereas nearly 10,000 of them were replaced between 1957 and 1983.

A similar farce was also played out on lawns. In 1965, under the municipal government's policy 'Let no bare earth face the sky' (黄土不露天), lawns were hastily adopted to cover all bare earth at the Altar of Sun Park. But a few months later, the lawn was reinterpreted as the 'revisionist's poisonous grass' by the Cultural Revolutionaries, and it therefore had to be immediately removed from the park.⁷⁹

Nor were the buildings and features in the altar parks left in peace. When land and building resources were in shortage, some of the historic buildings of the imperial altars were reassigned as various work units, either as offices or warehouses. The terrace for sacrifice at the Altar of Earth was used as an exhibition terrace and later a warehouse was built on it; in 1959 at the Altar of Moon Park, the Children's House was moved into the Divine Hall, and by 1960 most of the buildings were occupied by colleges, schools, and work units.

In late 1960s, when Cultural Revolution achieved its peak, imperial altars, together with numerous cultural heritage sites, encountered further damage. The terrace of sacrifice in the Altar of Sun was entirely removed and a flag pole was erected at the centre of the site. The National Radio Administration demolished the sacrifice terrace at the Altar of Moon and built a radio broadcasting tower on the site. The altar gates were sealed for security reasons.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 130.

⁸⁰ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 132.

Another disturbance of the imperial altars was caused by the construction of air-raid shelters at the turn of the 1970s. Because of the increased confrontation between China and Soviet Union since the late 1960s, and especially after an armed attack in 1969, Mao conjectured that a war could happen soon, which led him to issue orders for the air-raid shelter project to connect key sites in central Beijing with the western suburbs. Most parks in Beijing were closed for this purpose. Zhongshan Park, next to the political centre, was closed from 1969 to 1971. About half of the area was disturbed, trees were dug out, buildings and features were removed. Although the destroyed part was soon reconstructed in a similar manner to its early twentieth century layout, historical accuracy was seldom considered of importance. Apart from the gateway being basically restored the same, all the other buildings (6, 923 square metres in total) were actually redesigned—although much of the old building material was recycled. Landscapes were also restructured, which is believed to have reduced the artistic value of the site. For example, the lake in front of the green house *Tanghua Wu* was reduced in size, and was rearranged by the rockery bank resulting in a lower aesthetic quality. Natural planting and a bamboo grove were removed from the plan.⁸¹ Apart from the dismantling of the parks, the huge amount of earth coming from the air-raid shelters was carried to and piled up in various parks. The Altar of Heaven received a 32 metre-high earth hill in its inner altar area, occupying 6 ha of the land. The Altar of Moon and Altar of Sun were also changed by the addition of hills. In addition, in the 1970s the Altar of Heaven lost more of its land for the building of working and living quarters⁸².

In 1971, the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China in the United Nations, and the United States established diplomatic relations with China. The change of international and national image brought a change of attitudes to

⁸¹ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p.107.

⁸² *Tiantan zhi* (天坛志 The Altar of Heaven Records), ed. by Editorial Board of Beijing Chorography (北京市地方志编撰委员会) (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 2006), p. 9.

gardens.⁸³ When political conflicts gradually calmed down between China and the West, and also within the central government, altar parks were also returned to their functions as public spaces. In 1972, potted flowers reappeared in Zhongshan park, where the next year the flower show was re-launched, and in 1975 Goldfish nursery was re-established. A traditional appreciation of flowers and fish returned to people's lives.

In the thirty years of Mao's era, the objectives of socialist culture were practiced at the cost of sacrificing Chinese 'old culture'. Many traditions were denied and destroyed, among which the imperial altars and their culture did not escape. By the destruction of the meanings of imperial sacrificial culture, the spirits (or rather the intangible heritage) of the imperial altars were taken out, leaving them as a body with no spirit. This destruction had paved the way for the reuse of imperial altars as land and building resources.

Beautiful, Profitable, and Cultural: Commercialisation and Culturalisation of Altar Parks during Economic Reform Period: 1978-1990s

In December 1978, the third central committee of the eleventh Congress of CCP was held, which marked a turning point for Chinese history. Deng Xiaoping, a strong economic reformist, was appointed back to the central board of the party and held a different view with respect to the direction in which the country ought to develop. He thought that developing the economy was the most important challenge. Economic policy was redefined as, 'readjust, reform, re-organise, and enhance'.⁸⁴ One year later, the significance of cultural and spiritual civilisation was recognised, being described as 'building up two civilisations, known as the material civilisation and the spiritual civilisation'. His economic principles have influenced China since then.

⁸³ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 20

⁸⁴ 'Economic Policies' in Article 'China', *Encyclopedia Britannica* 2008.

The change of policy soon reshaped the attitudes toward imperial altars. Taking the Altar of Sun as an example, this park, which had previously been seen as merely urban green space, with its management expenses largely coming from the governmental allotment, began to charge an entrance fee from 1979. From 1980 onwards, a roller-skating rink and spaceship (entertainment facilities), restaurants, snack bars, training classes and the like had launched, either constructed on spare land or using historical buildings. They brought in 1,610,000 Yuan of RMB in total between 1979 and 1985. Such income met the cost of managing the park.⁸⁵

On the other hand, the cultural values of imperial altars also achieved more recognition. Apart from the Altar of Heaven and the Altar of Soil and Grain which had received continuous attention during this time, the development schedules of the Altar of Earth, Altar of Sun and Altar of Moon, which had been neglected and disturbed in the first half century, were also taken into discussion. All were designated as district parks, and development plans for them were drawn up by either municipal or district governmental specialists, also with the influence of the political leaders.

The altar parks were treated just like other public parks at the time, and were set to satisfy a combined purpose of productivity and consumption, being defined through six goals: to generate economic productivity; to provide a place for workers to rest; to raise political consciousness; to popularise science; to show special exhibits; and to beautify the city and extend the regional 'greenisation' programme.⁸⁶

Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, the renovation work on imperial altars has mainly focused on the Altar of Earth, Altar of Sun and the Altar of Moon, which had been neglected and allowed to become derelict in the past

In 1981, Beijing Municipal Government allocated funds to restore the Sacrificial Altar

⁸⁵ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 131.

⁸⁶ Galen Cranz, 'The Useful and the Beautiful: Urban Parks in China', *Landscape* 23:2 (1979), 3-10 (p. 4).

and the Imperial Divine Hall in the Altar of Earth. The next year, the Development Plan of the Altar of Earth Park was made under the direction of the East-city District Government.⁸⁷ The development principle for the Altar of Earth Park was set as 'keeping the original altar style, creating a historical, simple, tranquil, and elegant characters, constructing [the site] as a cultural and recreational park mainly serving old people.'⁸⁸ Shortly afterwards, East City District Government appropriated funds to restore the building group of the Divine Instrument Stores. After restoration, the courtyard and building complex were turned into the Service Department for Tourism (that is, a restaurant and tourist shops). The Imperial Fasting Palace was used as Beijing Waxwork Gallery, where the models of 53 national heroes of China were displayed. Besides, a few 'gardens in garden' were also constructed to add the joy to the park. (Figures 3.15, 3.16) Similar design methods were also applied in the Altar of Sun and Altar of Moon, which were both significantly changed in their landscapes by the installation of flowering plants, natural ponds and rockery hills.

⁸⁷ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 128.

⁸⁸ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 128.



Figure 3.15 Tourist map of the Altar of Earth Park. It shows ‘gardened’ areas mixed with the restored main entrances, Altar of Earth, and two straight paths (Source: photo by author, July 2006)



Figure 3.16 Interior of the Hall of God of Earth. (left) 1925, used as public library; (right) 2006, restored tablet of God of Earth. In front of it, there are cushions and a money box for donations from visitors praying. (Sources: (left) Ji Liu (刘骥), *Jingzhao gongyuan jishi* (京兆公园纪实 Authentic records of the Capital City Park) (Beijing: [unknown publisher], 1925)); (right) photo by author, July 2006)

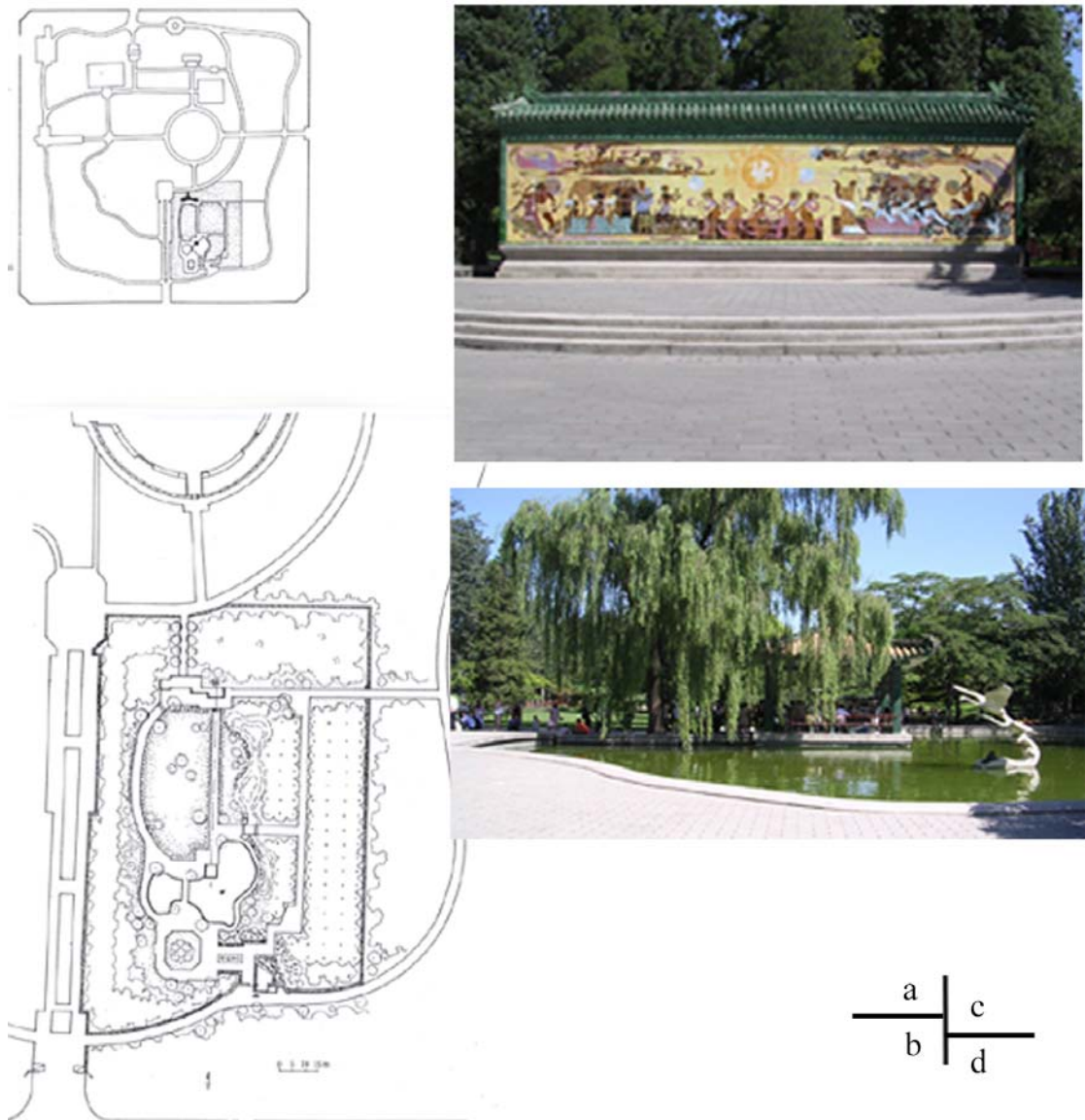
In order to give each altar park a distinctive quality, in 1984, at the municipal landscape bureau working conference, it was agreed that the design of the Altar of Sun Park should highlight the theme of 'sun' culture, and the same for the Altar of Moon, which was to show the moon culture in Chinese tradition.⁸⁹ (Figures 3.17 and 3.18)

The 1980s construction of 'Sacrificing to the Sun', a wall painting, was intended to be the 'masterpiece and heritage for the future'. However, the well designed picture, showing various Chinese legends on the sun and visually artistic, does not match in any sense the way in which the Ming and Qing emperors used the site for sacrificing to the sun. The Emperor's costume was wrong (the altar was believed to be restored as it was in Qing Dynasty, but the emperor on the painting was wearing a Han robe rather than Manchu dress), the female dancers, dominating the centre and greatest part of the picture, were historically impossible. Therefore, such painting can only be seen as a cultural allusion (poetic illusion) rather than as having any historical accuracy. (Figure 3.17 c)

In general, making the altars into public parks largely negated their historical value as the once most significant ritual places of China. Old fabric merged into new landscapes, which are no longer appreciated as sacred places.

From the 1980s onwards, the demands of developing the economy and culture, known as material civilisation and spiritual civilisation, set the new vision for imperial altars. They were treated as cultural property and exploited for their commercial value. Many of the altars which had been neglected for centuries were redesigned as cultural parks and the significance of imperial altars was obviously enhanced, although hypothetically reinterpreted, rather than based on a respect for the past.

⁸⁹ Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), p. 129.



- a- Sketch plan of the Altar of Sun (c 1984)
- b- *Quchi shengchun* [Wind pond and Exquisite Spring] scenic garden within the Park
- c- Wall painting 'Sacrifice the Sun' made in 1980s
- d- Irregular-shaped pond and contemporary sculpture in *Quchi shengchun*

Figure 3.17 Sketch plan and views of the Altar of Sun (Sources: a. and b. from *Zhongguo xin yuanlin* (中国新园林 New Gardens and Parks in China), ed. by the Institute of Urban Planning of China (中国城市规划设计研究院), (Beijing: China Forestry Press, 1985); c. and d. photos by author, July 2006)

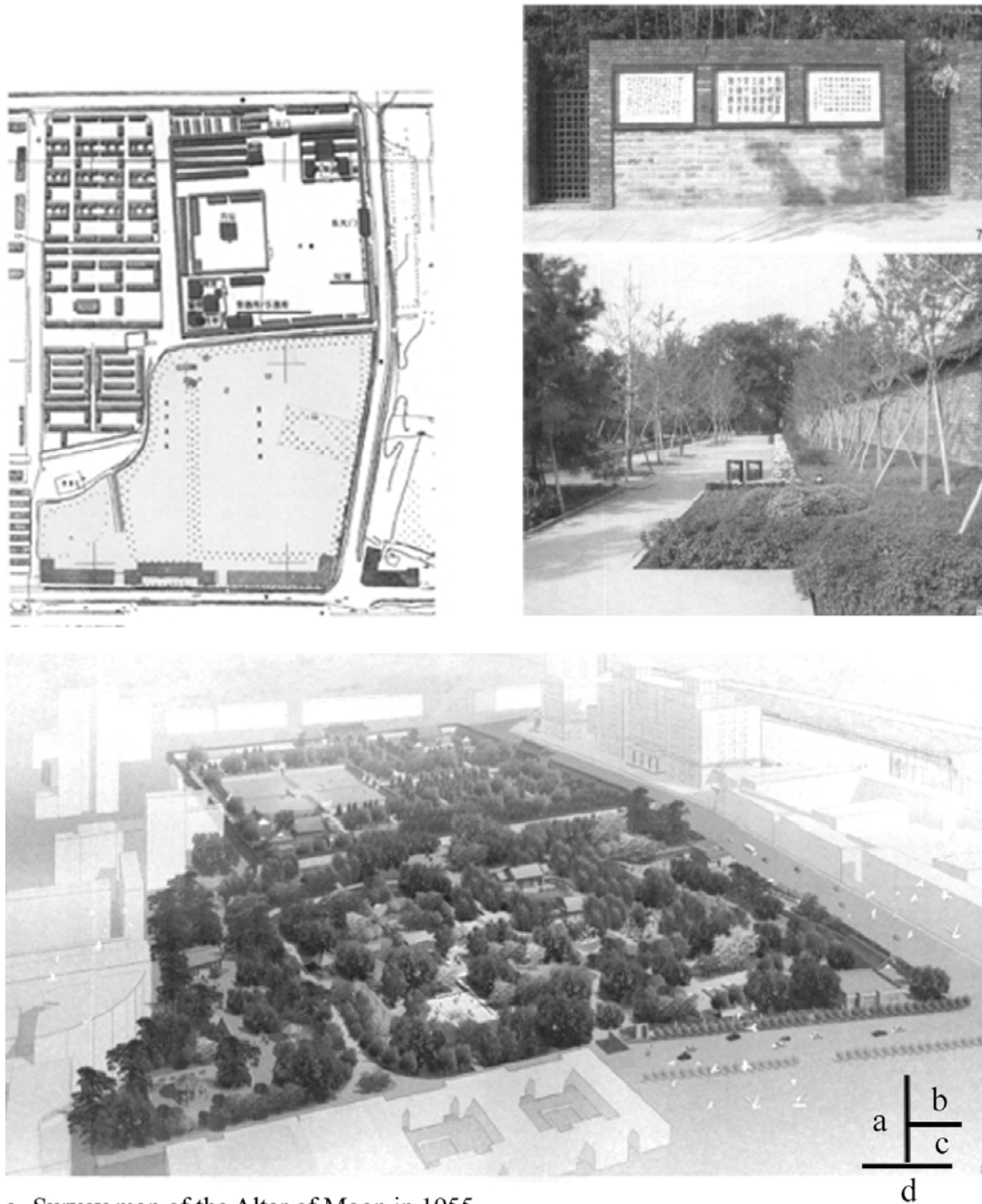


Figure 3.18 Plan of the Altar of Moon Park (Source: Dan Yang, 'The Overall Renovation Plan of Yuetan Park', *Zhongguo Yuanlin*, 2007)

Imperial Altars as Heritage: Reconstructing Altars and Reconstructing Chinese Tradition 1990s

It was not until the end of 1980s that the original culture embedded in imperial altars were appreciated as heritage.⁹⁰ In 1980s, western culture and political ideology was welcomed by Chinese intellectuals and some political leaders. In 1989, the Tian'anmen protest for democracy made central government realise the urgency of the need to strengthen Chinese identity, which was thought to be found in traditional culture. In terms of imperial altars, it was generally accepted that the Altar of Heaven should be treated as a cultural heritage site more than a public park. In 1994, part of the demolished outer wall was reconstructed; in 1998, historical buildings were cleared of their occupants; in 2000, further walls were reconstructed. These were seen as efforts to restore the original appearance of the Altar of Heaven.⁹¹

At a time of modernisation, the significance of cultural heritage was not fully recovered and appreciated. The first Law on Cultural Heritage Protection was edicted in 1982, 33 years after the founding of the PRC. It mostly focuses on movable cultural objects rather than sites. Little consideration has been given to historic gardens. Although China joined World Heritage List in 1987, its initial intention was to generate tourism economy more than preserving heritage. At the turn of the 21st century, China has become a country of great economic power. In order to make Chinese culture compatible with its economic development, the need for a strategy on culture development came to the fore. History and Chinese traditions again became hot topics of both the public and professionals. In 2000 the *Conservation and Management Principles for Cultural Heritage Sites in China (China Principles)* were promulgated; in 2002 the Cultural Heritage Law was revised; in 2005 Xi'an accommodated the 15th ICOMOS assembly; in 2006 the first China Heritage Day was

⁹⁰ For example, in 1987, the sacrifice at imperial altars were still conceived as 'a kind of superstitious activity made by the Feudal monarchs praying for peace protected by the gods', see Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks (北京市园林局), *Dangdai Beijing yuanlin fazhanshi* (当代北京园林发展史 A Contemporary History of the Development of Gardens and Landscapes in Beijing) (October, 1987), pp. 131-132.

⁹¹ *Tiantan zhi* (天坛志 Record of the Altar of Heaven), ed. by Editorial Board of Beijing Chronicles (北京市地方志编撰委员会) (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 2006), p. 9.

launched to attract the public's attention to the need to protect heritage; in 2007, a regulation was made to enhance and legitimise conservation plans for every national heritage site. In this context, the vision for the imperial altars is changing again.

The *China Principles* made in 2000 adopt authenticity and integrity as key conservation philosophies. In 2005, the Xi'an Declaration announced the care of 'conserving the setting' as a whole. By 2006, all six imperial altars were designated as sites protected for their historical and cultural values at the national level, which envisages a more careful conservation ahead.

in 2007, the *Conservation Plan of Beijing as Historicly and Culturally famous city during the eleventh Five-Year-Plan* was published, claiming to "restore original cultural aspects of temple and altar gardens—with the Altar of Heaven, Altar of Earth, Altar of Sun, Altar of Moon as the representatives—via a series of approaches, including moving out working units within the altar grounds and regulating buildings and constructions outside the altars". Although what this 'original' means is not explained, it draws an outline for the future of imperial altars. Are the altars lost in history to be brought to life in future?

In general, the last decade has seen the reconstruction of Chinese tradition. This has happened although this has long been either denied as a backward culture or falsified as a fantasy, and for the first time in modern history, the Chinese are adopting a scientific perspective on their heritage as well as history. The historical meanings of imperial altars have been recognised and reinstated. If the sacrifice performance in the Altar of Earth in 1994 was somehow a mixture of culture and commerce, the boom in researches and publications about the altar and sacrificial culture no doubt indicates the enhanced interest in exploring the meanings behind the altar sites. Soon after being recognised as national heritage in 2006, all the imperial altars in Beijing were declared as historic gardens in the Development plan of Beijing City.⁹²

⁹² 'Beijingshi shiyiwu guihua gangyao baogao fabu' (北京市“十一五”规划纲要报告发布 The framework of

The meanings of imperial altars have returned from being materialised use to recognising of cultural and historical significance, and the conservation methods have developed from selected protection to equally treating each altar and conserving them as an integrated whole.

Walking in the Altar of Heaven Park, which used to be the most significant one among the altars, what one can see today is a juxtaposition of ancient buildings and constructions, restored walls and pavements, renovated landscapes of cypress groves, flowering trees, decorative pavilions and corridors, joined by local people practicing collective dancing, singing opera, playing musical instruments, training birds and so on. At the Altar of Soil and Grain, today named Zhongshan Park, apart from the authentic altar terrace and buildings, one can also enjoy seasonal flower shows and goldfish displays, settling within a naturally arranged water-and-rockery landscape which gives a sense of Chinese classical gardens. Similarly, at the Altar of Sun and the Altar of Moon, surviving buildings stand with brand new landscape settings. These raise several questions: What did the altars look like in the past? How have they changed and why? Have the altar parks today revealed their full values? What does heritage mean to the altars and, indeed, to us?

CONCLUSION: CHANGED AND UNCHANGED IN CHINESE HERITAGE

The chapter shows the change of perceived values of imperial altars in Beijing. Although at the beginning of each political regime (that is, the Republican era of 1911-1949, and the People's Republic era from 1949), the altars had been reinterpreted for new ideologies, it is the traditional meaning that has returned to altars.

In the Republican and the People's Republic eras, two major transformations have

the 11th Five-Year plan of Beijing), *Xinhua New Net*
< http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-01/25/content_4097901.htm > [accessed 6th February 2010]

been made to these altars in order to recreate the land for the public/nation. There are similarities and differences in design and management methods and approaches. These have reflected the changing attitudes towards historic landscapes in different eras.

Similarities exist through the whole twentieth century. Firstly, imperial altars, since being turned into public property, have needed to survive by balancing operating fees with revenues. For this reason, for much of the twentieth century the altar parks have been presented more like entertainment grounds rather than the Western idea of parks. Such a situation existed both in the Republican era and in the People's Republic. Secondly, in the renovation of parks, the species of adopted flowering trees and shrubs are more or less similar, and so too the flower shows and fish displays. So far as conservation is concerned, similarities include protecting ancient trees and buildings, grouping them into park planning and giving them new uses.

But there are great differences, mainly affected by ideology. As public spaces, their functions were determined by contemporary ethics, that is what is good for the public. In the Republican era, the educational purpose was distinctive. The first two parks adapted from altars aimed to foster civilisation for local people, while in 1925 the adaptation of the Altar of Earth added more Chinese traditional morals. Since the 1930s, the altars were also seen as Chinese cultural property and representing the exquisite quality of Chinese wisdom. But in the early period of P. R. China, due to the cash-strapped government and the needs of socialist construction in Beijing, the altars were firstly considered as urban green space, and their ecological and physical values were dominant. It was not until the late 1980s, that the cultural values of imperial altars were recognised and used as an education tool for national strength.

Since 1911 there have been two big revolutions in China, each bringing a new government with brand-new pursuits. Although there is a huge difference between the ideologies of the Republican and those of the People's Republic government, the attitudes towards their heritage—mirrored by the recent history of Imperial

Altars—coincidentally or unavoidably drifted down to the same trend, that is both starting from reforming or rejecting the past and ending by respecting and restoring it. Today, the imperial altars are seen as national and international heritage, even though their original structures have been disturbed and restored. To the people who come to enjoy and learn, they provide parklands and a 'historic' landscape; to the people who hold the fate of them, they provide a tangible language to speak a contemporary ideology.

At last, the recommendation for imperial altars as heritage can be given as: instead of an emphasis on Qing Imperial altars alone, which is how they are named as heritage, the values of imperial altars also exist in terms of their 20th century history of adaptation, which records China's experiments in democracy and the pursuit of citizen life.

From Self Expression to National Icon:

Classical Gardens in Suzhou

This chapter examines classical gardens in Suzhou: how in imperial times they were cultivated by intellectual bureaucrats, and how they have changed through the 20th century. Suzhou gardens are representative of Chinese literati who initially made them as reclusive places for self-cultivation and self-expression. Today they are preserved as museums and together they are presented as an icon of Chinese garden art. The changing image of Suzhou gardens from personal identity to national identity mirrors the replacement of individuality by central ideology. As a result, the meanings of Suzhou gardens have been reduced and the values of Suzhou gardens have been strengthened in the National pursuit of economic and cultural hegemony.

LITERATI, GARDENS & SELF EXPRESSION: A TRADITIONAL CONTEXT

In an interview in 2006, Sun Xiaoxiang, a well-known professor in Landscape Architecture and authority on the Chinese garden, then in his mid 80s, suggested that no time should be wasted on studying Suzhou gardens, since 'nobody today really understands them! You will get nowhere except for some superficial views,' despite the fact that Suzhou gardens have been the object of academic interest since the early twentieth century and have been studied more than any other gardens in China with the exception perhaps of the Qing imperial gardens. Sun believed that 'Suzhou (literati) gardens represent the most advanced realm of the human spirit'. He

commented that they are ‘all about scolding emperors, though few people today have understood them as such...’¹

In the West, one of the most referenced studies on Suzhou gardens is *Fruitful Sites* by Craig Clunas (1996).² Using Wen Zhengming, an influential character in Ming literature world who produced valuable records of gardens in Suzhou in the form of poems and paintings, as a thread and source of reference, the book traces the economic, social and ideological factors of garden culture in Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD). Five stories from unusual angles reveal various aspects: economic values of gardens in early Ming dynasty; how the focus of garden values moved from economics to aesthetics, and why; a study of gardens of Wen’s family; how gardens are represented in different ways; numbers and their deep meaning to the Chinese gardens and landscape.

Due to language issues and ideological differences between China and the West, Clunas’ book has not yet been sufficiently acknowledged by Chinese scholars, which may be the reason why Professor Sun is still able to maintain an outdated opinion. However, his view provides a valuable indicator of current scholarly study in China of its gardens, which mostly considers gardens as works of art rather than a more comprehensive expression of culture. To reveal how values of gardens have changed, it is important to investigate gardens through traditional literati’s eyes.

Literati culture in China

The literati (文人 *wenren*), also known as scholars (士 *shi*), were educated men of imperial China. They were the people who were believed to have great knowledge and were able to take the right decisions. Governmental recruitment selected officials through national examinations. Therefore officials in imperial China were also known as scholar bureaucrats or scholar officials. Not all literati were offered official positions, however. Those who did not succeed in obtaining an official appointment

¹ The original texts are ‘苏州园林[文人园林]是心灵美的最高境界，但是都是骂皇帝的。全世界没有人懂.’ (Suzhou [literati] gardens represent the most advanced realm of human spirit. But they are all about scolding emperors. Nobody today understands this.) Source from the interview with Professor Xiaoxiang Sun (孙筱祥), conducted by the author in Beijing on 23rd July, 2006. See interview transcript No. SA-SX, p. 4.

² Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden culture in Ming dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996)

might participate in running local communities on an informal basis,³ or teach in private schools, and some became residential artists or scholars of prominent officials. As a whole, literati are the elite group who carry the essence of Chinese civilisation, as well as the real holders of power in culture, politics, and economics since Song dynasty.

Literati are a special group that is culturally most highly regarded. Their values are distinct from mercantile or official values which value economic and political power. Instead, literatis valued individuality and independence, which allowed them to achieve self refinement, and protected them from a 'polluted' world. Because of this, literati life also meant a life of frugality. From the 17th century, the literati class was integrated with official and merchant groups, partly because some official and merchants themselves were literati, partly because they needed each other (for example, garden making is an example in which the literati bring ideas and aesthetic design while officials and merchants—often the clients—provide financial support). Therefore the frugal life which had been insisted upon by most literati before, was displaced by the pursuit of pleasure in life. Literati culture by this stage was a symbol of elite culture in all circles in China.

As an ethically-centred civilisation, Chinese society is organised and maintained on the basis of a unified world view. Ethics are believed to be the true nature of all beings/things, from Heaven to individual lives (be it human, animal or plants). By protecting and practicing the right ethics, it is believed both the universe and the human society can run harmoniously. Therefore, political governance in imperial China is very much centred on moral governance. Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism have all illustrated ideal models for their disciples to learn from, whether they are the Emperor, officials or ordinary people. The most respected bureaucrats are those who insist on right moral values and are honest in administration.⁴ However, the real world has never been ideal. When an emperor fails to maintain good morals and lets the court fall into corruption, his subjects may choose to quit their official position in order to keep themselves from being spoilt, normally by living a reclusive life at their hometowns or other remote places far from the central government, spending their retired life in their gardens, where they construct their self expression.

³ *China: a Historical and Cultural Dictionary*, edited by Michael Dillon (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 116.

⁴ Dorothy Perkins, *Encyclopedia of China: The Essential Reference to China, its History and Culture* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1999), pp. 288-289.

Literati gardens

Beyond Visual Informality: a Discussion on Sharawadgi and Characteristics of Literati gardens

Today, the common understanding of literati gardens, or Chinese gardens in general, is that they are ‘irregular’ in form, contrasting with Western formal gardens. This idea probably originated from 1685, when Sir William Temple first introduced the term ‘Sharawadgi’ in *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*, where he explained that this term was used by the Chinese as a noun to describe a garden of great beauty, ‘but without any order or disposition of parts’.⁵ Temple’s understanding of *Sharawadgi* was partly based on what he was told by somebody who ‘once lived among the Chinese’, and was partly developed upon his own observations of oriental art, including Indian gowns, Chinese screens and porcelain.⁶ However, he did not provide an exact source for his knowledge and the origin of the word was not indicated. This omission later set off a centuries-long debate about the linguistic roots and meanings of *Sharawadgi*, carried on by both Western and Eastern scholars.

Over seventy years later William Chambers in his *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines and Utensils* (1757) asserted that irregularity was the main characteristic of Chinese gardens. The engravings in this influential treatise work provided samples of garden buildings and features that were thought to illustrate this, and had a significant influence on the perception of Chinese gardens afterwards.⁷ By drawing attention to visual characteristics in comparing them to European gardens, Chinese gardens were conceived as being more naturalistic, as evident from the irregularity visible on garden plans and in garden features. In the West the explanation of *Sharawadgi* was subsequently shaped by this popular perception.

When in the early 20th century Chinese scholars failed to find an equivalent term to ‘Sharawadgi’ that highlighted the ‘irregularity’ of Chinese gardens, it was suggested that the word could not belong to Chinese language. In 1931, E.V. Gatenby

⁵ For the original text of Sharawadgi, see Sir William Temple, ‘Upon the Gardens of Epicurus, with other XVIIth Century Garden Essays’, Sir William Temple and others, *The King’s Classics: Essays on Gardens* (London: Chatto and Windus, Publishers, 1908) pp. 1-65 (53-54).

⁶ Sir William Temple, *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*, p. 54.

⁷ William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines and Utensils* (London, 1757), quoted from *The Genius of the Place*, edited by John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis (London: Paul Elek, 1975), pp. 283-288.

suggested that *Sharawadgi*, instead of being of Chinese origin, was actually from the Japanese word *sorowaji*, which means 'not being regular'.⁸ This provided the basis for twentieth century understanding of the term.

Over half a century later, Gatenby's hypothesis was investigated by Ciaran Murray with in-depth research, published as *Sharawadgi: The Romantic Return to Nature* (1998).⁹ This research was supplemented with a paper that showed the confusion of seventeenth century Europeans in distinguishing *Japanese* from *Chinese*. It was suggested that, on an isolated island of Japan where the Dutch merchants lived, the verb *sorowaji* was wrongly translated as a noun. This thesis thus appeared to resolve both the geographical and linguistic roots, thus enabling the suggestion that the problem with the term *Sharawadgi* was resolved. It was suggested that 'irregular but agreeable', 'artfully made in imitation of nature' were the supposed meanings of *Sharawadgi*.¹⁰

A paper published by Takau Shimada one year before Murray's thesis also researched Gatenby's hypothesis. Shimada however questioned its validity and suggested that, based on the Japanese way of appreciating gardens, the word would better have been translated as *sawaraji* (or *sawarazu* or their derivatives), which means 'let's not touch', 'let things as they are'. This solution provides a different angle from which to understand oriental gardens, which appreciates nature as art: they, 'found in nature their model and used art as an effort to copy her'.¹¹ Thus, rather than using the English word 'irregularity' as a starting point and matching this to a Japanese word, this new hypothesis explored this issue from a different angle. No research to date however has questioned the premise set by Temple, that 'the beauty shall be great and strike the eye', that is, that the beauty of *Sharawadgi* is perceived by eye.

In the early 20th century, the term *Sharawadgi* travelled back to China, and from the mid century onwards, 'irregularity', 'informality' or 'naturalness' has become a broadly accepted character for Chinese gardens.

⁸ E. V. Gatenby, 'The influence of Japanese on English', *Studies in English Literature*, Tokyo, II (October 1931), 508-520 [re-quoted from Ciaran Murray, 'Sharawadgi resolved', *Garden History*, Vol.26, No.2. (1998), 208-213 (212).]

⁹ Ciaran Murray, *Sharawadgi : the Romantic Return to Nature* (London : International Scholars Publications, c1998.)

¹⁰ Ciaran Murray, 'Sharawadgi resolved', *Garden History*, Vol.26, No.2. (1998), 208-213 (210).

¹¹ Takau Shimada, 'Is sharawadgi derived from the Japanese word sorowaji?' *The Review of English Studies*, Vol.48, No.191 (1997), 350-352 (352).

However, do Chinese literati appreciate gardens for their irregular forms, or take irregularity as a garden design principle? A source written in the late 1930s by a Chinese scholar provides an insight into Chinese gardens which may be more authentic than the foreign one or its later interpretations. He thinks the garden, although having a freedom in forms and regularity, is by no means

to be conceived as careless, orderless, irresponsible activity. It is freedom within a prescribed order. Nature is never looked upon by the Chinese as chaotic or disorganised. Heaven and earth co-exist in harmony, and the four seasons run their course regularly. Thus the Confucians and the Taoists unite in reminding the Chinese that there is a universal principle pervading all things, whether in the realm of physical nature or in the sphere of human life [...] Natural order is religiously preserved [...] In thus establishing the order of nature in the garden, man really re-creates nature. [...] nature here does not appear wild or chaotic. Order is restored and harmony is never disturbed.¹²

For Wing-Tsit Chan, the Chinese garden is an ordered miniaturised world created by humans. This order is not expressed as regular or formal shapes as in the West, but is constructed from the associated meanings of garden features and hierarchical arrangements which are believed to correspond to the order of nature. Therefore, to declare Chinese gardens have no order shows a superficial view of Chinese gardens. To the Chinese, a sense of 'irregularity' seems only rarely to have been considered as a measure of the beauty of gardens.¹³

Spiritual construction of Literati Gardens

A great wealth of literary and pictorial sources on contemporary Chinese gardens and landscapes reveals how the Chinese literati appreciated their gardens. One of the main sources for aesthetic standards in relationship to Chinese gardens and landscapes derives from Tao Yuanming (陶渊明 365-427 AD), an unsuccessful official, but great poet, and whose landscape poetry was particularly influential in the time of the Tang (618-907 AD) and Song (960-1279 AD) dynasties. Disappointed by

¹² Wing-Tsit Chan, 'Man and Nature in the Chinese Garden', Henry Inn and S. C. Lee, *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (London: Kegan Paul Limited, 2001), pp. 30-36. Wing-Tsit Chan was professor of Chinese philosophy and aesthetics at the University of Hawaii. The article was written in the late 1930s, and the book was first published in circa 1940, a time when much of the Chinese tradition was still well kept. Therefore, his perspective of Chinese gardens valuably reflects the traditional Chinese view of gardens.

¹³ In terms of the order/formality of Chinese gardens, the author has done a research through the case study of Huizhou gardens. See Lei Gao (高磊), 'Huizhou yuanlin yu Yangzhou yuanlin zhi bijiao' (徽州园林与扬州园林之比较 Comparison of Huizhou Gardens and Yangzhou Gardens) (unpublished Masters thesis, Hefei University of Technology, 2003). This research shows that, instead of irregularity or naturalistic characters, some of the Chinese gardens have strict sense of order under their loosely constructed shapes. Such formality is mainly a reflection of the people's perception of the order of nature.

contemporary politics, Tao Yuanming resigned from his official occupation when only in his early forties in order to retire to the solitude of the countryside. He created a garden, and grew vegetables and crops by himself, believing that by doing so he might achieve personal freedom and independence from bureaucracy. He appreciated ordinary natural occurrences, such as the presence of clouds and birds, wild plants, the sounds of wind blowing through bamboo and pine trees. The sensory notions of these landscapes and the philosophy embedded in them were deeply loved by Chinese artists and literati, and were adopted as an aesthetic canon for landscape paintings, and as a model of garden making. To artists the value of Tao Yuanming's poems represented not just a visual impression of nature, but also a spiritual enlightenment of attaining the meaning of life from Nature, instead of from humanity as advocated in Confucian thought. This is the true contribution of Tao Yuanming's 'poetic interpretations of nature's mystic meaning'.¹⁴ Such poetic interpretations made a significant contribution to the Chinese garden in that they expanded its aesthetics from 'beautiful to the eye' to 'meaningful to the mind', and moved the meaning of life from a Confucian preoccupation with how people related to each other to a Taoist sentiment in regard to nature. Here are some examples of the poems by Tao Yuanming.¹⁵

Back to my garden home (selection)

[...]
 I have cleared the wildland on the southern horizon.
 I have built eight or nine grass huts.
 Elms and willows shadow the eaves;
 Peach and plum trees give shade at my front door
 [...]
 There is no dust, and no clamouring in my courtyard.
 In my empty rooms I enjoy leisurely the idle hours [...]

Homeward bound

Daily I wander pleasantly in my garden.
 There is a gate, but it is always closed.
 I lean on my bamboo cane as I wonder about or sit down to rest.
 Now and then I raise my head and look at the sky.
 The clouds drift from their mountain recesses;
 The birds, weary of flying, return to their nests.
 Now it is getting dark, and the lovely scene is vanishing;

¹⁴ Shao Chang Lee, 'The Chinese Love of Home and Symbolism', Henry Inn and S. C. Lee, *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (London: Kegan Paul Limited, 2001). pp. 37-44 (40).

¹⁵ Translation abridged from Shao Chang Lee, 'The Chinese Love of Home and Symbolism', Henry Inn and S. C. Lee, *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (London: Kegan Paul Limited, 2001). pp. 37-44 (39).

Still I like to linger beneath the lonely pine.

Tao Yuanming valued the frugal but independent life in gardens, and this value had a significant impact on Chinese garden aesthetics. From the 16th century, however, literati, bureaucrats and merchants became more integrated with each other rather than representing opposite values, so that in gardens, extravagance took the place of frugality.¹⁶ But the central idea of spiritual independence and refinement has been maintained in literati gardens by and large.

Another significant influence on the perception of gardens was Du Le Yuan (独乐园), the Garden of Solitary Delight, made by Sima Guang (司马光 1019-1086 AD), a politician and literatus who has been considered as 'refined'. His garden was described by a contemporary observer as relatively humble and small in scale and features, which puts it on a par with other contemporary gardens.¹⁷ However, while other gardens, their features, names and even their locations have been forgotten, Du Le Yuan has continued to survive in Chinese memory. It was painted by artists and treated as a model by other garden owners even though none of them had ever visited the garden. The 'image' of Du Le Yuan was carried principally by texts. After completion, Sima Guang wrote a series of poems and essays on the garden—about the name and meanings of each garden feature, his daily routines in the garden, and most importantly, his values with respect to public life, politics, and landscape aesthetics.¹⁸ The emphasis on these various aspects illustrates that the reputation of a garden depended neither on its general design, nor on its features, but on that of the garden master (owner). He provides the garden with a spirit, and this spirit remains alive in texts even though the garden has physically disappeared. (Figure 4.1)

¹⁶ Joanna F. Handlin Smith, 'Gardens in Ch'i Piao-chia's Social World: Wealth and Values in Late-Ming Kiangnan', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Feb., 1992), pp. 55-81.

¹⁷ Gefei Li (李贽) (?-1106), 'Luo yang ming yuan ji' (螺阳明园记) Records of celebrated gardens in Luoyang), *Yuan Zong* (园踪 Traces of gardens) (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2004), pp. 44-50 (49).

¹⁸ The English translations of the *Records of Du Le Yuan* by Sima Guang are available at Osvald Siren, *The Gardens of China* (NY: The Ronald Press Company, 1949), pp.77-78; and Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, translated by Alison Hardie, (London: Yale University Press, 1988) pp. 123-124.



Figure 4.1 *The Garden of Solitary Delight*. This detail of a painting of Du Le Yuan was drawn by the celebrated painter Qiu Ying (c.1494-1552) based on the texts of Du Le Yuan written by its owner Sima Guang in the 11th century. It shows an 'admirable' life in a beautifully constructed garden, including squares planted with Chinese medical herbs, bamboo huts, and a dancing crane. The garden owner rests on a tiger skin and watches the crane dance, a few yards away, a servant is watering plants. All these experiences are not about irregularity, but about the sentiment of life. (Source: Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, translated by Alison Hardie (London: Yale University Press, 1988), inner cover)

The gardens described above show that the reputation of a garden does not depend on its visual appearance, but rather, on the reputation of its owner. Because of this, the simple but meaningful garden of Tao Yuanming has been remembered over a thousand years, and the long lost garden of Sima Guang is reconstructed again and again both on the ground and on paper (for example in poems, essays and paintings). Through referring to the ideas of early gardens, their original owners are memorialised, and so are their spirits.¹⁹

Another example is Chinese appreciation of Nature. The earliest Chinese collection of poetry, *Shijing* (诗经 Book of Odes), dates back about 3000 years, and contains many descriptions of landscapes (mountains, rivers, plants and so on) which are

¹⁹ For the study of spiritual and moral values of literati gardens, see Changmei Huang (黄长美), *Zhongguo tingyuan yu wenren sixiang* (中国庭园与文人思想 Chinese gardens and literati thoughts) (Taipei: Mingwen Shuju, 1985); Baode Han (汉宝德), *Wuxiang yu xinjing—zhongguo de yuanlin* (物象与心境—中国的园林 Phenomena and mental image—gardens in China) (Taipei: Youshi wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1990); Naihui Hou (侯迺慧), *Shiqing yu youjing—tangdai wenren de yuanlin shenghuo* (诗情与幽境—唐代文人的园林生活 Poetic sentiment and hidden world—the garden life of Tang literati) (Taipei: Dongda tushu gufen youxian gongsi, 1991)

appreciated not for their physical appearance but rather for as similes to express personal sentiments and thoughts. It was not until the 4th century AD that the landscape first appeared as a feature which is appreciated for its own sake.²⁰ However, such separation of landscape (or say, natural scenery) and its viewer did not last long. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), the visual appearances of landscapes were again combined with personal sentiments.²¹ One of the popular formats of Tang poems, for example, consists of four lines, with the first two lines describing natural phenomena and the next two explaining what they mean to the author.

Poem-and-Painting Construction of Literati Gardens

Painting, calligraphy and poetry making were considered a central requirement for literati. Probably since the 11th century, these arts were seen as a way to 'express the ideas and feelings of the cultivated individual'.²²

Literati gardens have a close relationship with other forms of literati art, such as painting and poetry. First, the gardens are designed by literati with their painting and poetry talents. Unlike modern design methods, which require a detailed and precise plan to be drawn up before construction, Chinese gardens (even buildings) are a combination of various features. The difference comes from the method of organisation rather than individual elements. For this reason, once the master (designer) decides what elements he wants and where they are to be placed, the workers do the job without necessarily having a construction plan.²³ Secondly, the meanings of gardens were often adopted from history and literature, which were central to literati knowledge. With this set of coding systems, the garden becomes a vehicle of expression for the literati. Physical elements, or signals, have their signifiers, which deliver ideas among intellectual friends. By this means, self expression is realised through communicating and understanding. The urge for self expression is especially strong when one's political career falters; when there is a

²⁰ Lingyun Xie (谢灵运 385-433 AD) is believed the founder of Chinese landscape poems.

²¹ See Jiaying Ye (叶嘉莹), *Tangsong ci shiqi jiang* (唐宋词十七讲 Seventeen lectures on Tang and Song Poetry) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1997), p. 207.

²² *China: a Historical and Cultural Dictionary*, edited by Michael Dillon (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998) p. 197. which source from S. Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Chichang (1555-1636)* (Harvard Yenching Studies, No. 27, Cambridge, Mass., 1971)

²³ Source from the interview with Zheng Zhou (周铮), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 24th August, 2006. See interview transcript No. SG-ZZ.

conflict in ideology, to resign from one's official post or to arrange to be relocated far away were common solutions. This not only provided extra time, and maybe space as well, for making and living in gardens, but also resources for self expression.

Through history, most of the works of self expression which have survived are found in poetry and paintings, since it is easier to preserve them than real gardens. Some of these poems and paintings are about gardens and landscapes, normally constructed or visited by the author. The scenery is well described, and the ideas are followed. These art works are good sources from which we can learn what gardens meant to literati in the past.

The first surviving manual on garden making in China, *Yuan Ye*, or *The Craft of Gardens* (1637), provides a valuable perspective on how contemporary Chinese judged gardens. It differed from previous books in that its author, Ji Cheng, a gifted garden designer in *Jiangnan* (Southern Region of the Yangzi River), was a literate garden designer with extensive knowledge of art and literature as well as considerable practical experience, which made this book both useful from a practical perspective as well as admired by scholars. The book, consisting of ten volumes (each equivalent to a 'chapter'), provided both principles and examples to show how to make a 'refined' garden while avoiding 'vulgar' influences. It was suggested that the quality of a garden depended on the garden master rather than workmen (gardeners, craftsmen and so on). A garden master is the person who has the ability to 'follow and borrow from the existing scenery and lie of the land', and is capable of creating the 'feeling of suitability'.²⁴ How a garden master would develop these skills is suggested by Ji Cheng:

As a young man I was known as a painter. I was by nature interested in seeking out the unusual; since I derived most pleasure from the brushes of Guan Tong and Jing Hao [both master painters], I paid homage to their style in all my work.

[...]

(When working for the Lord Wu Youyu to make a garden,) I said, 'one should not only pile up the depth, in proportion with these tall trees scattered on the hillside here, with their roots curled around sheer rocks just as in a painting.'²⁵

²⁴ Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, translated by Alison Hardie (London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 39.

²⁵ Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, p. 35. With a minor change of translation by the author.

Being trained as an artist, Ji Cheng's principles of garden making were closely associated with painting theories. These guided construction and can be observed variously throughout the book: 'the depth of your imagination should be full of pictures, and your feelings should overflow into hills and valleys'; and when arranging artificial mountains, 'the whitewashed surface acts as paper and the rocks as the painting upon it [...] looking at this scene through a round window is just like seeing scenery reflected in a mirror'; 'your thoughts will travel beyond the confines of this world of dust, and you will feel as though you were wandering within a painting' and so on.²⁶

Because of this close association between Chinese gardens and paintings, a famous painting was often adopted as the theme for a garden, and successful gardens become models for painters. Even today, when a Chinese person finds an admirable view in nature or gardens, the appreciation that naturally comes to mind is 'the view is as beautiful as a painting' (风景如画) (*huà jǐng* 澹菴), or 'the landscape has a sentiment of poetry 诗意风景'. Therefore, poems, paintings, and gardens are often correlated in China: the poem constructs an emotional landscape which is conceivable by imagination; the painting illustrates an imaginary landscape which is visually perceivable; the garden, by adopting inspiration from poetry and paintings, brings both physical and mental experiences. This is the real magic of the Chinese garden, where the space is beyond the boundary of the wall, and the beauty is beyond the visual limitation. The aesthetic quality of painting, poetry and gardens are all determined by the aesthetic calibre of the master.

Modern writers have variously observed such close ties. Osvald Siren, Maggie Keswick, and Edwin Morris, for example, have each included one or two chapters on painting and literary influences, and are in agreement that a successful garden embodies the sentiment of the poet and the eye of the painter. In garden making, forms themselves are only a starting point; the true course is to capture the vital spirit, which is the platform where painting, poetry and gardens echo each other.²⁷

²⁶ Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, pp. 106, 109, 120.

²⁷ For some western studies on the relationship between the Chinese garden and the painting and poem, see Osvald Siren, 'Chapter 5. Gardens in literature and painting', *Gardens of China*, pp. 70-84; Maggie Keswick, 'Chapter 4. The garden of the literati' and 'Chapter 5. The painter's eye', *The Chinese Garden: History, Art and Architecture* (NY: Rizzoli, 1978), pp. 73-90, 91-115; Edwin T. Morris, 'Chapter 3. The garden of the poet and painter', *The Gardens of China: History, Art and Meanings* (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), pp. 47-67.

Summary

The sources of literature above reveal that the values of a literati garden are determined by state of virtue (morality) and aesthetic /artistic values, which the latter is also morality/virtue related. Recording gardens and transferring ideas rely heavily on words and images,²⁸ which preserve the spirit of gardens and allow this spirit to be inherited by its later admirers, although they might be in a very different physical environment. To conclude, the beauty of the literati garden is better revealed through interpretative rather than descriptive ways. This needs a deep understanding of garden history and literati spirit.

INCREASED AWARENESS OF SUZHOU GARDENS IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

An Introduction to Suzhou

Suzhou is an ancient city located in Southeast China, a region known as Jiangnan (江南Yangzi River Delta). Because of the rich water resource and temperate climate, Suzhou was wealthy due to its advancements in agriculture and the fishing industry. In the Sui dynasty (隋 581-618 AD), a big canal was constructed to connect the capital city Beijing with the commercial centre, Hangzhou, a large city in Jiangnan, where Suzhou was an important port. The new convenience of transportation significantly boosted economic and cultural development in Suzhou. By the 12th century, the cultural centre of China had moved to the Jiangnan area, and Suzhou became one of the best cities for culture and art. The number of its scholars who passed national examinations was the highest in the country, and therefore Suzhou was the hometown of a large number of scholar-bureaucrats, many of whom also retired to Suzhou. These are the dominant factors which facilitated the creation of garden culture in Suzhou. Besides, the Taihu Lake (太湖) just next to the city of

²⁸ Jan Stuart, 'Ming dynasty gardens reconstructed in words and images', *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1990), pp. 162-172

Suzhou provides a rich source of rocks, which are amongst the main features of gardens.²⁹

Because of all these advantages, private garden making flourished from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD). The local records of Suzhou state that in the Ming dynasty alone Suzhou had 271 famous gardens.³⁰

The greatest achievements of the garden making of Suzhou were accomplished during the three centuries between the mid Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the early 19th century. Among various types of gardens, the residential gardens were especially well known in Suzhou, and are generally known as literati gardens or scholar gardens.³¹ (Figure 4.2)



Figure 4.2 Detail from Yang Xu (徐扬 1712 -- c.1777), *Gusu fanhua tu* (姑苏繁华图 Prosperous Suzhou). The scroll records the 18th century Suzhou, where it shows gardens are part of living space, from private houses to temples and official compounds. (Source: *Fanhua dushi—liaoningsheng bowuguan canghua zhan* (繁华都市——辽宁省博物馆藏画展 Prosperous Cities—Exhibition of collections from Liaoning Provincial Museum), ed. by Hong Kong Museum of Art (香港艺术馆) (Hongkong: Hongkong Museum of Art, 2009)

²⁹ Jiazan Wei (魏嘉瓚), *Suzhou lidai yuanlin lu* (苏州历代园林录 Chronicle of Suzhou gardens in history) (Beijing: Yanshan Chubanshe, 1992), p. 2.

³⁰ Quoted from *Yuanlin minghua tezhan tulu* (园林名画特展图录 Illustrated catalogue of celebrated paintings on garden), ed. by Editorial Committee of National Palace Museum (国立故宫博物院编辑委员会) (Taipei: national Palace Museum, 1987)

³¹ *Suzhou yuanlin pinshanglu* (苏州园林品鉴录 Review and treatises on Suzhou gardens), ed. by Xiaosi Xie (谢孝思) (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe, 1998), p.112.

Suzhou as the Garden City

In a 1930s travel book written by an American author, Suzhou is acknowledged as the 'Garden City'.³² And another book in the 1940s also said Suzhou was 'one of the cities of China famous for its gardens'.³³ (Figure 4.3)

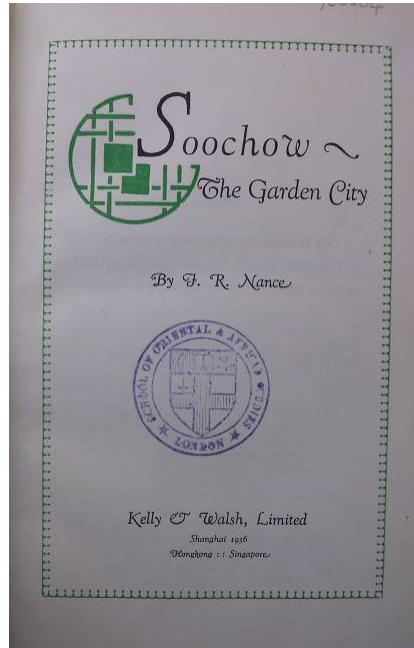


Figure 4.3 The inner cover of the book *Soochow—the Garden City*, published in 1936 (Source: J.R. Nance, *Soochow—the garden city* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh Limited, 1936), inner cover)

However, despite all this modern fame, before the 20th century Suzhou gardens had not stood out as the best gardens of China, or even in Jiangnan. In imperial times, many cities and towns in the Jiangnan area flourished with private gardens and public landscapes (such as gardens attached to temples). Among these places, Yangzhou 扬州 and Hangzhou 杭州 were especially well known for their beautiful natural and man-made scenery. Compared with them, Suzhou had less advantage in its natural environment than Hangzhou, and less comprehensiveness in rockery making (which is amongst the most important features of Chinese gardens) than that of Yangzhou, although the lifestyle in Suzhou was exquisitely delicate. Therefore, in Qing times, a saying described the three cities in Jiangnan thus, 'Hangzhou stands

³² F. R. Nance, *Soochow—the garden city* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh Limited, 1936).

³³ Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p.11.

out for its lakes and mountains, Suzhou for its streets and markets, and Yangzhou for its gardens'.³⁴

The western narratives on Chinese gardens also show that the significance of Suzhou gardens only appears after the beginning of the 20th century. Western reports of Chinese gardens started in the 18th century with that of Sir William Chambers. In his two published books related to Chinese gardens, the examples were taken from imperial gardens in Beijing and, probably, the merchant gardens in Canton. Because of the restraints on visiting permission, Suzhou and most areas in Jiangnan were a virgin land for westerners. By the first decade of the 20th century, the gardens in Jiangnan began to appear in western narratives. Ernest H. Wilson, in his *A Naturalist in Western China*, wrote, 'In the neighbourhood of wealthy cities like Soochou [Suzhou], Hanchou [Hangzhou], and Canton [Guangdong], are public and private gardens which are famed throughout the length and breadth of the Empire.'³⁵ But he gives no further information on any particular garden in these cities. Instead, some temples in Beijing are introduced to give an idea of Chinese gardens.

So, how is it that Suzhou, but not Yangzhou, Hangzhou or other places, becomes the Garden City after the early 20th century; and why do Suzhou gardens come to the throne to be an icon of Chinese garden art and find themselves designated as World Heritage Sites in the later half of the 20th century?

This is for various reasons: firstly, in the early 20th century, the development of modern transport made communication easier, and Suzhou, sitting between Shanghai and Nanjing and close to both cities, became one of the most visited cities by both westerners in China and the Chinese themselves. Secondly, after the wars and the deterioration in the economic situation, private gardens in Yangzhou and Hangzhou were mostly damaged or neglected due to the migration of garden owners. In comparison, Suzhou was less impacted by wars and therefore kept as a comfortable place to live for the Chinese elite. Although gardens were sold by one owner to another, they were mostly well kept and residential life in gardens continued. Besides, the national promotion of tourism which started in late 1920s also served as a catalyst for the enhanced fame of Suzhou gardens.

³⁴ The Chinese texts are “杭州以湖山胜，苏州以市肆胜，扬州以园亭胜”. See Dou Li (李斗), *Yangzhou huafang lu* (扬州画舫录 Yangzhou Painted Boat Chronicles), (Ji'nan: Shandong Youyi Chubanshe, 2001) p. 175.

³⁵ Earnest Henry Wilson, *A naturalist in Western China* (London: Methuen, 1913), p.42.

Opening of Private Gardens to the Public

The opening of private gardens to the public can be traced to the Song Dynasty, when Sima Guang opened his Garden of Solitude Delight to be enjoyed by the many instead of just by himself. In Suzhou, at least in the Qing Dynasty, it became a custom to open gardens at certain times of the year, normally in spring, for the public to stroll freely within.³⁶

In the early 20th century, recreation and entertainment in public spaces had become a fashion for citizens in the newly modernised cities. Public parks and gardens often provided such space for both modern styled entertainment and Chinese traditional tea gatherings and so on (see Chapter three for details). For the people who had a commercial mind and owned a garden which was big enough to hold public events, they could make a fortune by opening their gardens to the public. In Shanghai, a few gardens were converted and had modern entertainment facilities added, becoming popular sites to spend leisure time in. As the nearest city to Shanghai, Suzhou also had some gardens opened to the public, although far fewer in number and less crowded.³⁷

Most gardens in Suzhou, however, were part of private homes and stayed exclusive, away from outsiders, until the communist era, which was to come in 1949.

Professionals' Interest in Suzhou Gardens

In the 1930s, two Chinese professionals, both trained as architects overseas and working in the cities near Suzhou, developed passionate and consistent interests in gardens in Suzhou. They are the pioneers of the modern study of Suzhou gardens.

In August 1936, *Liu Dunzhen* (刘敦楨 1897-1968), a graduate from Tokyo Institute of Technology and, since 1930, director of the Archival Department of the Society for the

³⁶ Dunzhen Liu (刘敦楨), *Suzhou gudian yuanlin* (苏州古典园林 Classical gardens in Suzhou) (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 2005), p.14. Liu referenced the works, '道光二年(1830年), 顾铁卿撰《清嘉录》三月游春玩景条: "春暖, 园林百化竞放, 阖人索扫花钱少许, 纵人流览, 士女杂遝, 罗绮如云, 园中蓄养珍禽异卉, 状点一新." ; 清同治三年(1864年) 袁学澜《苏台揽胜词》春日游吴中诸家园林并序: "豪门右族, 争饰池馆相娱乐, 或因或创, 穷汰极侈, 春时开园, 纵人游赏..... 恒弥月不止焉'.

³⁷ One of the evidence see Dafu Yu (郁达夫), 'Visiting Suzhou in misty rains', in *Yu Dafu sanwen jingpin xuan* (郁达夫散文精品选 Selected works on Essays by Yu Dafu), ed. by Yuan Wen (文轅) (Lanzhou: Gansu Wenhua Chubanshe, 2004), pp. 65-74 (pp. 73-74). Dafu Yu (1896-1945) is a popular writer in contemporary China. In 1920s (c.1928), he first time visited Suzhou, and recorded his visits in the essay,

Research in Chinese Architecture (SRCC) (中国营造学社 *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe*, 1930-1946), visited Suzhou, initially to investigate historical buildings (such as temples and residential houses) but found himself surprised by the gardens attached to the houses. One month later, Liu Dunzhen came again with two assistants. This time they investigated fourteen sites, among which six were residential gardens. They are: Yi yuan (怡园 The Garden of Pleasance), Zhuozheng yuan (拙政园 The Humble Administrator's Garden), Shizilin (狮子林 The Lion Forest Garden), Huanxiu shanzhuang (环秀山庄 The Mountain Villa of Embracing Beauty), Liu yuan (留园 The Lingering Garden), and Yan yuan (严园 Garden of Yan) in Mudu (木渎, a town on the outskirts of Suzhou). The report of this visit was presented in the paper, 'Records on the investigation of Suzhou ancient architecture', which was published in the journal of SRCC in September 1936.³⁸

Meanwhile in the 1930s, Tong Jun (童寯 1900-1993), an architect who received his BA and MA in Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, also paid visits to Suzhou gardens. Having a strong passion for Chinese traditional culture, Tong Jun surveyed the gardens in Suzhou and other cities and towns in the Jiangnan region. He took pictures, drew layouts of gardens, and studied their histories. Based on these, he drafted the book *Jiangnan yuanlin zhi* (江南园林志 *Records of Jiangnan Gardens*) in 1937, although it was not published until 1963 because of political events. Tong Jun also wrote several articles on Suzhou gardens in English which were published by *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, an academic journal founded in Shanghai in 1935, aiming to introduce Chinese culture to English-speaking readers.³⁹

In general, Suzhou gardens in the first half of the 20th century received both visitors and professional attention because of their cultural and aesthetic values. Although a few gardens had opened to the public, Suzhou gardens in general were inseparable from their owners' daily life.

³⁸ Dunzhen Liu (刘敦楨), 'Suzhou gujianzhu diaocha ji' (苏州古建筑调查记 Records on the investigation of Suzhou ancient architecture), *Yingzao xueshe huikan* (营造学社汇刊 Journal of SRCC), Vol.6, No.3. (1936). Quoted from *Suzhou shizhi* (苏州市志 Suzhou chronicle), ed. by Suzhoushi difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (苏州市地方志编撰委员会 Editorial committee of Suzhou chronicles) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1995), p. 1022.

³⁹ T'ien Hsia Monthly was first published in August 1935. The publisher was in Shanghai first, and then moved to Hongkong during the Sino-Japanese war from 1937. Altogether it published over 50 issues before drawing to a full stop. It has a high academic values aiming to introduce Chinese culture to the English-speaking world. Its establishment was supported by Sun Zhongshan, the leader of Chinese Nationalist Party. Source from Dengshan Cai (蔡登山), 'Yi yingwen xiezu de Wen Yuanning jiaoshou' (以英文寫作的溫源寧教授 Writing in English, Professor Wen Yuanning), *New Books Information Monthly* (全國新書資訊月刊), March 2009 <<http://isbnfax.ncl.edu.tw/isbn/admin/pdf/980312304.pdf>> [accessed 29th June 2009]

FROM SELF EXPRESSION TO NATIONAL ICON: TRANSITION OF SUZHOU GARDENS 1949-2000S

On 1st October 1949, Mao Zedong (毛泽东 1893-1976, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party 1943-1976) announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) at Tian'anmen (天安门 Gate of Heavenly Peace), the front gate of the Imperial Forbidden City. Of relatively low significance in the Ming and Qing dynasties, Tian'anmen became the symbol of political power in the PRC; its image appears on the centre of the national emblem and it became almost a holy place for the Chinese from outside Beijing. The renewed image of Tian'anmen is an indicator of the PRC's attitudes towards cultural heritage—form retained, meaning changed.

Mao's Ideas on Art, Culture and Tradition

Values of Art and Literature

'Literature and art should be part of the machine of Revolution, [...] and serve as a powerful weapon to unite and educate people, and to combat and eradicate enemies'. Such ideas of the value of art and literature were first articulated by Mao Zedong in 1942, and soon became the guideline for socialist art and literature.⁴⁰ Its influence still lasts today, when art is not for the sake of art, but rather, for ideology and politics. (Figure 4.4)

⁴⁰ The Chinese texts are '我们今天开会，就是要使文艺很好地成为整个革命机器的一个组成部分，作为团结人民、教育人民、打击敌人、消灭敌人的有力的武器，帮助人民同心同德地和敌人作斗争'. Zedong Mao (毛泽东), *Zai yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua* (在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话Speech on the Forum of Yan'an Literature and Art) (1942) <http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2004-06/24/content_1545090.htm accessed 29th January 2010.> [accessed 27th January 2010]



Figure 4.4 A poster based on a quotation of Chairman Mao. the text says: 'All our literature and art are for the masses of people, and in the first place for the workers, peasants and soldiers. They are created for the workers, peasants and soldiers and are for their use.' The picture shows three figures (from left to right: a worker, a soldier, a peasant) firmly holding books by Mao Zedong in their hands, symbolising the single ideology taking control of all Chinese people. The elite class had been mostly demolished by then, together with elite culture and art including refined garden heritage. Instead, popular culture and art emerged to serve the people. (Source: *Chinese Literature*, No.11 (1967), pp. 102-103.)

Attitudes towards Tradition

Attitudes towards tradition (and traditional culture) swung during the communist era. At first the attitude was about 'selective inheritance'.⁴¹ This view stayed through most of the 1950s and the early '60s, as seen in Mao Zedong's 'Let the new emerge from the old', and 'make the ancient serve the present, the foreign serve China'.⁴²

Under such an ideology, the values of traditional buildings and gardens also needed to be reinterpreted. In the first text book for architecture education in university, for

⁴¹ Enlai Zhou (周恩来), 'Dui jiuwenhua yao pipan de jicheng' (对旧文化要批判地继承 Old culture should be critically inherited), in *Zhou Enlai wenhua wenxuan* (周恩来文化文选 Anthology of Zhou Enlai on culture), ed. by Chunsheng Zhao (赵春生) and others (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 1998), pp. 48-49.

⁴² Yuan-shou Tan, 'Great Heroic Images by Applying Mao Tse-tung's Thought', *Chinese Literature*, No.11, 1967. 98-102 (99).

example, gardens are valued as representative of the labouring-people's wisdom, as well as the degenerate spirit and rotten lifestyle of the bureaucrat class.

Among the feudal landlord class, there appeared a new political force held by regional warlords and bureaucrats. Based on suppressing peasant revolution and crazy looting of wealth and huge amount of land resources, [...they] created a fashion of building tall, big and magnificent residential houses and family shrines. Later on, this building fashion extended to big landlords and merchants, and lasted until the Xinhai Revolution [1911] before going into decline. These grand houses, family shrines and private gardens that were attached to them have two values: on the one hand, the craftsmanship developed and enriched by contemporary craftsmen, seen in the layout of gardens and courtyards, the division of space, the design of buildings, the arrangement of transportation, the gardening of courtyards, the combination of gardens and houses, the approaches of artificial mountains, water features, plants and garden buildings. On the other hand, they reflect the extravagant, luxurious and rotten life style of contemporary bureaucrats and landlord classes, as well as their degenerate spirit of pursuing grandiose showing –off and ostentation.⁴³

Socialist Reform and its Impact on Garden Culture

Land reform

In order to 'cure the age-old problem of landlordism', the Central government promulgated the Agrarian Reform Law in 1950, 'which called for the "abolition of the land ownership system of feudal exploitation' and the confiscation of landowners" holdings and farm implements for redistribution to landless peasants. [...] By the end of 1952, the agrarian revolution had been completed, and some 700 million *mu* (1 *mu* is equivalent to 1/6 acre) of land had been redistributed to 300 million peasants.'⁴⁴ As a result, landlords and rich peasants were mostly eliminated, and so were their property and lifestyle.

⁴³ The original Chinese texts are '封建地主阶级中出现的方大军阀、大官僚的新势力，在镇压农民革命的基础上，随着疯狂掠夺和大量的土地兼并，[...]掀起了一个追求高、大、华丽的大住宅、大祠堂的建筑潮流。这个潮流并扩展到大地主、大商人中，一直延续到辛亥革命以后才逐渐衰退。在这些大住宅、大祠堂以及与之相结合的私家园林的建筑中，一方面，近代匠师在院落组织、空间分隔、楼房处理、交通安排、庭院绿化以及住宅与园林的结合、山池花木和小建筑的处理等方面，发展、丰富了一些传统的处理手法。另一方面，则反映了当时官僚地主阶级穷奢极欲的腐朽生活方式和追求炫耀、排场、浮夸等没落的精神面貌'。 *Zhongguo jianzhu jianshi* (中国建筑简史 A brief history of Chinese architecture), Vol. 2, ed. by the Editorial team of a brief history of Chinese architecture (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 1962), p. 2.

⁴⁴ Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, sixth edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 652-653.

These events had two effects on Suzhou gardens. First, the garden as a symbol of family wealth inevitably caused political criticism of the family now that the proletarian class held power; second, the land property owned by the garden owners in the countryside was taken back, which cut off the economic resources from which the family could maintain the gardens. Therefore, under political and economic pressures, the safest way was to donate the gardens to the government. For example, in 1952, the wealthy business family the Bei's donated Shizilin (狮子林 The Lion Forest Garden) to the People's Government of Suzhou.⁴⁵ In 1954, celebrated scholar Yu Pingbo (俞平伯 1900-1990) donated his family property Qu Yuan (曲园 The Winding Garden, or the Garden of Music) to the People's Government of Suzhou.⁴⁶

Private gardens used to be the common part of a housing space. Wealthy families created rockeries, water ponds and pavilions, ordinary families with an extra plot of land made their gardens mainly with plants. But such living environments changed quickly with industrialisation, launched in 1953 as part of the first Five-Year Plan. This plan put the greatest emphasis on the rapid expansion of heavy industry and the collectivisation of agriculture.⁴⁷ Cities needed more workers, and therefore people moved from the countryside to cities, which brought a surge in the demand for houses there. Traditional houses were rased to the ground and replaced by new apartment blocks and factories. Traditional garden culture was by and large interrupted and became alien to ordinary people's life.



Figure 4.5 A traditional residential complex was demolished to give land for new apartment blocks (Source: *China Reconstructs*, No. 4&5 (July, 1960))

⁴⁵ Source from the interview with Zhong Chen (陈中), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 19th August 2006. See interview transcript No. SM-CZ, p. 9.

⁴⁶ Source from the interview with Jiazan Wei (魏嘉瓚), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 23rd August 2006. See interview transcript No. SS-WJ, pp. 7, 9.

⁴⁷ *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, ed. by Joel Krieger and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 128-130.

Intellectual Re-education and Education Reform

Chinese traditional education and its national examination system had existed in imperial China for over a thousand years and produced a cultivated Chinese elite class of literati and scholar-bureaucrats. In 1905, a modern education system was launched in China, in which science and technology were more favoured than the humanities and social science, which shifted the emphasis of education from cultivating independent-spirited and morally-centred literati into producing useful 'tools'.⁴⁸ However, in the early and mid 20th century Chinese intellectuals by and large had their distinctive identity, fostered by both the traditional spirit of literati and a modern spirit of individuality.

By 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded, there were about four million 'intellectuals' in a total population of some six hundred million.⁴⁹ Generally known as the *zhishi fenzi* (知识分子), 'learned elements', they mostly received their education before 1949, and had therefore formed a worldview which did not always match the new Communist ideology.⁵⁰

In the spring of 1957, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party launched the 'Blooming and Contending' movement, asking for criticism from the people, especially intellectuals, with the intention of consolidating the relationship between the party and the other circles. However, after receiving overwhelming criticism of the Communist monopoly of power, with intellectuals appealing for freedom, in the summer of 1957 the movement soon turned into the 'anti-rightist campaign'.⁵¹

Intellectuals were described as 'motivated by self-interest, and wanting the good life'. They therefore needed to be re-educated to suit proletarian class needs. The

⁴⁸ 'Preface', *Pan Guandan tuzhuan* (潘光旦图传 Pictorial Biography of Pan Guangdan) <<http://www.luobinghui.com/ld/zx/y/200611/15945.html>> [accessed 10th October 2009]

⁴⁹ Intellectuals in contemporary China refer to those who have a higher degree, generally from upper-middle school on up. See 'The Intellectuals: The Dilemma of the Educated', *Communist China: Revolutionary reconstruction and international confrontation 1949 to the present*, edited and annotated by Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968) pp. 146-166 (146).

⁵⁰ 'The Intellectuals: The Dilemma of the Educated', *Communist China: Revolutionary reconstruction and international confrontation 1949 to the present*, ed. and annotated by Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968), pp. 146-166 (146).

⁵¹ Vidya Prakash Dutt, *China's Foreign Policy* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 9-20. Quoted from 'The Intellectuals: The Dilemma of the Educated', *Communist China: Revolutionary reconstruction and international confrontation 1949 to the present*, ed. and annotated by Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968), pp. 148-157.

reformation was done through labouring work, criticism and self-criticism meetings, and various group studies.

Apart from re-educating intellectuals for socialist construction, between 1952 and 1953, the higher education institutions in China were also restructured. Under a utilitarian view of high education, practical science, industrial and military related science and technologies were highly valued and supported by the government, while the arts and humanities, less immediately useful and—even worse—with the potential danger of carrying the ‘wrong’ ideology, were reduced (for example, anthropology, politics) and some were even entirely wiped off from the list (such as sociology). The imbalanced subject division caused difficulties in some areas which require knowledge of both science and the arts. The study of Chinese gardens, for example, had until then mainly focused on architectural factors and spatial character (within architecture departments) or on plant science (in horticulture or forestry departments). The cultural and spiritual realm of Chinese gardens was simply omitted.

Universities and academic institutions became affiliated with the government, so political control was tight. Less freedom in ideological studies restricted intellectuals’ personal scope, and together with a series of political campaigns (intellectual reforms), individuality was gradually wiped out. Instead, collective identity took its place.

Through a series of political campaigns and mass movements, the proletarian working class, that is, the people, replaced the gentry (literati and scholar-bureaucrats) and became the ‘masters of the country’. Correspondingly, mass culture (popular culture) replaced elite culture (high culture, refined culture) and became the goal for socialist cultural and artistic development.

Reinterpreting Suzhou Gardens

New Meanings for Tourism in Relation to Gardens and Landscapes

Where literati in the past had appreciated gardens and landscapes as a way of cultivating and expressing personal views through the connection between self and nature, garden tourism in the early communist era was given a completely new meaning.

On days off work and holidays, the people who are devoting themselves to socialist construction can all come here [Yiheyuan, or the Summer Palace] to appreciate the tranquil beauty of Nature and excellence of garden art. After intensive working, they can enjoy themselves in boating, swimming, fishing, playing chess, painting, chanting poems...all kinds of cultural entertainment. By means of either collective dancing or personal strolling, they can always get rid of the tension in a heart-delighted way, and refresh themselves in order to work happily for socialist construction.⁵²

In the old society [imperial China], landscape touring was the scholar-bureaucrat class's leisure. They sought tranquillity and explored the scenery merely for the sake of personal enjoyment. Making poems on wind and moon [which means refined art with little practical or realistic purpose] has no meaning to people today. [...] Now we must reconstruct attitudes towards landscape tourism, that is, to integrate the tourism with various investigations [...] especially of natural resources [...] to support national economic development—how meaningful that is! Also, mountains are associated with military defence, [...] history, geography, economy, flora and fauna, minerals [the investigation of] these have special positive meanings. [...] Only by this means can we avoid repeating the old perception that [landscape touring] is only for personal enjoyment.⁵³

By such interpretations, historic gardens and landscapes found their new values in terms of socialist construction, that is, they were recreational places to refresh workers' bodies and minds, and an educational ground for gaining knowledge in order to contribute to socialist economic development. Therefore, the 'selfish' interests were removed from tourism in gardens, and collective and national interests took their place.

Studies and Surveys of Suzhou Gardens

After 1949, the SRCC was disbanded. Liang Sicheng stayed in Beijing and worked at Tsinghua University (清华大学), while Liu Dunzhen moved to Nanjing Institute of Technology (南京工学院); both worked as professors in architecture.

⁵² Original Chinese texts are: '正在从事社会主义建设的人们, 每当休息假日, 都来到这里欣赏自然风景的幽美和园林艺术的巧妙。他们在紧张的劳动后, 尽情地享受着划船、游泳、钓鱼、对棋、绘画、吟诗.....种种文娱活动。无论是集体歌舞, 或者是个人寻幽, 都能够心情舒畅地消除疲劳, 换得充沛的精神在为社会主义建设愉快地劳动。' From 'Preface', *Yi He Yuan* (颐和园 The Summer Palace), ed. by Department of Yiheyuan Administration of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Gardens and Parks (Beijing: Cultural Heritage Press, 1959)

⁵³ Original Chinese texts are '在旧社会里, 游山玩水, 是士大夫阶级的闲情逸致, 他们寻幽探胜, 只是为了个人的享乐, 所作的吟风弄月的诗词歌赋, 对于人民根本风牛马不相及 [...] 我们现在必须重新确立游览观点, 就是游览要配合各种调查 [...] 特别是无机物体的物质原料 [...] 协助国家经济建设, 该是多么有意义, 同时崇山峻岭和国防有关 [...] 至于帮助认识历史、地理、经济、动植物、矿物尤其具有积极的意义 [...] 这样, 才不致重走古人的老路, 只是为了个人享受罢了', from 'Zenyang jianli xinde youlan guandian (怎样建立新的游览观点 how to build new attitudes towards touring), in Maoda Fan (范懋达), *Suzhou fengjingxian* (苏州风景线 Suzhou Landscape Horizon) (Suzhou: Yilin Press, 1951), p. 3.

Living much closer to Suzhou now, in 1953 Liu Dunzhen led a team to Suzhou for a general investigation of Suzhou classical gardens. The team members were from the China Architecture Research Office (中国建筑研究室), co-founded by Nanjing Institute of Technology and the Industrial Architecture Design Institute of East China (华东工业建筑设计院). During the 1950s photos were taken at over 50 sites. Between 1956 and 1959, over 40 gardens were surveyed by Liu Dunzhen and his team. In 1960, the book draft *Suzhou gudian yuanlin* (苏州古典园林 Suzhou classical gardens) was finished. Although this book was not published until 1979 due to the change of political atmosphere and the author's wish to improve the texts, it is recognized as the first treatise on Suzhou garden studies.⁵⁴

In this book, Liu Dunzhen suggested that, 'in order to make the most use and exhibit most value of this precious cultural heritage [Suzhou gardens], we should start from a general survey [...] and the best solution is not to be satisfied with their contemporary condition, but to distinguish good ones from not so good ones, and to remove the backward parts, improve the over-plain parts, then we can actively promote the excellence of this traditional culture and make it serve the people. if we do so, within some years, Suzhou will become a garden city with traditional character.'⁵⁵

In the investigation carried out in the 1950s, 188 gardens were identified in Suzhou, among which over 90% were residential gardens. In 188 gardens, there were 11 'large gardens' (that is, over 10 acres of land coverage), 34 'middle gardens' (about 5 acres of land coverage), 69 'small gardens' (1-2 acres of land coverage), and 74 courtyards. The conditions of these gardens were: 46 gardens were entirely derelict; 57 half-derelict (only artificial mountains and water ponds left), and 85 gardens were in good condition.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Suzhou shizhi* (苏州市志 Suzhou chronicle), ed. by Suzhoushi difangzhi bianzhuang weiyuanhui (苏州市地方志编撰委员会 Editorial committee of Suzhou chronicles) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1995), p. 1022.

⁵⁵ Wei Chen (陈薇), The Meaning of the Work 'The Classical Gardens of Suzhou', *Proceedings of International Conference on Chinese Architectural History IV* (Shanghai, 2007)

⁵⁶ Source from the interview with Wei Huang (黄玮), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 20th August, 2006. See interview transcript No. SA-HW.

Table 4.1 Survival of Suzhou gardens 1950s-2000s ⁵⁷

	total	Entire derelict	Half-derelict	Well preserved
1950s	188 ⁵⁸	46	57	85
Early 1980s	70			28 ⁵⁹
1996	71			

Also in the 1950s, Chen Congzhou (陈从周 1918-2000),⁶⁰ started his exploration of Suzhou gardens. His first book on this subject, entitled *Suzhou Gardens* (苏州园林) was published in 1956, which was also the first published book on Suzhou gardens in PRC. In this book, Chen Congzhou brought forward the saying which later became the slogan for promoting Suzhou gardens to the world, ‘gardens in Jiangnan are the best in the world; gardens in Suzhou are the best in Jiangnan’ (江南园林甲天下，苏州园林甲江南).

When the Cultural Revolution began, Liu Dunzhen and his research on Suzhou gardens were claimed to be a ‘waste of money and time’. A white poster was posted on the door to his house, on which was written in black ink ‘300,000 Yuan of People’s property (money) was wasted [on surveying and researching gardens]; hundreds of young researchers’ youth was swallowed [by the Suzhou garden studies directed by Liu Dunzhen]’ and Liu Dunzhen himself was denounced. He died in 1968.⁶¹ This tragic event indicates that historic gardens in the late 1960s were seen as having no value. Although such extreme attitudes and fury towards cultural heritage did not last long (the mass destruction was mostly between 1967 and 1969), studies of traditional gardens were halted and did not recover until the end of the 1970s.

⁵⁷ Source from the interview with Wei Huang (黄玮), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 20th August, 2006. See interview transcript No. SA-HW.

⁵⁸ 188 gardens survived, including 74 courtyard (50-100 m²); 114 garden (>100 m²)

⁵⁹ 28 were considered to be preserved by Suzhou urban planning. Source from the interview with Wei Huang (黄玮), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 20th August, 2006. See interview transcript No. SA-HW, pp. 5-6.

⁶⁰ Chen Congzhou (陈从周 1918-2000) was educated in literature and art. Due to his interests in Suzhou gardens, Chen Congzhou started to study Suzhou gardens from the early 1950s when working in the architecture department in Zhejiang University (1950-1951) and in Tongji University (1952-). In the latter university, Chen Congzhou established the Research Team of Architectural History. From then on, Chen Congzhou spent all his life on garden studies. His published works were luxuriant, and has achieved excellent standard in garden criticism.

⁶¹ Source from the interview with Professor Xujie Liu (刘叙杰), the son of Liu Dunzhen, conducted by the author in Shanghai on 19th June, 2007.

Selective Restoration of Suzhou Gardens

Between 1953 and 1958, six gardens, dating from the Southern Song (1127-1279 AD) to the Qing (1644-1911 AD), were restored and opened as public parks and gardens.⁶² This was promoted by the first General Secretary of Jiangsu Province, Ke Qingshi (柯庆施 1902-1965).⁶³ He gave the order to restore Suzhou gardens in order to attract tourists. At that time, utilitarian ideas were dominant in the Chinese Communist Party, which meant that every city should be productive and contribute to national construction. Suzhou had long been a city of 'consumption', where the gentry class had a comfortable life and developed high culture and art instead of agriculture or industry. But Shanghai, a neighbour city of Suzhou, had become a dominant industrial city in P. R. China and its population rocketed due to the sheer extent of factory workers' needs. For this reason, governmental leaders in Jiangsu province decided to make use of Suzhou as a 'back garden' of Shanghai, that is, to restore Suzhou gardens as a recreational place for Shanghai workers.⁶⁴

The organisation in charge was Suzhou Management Committee of Cultural Relics (SMCCR 苏州市文物管理委员会), founded in 1950 and then from 1952 a subsidiary of the Suzhou People's Government. The director Xie Xiaosi (谢孝思 1905-2008) was a celebrated Chinese painting master. The committee members and consultants also came from the circles of art, culture and history. In spring 1954, SMCCR was ordered to be dismissed and a new organisation called Suzhou Protection and Management Committee of Cultural Relics and Ancient Sites (SPMCCRA 苏州市文物古迹保管委员会) was established, this time under the direct leadership of Suzhou People's Government. The committee was combined with Suzhou Administrative Department

⁶² The six gardens are: *Zhuozhengyuan*, *Shizilin*, *Canglangting*, *Yiyuan*, which were restored and opened in 1953; and *Liu Yuan* in 1954, *Wangshiyuan* in 1958. Source from 'Quanguo geda chengshi zhuyao gongyuan tongjibiao' (全国各大城市主要公园统计表 the table of public parks at main cities in China), *Yuanlin keji qingbao* (园林科技情报 Scientific and Technological information on Gardens and Parks), 1985, No. 2, pp. 44-46 (44).

⁶³ Jiangsu province is one of the most important provinces in P. R. China in terms of culture and economy. Its main cities include Nanjing, Suzhou, Yangzhou etc. Shanghai, although independent in administration, is located within Jiangsu Province and therefore had close relationships with other cities in the province.

⁶⁴ Source from the interview with Fengquan Chen (陈凤全), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 18th August 2006. See interview transcript No. SS-CF; also see Bocheng Hu (胡伯诚), *Suzhou yuanlin heyi neng jinru shijieyichan minglu* (苏州园林何以能进入世界遗产名录 How have Suzhou gardens been able to be listed as World Heritage Sites) <<http://su.people.com.cn/GB/channel251/413/200803/24/11693.html>> [accessed 15th Oct., 2009]

of Gardens (苏州市园林管理处), which indicates that Suzhou gardens were treated as cultural heritage in the mid 1950s.

In 1955, SPMCCRA announced a general investigation of the residential gardens, temples and shrines, stone carvings and scenic landscape sites. Based on this, in 1956 a list of sites recommended for protection and with municipal significance was compiled, including 21 gardens among all the 128 sites.

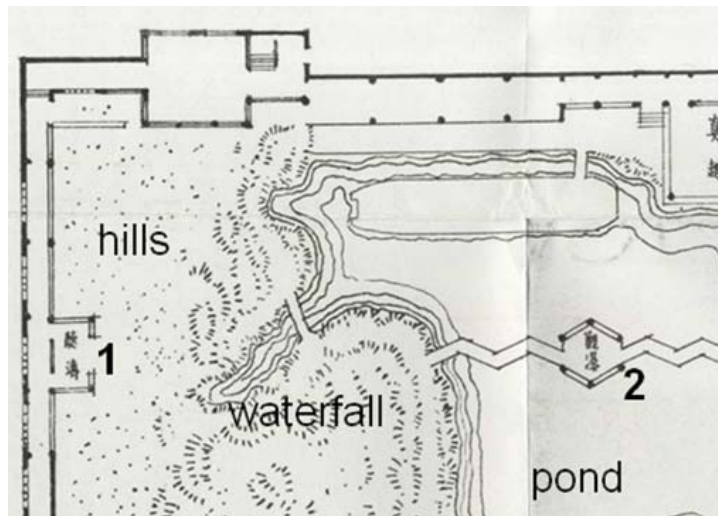
Distorted Meanings of Suzhou Gardens

The fates of nationalized gardens are various, depending on the aesthetic values of gardens versus the economic value of the land they are on. Referring to the two donated gardens which were mentioned earlier, the Lion Grove Garden, large in size and well known in history, was soon opened to the public as a park (with small fees charged). But the garden of Qu Yuan was less fortunate. The major part of the residence was houses, with only a tiny garden attached, which did not have many intriguing garden features. So the houses of Qu Yuan were distributed to over a dozen families as their homes; the garden was firstly neglected and then levelled to allow a three-storey building to be erected on the site in 1958, to help satisfy the continuing demand for housing. It was not until the end of the Cultural Revolution, when Yu Pingbo was again recognised as a Suzhou celebrity, that his former residence was reconsidered for its historical values and there were calls for its restoration.⁶⁵

But even for the Lion Forest Garden, the later restoration and alteration has not kept all the values of this garden. One of the changes is the alteration of the names of garden features. This mostly happened in the 1950s, and a few more between the 1950s and the 2000s. For example, there are two garden pavilions at the northwest of the Lion Forest Garden (marked in Figure 4.6 as 1 and 2). Pavilion 1 is on the top of a hillside, and pavilion 2 on the lake. Between them, a waterfall runs from the hillside down to the lake. In the 1930s, pavilion 1 had the name 'listening waves', and pavilion 2 'watching waterfall'. These gave a clue about what to appreciate at each spot, respectively emphasising the aural and visual senses. But in the 1950s, the name of pavilion 1 became 'Running-water Pavilion', and that of pavilion 2 'Central-

⁶⁵ Source from the interview with Jiazan Wei (魏嘉瓚), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 23rd August 2006. See interview transcript No. SS-WJ, p. 9.

lake Pavilion’, both simple descriptions of physical locations instead of personal senses, therefore losing the poetic and sensual attachment between visitor and scenery. Some decades later, the name of pavilion 1 was changed to ‘Waterfall-watching Pavilion’. However, a visitor at this spot cannot see the waterfall at all (since waterfalls can only be seen from a lower point like that at which pavilion 2 stands). Therefore, it is a completely misleading name which reveals that the person in charge had not understood the scenery before choosing a seemingly traditional name.



	1.	2.
1930s	Listening waves	Watching waterfall
1950s	Running-waterfall pavilion	Central-lake pavilion
2000s	Waterfall-watching pavilion	Central-lake pavilion

Figure 4.6 Detail of *Shizilin* (Lion Forest Garden) plan and changes of garden building names. It shows the two pavilions which names being changed three times in the 20th century.

The changing of names at other classical gardens in Suzhou is also common. Most names that are changed are those associated with personal sentiments and values, and what replaces them are more objective description of the scenic view. By doing this the values of Suzhou gardens are increasingly moved towards the appreciation of natural beauty instead of personal expression and the pursuit of spiritual refinement.

As a result, Suzhou gardens are no longer a home for literati, no longer a place for personal expression, and have lost their spirit.

Suzhou Gardens as Heritage (1978-2000s)

Gardens as Cultural Ambassador

In December 1979, a team of twenty-seven engineers and craftsmen from the Suzhou Garden Administration arrived in New York City. They were to build the first Chinese garden in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This was suggested and sponsored by Mrs Vincent Astor, a trustee of the Museum who spent part of her childhood in Beijing and remembered the serenity of the traditional Chinese garden court. The garden, named the Astor Court, was almost an exact replica of the garden court at Wangshiyuan (网师园 Garden of Master of Fishing Nets), though perhaps more meticulous and polished than the original. It is believed to represent 'the first permanent cultural exchange between the United States and the People's Republic of China and was marked throughout by a special spirit of cooperation'. Such cooperation was not only revealed in the objects, but also throughout the building process, for example, the construction began with a warm ceremony at which the Chinese and American workers exchanged hard hats, so as 'to set the tone of smooth collaboration' between two teams and, symbolically, two nations.⁶⁶

After that, over twenty Suzhou style gardens have been exported to other countries.

Tradition Lost, Heritage Emerged

Although selected gardens were preserved and became an icon of Chinese garden art, the 'ordinary' gardens, that is, the small gardens and courtyards attached to traditional houses, have not been protected. Since the 1990s, city expansion and urbanisation have speeded up, demanding more land for modern buildings and roads. Early in the 1950s there had been ideas of expanding and straightening main streets to make transportation more convenient. Proposed by Soviet experts but disagreed

⁶⁶ Philippe de Montebello, 'Director's Note', & 'VII. Building a garden court in New York', Alfreda Murck & Wen Fong, *A Chinese garden court—the Astor Court at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), p.1.

with by Chinese professionals, this suggestion was not realised at that time.⁶⁷ But four decades later, when the population had rocketed, economic development was the prime goal for governments at all levels, and traditional houses and road systems finally gave way to city planning scheme and economic development. The main street Ganjiang Road (干将路), for example, was expanded in order to relieve the overcrowded urban transportation. It was an ancient street with many old houses built on either side. These houses and gardens were demolished, and so were many more in other places. The large scale removal of old living quarters ‘produced’ many historical building materials, which were seen to be of value by a businessman and billionaire, who bought them (bricks, pavements, and even whole timber buildings), integrating them into his newly built house and gardens. (Figure 4.7)



Figure 4.7 Buildings at Jingsiyuan (静思园 Quiet Thinking Garden), Tongli County, Suzhou. Jingsiyuan is a new garden claimed to be of historical value, because many of the building materials are recycled from historical buildings, such as the buildings shown here (Source: photo by author, August 2006)

Nine Suzhou Gardens as World Heritage Site

In 1996, Suzhou People’s Government decided to apply for World Cultural Heritage (WCH) status for Suzhou classical gardens. The original motivation for joining UNESCO in protecting World Heritage Sites was in respect of tourism, since a title of

⁶⁷ The Chinese texts are ‘1959年，苏联专家要把苏州市区主要干道拓宽、取直，拆除原路旁的所有建筑，大兴土木。他[程世抚]面对这种情况，坚持“经济、实用、保留古城面貌”的观点，主张随形就势，少拆建筑，搞一条曲线干道，在弯曲空地内见缝插针搞绿化。他认为这样可以保持古城风貌，既可节约投资，又可利用空地绿化，改善环境，同时形成自然式街景特点’。 Cheng Shifu (程世抚) <<http://www.cpst.net.cn/kxj/zgkxjszj/cx/gxb/pe/tm18021001.htm>> [accessed 18th June 2007]

WCH was no doubt the best advertisement for attracting tourists, therefore contributing to the economy. For this reason the government prepared all it could to make the application go through as smoothly as possible.

In order to ensure the best quality work, a team was founded especially for this purpose, known as The Directorial Team Applying for WCH Status for Suzhou Classical Gardens. The head of the team was the mayor of Suzhou city, and the associate team leaders were two vice-mayors. Other team members were also from various departments of the government.⁶⁸ This team provided the high efficiency and best quality of preparation needed for the application.

By that time, there were seventy one surviving gardens in Suzhou, nine of them of cultural heritage at a national or provincial level of significance, and twenty two of municipal significance, which put their protection within the scope of laws on cultural relics. However, the general law on cultural relics did not entirely suit garden conservation, and the maintenance of Suzhou gardens had kept a low status. Key conflicts, for example, were the uncontrolled construction and alteration of the setting of the gardens, constructions added within the garden land, etc.⁶⁹

In order to fulfil the requirements for applying for WCH, in 1997, the *Conservation and Management Ordinance on Suzhou Gardens* was published, which became China's first regulation specifically on garden conservation.

In the same year, four gardens in Suzhou were nominated for World Cultural Heritage. In 2000, five more gardens were added to the list so that nine Suzhou gardens, entitled 'classical gardens of Suzhou', were designated as World Heritage of International Significance.⁷⁰

Today, the preservation of Suzhou gardens is a model for other Chinese historical garden and park administrations to follow. However, there is room for critical views. For example, the Guanyun Peak (冠云峰, which is said to be the best individual

⁶⁸ The Chinese texts are '苏州市古典园林申报世界文化遗产领导小组, 组长: 张新胜 (市长); 副组长: 沈长全 (副市长), 顾朝曦 (副市长)' Source from Document of Suzhou People's Government (苏州市人民政府文件), Suzhou Government [1996], No. 30. (苏府[1996]30号) (Available from the exhibition at Suzhou Garden Museum).

⁶⁹ Zhaochang Bi (毕兆昌 vice director of Suzhou People's Committee), 'Guanyu "Suzhou yuanlin baohu he guanli tiaoli" de shuoming' (关于《苏州园林保护和管理条例》的说明 Explanations on 'the Conservation and Management Ordinance on Suzhou Gardens'), *Suzhou yuanlin baohu he guanli tiaoli* (苏州园林保护和管理条例 Conservation and Management Ordinance on Suzhou Gardens) (January 1997), pp. 12-22 (23).

⁷⁰ UNESCO, 'Classical Gardens of Suzhou', *World Heritage List* <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/813>> [accessed 29th July 2008]

garden rock in Suzhou, or even China) at the Lingerig Garden is now surrounded by a rather contemporary arrangement of plants, which delivers a sense of a park rather than a historic garden; other criticisms have also been made of the overgrown lotus in the pond, which blocks the view of reflection of the sky, and the improper tree planting which damages the original design intention, and so on.⁷¹ Other concerns may also be seen from a higher level of the administrative structure. Since the late 1990s, research institutions have been separated from governmental organisation and regrouped into companies. Therefore, scientific and technical support for the restoration project was weakened. The same situation has arisen in many other areas in China during the same period.⁷²

UNESCO recognised the values of Suzhou gardens as 'to recreate natural landscapes in miniature [...and] reflect the profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture in their meticulous design.'⁷³

However, what Suzhou gardens had talked about was more than just nature.

⁷¹ Source from the interview with Professor Hongxun Yang (杨鸿勋), conducted by the author in Beijing on 30th July, 2006. See interview transcript No. SA-YH.

⁷² Ecocity, 'Zhongguo xinnengyuan fazhan de shiqing' (中国新能源发展的实情real situation of new energy development in China) <<http://www.bullock.cn/blogs/ecocity/archives/78394.aspx>> [accessed 29th July 2008]

⁷³ UNESCO, 'Classical Gardens of Suzhou', *World Heritage List* <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/813>> [accessed 29th July 2008]

CASE STUDY: LIU YUAN

Here, one garden is chosen to give a detailed view of the changes in Suzhou gardens. Liu Yuan (留园 The Linger Garden) is one of the oldest existing gardens in Suzhou, and one of few gardens to have been opened to the public in the early 20th century. In the early 1950s, Liu Yuan became one of the six gardens that were chosen to be restored and opened as public parks and gardens. The history of Liu Yuan well reflects the changing values of gardens in history and today, and how those changing attitudes have affected the physical appearance of gardens.

History of Liu Yuan before 1949

Liu Yuan was initially laid out in the late 16th century by Xu Taishi (徐泰时 1540-1598), a retired Ming dynasty [1368-1644] official. At the time it was known as Dong Yuan (东园 East Garden). Located 2 *li* (1 Chinese *li* is approximately equivalent to 500 metres) outside the northwest city gate of Suzhou, the property had been used as the house and gardens of the Xu families for generations. It was, however, Xu Taishi who shaped the garden to what can still be traced over four hundred years later. Xu had been a buildings inspector in the imperial court, with his work including a palace hall in the Forbidden City, and had been disliked by fellow officials because of his straightforwardness. This attribute ultimately led to his resignation and his return to Suzhou, after which he devoted himself to garden making. Soon Dong Yuan was the most famous garden in town.⁷⁴

The features in Dong Yuan, as recorded by his contemporaries, included two halls, a tower, two pavilions, a study, a two-*mu* pond (1 Chinese *mu* is equivalent to 667 square metres) and artificial mountains built with rocks. Plants in the garden included a few dozen herbaceous and tree peonies which surrounded the main hall and the tower, a wild-plum grove, about a dozen red plums planted on the rockery mountains, red apricots and weeping willows intermixed at the bank of the pond, an exotic

⁷⁴ Zheng Zhou 周铮, *Liu Yuan* 留园 (the Linger Garden) (Suzhou: Guwuxuan Chubanshe, 1998), pp. 2-3.

garden including Crapemyrtle, sweet-scented osmanthus, *Hibiscus mutabilis*, *Magnolia denudata* and a bamboo grove.⁷⁵

The main hall *Hou Le Tang* (后乐堂 the Hall of Altruism) was named after the famous essay written by a Song literatus and official Fan Zhongyan (范仲淹 969-1052), which indicated the garden master's values, putting personal happiness second to national affairs. However, since Xu was not given an office which allowed him to devote himself to government affairs, he turned instead to enjoying drinking and playing with young male dancers in his garden, which was nevertheless understood by his guests, who saw his unfulfilled ambition and deep worries about the state in his seemingly disconcerting behaviour.⁷⁶

Dong Yuan was maintained by Xu Taishi and his descendants for about a hundred years before it was sold. The garden gradually decayed and its land was mostly occupied by dwelling houses. In 1794, Liu Shu (刘恕, also named Liu Rongfeng 刘蓉峰) bought the property, reconstructed and expanded the garden, and named it Han Bi Zhuang (寒碧庄 Cold Jade Manor) because many white-skinned pine trees (*Pinus bungeana*) known as 'cold jade' were planted in the garden. But the locals simply called it Liu Yuan (刘园), the garden of Liu. As with Xu Taishi, Liu Shu was also a governmental official and literatus. After retiring in his late 30s, he returned to Suzhou and enjoyed his life in the garden, especially in collecting flowers and rocks. He collected twelve rocks, about which he wrote many poems and prose pieces to describe how they were obtained and appreciating their character. He also had over fourteen buildings and pavilions constructed in the garden.⁷⁷ After the garden's construction was finished, Liu invited his friends for a party in the garden. (Figure 4.8) At this party, guests were asked to make poems, essays or paintings in reflection of the garden. One of his guests, Qian Daxin (钱大昕), wrote in his essay that 'the excellence of gardens can only be sustained forever by being chanted [that is, written about] by famous people'. He also pointed out that the fame of the garden is not built

⁷⁵ Yingke Jiang (江盈科 1553-1605), 'Hou Le Tang Ji' (后乐堂记 An essay on the Hall of Atruism), in Zheng Zhou (周铮), *Liu Yuan* (留园 the Lingering Garden) (Suzhou: Guwuxuan Chubanshe, 1998), pp. 134-135.

⁷⁶ Yingke Jiang (江盈科 1553-1605), 'Hou Le Tang Ji' (后乐堂记 An essay on the Hall of Happy After), in Zheng Zhou (周铮), *Liu Yuan* (留园 the Lingering Garden) (Suzhou: Guwuxuan Chubanshe, 1998), pp. 134-135.

⁷⁷ The reference to the building constructions in Han Bi Zhuang is provided personally by Fengquan Chen (陈凤全) in his unpublished paper 'History of Liu Yuan'. Fengquan Chen is the researcher in Liu Yuan Administration and one of the first tour guide in Liu Yuan in 1980s.

upon splendid parties, but rather on its master's fame.⁷⁸ This shows well the relationship between gardens and their owners: it is the garden owner who gives the garden a character, and the garden's character can only be known by being interpreted by the owner's literati friends.



Figure 4.8 Paintings of Liu Yuan drawn in 1789 (left) and 1794 (right) by the garden owner's artist friends. (Source: Dunzhen Liu (刘敦楨), *Suzhou gudian yuanlin* (苏州古典园林 Classical gardens in Suzhou) (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 2005), p.341.)

In 1823, Liu Shu first opened the garden to the public, which became an event that attracted visitors every day during the opening, and was recorded by contemporary literati in books.⁷⁹

Liu Yuan was later bought by Sheng Kang (盛康) in 1873. Sheng Kang was also a governmental official and garden lover. He restored the garden and renamed it Liu Yuan (留园), The Lingering Garden, cleverly retaining the same pronunciation but changing the character and meaning. By this time, as the recorded names showed, there were at least 25 buildings in Liu Yuan, and this number was increased after two more gardens were attached.⁸⁰ Like previous owners of Liu Yuan, Sheng Kang also liked collecting strange rocks. When he found a unique standing rock in his neighbour's neglected garden, he managed to buy the land, combined it into his garden, and constructed a pond and a bamboo grove to accompany the rock, which

⁷⁸ Daxin Qian 钱大昕[1728-1804], 'Han Bi Zhuang Yanji Xu' 寒碧庄宴集序(the preface of collected works in the Banquet at Han Bi Zhuang), in Zheng Zhou 周铮, *Liu Yuan* 留园 (the Lingering Garden) (Suzhou: Guwuxuan Chubanshe, 1998), p. 139.

⁷⁹ Yong Qian 钱泳[1759-1844], *Lü Yuan Conghua* (履园丛话 Various Topics in Lü Garden) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1979), p. 529. The original text is '来游者无虚日, 倾动一时' (there had been no day that no visitor in the garden, which made a great impact of the time).

⁸⁰ The reference to the building constructions in Liu Yuan is provided personally by Fengquan Chen (陈凤全) in his unpublished paper 'History of Liu Yuan'.

he named *Guan Yun Feng* (冠云峰 Cloud Capped Peak).⁸¹ (Figure 4.9) With the intention of sharing happiness with the public, Sheng Kang opened the garden without charge on selected days, which made Liu Yuan one of the earliest gardens to be well-known by the general public. After Sheng Kang's death, his son Sheng Xuanhuai (盛宣怀) inherited Liu Yuan. (Figure 4.10) Sheng Xuanhuai was an entrepreneur as well as an important figure in the late Qing government, who actively adapted Western industry and technology for China. He managed Liu Yuan successfully and kept his father's tradition of opening the garden to the public.⁸²



Figure 4.9 *Guan Yun Feng* (Cloud Capped Peak) in Liu Yuan. (Source: photo by author, September 2005)

After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912, Liu Yuan was taken over by the Republican government, but soon after it was returned to Sheng Xuanhuai due to his networking skills. Sheng Xuanhuai died in 1916, with five sons surviving and some daughters. Half of his property was evenly distributed to his descendents, and the other half, including Liu Yuan, was donated to the charity which had been run by the family for generations. During the 1920s and early 30s, Liu Yuan was sometimes occupied by

⁸¹ Yue Yu (俞樾 1821-1907), 'Guan Yun Feng Zan You Xu' 冠云峰赞有序 (Preface of the appreciation of Cloud Capped Peak), in Zheng Zhou 周铮, *Liu Yuan* 留园 (the Lingering Garden) (Suzhou: Guwuxuan Chubanshe, 1998), pp. 144-145.

⁸² Zheng Zhou 周铮, *Liu Yuan* 留园 (the Lingering Garden) (Suzhou: Guwuxuan Chubanshe, 1998), pp. 3-4.

various warlords as their military base, and for most years of this decade Liu Yuan was ‘taken over by the city government, supported by new scholars and new businessmen of the Republic.’ They opened the gardens and houses to the public, ‘free, or with a thin dime as the fee to admit anyone to this priceless heritage for a few hours, or for a day.’ But there seem not to have seen many visitors in the garden; as seen by a western visitor in 1926, ‘a tea boy passing by, and an occasional visitor, are the only persons one sees in the garden. There are no guards. Nothing seems to be molested.’⁸³ Gardens at this time were still part of everyday life, where their visitors could ‘see the Chinese garden in its truly Chinese perspective, to understand it as it really is’.⁸⁴ (Figures 4.11, 4.12)

In 1934, one of Sheng Xuanhuai’s sons reclaimed the ownership of Liu Yuan and other properties which had been given to the charity. But a few years later, the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) began. Liu Yuan was occupied by Japanese troops, and later by National Government military, and was used as a military stable. Plants were neglected, buildings were damaged, furniture and the decorations were removed ‘for safe keeping’ but never returned. The garden again fell into decay.⁸⁵

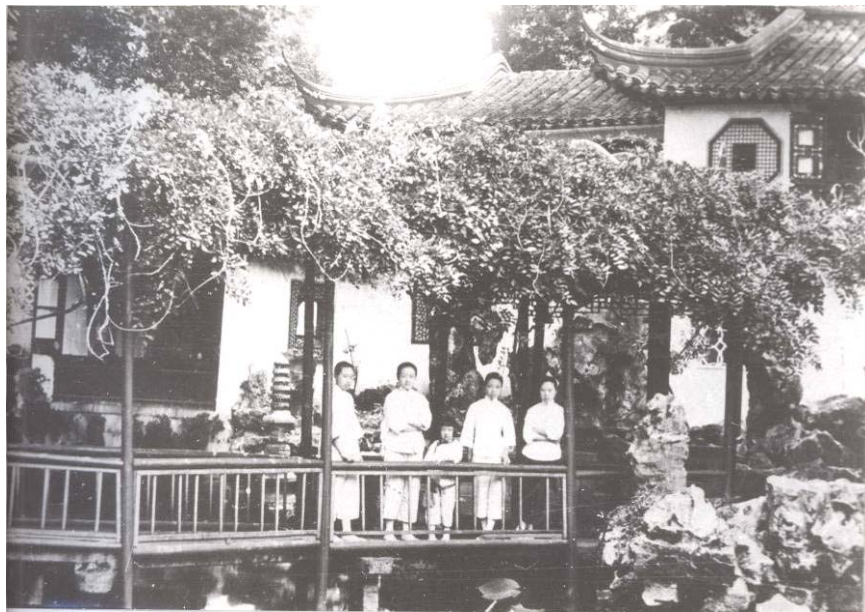


Figure 4.10 Liu Yuan in 1917, with family members of Sheng standing on the bridge (Source: photo provided by Fengquan Chen (陈凤全))

⁸³ Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 21.

⁸⁴ Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 13.

⁸⁵ Fengquan Chen (陈凤全), *History of Liu Yuan* (unpublished paper provided by its author). Fengquan Chen referenced local newspapers published in 1920s and 1930s. For the reference of ‘the furniture and decorations removed for safe keeping’, see Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 14.

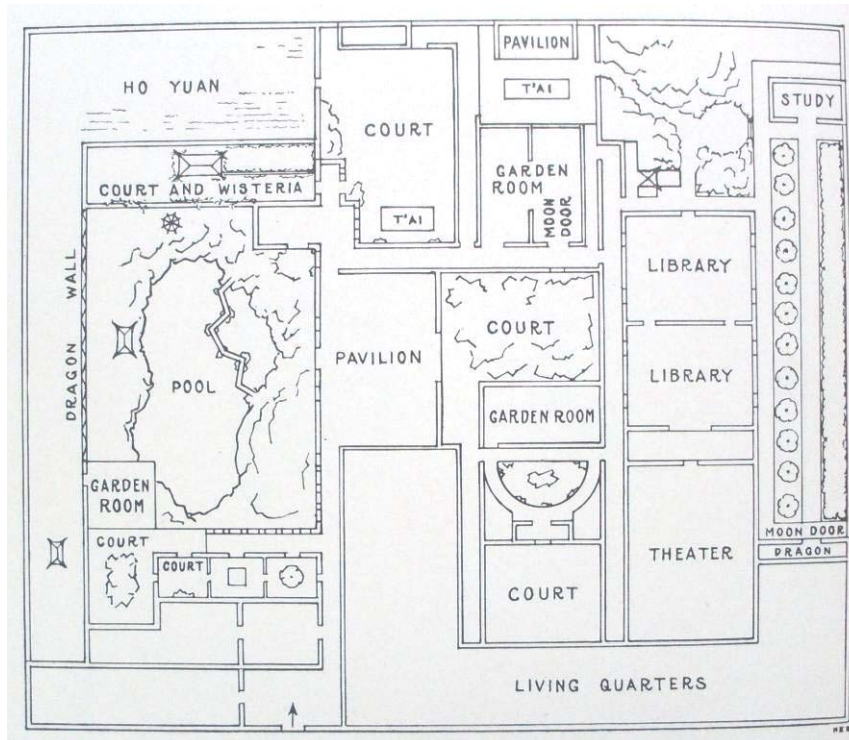


Figure 4.11 Liu Yuan Plan, drawn from memory by Florence Lee Powell, a college teacher who lived in Suzhou in 1920s, and re-drawn by a landscape architect. This drawing is believed 'sufficiently accurate to give a true idea of this model garden'. It shows that, in 1920s, the houses and gardens of Liu Yuan was jointly opened to visitors. (Source: Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 25.)



Figure 4.12 Main entrance of Liu Yuan, with sentry box at the right of the gate. The picture was taken by Florence Lee Powell in 1926. (Source: Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 25.)

But not all gardens in Suzhou were damaged by war and neglected by their people. During this period, some efforts were made, in collaboration between both Chinese gentry and the West, to preserve Suzhou gardens as heritage. As described by Florence Lee Powell in 1943:

Recently a group of citizens has assisted the city government in preserving the gardens of Soochow [Suzhou], once private gardens but now property of the city. To be a member, a man must be a scholar. The group meets in the room pictured below. [...] One of the black plaques at the back of the room was given by a Chinese organization corresponding to the Rotary Club in the West.

Who knows but that, already, fate has decreed that the East and the West cooperate in the continued effort to preserve the gardens of Soochow.⁸⁶ (Figure 4.13)



Figure 4.13 The meeting room of the local gentry group who promoted Suzhou garden preservation in 1940s. It was situated in Hu Qiu (Tiger Hill), a few miles outside the city and a historical scenic sites, and was called 'Little Soochow'. (Source: Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 15.)

History of Liu Yuan 1949-2000s

After the establishment of P. R. China, Liu Yuan was taken over by the government from its owner, the fourth son of Sheng Xuanhuai, once super rich but now an ordinary citizen, if not poorer.

In 1953, Suzhou Municipal Government made the decision to restore Liu Yuan to make it a public garden.⁸⁷ In the same year, the provincial government allocated

⁸⁶ Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 15.

100,000 Yuan for Suzhou garden restoration, and *the Committee for Restoring Gardens and Ancient Sites of Suzhou* (苏州市园林古迹修整委员会 CRGASS) was established to take charge of this mission. The director of the committee was Xie Xiaosi (谢孝思 1905-2008), a respected Chinese painting master, educator and patriotic CCP member. The members of the committee included Zhou Shoujuan (周瘦鹃 1895-1968) and Jiang Yinqiu (蒋吟秋 1896-1981), both celebrated artists and literati. Well equipped with traditional culture and art and prompted by a sincere passion for a socialist China, they devoted themselves to the Liu Yuan project and quickly produced restoration plans. Because the intention was to use Liu Yuan as a public garden, there was no concern about restoring the house and the family shrines which the garden was attached to. The houses and shrines have since been let as dwelling houses and factories.

The construction work was taken charge of by *Wang Licheng Construction Factory* (王立成营造厂), a leading company for traditional construction owned by the Wang family. Their workers were 'Xiangshan Artisans' (香山匠人), who had long inherited traditions in garden and building construction in Suzhou and its surroundings. Building materials, such as timber columns and beams, windows and doors, furniture and interior decoration, were mainly collected from other old houses and gardens. Following the ideological and economic trend, many once-wealthy families had become very poor, so their valuables, such as redwood furniture, was sold cheaply to make a living. Besides, the demolition of old buildings such as family shrines and abandoned houses also provided rich building components to be recycled. As a key restoration project, Liu Yuan received the best components from various places in Suzhou. For example, the elegantly designed and comprehensively carved round door frame in Mandarin Duck Hall was from a painter's house; over a hundred partitions and windows of Liu Yuan were disassembled from a family shrine; an octagonal pavilion was removed from a garden of the Song family; replacement *nanmu* (*Phoebe Nees*) beams were from another family shrine; and fourteen window

⁸⁷ Source from the interview with Fengquan Chen (陈凤全), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 18th August 2006. See interview transcript No. SS-CF; also see Bocheng Hu (胡伯诚), *Suzhou yuanlin heyi neng jinru shijieyichan minglu* (苏州园林何以能进入世界遗产名录 How have Suzhou gardens been able to be listed as World Heritage Sites) <<http://su.people.com.cn/GB/channel251/413/200803/24/11693.html>> [accessed 15th October 2009]

screens were bought for five Yuan each from a cart which was taking them to carpenters to make abacus beads.⁸⁸ (Figure 4.14)

The restoration was finished by the end of 1953, with a cost of 50,000 Yuan, much lower than its original budget of 300,000 Yuan.⁸⁹ Supervised and carried out in consultation with experts on traditional culture and art, constructed by workers skilled in traditional techniques and knowledge, repaired with real historical materials and building pieces, the Liu Yuan restoration project achieved such a standard that no later garden restoration has been able to achieve. The restored Liu Yuan is believed to have entirely brought back the lost splendour of this famous garden.⁹⁰ However, due to the lack of historical research, or rather, the difference in conservation philosophy, the restored Liu Yuan had obvious differences compared with its early 20th century version. Here, the question of authenticity remains. But the real question is: should this evidence be used to argue about the authenticity of the conservation of Liu Yuan, or to argue the meaning of authenticity? (Figures 4.15, 4.16)

⁸⁸ Bocheng Hu (胡伯诚), *Suzhou yuanlin heyi neng jinru shijieyichan minglu* (苏州园林何以能进入世界遗产名录How have Suzhou gardens been able to be listed as World Heritage Sites) <<http://su.people.com.cn/GB/channel251/413/200803/24/11693.html>> [accessed 15th October 2009]

⁸⁹ Source from the interview with Fengquan Chen (陈凤全), conducted by the author in Suzhou on 18th August 2006. See interview transcript No. SS-CF; also see Bocheng Hu (胡伯诚), *Suzhou yuanlin heyi neng jinru shijieyichan minglu* (苏州园林何以能进入世界遗产名录How have Suzhou gardens been able to be listed as World Heritage Sites) <<http://su.people.com.cn/GB/channel251/413/200803/24/11693.html>> [accessed 15th October 2009]

⁹⁰ Zheng Zhou (周铮), *Liu Yuan* 留园 (the Lingering Garden) (Suzhou: Guwuxuan Chubanshe, 1998), p. 4.



Figure 4.14 Quxi Lou (曲溪楼 Crooked Brook Tower) in restoration (1953) The building structure has been mostly well kept, but there was damage to both walls and roof, and timber window frames are missing. Other garden features such as rocks, pond, bridge and old trees are well preserved. (Source: provided by Fengquan Chen (陈凤全))



Figure 4.15 'Leaking view' windows on the corridor wall beside Quxi Lou, in 1926 (left) and 2006 (right). Three of the four window patterns are entirely different in two pictures. (Sources: (left) Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 30; (right) photo by author, August 2006)



Figure 4.16 Quxi Lou in 1926 (left) and 2006 (right). Notable differences include: the demise of the leaning camphor tree and replacement with an upright tree, which has been criticised by contemporary architects and garden professionals for its aesthetic imperfection; windows on the top floor of the building are much plainer than the original. The arrangement of plants by the pond is also different. (Sources: (left) Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 30; (right) photo by author, August 2006)

On 1st January 1954, Liu Yuan formally opened to the public. Meanwhile the Liu Yuan Administration was founded for the garden's management. Immediately it attracted over 10,000 visits each day, and Liu Yuan was soon known as one of the Four Best Gardens in China.⁹¹ In 1961, Liu Yuan was listed on the first batch of Cultural Heritage Sites of National Significance by the Ministry of Interior of the PRC. During the Cultural Revolution, Liu Yuan was renamed as Hong Wei Gongyuan 红卫公园 (Red Guard Park) between 1966 and 1971. By carefully reshaping itself as a park serving the people, Liu Yuan escaped the mass destruction of other cultural heritage.

⁹²

In 1991, Liu Yuan Administration took back the original family shrine and some of the houses of Liu Yuan, which had been used as the store of a medicine factory, and restored the buildings in order to 'return Liu Yuan to its original form'.⁹³ The restored

⁹¹ Fengquan Chen (陈凤全), *History of Liu Yuan* (unpublished paper provided by its author). Fengquan Chen referenced local newspapers published in 1920s and 1930s.

⁹² Fengquan Chen (陈凤全), *History of Liu Yuan* (unpublished paper provided by its author). Fengquan Chen referenced local newspapers published in 1920s and 1930s.

⁹³ Fengquan Chen (陈凤全), *History of Liu Yuan* (unpublished paper provided by its author). Fengquan Chen referenced local newspapers published in 1920s and 1930s.

family shrine, originally built in 1892, is now used for the souvenir shops and exhibition rooms of Liu Yuan.⁹⁴

After being designated as a World Heritage Site in 1997, the protection of Liu Yuan was further strengthened. From 1998 to 2000, the 'environmental reorganisation project' removed over 70 homes from Liu Yuan site in order to give a space of 5207 m² for constructing the Suzhou Garden Archives (1998), gardeners and workers' offices and nurseries (1998-1999), a ticket office (2002), an 'ecological' car park (that is, a car park planted with a few lines of trees and paved with cement bricks with holes to allow grass to grow [Figure 4.17]) (2003), and the new building of Liu Yuan Administration (2003).⁹⁵



Figure 4.17 'Ecological Car Park', using with permeable paving and planting, at Liu Yuan, built upon the original residential units of Liu Yuan. (Source: photo by author, August 2006)

From a Private Home to a Garden Museum: Changes of Liu Yuan

Houses of Liu Yuan

In late 19th century, there were three residential units in Liu Yuan. One was at the southwest corner, which had been the dwelling house neighbouring Liu Yuan before

⁹⁴ See <http://www.gardenly.com/art3.asp> [accessed 21 Oct., 2009]

⁹⁵ Liu Fengquan, *History of Liu Yuan* (unpublished paper provided by its author).

it was bought by Sheng Kang and reconstructed in 1887. It was called *Yong Shan Tang* (永善堂 Eternal Mercy Hall). The second was *Dong Zhai* (东宅 East House), located at the east side of Liu Yuan. Its location was the original housing area of Liu Yuan dating back to the late 16th century. The third was the main house constructed in 1888 by Sheng Kang. It was located at the south side of Liu Yuan, next to the family shrine and facing the street.

After 1949, Yong Shan Tang became the home of nearly two dozen households. These residents were removed in 1998 under the environmental reorganisation of Liu Yuan's surroundings, and on the site the first garden archives of China, Suzhou Garden Archives, was built, which is a traditional-style-inspired but completely new building (Figure 4.18). In the 1940s, Dong Zhai was used to house war refugees, and was gradually taken over for residential accommodation. In 2000, 42 homes were demolished on the Dong Zhai site, which created nearly 3000 m² for the extension of Liu Yuan Administration (visitors car park, the Administration's office building and ticket office) ⁹⁶



Figure 4.18 The Suzhou Garden Archives—the first Garden Archives in China was built and opened in 2002. (Source: the official website of Suzhou Municipal Administrative Bureau of Gardens, <http://www.ylj.suzhou.gov.cn/Info_Detail.asp?id=6902> [accessed 23rd October 2009])

⁹⁶ Liu Yuan official website <<http://www.gardenly.com/art3.asp>> [accessed 4th November, 2009]

Layout and Functions of Liu Yuan

In order to identify how Liu Yuan has been changed throughout the 20th century, a comparison was made among records from various periods of time. By comparing the garden survey maps in 1910, 1930s, 1950s, 1980s and 2000, it can be seen that the most significant changes happened in the 1950s restoration, with some buildings being replaced by re-designed landscapes. Between the 1950s and 2000, few changes occurred. But after 2000, a significant expansion took place, mainly the removal of a housing area of the Liu Yuan property to clear space for the tourist car park, a new garden administration building and the Suzhou Garden Archives. (Table 4.2; Figures 4.19 - 4.23)

Table 4.2. List of surveys and features of Liu Yuan 1910-2000s

<i>Time of change</i>	<i>Location (on Figures 4.19-4.23)</i>	<i>Description and meanings of changes</i>	<i>Significance of impact</i>
1910-1930s	1,2	Crane garden and deer garden (1), the vegetable garden and the zoo (2) became unrecognisable on 1930s map. The former vegetable garden was re-named as <i>penglai</i> (蓬莱 immortal island); crane garden and deer garden was removed and the site left unmarked. Original path and buildings remained. →from private garden to public garden	significant
1910-1930s	3	<i>Shijing huawu</i> (十景花坞 ten-scene flower garden) was unmarked on 1930s plan, but it is unknown if the site was redesigned or not.	Medium significance
1910-1930s	4,5	The names of two pavilions, <i>zhileting</i> (至乐亭 Pavilion of Great happiness) (4) and <i>yueshu xingtai</i> (月树星台 moon on the tree, stars on the tower) (5) are swapped. ⁹⁷	significant
1953	1,2	1 and 2 were redesigned again. On site 1, Buildings are removed (or destroyed before the restoration) and an orchard, magnolia and bamboo groves are planted. On site 2, a building complex is added and the site is re-landscaped.	significant
1953	3	The site was re designed and an oval shaped pond is added	Medium significant

⁹⁷ It is unknown if this is a recording mistake made by the architect who recorded the 1930s plan or the names were intentionally swapped.

IV. Suzhou Gardens

1953	6	<i>Banye caotang</i> (半野草堂 Half-wild thatched hut) is removed. The corridor is reconstructed in a slightly different layout (compare 6 on 1930s map and 1950s map)	Medium significant
1953	7,8	Names of two buildings are changed. The former <i>zizaichu</i> (自在处 Place-to-be-yourself) (7) is changed into <i>yuancuige</i> (远翠阁 Tower of distant greening); the former <i>yiwulu</i> (亦吾庐 Study of Also-to-be-myself) is changed into <i>jiaqing xiyu kuaixue zhi ting</i> (佳晴喜雨快雪之亭 Good-sun Benign-rain Happy-snow Pavilion) →removal of personal identity	significant
1953	9	The former building <i>jiaqing xiyu kuaixue zhi ting</i> (佳晴喜雨快雪之亭 Good-sun Benign-rain Happy-snow Pavilion) (9) is removed from the site, and the name of this pavilion is re-designated at the former <i>yiwulu</i> (亦吾庐 Study of Also-to-be-myself) (8).	significant
1953	10	Buildings of the former theatre are removed and the site is redesigned into a garden →from private living place to public garden	significant
1953	11	The garden administration building is added ⁹⁸	Not significant
1953	12	The former pavilion <i>junzi suolü</i> (君子所履 Where the gentleman trod) is removed	Medium significant
1953	13	The former pavilion is removed	Medium significant
1950s-1980s	14	A pavilion is removed	Medium significant
c 2000s	1,2,3	The sites 1 and 3 are redesigned into a bonsai garden	Medium significant
2000s	11	The garden administration building is reconstructed and expanded of size. The site was the former house area of Liu Yuan property →from private living place to tourist site / garden museum	Medium significant
2000s	15	A new tourist car park is added at the site of former houses of Liu Yuan property →from private living place to tourist site	Medium significant
2000s	16	Suzhou Garden archives is built beside Liu Yuan	Not significant
1980s-2000s	17	The former family shrine is converted into the exhibition hall of the garden art of Liu Yuan →from private living place to tourist site	significant

⁹⁸ It is not clear from the survey plan that if the garden administration office uses existing buildings or is newly constructed.

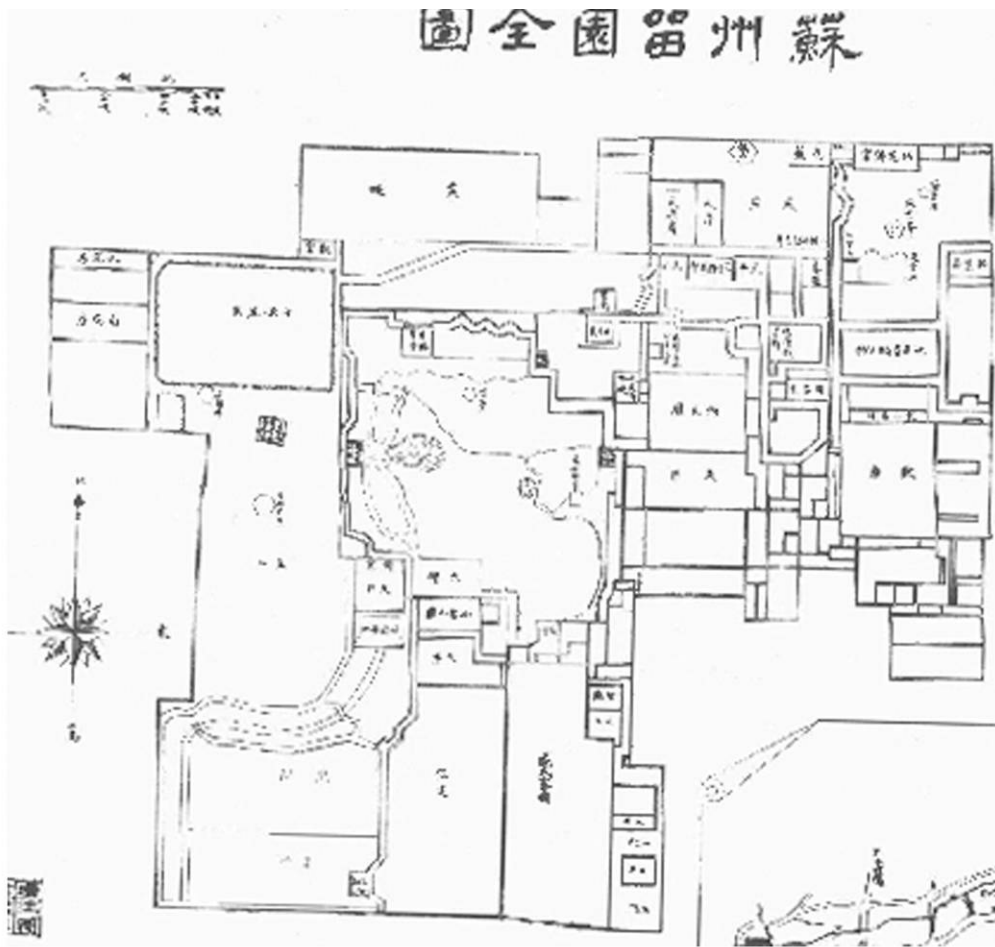


Figure 4.19 Sizhao Zheng (郑思赵), Liu Yuan plan (1910) (Source: private collection, provided by Fengquan Chen (陈凤全))



Figure 4.20 Liu Yuan Plan (1930s). Numbers and shadowing added by the author. See Table 4.2 for changes of layout and garden features. (Source: Jun Tong (童寯), *Jiangnan yuanlin zhi* (江南园林志 Records on Jiangnan Gardens), 2nd edition (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 1984), plate 4.)



Figure 4.21 Liu Yuan Plan (1950s). Numbers and shading added by the author. See Table 4.2 for changes of layout and garden features. (Source: Dunzhen Liu (刘敦楨), *Suzhou gudian yuanlin* (苏州古典园林 Classical gardens in Suzhou) (Beijing: China Architecture Press, 2005), pp. 342-343.)

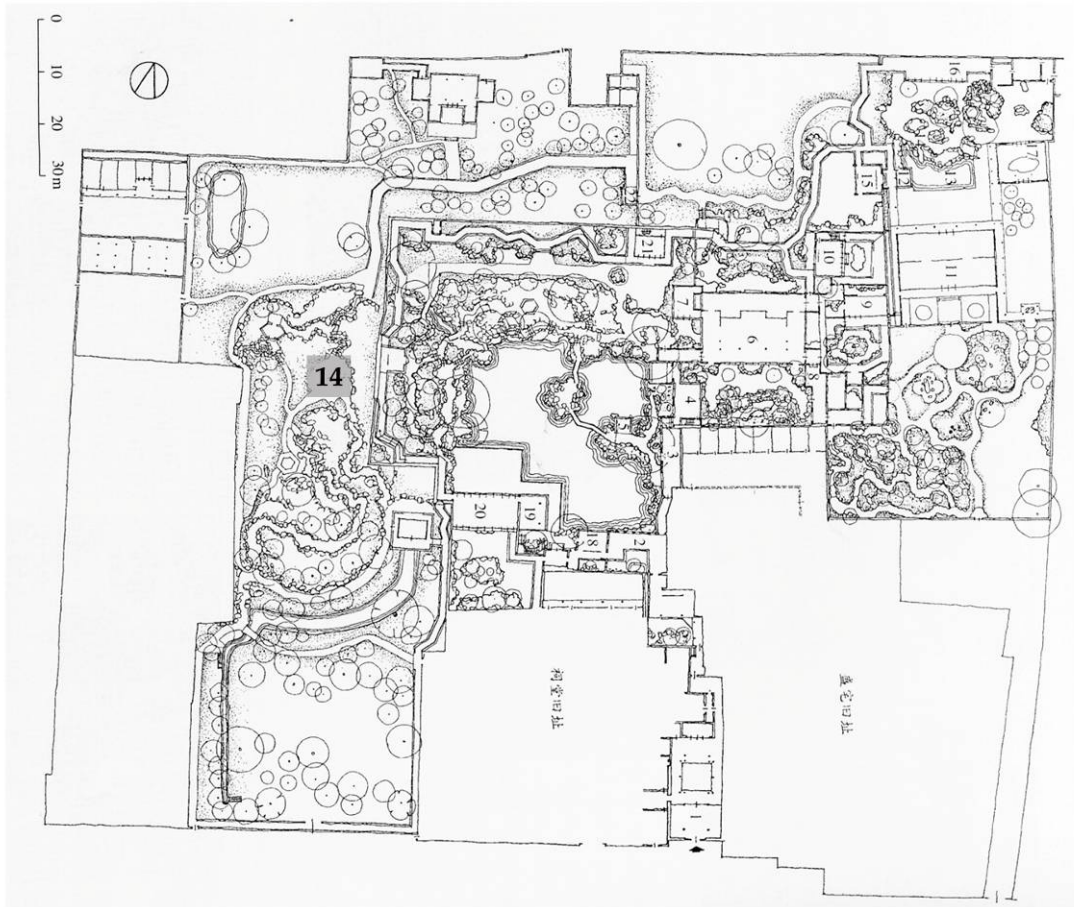


Figure 4.22. Liu Yuan plan (c1980s). Numbers and shadowing added by the author. See Table 4.2 for changes of garden features. (Source: Guxi Pan (潘谷西), *Jiangnan lijing yishu* (江南理景艺术 Gardening making and landscaping art of Jiangnan) (Nanjing: Southeast University Press, 2001), p. 178.)



Figure 4.23 Survey map of Liu Yuan (c 2005). Numbers and shading added by the author. See Table 4.2 for changes of land use. (Source: *Suzhou wenwu baohu danwei baohu fanwei ji jianshe kongzhi didai tulu, guchengqu fence* (苏州文物保护单位保护范围及建设控制地带图录, 古城区分册 Protected and controlled zones of Suzhou cultural heritage sites, volume of old city area), edited by Suzhou Cultural Heritage Bureau and Urban Planning Bureau (Suzhou, c 2005), p. 3.)

The analysis shows that between 1920s-1930s, Liu Yuan was converted from a private property (house and gardens) into a public garden. The northern part of Liu Yuan lost its productive function for meat and vegetables, as well as the crane garden—a symbol of gentlemen.

During the 1953 restoration, the northern part was altered again. The new design was led by aesthetic rather than functional reasons. Another change in 1953 was the removal of the family theatre: the site was taken over by a newly designed garden. Also, a few building names were changed, with the meanings altered from self-expression to mere descriptions of natural scenery. The changes emphasise the transformation of the former private garden into a public garden.

Further changes were made in the 2000s; besides altering the northern part to become a bonsai garden, the most significant change was the demolition and alteration of original houses and family shrines in order to improve tourism management facilities (including a tourist car park, the garden administration building complex and exhibition rooms).

Through the three major phases of change, Liu Yuan was transformed from a private home into a public garden and tourist attraction. The meanings of Liu Yuan changed from a source of life (both material and spiritual) for its owners to a garden museum of highlighted aesthetic values. (Figure 4.24)

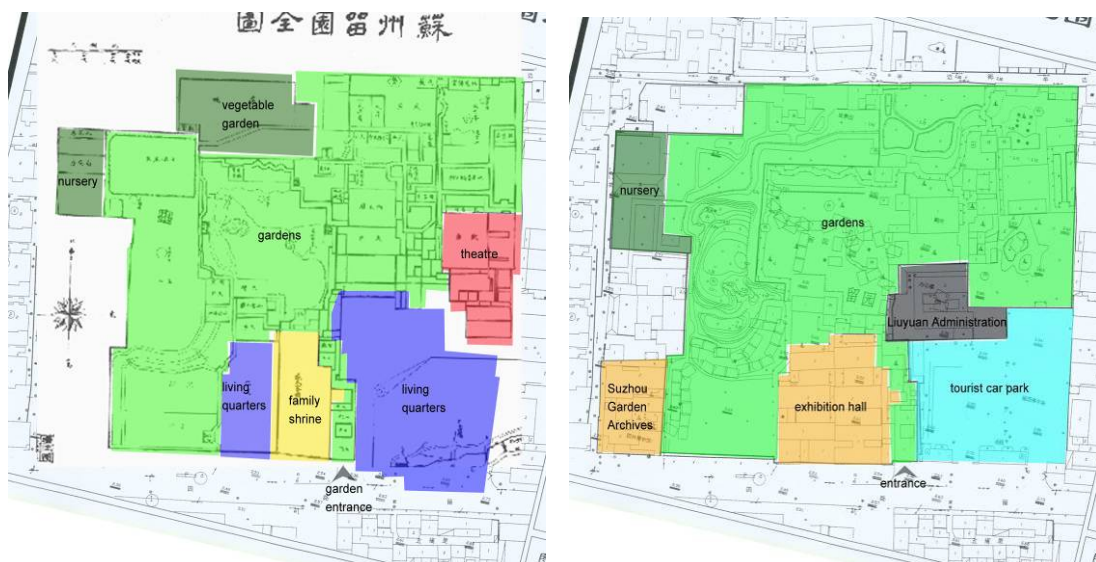


Figure 4.24. Uses of Liu Yuan in 1910 (left) and 2000s (right) (Sources: analysis by author, based on (left) Sizhao Zheng, Liu Yuan plan (1910) and (right) Survey map of Liu Yuan (c 2005).)

Today, Liu Yuan is well protected under local, regional, national and international laws and regulations. Visitors are able to enjoy its preserved beauty of art. However, there are lost meanings at Liu Yuan, as well as in other gardens in Suzhou, which can no longer be retrieved. A foreign visitor in 1926 gives us a glance of such meanings of Suzhou gardens:

The Chinese garden is practically never built as a “public” garden in the Western meaning of the word. It is considered a part of everyday life, and is begun and planned, where it can be afforded, along with the living quarters for the pleasure of its owner, his immediate family, his favourite concubine, the families of his sons, his other relatives, and his friends. Generally, the garden is not completed when the living quarters are; the owner continues the building of the garden as his own *individual expression* of the centuries-old Chinese culture, adding a new court, another garden room, or a mountain of naturally weathered rocks, as his inspiration moves him.⁹⁹

CONCLUSION

This study reveals how the values of Suzhou gardens have been changed throughout the latter half of the 20th century, and how these changes have affected the appearance and meaning of Suzhou gardens. Until the late 1940s, Suzhou gardens were appreciated as an elegant living environment which supported both physical and spiritual needs. The interpretation of Suzhou gardens for their aesthetic and architectural excellence only came to dominate other meanings after 1949, when ideological control suppressed freedom of thought. Such influence still affects the interpretation of Suzhou gardens today. Although there are scholarly works on the topics of the political, cultural or economic context of Suzhou gardens, mostly produced outside China, Chinese professional training and education (garden history for example) has been largely focused on architectural, artistic and horticultural perspectives, and so that is the information offered to visitors at Suzhou gardens today. Another change is the garden culture. Suzhou gardens, from a culture for the individual and source of life, turned into a heritage and commodity; although some of the best gardens are preserved and open to everybody, the Suzhou garden culture by and large has not yet been revived in Suzhou people’s daily life.

⁹⁹ Florence Lee Powell, *In the Chinese Garden* (NY: The John Day Company, 1943), p. 19.

Repairing Broken Continuity:

Vernacular Gardens in Huizhou

The Huizhou area developed a distinctive regional garden style that emerged from the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD) and achieved its pinnacle in Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing (1644-1911 AD) times, evidently as a consequence of the increasing wealth of Huizhou merchants, who generously invested in house and garden construction. Garden culture continued in Huizhou until the mid 20th century, when it was suddenly wiped out by Socialist Reform, as was the Huizhou merchant class. By the early 1980s, Huizhou had become one of the poorest regions of China, and most of its traditional gardens as well as its garden culture had disappeared. Since the mid 1980s, a few well-preserved villages in Huizhou set out to develop tourism as a source of income, encouraged by an economic upturn. In 2000, two villages, Xidi and Hongcun, were designated as World Heritage Sites, which significantly increased the number of tourists and improved the economic situation of both governments and individuals. This economic boom in turn encouraged the return of garden culture, as can be seen at Hongcun, where the derelict gardens are being restored and new gardens are being constructed. This, however, has not been the case for Xidi, where the locals' freedom to modify their property (house and gardens) has been constrained by conservation laws and regulations within the spirit of international conservation principles. This chapter investigates contemporary garden culture at Xidi and Hongcun, where the local governments have distinctively different attitudes towards heritage conservation. Using them as case studies, the role of local people in maintaining garden culture is explored and the impact of conservation policy on heritage continuity is questioned, as well as the concept of heritage.

INTRODUCTION

Huizhou

Huizhou (徽州 the prefecture of Hui) is the name of a prefecture in imperial China which existed between 1121 and 1911. Huizhou prefecture includes six xian (县 county), namely She (歙), Yi (黟), Wuyuan (婺源), Xiuning (休宁), Qimen (祁门) and Jixi (绩溪). In 1912, at the fall of the Chinese Empire and with the establishment of the Republic, the prefecture system was abandoned, but the names and boundaries of these six counties remained without change.

Today, five of the six counties of Huizhou belong to Anhui province (安徽省), and one (Wuyuan) is in Jiangxi Province (江西省). Because the five counties are all located in the very south of Anhui, the geographical name Huizhou is replaced by Wannan (皖南 Southern Anhui). But as a historical and cultural term, the name of Huizhou remains alive and is largely used by both professionals and locals. In this thesis, the term Huizhou is preferred to Wannan in referring to the six historic counties of Huizhou.

The climate in Huizhou is sub-tropical, and the terrain is mostly mountainous and lavishly covered by forests. Folk memory in Huizhou describes their landform as: 70% mountain, 10% water, 10% agricultural fields, 10% roads and housing.¹ These physical conditions brought rich natural resources including timber, bamboo, tea, medical plants, and in some parts, stones (used as paving stones, ornamental stones in garden, and for stone carving and so on), but there was not much flat land available for agriculture and housing.

The population in Huizhou is not indigenous, however. They are the descendants of nobles and even royal families from northern China who emigrated to Huizhou mainly in the 4th, 9th and 12th centuries to escape war. They brought Confucianism and their respect for education with them. Therefore, the cultural environment in Huizhou, unlike many country areas in China, was well developed, and the influence of Confucianism was strong both culturally and ideologically.

¹ This is a saying in Huizhou area, of which the Chinese text is 七山一水一分田，一分道路和庄园。 Another version of this saying, slightly different however, is '80% of land is covered by mountains, 10% by water, 10% by agricultural fields' 八山一水一分田。

Huizhou Merchants and Huizhou Culture

Because of the surplus in population and shortage of farm land, while still teenagers Huizhou boys would be sent by their relatives to the cities in the economic centre, Jiangnan (江南), to learn the skills of trading. During Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) times, by establishing a network with the government, Huizhou merchants successfully controlled the markets in salt, timber, silk, tea and so on, and established a considerable wealth, which reinforced cultural development in both Jiangnan and Huizhou, respectively their dwelling place and their hometown.² For example, in Yangzhou (扬州), a port city in Jiangnan, centre of salt trade and a popular place for Huizhou merchants, over 90% of the gardens were made by Huizhou merchants.³ In Huizhou, which benefited from the money sent back by their merchant sons, buildings and gardens also achieved an exquisite standard.

Besides gardens and buildings, Huizhou culture in general was nourished by the wealth of Huizhou merchants and Confucianist philosophy (which by that time had developed into Neo-Confucianism by accepting ideas from Daoism and Buddhism). It gradually developed into a unique regional culture, particularly noted for Xin'an (新安, Xin'an is the old name of Huizhou) Neo-Confucianism, the Huizhou school of Puxue (朴学, the critical interpretation of ancient texts), Xin'an medicine, the Xin'an painting school, seal cutting, engraving or itching painting, the Huizhou local operas, block printing, architecture, potted landscape, and so on.⁴

² *Huishang yanjiu* (徽商研究 A study of Huizhou merchants), ed. by Haipeng Zhang (张海鹏) & Tingyuan Wang (王廷元) (Hefei: Anhui People's Press, 1995)

³ Lei Gao (高磊), 'Huizhou yuanlin yu Yangzhou yuanlin zhi bijiao' (徽州园林与扬州园林之比较 Comparison of Huizhou Gardens and Yangzhou Gardens) (unpublished Masters thesis, Hefei University of Technology, 2003).

⁴ 'Preface', *Huizhou qiannian qiyue wenshu* 徽州千年契约文书(Contracts and documents in Huizhou in last thousand years), Vol. 1, collected and edited by Institute of History Studies, Social Science Academy of China (中国社会科学院历史研究所收藏整理) (Shijiazhuang: Huashan Art and Literature Press (花山文艺出版社), c.1991)

Garden Culture of Huizhou: a Broken Continuity

From the second half of the nineteenth century China became embroiled in a series of wars. The imperial court fought Western forces over trade expansion, while at the same time negotiating an agreement. There were also domestic wars, notably the Taiping Rebellion in which peasant armies rebelled against the imperial government. These troubles caused a sharp economic decline, which also had a significant impact on Huizhou trade. The trading network established and maintained by Huizhou merchants over generations was destroyed. When Huizhou became a battlefield, this caused significant damage to property. With insufficient resources to restore damaged homes and to maintain a merchant life style, the Huizhou building and garden culture soon declined.⁵

With the rise of communism in 1949 free trade was banned and the merchant class lost their role and means of support. As elsewhere, the main occupation now became agriculture, but with land shortages in this populous area, by the 1950s Huizhou had become one of the most impoverished regions in China. Meanwhile, the Land Reform movement of the early 1950s transformed living conditions, with large residences confiscated from their merchant owners, divided into small units and allocated to poor peasants. In other instances residences were purposely demolished, and the lack of resources made neglect evident everywhere. Ornamental gardens were considered as unnecessary and unaffordable luxuries which did not fit a proletarian life style. Many private and public gardens were converted into vegetable plots, cleared to provide land for housing, or used as school premises. After such a lengthy period of decline, Huizhou gardens and garden culture had virtually disappeared. Although over half of Huizhou's buildings remained because they had been adapted to new uses, such 'usefulness' could not be demonstrated for the ornamental gardens, and only a few survived.⁶

Xidi and Hongcun as Case Studies

Xidi and Hongcun are two of the best surviving villages in the Huizhou region. When the author first visited them in 1997, and then 2001, Xidi had fewer than ten surviving

⁵ *Huishang yanjiu* (徽商研究 A study of Huizhou merchants), ed. by Haipeng Zhang (张海鹏) & Tingyuan Wang(王廷元) (Hefei: Anhui People's Press, 1995)

⁶ Source from the interview with Huisheng Hu (胡晖生), conducted by the author in Xidi, Huizhou on 21st June 2006. See interview transcript No. HS-HH.

gardens and Hongcun a similar number. Few of these gardens were in anything like a reasonable condition, several only surviving in parts, with an individual courtyard or some ornamental rocks. They all suffered greatly from a lack of care and maintenance.

However return visits in 2006 and 2007 revealed interesting changes. The gardens in Xidi, remained in a very similar state of neglect; however, in Hongcun there had been significant improvements. Existing gardens had been restored and additionally new gardens had appeared on vacant plots. Such contrasting results unavoidably generated a series of questions: what are the factors which created the different fortunes of gardens in these two villages? Can these new gardens in Hongcun still be referred to as heritage? Or, what do we mean by heritage in this instance; what is valued? How is it possible to restore a disrupted garden(ing) tradition? What is the best way to preserve garden heritage in this instance?

When visits over an interval of ten years revealed significant differences, it became obvious that Xidi and Hongcun would make good case studies in order to investigate why these changes occurred. Xidi and Hongcun were in very similar geographical settings, with the same cultural background, and their gardens and garden(ing) culture had been very similar until the end of the 20th century. These similarities in their initial condition enabled the subsequent changes in approach to be investigated and compared on a common basis. This was done by reviewing the administrative structures for conservation and tourist management in both villages, as well as the condition of existing gardens and the values of those involved with gardens, including professionals, politicians and residents. Both the private gardens and public gardens of the two villages were studied and compared, revealing the villages' different attitudes and attachments to gardens, and the different ways in which decision makers both valued gardens and understood the principles of conservation. This was done through a number of site visits, where the condition of the gardens was recorded by producing annotated sketch plans and through photography.

Twelve private gardens were selected as case studies; six at each village, selected for this study following the field survey and suggestions from local officials and scholars. All of these gardens have remnant historical (at least a hundred years old) features, and are locally known as 'ancient gardens'. These garden owners were given a questionnaire that asked about the relationship with their garden, about maintenance and alterations (if any), daily life in their garden, attitudes towards

gardens as a heritage, the vision of the future of their garden, and so on. Sketch plans were drawn in situ and photographs were taken to record the garden layout and the location of garden features and plants.

Three public gardens (one at Xidi, two at Hongcun) were also studied, with the materials from field visits and provided by the architect who was in charge of all three projects. The public garden at Xidi is managed by the local government and those in Hongcun by the tourist company, under supervision of the local and regional governments. Therefore, the architect's vision of the three projects in a way is also the official view of the heritage values.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT AT XIDI AND HONGCUN

The development of the tourist industry is generally one of the most efficient ways to promote heritage values: 'But often this form of development is haphazard instead of careful [...] China wants UNESCO World Heritage sites the same way actors want Oscars, for the recognition'.⁷ This means that heritage values are primarily seen in terms of economic gain or as a way to accumulate prestigious awards. This attitude can be seen in both Xidi and Hongcun.

Making Old Villages a Source of Tourism Revenue

In 1978, after three decades of isolation from the West, China reopened its doors, and launched a series of reforms to reinvigorate the national economy. This change meant that from a self sufficient economy based on agriculture and manufacture, a more varied economic basis was pursued, which included tourism. In 1979, China's economic reform was promoted by Deng Xiaoping, the party leader who championed tourism and promoted it in a (published) speech during a visit to the Yellow Mountain,

⁷ Michael Meyer, *The last days of old Beijing: life in the vanishing backstreets of a city transformed* (New York: Walker & Company, 2008), p. 179

a site of natural and cultural excellence within Huizhou.⁸ (Figure 5.1) It took a while before this new concept was explored but after being encouraged to do so by a group of architects, a first group of foreign tourists from Japan visited Xidi in spring 1985. When this proved to be a success the village quickly gained a reputation with visitor numbers increasing fast. This encouraged the local government to seriously consider tourism as a source of income and to establish the Xidi Tourism Service Company in 1993, run by local staff with revenue raised used to benefit the local authority which thereby managed to increase welfare in the area, providing free education, as well as pensions for the elderly.⁹



Figure 5.1 Deng Xiaoping at the Yellow Mountain, a symbol of the starting point of tourism development in P. R. China. (Source: *Chinanews.com* <<http://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/news/2009/05-29/U102P4T8D1711377F107DT20090529085127.jpg>> [accessed 6th February 2010])

The successful development of tourism in Xidi inspired other villages to explore this route. This included Hongcun, which benefited from a unique landscape setting in a valley with an artificial water network and well preserved houses. While a single physical entity, Hongcun is administratively divided into two villages. This anomaly caused much disagreement over the approach to be taken to draw tourists to the village. The various local power struggles between two councils meant abortive attempts and failure to establish policies that might help to draw tourists, resulting in

⁸ Xiaoping Deng (邓小平), 'Ba huangshan de paizi dachuqu' (把黄山的牌子打出去 Publicising the brand of the Yellow Mountain) (1979), in *Deng Xiaoping lun luyou* (邓小平论旅游 Deng Xiaoping on Tourism), ed. by Central Party Literature Research Studio & State Tourism Administration (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2000)

⁹ Source from the interview with Huisheng Hu (胡晖生), conducted by the author in Xidi, Huizhou on 21st June 2006. See interview transcript No. HS-HH.

the regional government taking charge of the issue. In 1996 they took the decision to outsource tourist management to Huangshan Jingyi Tourist Development Company, a private Beijing based company, leasing it to them for a period of thirty years. It was thought that local people would benefit more from an independent and professionally organised tourist company. Indeed the involvement of a commercial organisation led to instant investments in infrastructure and marketing, and meant that Hongcun quickly became a popular tourist destination. Although Xidi had started tourist development almost ten years earlier, Hongcun quickly caught up and from 2003 exceeded Xidi in number of visitors and revenue.¹⁰ (Figure 5.2)

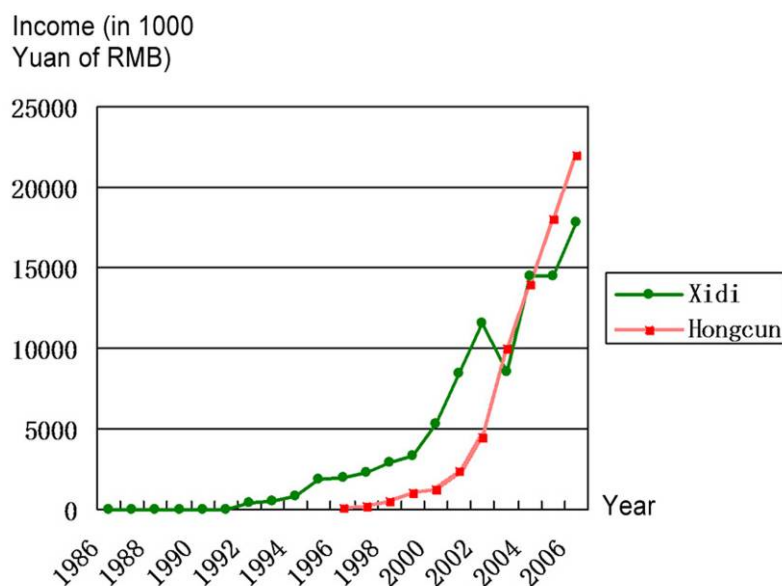


Figure 5.2 Income generated from ticket sales to visit the historic village of Xidi and that of Hongcun (1986-2006). This chart shows the growth of tourist income generated from ticket sales. It shows that the year 2000, when both villages were designated as World Heritage Sites, was a turning point. The drop in revenue in Xidi in 2003 was caused by the temporary stagnation in tourism during the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) epidemic, which had spread quickly throughout the country. However Hongcun managed to retain its upward trend as providing a special offer immediately after the epidemic meant that large numbers of visitors appeared in the summer of 2003. (Source: Chart drawn by author based on figures provided by local authority. Source of Xidi figures: Huisheng Hu (胡晖生) and others, *Xidi cunzhi* (西递村志 Chronicle of Xidi) (Xidi, 2006) [unpublished manuscript provided by its author], p. 230; Hongcun figures were extracted from the interviews with two tourism managers of Hongcun. Both interviews were conducted by the author in June 2006, see interview transcripts No. HM-WG and No. HM-HZ)

¹⁰ Source from the interview with Guoping Wang (汪国平), conducted by the author in Xidi, Huizhou on 23rd June 2006. See interview transcript No. HM-WG.

In 2000, Xidi and Hongcun were jointly designated as World Heritage Sites because ‘their street plan, their architecture and decoration, and the integration of houses with comprehensive water systems are unique surviving examples’.¹¹ This worldwide recognition of the heritage value boosted tourist numbers in both villages, and encouraged the desire to improve and restore private gardens both as the means of attracting further tourists and as a way to improve the local environment, thereby increasing the quality of life.

Heritage Management of Xidi and Hongcun

The heritage management of these villages has been organised very differently. Xidi, where the local government manages the tourist industry, set up strict rules about the management of houses and gardens based on heritage management in the spirit of the *China Principles*, a ‘Chinese Burra Charter’ but more rigid and less accepting of change.¹² These restricted alterations to houses and gardens and provided residents only with responsibility for daily maintenance. Material authenticity was maintained with a carrot-and-stick policy wherein residents were rewarded for following official policies to the letter. They were actively engaged in various events organised by the Xidi authority, and vouched their allegiance to conservation policies by communally writing letters to the UN general secretary. In return for their expression of commitment to their heritage, villagers received welfare and a share in income generated from the revenue.¹³ On the other hand, strict rules and punishment were set up to prevent any illegal alteration. A resident who created a new door through an old wall of her house was imprisoned for three years, which provided a general warning to all other villagers.¹⁴

In contrast to Xidi, the local government of Hongcun was less concerned with the principles of heritage conservation. The close relationship of the regional government

¹¹ UNESCO 2000, *Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun*, <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1002>> [accessed 10th April 2009]

¹² Lei Gao & Jan Woudstra, ‘Keeping Yuanmingyuan: a new vision through a holistic approach to conservation and authenticity’, in *Architectural heritage of China within global vision—proceedings of the international conference on Chinese architectural history IV*, (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2007), pp. 417-426; Fengqi Qian, ‘China’s Burra Charter: the Formation and Implementation of the China Principles’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2007), pp. 255-264.

¹³ Source from the interview with Dan Cheng (程丹), conducted by the author in Xidi, Huizhou on 21st June 2006. See interview transcript No. HG-CD.

¹⁴ Qun Xu (许群), Liwu Wang (王立武) & Junyao Pan (潘君耀), ‘Xidi cunmin buneng shanzhi zhengxiu guzhai’ (西递村民不能擅自整修古宅 Xidi villagers cannot unauthorised restore their ancient house), *Xihua News Agency*, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-09/02/content_5038541.htm> [accessed 15th January 2010]

with the tourist management company means that the latter is reaping the main profits. However while the local government has lost some of its revenue and ability to decide the nature of tourism as it is outsourced, it has reaped benefits by means of a regular income. Unfortunately the locals have benefited less and only share a small portion of the revenue. While this is problematic the local government encouraged residents to generate their own businesses, such as making and selling souvenirs, opening restaurants and guest houses. These became additional attractions for the urban tourists who come here to experience the 'happy life on the farm', which became the way in which life in the village was represented with reference to the recent past in which they exalted their life's experiences as farmers, rather than their former lives as merchants.

Soon, dozens of families opened their homes as hostels or restaurants. When tourist numbers kept increasing and with further experience in their management, some villagers used their resources to improve their gardens, in order to provide additional services and be more competitive. These improvements were often done by the locals themselves and included extensive modifications and adaptations, which were clearly against the *China Principles*, and indeed most international charters, about the definition and process of conservation.¹⁵ Besides these gardens that had been renovated there were also new gardens, built in a traditional manner. As a result, while the surviving gardens in Xidi have not changed much since 2000, gardens in Hongcun have not only been regenerated almost beyond recognition, but have also increased in number.

It seems therefore that the authenticity of the gardens of Hongcun, or even its historic environment as a whole, may be questioned. As this appears to conflict with UNESCO conservation guidance this merits further investigation. This is done by surveying the condition of gardens in both villages and the people associated with them, in order to detect what is really valued in these examples.

¹⁵ Australia ICOMOS, *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter)* (Canberra: The Australia ICOMOS, 1999); China ICOMOS, *Principles for the conservation of heritage sites in China (The China Principles)*, (Chengde: China ICOMOS, 2000, revised 2004)


RESIDENTIAL GARDENS AT XIDI AND HONGCUN

Private Gardens at Xidi and Hongcun

A Brief Description of Twelve Residential Gardens



The six gardens investigated at Xidi (see Table 5.1), except for one example, are included within a residential complex permanently inhabited by the residents. One other occupant lives elsewhere in recently built accommodation, with the old house shut up because it has become structurally unsound. The gardens however are open to visitors on request. Those residents with well preserved houses and gardens suitable to be visited by tourist parties are contracted to open their residence on a daily basis. They become shareholders and receive annual returns from the tourist company. They are not allowed to convert their property for other uses, but are permitted to have a small temporary stall to sell souvenirs. As the gardens are visited daily by hundreds of tourists, residents tend to spend their time away from their gardens in order to avoid them. It is noticeable that there is little evidence of upkeep of the gardens, and except for keeping them clean and tidy there is no physical difference compared with ten years earlier.

Table 5.1 Residential gardens at Xidi¹⁶

<i>Garden name</i>	<i>Garden features</i>	<i>Garden use</i>	<i>visual appearance</i>
<i>Ruiyu Ting</i> (瑞玉庭 Auspicious Jade Hall)	one courtyard	residential place; tourist site	




¹⁶ Source extracted from six questionnaires from private garden owners at Xidi, conducted by Lei Gao; photos: author (Xidi, August 2007)

<p><i>Taoli Yuan</i> (桃李园 Peach and Plum Garden)</p>	<p>two gardens (one garden with an ancient well and flower terraces; the other is vegetable plot)</p>	<p>residential place; tourist site</p>	
<p><i>Xi Yuan</i> (西 园 West Garden)</p>	<p>three courtyards</p>	<p>residential place; tourist site</p>	
<p><i>Yi Yuan</i> (亦 园 Also Garden)</p>	<p>two gardens/ courtyards</p>	<p>residential place; tourist site</p>	

<p><i>Qingyun Xuan</i> (青云轩 Blue Cloud Pavilion)</p>	<p>one courtyard (with a hundred-year old tree peony)</p>	<p>residential place; souvenir outlet; tourist site</p>	
<p><i>Linxi Bieshu</i> (临溪别墅 By-the-Brook Villa)</p>	<p>two courtyards (with a hundred-year-old tree peony and a few other old trees)</p>	<p>currently not used</p>	

The six gardens of Hongcun (see Table 5.2), are similarly within residential buildings, but the gardens are used in a different way. While in Xidi residents are passive with respect to garden visits, in Hongcun many residents are actively engaged in generating tourist trade. Three of the six gardens have been adapted to new uses as family restaurants and hostels and have been creatively improved. Two of the gardens, not aiming to attract tourists, have been adapted to create better living conditions for the owners.

Table 5.2 Residential gardens at Hongcun¹⁷

<i>Garden name</i>	<i>Garden features</i>	<i>Garden use</i>	<i>Visual appearance</i>
<i>Deyi Tang</i> (德义堂 Virtue and Righteous- ness Hall)	three gardens (one historical fish pond)	residential space (for many generations); souvenir stall	
<i>Bi Yuan</i> (碧 园 Jade Garden)	six gardens and courtyards (one historical fish pond)	residential place (for retirement); family hostel	
<i>Maohua Ju</i> (冒华居 House of Splendid Flowering)	one garden and one courtyard	residential place	

¹⁷ Source extracted from six questionnaires from private garden owners at Hongcun, conducted by the author; photos: author (Hongcun, August 2007)

<p><i>Jianqin Xie</i> (<i>劍琴樹</i> Sword and Zither Pavilion)</p>	<p>one garden with a historical fish pond</p>	<p>residential place; Family hostel</p>	
<p><i>Songhe Tang</i> (<i>松鶴</i> 堂 Pine and Crane Hall)</p>	<p>one garden with a historical fish pond</p>	<p>family hostel and restaurant</p>	
<p><i>Jushan Tang</i> (<i>居善</i> 堂 Benevolence Living Hall)</p>	<p>one garden with a historical fish pond</p>	<p>residential place; family restaurant and hostel</p>	

Detailed Surveys of Four Residential Gardens

In order to have a closer view, four individual gardens, two in Xidi and two in Hongcun, are picked out for a detailed study, including their layouts, garden features and planting.

Survey one. Xi Yuan, Xidi

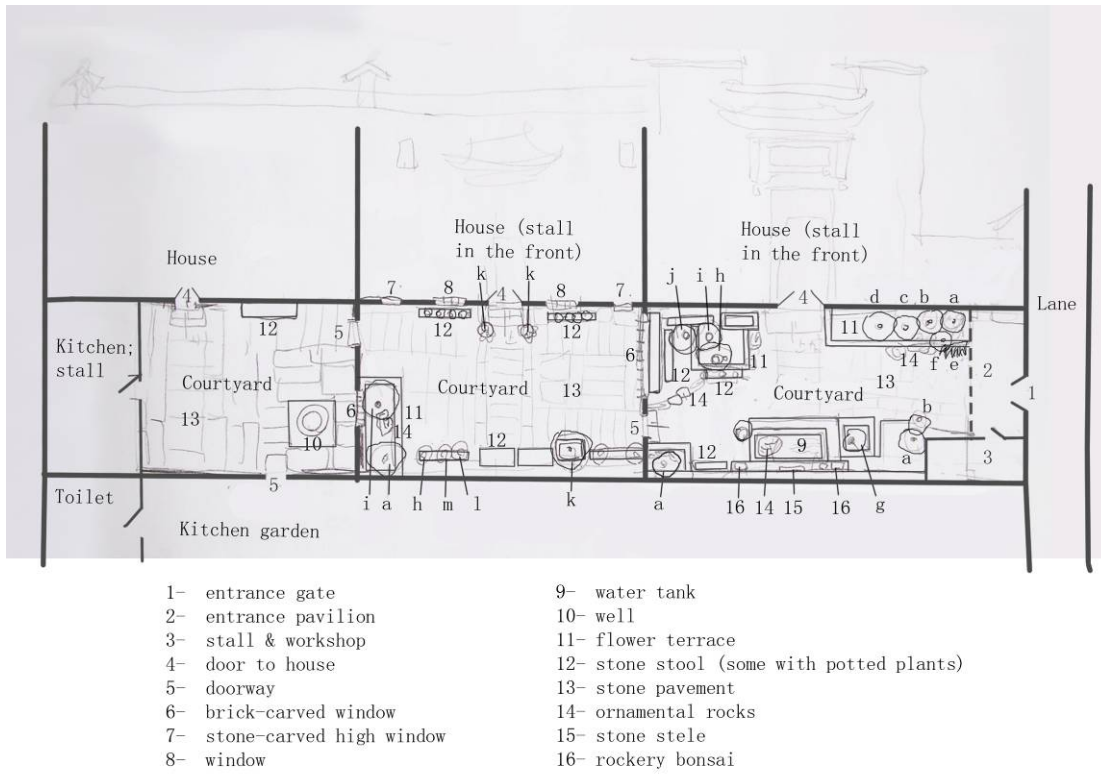
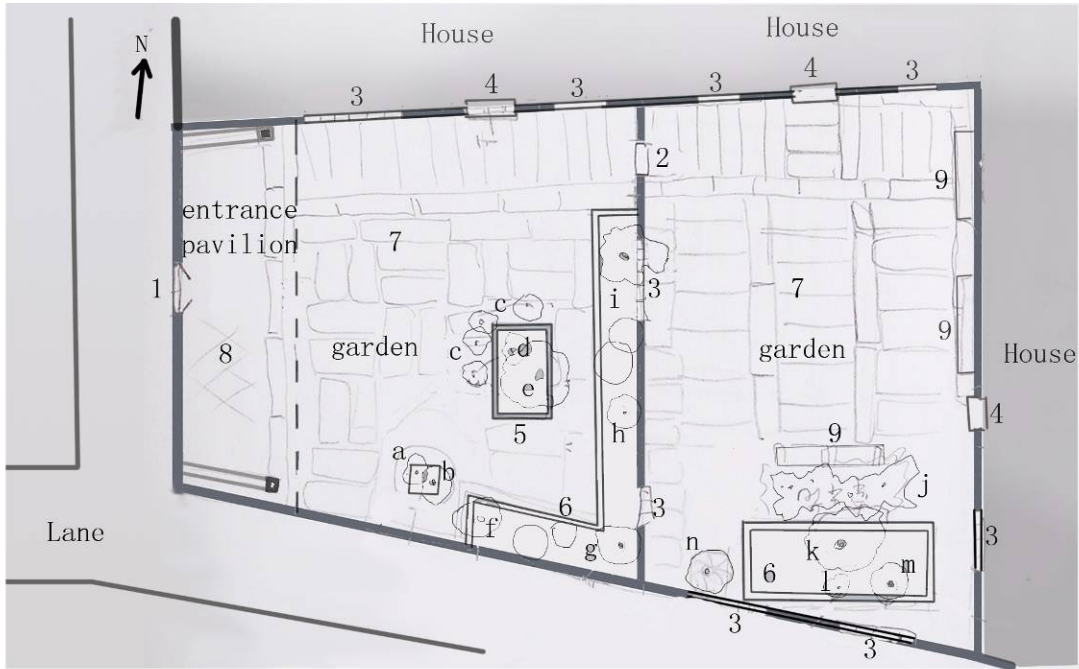


Figure 5.3 Sketch plan and garden features of Xi Yuan, Xidi (source: drawn by author based on field survey, 2006)

Table 5.3 Plants List of Xi Yuan, Xidi (recorded by author on 31 August, 2006)

a	nandina (<i>Nandina domestica</i> Thunb.)	南天竹
b	cotton rose (<i>Hibiscus mutabilis</i> L.)	芙蓉
c	Chinese evergreen (<i>Aglaonema modestum</i> Schott ex Engl.)	万年青
d	canna (<i>Canna glauca</i> L.)	美人蕉
e	mondo grass (<i>Ophiopogon japonicus</i> (L. f.) Ker-Gawl.)	沿阶草
f	balsamine (<i>Impatiens balsamina</i> L.)	凤仙花
g	Chinese fan palm (<i>Livistona chinensis</i> (Jacq.) R. Br. E Mart.) (30 years old)	棕榈
h	<i>Pinus</i> sp. (40 years old)	松树
i	Japanese mahonia (<i>Mahonia japonica</i> (Thunb.) DC.)	十大功劳
j	sweet olive (<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i> (Thunb.) Lour.)	桂花
k	Japanese boxwood (<i>Buxus microphylla</i> Sieb. et Zucc.)	小叶黄杨 (千年矮)
l	cape jasmine (<i>Gardenia augusta</i> (L.) Merr.)	栀子花
m	China rose (<i>Rosa chinensis</i> Jacq.)	月季
n	wintersweet (<i>Chimonanthus praecox</i> (L.) Link)	腊梅
	<i>Aglaia odorata</i> Lour.	米兰
	Orchid	兰花
	<i>Chrysanthemum</i> sp.	菊花

Survey two. Yi Yuan, Xidi



Plan of Yi yuan (Armpit Garden)亦园, Xidi

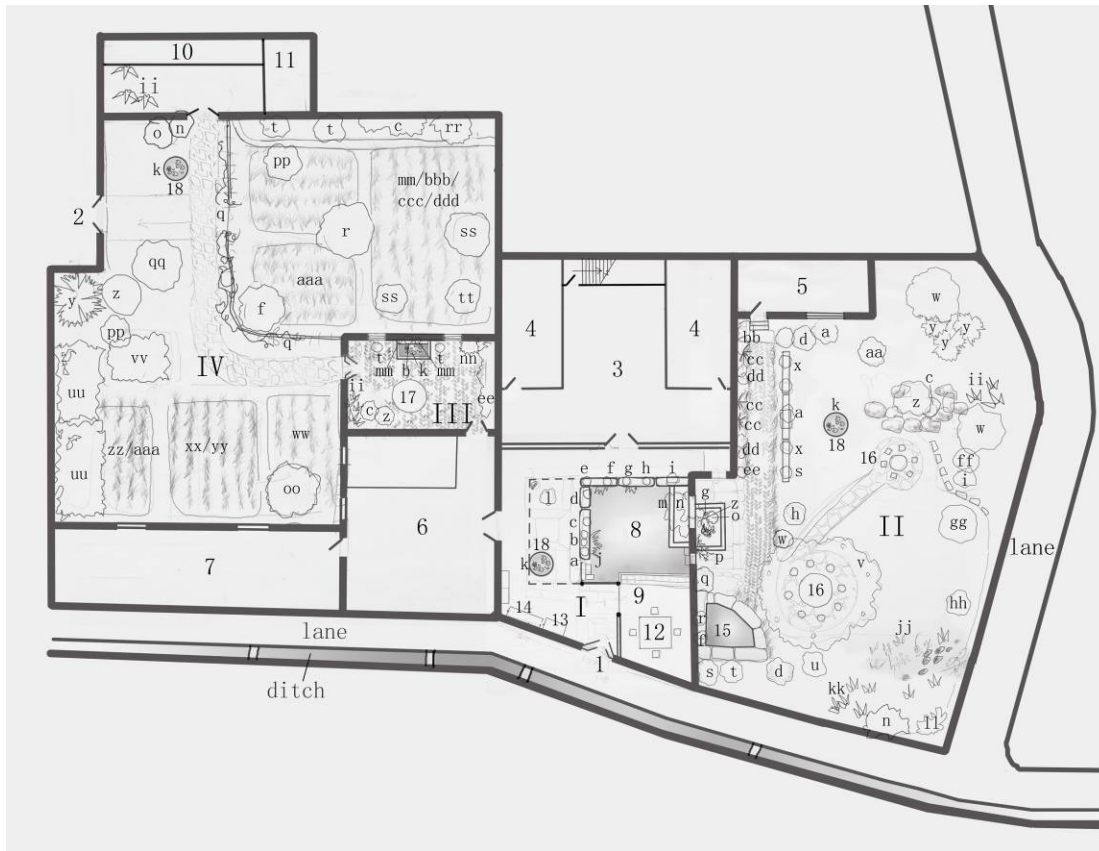
- 1- entrance door
- 2- doorway
- 3- stone/brick carved window (old)
- 4- door to house
- 5- ancient flower pot
- 6- flower terrace (constructed in late C20)
- 7- stone pavement (old)
- 8- cement pavement (constructed in late C20)
- 9- stone stool (unkown time)

Figure 5.4 Sketch plan and garden features of Yi Yuan, Xidi (source: drawn by author based on field survey, 2006)

Table 5.4 Plants List of Yi Yuan (recorded by author on 31 August, 2006)

a	Tomato	西红柿
b	canna (<i>Canna glauca</i> L.)	美人蕉
c	balsamine (<i>Impatiens balsamina</i> L.)	凤仙花
d	<i>Chrysanthemum</i> sp.	菊花
e	'Gui-zi' (local name, literally translated as 'noble-son' tree)	贵子树
f	<i>Hydrangea aspera chinensis</i> Maxim.	绣球
g	Yulan magnolia (<i>Magnolia denudate</i> Desr.)	辛夷
h	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i> Thunb.	梅
i	nandina (<i>Nandina domestica</i> Thunb.)	南天竹
j	morning glory bush (<i>Ipomoea carnea</i> subsp. <i>fistulosa</i> (Mart. Ex Choisy) D. F. Austin)	牵牛花
k	cape jasmine (<i>Gardenia augusta</i> (L.) Merr.)	梔子花
l	moutan peony (<i>Paeonia suffruticosa</i> Andrews)	牡丹
m	China rose (<i>Rosa chinensis</i> Jacq.)	月季
n	wintersweet (<i>Chimonanthus praecox</i> (L.) Link)	腊梅
	winter jasmine (<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i> Lindl.)	迎春花
	Chinese hibiscus (<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> L.)	树玫瑰
	pomegranate (<i>Punica granatum</i> L.)	石榴

Survey three. De Yi Tang, Hongcun



Key to the diagrammatic map

I	Water yard (old)	7	store
II	East Garden (old + new features)	8	Water pond
III	Courtyard (new)	9	Pavilion
IV	West Garden (kitchen garden) (original housing site. The garden was made since the house was burned down in the end of 19 th century)	10	Hen house
		11	Pigsty
		12	Square table (for tea)
1	Main entrance	13	Pump well
2	Rear gate	14	Washing table
3	Hall (living room)	15	Pond for watering plants
4	Bedroom	16	Stone table and stools
5	Study	17	Stone table (mill stone)
6	Kitchen and dining room	18	Urn
		19	Artificial mountains

Figure 5.5 Sketch plan and garden features of De Yi Tang, Hongcun (source: drawn by author based on field survey, 2006)

Table 5.5 Plants List Table: Plants List of De Yi Tang (recorded by author on 1 September, 2006)

a	<i>Rhododendron sp.</i>	杜鹃
b	asparagus fern (<i>Asparagus setaceus</i> (Kunth) Jessop.)	文竹
c	Japanese privet (<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i> Thunb.)	苦丁茶
d	cape jasmine (<i>Gardenia augusta</i> (L.) Merr.)	小叶梔子/大 叶梔子
e	<i>Chloranthus spicatus</i> (Thunb.) Makino	珠兰
f	peach (<i>Prunus persica</i> (L.) Batsch)	桃
g	<i>Michelia figo</i> (Lour.) Spreng	含笑
h	crape myrtle (<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> L.)	紫薇
i	nandina (<i>Nandina domestica</i> Thunb.)	南天竹
j	August lily (<i>Hosta plantaginea</i> (Lam.) Asch.)	玉簪
k	pygmy water lily (<i>Nymphaea tetragona</i> Georgi.)	睡莲
l	fragrant olive (<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i> Lour.)	四季桂花
m	moutan peony (<i>Paeonia suffruticosa</i> Andrews)	牡丹
n	kiwi fruit (<i>Actinidia deliciosa</i> (A. Chev.) C.F.Liang et A.R.Ferguson)	猕猴桃
o	bigleave podocarp (<i>Podocytisus macrophyllus</i> (Thunb.) D. Don.)	罗汉松
p	winter jasmine (<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i> Lindl.)	迎春花
q	loofah (<i>Luffa cylindrica</i> (L.) M. Roem.)	丝瓜
r	Chinese plum tree (<i>Prunus japonica</i> Thunb.)	李树
s	round kumquat (<i>Fortunella japonica</i> (Thunb.) Swingle)	金橘
t	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i> Thunb.	梅树/茶梅
u	apricot plum (<i>Prunus simonii</i>)	杏梅
v	Chinese wisteria (<i>Wisteria sinensis</i> (Sims) Sweet)	紫藤
w	loquat (<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i> (Thunb.) Lindl.)	枇杷
x	geranium (<i>Pelargonium zonale</i> (L.) L'Herit.)	海棠
y	Chinese fan palm (<i>Livistona chinensis</i> (Jacq.) R. Br. E Mart.)	棕桐
z	wintersweet (<i>Chimonanthus praecox</i> (L.) Link)	腊梅
aa	bayberry (<i>Myrica pensylvanica</i> Loisel.)	杨梅
bb	China hibiscus (<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> L.)	木槿
cc	<i>Gladiolus sp.</i>	建兰
dd	cockscomb (<i>Celosia argentea</i> L.)	鸡冠花
ee	China rose (<i>Rosa chinensis</i> Jacq.)	月季
ff	Japanese mahonia (<i>Mahonia japonica</i> (Thunb. Ex Murray) DC.)	十大功劳
gg	<i>Osmanthus sp.</i> (a wild plant in mountains, fruit small and red, mature in April, edible)	茶桂
hh	sweet olive (<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i> (Thunb.) Lour.)	八月桂
ii	'thunder bamboo' (local name of a kind of fast growing bamboo, thick and tall, bamboo shoot edible)	雷竹
jj	black bamboo (<i>Phyllostachys nigra</i> (Lodd. Ex Lindl.) Munro)	紫竹
kk	buddha's belly bamboo (<i>Bambusa ventricosa</i> Mc Clure)	罗汉竹
ll	Japanese banana (<i>Musa basjoo</i> Siebold et Zucc.)	芭蕉
mm	<i>Chrysanthemum sp.</i>	菊花
nn	stone pine (<i>Pinus pinea</i> L.)	五针松
oo	pear (<i>Pyrus communis</i> L.)	梨树
pp	pomegranate (<i>Punica granatum</i> L.)	石榴
qq	jujube (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i> Mill.)	枣树
rr	Yulan magnolia (<i>Magnolia denudata</i> Desr.)	望春花 (玉兰)
ss	tangelo (<i>Citrus x tangelo</i> J. Ingram et H. E. Moore)	桔子树
tt	sweet orange (<i>Citrus sinensis</i> (L.) Osbeck)	橙子树

uu	grape (<i>Vitis vinifera</i> L.)	葡萄
vv	<i>Vigna sinensis</i> (L.) Savi ex Hassk.	豆角
ww	linseed (<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> L.)	胡麻
xx	hot pepper (<i>Capsicum frutescens</i> L.)	辣椒
yy	aubergine (<i>Solanum melongena</i> L.)	茄子
zz	Chinese cabbage (<i>Brassica rapa</i> L. Pekinensis group)	白菜
aaa	radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i> L.)	萝卜
bbb	coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i> L.)	油心菜/香菜
ccc	garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i> L.)	大蒜
ddd	Chinese spinach (<i>Amaranthus tricolor</i> L.)	菠菜

Table 5.6 Plants List of Bi Yuan, Hongcun (recorded by author on 1 September, 2006)

a	baby's breath (<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i> L.)	六月雪
b	Chinese elm (<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> Jacq.)	榆树
c	scarlet maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i> L.)	紫红枫
d	stone pine (<i>Pinus pinea</i> L.)	五针松
e	Japanese plum (<i>Prunus salicina</i> Lindl.), 'gree plum'	绿梅
f	'cat-face flower'	猫头花
g	creeping juniper (<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i> Moench.)	匍地龙柏
h	winter jasmine (<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i> Lindl.)	迎春花
i	fragrant honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i> Lindl. et Paxt.)	金银花
j	tangelo (<i>Citrus x tangelo</i> J. Ingram et H. E. Moore)	桔子
k	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	杜鹃
l	sweet olive (<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i> (Thunb.) Lour.)	四季桂/桂花
m	Japanese boxwood (<i>Buxus microphylla</i> Sieb. et Zucc.)	小叶黄杨
n	August lily (<i>Hosta plantaginea</i> (Lam.) Asch.)	玉簪
o	butterfly orchid (<i>Oncidium papilio</i> Lindl.)	蝴蝶兰
p	loquat (<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i> (Thunb.) Lindl.)	枇杷
q	China rose (<i>Rosa chinensis</i> Jacq.)	月季
r	magnolia pourpre (<i>Magnolia liliiflora</i> Desr.)	紫玉兰
s	Chinese redbud (<i>Cercis chinensis</i> Bunge)	紫荆
t	tuberose (<i>Polianthes tuberosa</i> L.)	夜来香
u	moutan peony (<i>Paeonia suffruticosa</i> Andrews)	牡丹
v	trumpet honeysuckle (<i>Campsis radicans</i> (L.) Seem. ex Bureau)	凌霄
w	nandina (<i>Nandina domestica</i> Thunb.)	南天竹
x	jujube (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i> Mill.)	枣树
y	guava (<i>Psidium guajava</i> L.)	番石榴
z	cockscomb (<i>Celosia argentea</i> L.)	鸡冠花
aa	crape myrtle (<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> L.)	紫薇
bb	fragrant olive (<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i> Lour.)	桂花
cc	'thunder bamboo' (fast growing bamboo, thick and tall, bamboo shoot eatable)	雷竹
dd	Japanese photinia (<i>Photinia serrulata</i> Lindl.)	石楠
ee	<i>Hydrangea aspera chinensis</i> Maxim.	绣球
ff	cypress	柏树
gg	apple tree	苹果
hh	scarlet sage (<i>Salvia splendens</i> Buc'hoz ex Etl.)	一串红
ii	Mountain camellia (<i>Stewartia ovata</i> (Cav.) Weath.)	茶花
jj	lily (<i>Lilium</i> L.)	百合
kk	sweet orange (<i>Citrus sinensis</i> (L.) Osbeck)	橙子
ll	red maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i> L.)	红叶
mm	<i>Gladiolus</i> sp.	建兰
nn	pomegranate (<i>Punica granatum</i> L.)	石榴
oo	'jun sun' (local name; medicinal plants)	'君笋'
pp	balsamine (<i>Impatiens balsamina</i> L.)	凤仙花
qq	morning glory bush (<i>Ipomoea carnea</i> subsp. <i>fistulosa</i> (Mart. Ex Choisy) D. F. Austin)	牵牛花
rr	<i>Cycas revolute</i> Thunb.	铁树
ss	cape jasmine (<i>Gardenia augusta</i> (L.) Merr.)	栀子花
tt	geranium (<i>Pelargonium zonale</i> (L.) L'Herit.)	海棠
uu	bigleave podocarp (<i>Podocytisus macrophyllus</i> (Thunb.) D. Don.)	罗汉松
vv	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i> Thunb.	茶梅
ww	<i>Michelia figo</i> (Lour.) Spreng	含笑
xx	snowberry (<i>Chiococca alba</i> (L.) Hitchc.)	雪球

yy	winter jasmine (<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i> Lindl.)	报春花
zz	Chinese daphne (<i>Daphne genkwa</i> Siebold et Zucc.)	瑞香
aaa	<i>Prunus</i> sp. ('red plum blossom')	红梅
bbb	wintersweet (<i>Chimonanthus praecox</i> (L.) Link)	腊梅
ccc	crabapple (<i>Malus coronaria</i> (L.) Mill.)	花红
ddd	Japanese mahonia (<i>Mahonia japonica</i> (Thunb. Ex Murray) DC.)	十大功劳
eee	Tarajo holly (<i>Ilex latifolia</i> Thunb.)	苦丁茶
fff	kiwi fruit (<i>Actinidia deliciosa</i> (A. Chev.) C.F.Liang et A.R.Ferguson)	猕猴桃
ggg	Chinese toon (<i>Toona sinensis</i> (A. Juss.) M. Roem.)	香椿
hhh	persimmon (<i>Diospyros kaki</i> L. f.)	柿子树
iii	hot pepper (<i>Capsicum frutescens</i> L.)	辣椒
jjj	bayberry (<i>Myrica pensylvanica</i> Loisel.)	杨梅
kkk	'golden guard' (<i>Cucurbita</i> sp.)	金瓜
lll	Chinese fan palm (<i>Livistona chinensis</i> (Jacq.) R. Br. E Mart.)	棕榈
mmm	<i>Juniperus taxifolia</i> Hook. et Arn.	刺柏
nnn	Japanese nutmeg-yew (<i>Torreya nucifera</i> (L.) Sieb. et Zucc.)	香榧
ooo	Chinese wolfberry (<i>Lycium chinense</i> Mill.)	枸杞
ppp	Ginkgo (<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> L.)	银杏
qqq	Japanese banana (<i>Musa basjoo</i> Siebold et Zucc.)	芭蕉
rrr	Chinese wisteria (<i>Wisteria sinensis</i> (Sims) Sweet)	紫藤
sss	pygmy water lily (<i>Nymphaea tetragona</i> Georgi.)	睡莲

Summary

In comparison with the gardens in Xidi, those in Hongcun are more engagingly designed with garden buildings and features, and better planted. It is clear that the owners associate more closely with them as they depend on them for their work; they are therefore part of their daily life.

Local Residents' Attitudes and Approaches towards Their Garden: A Comparison between Xidi and Hongcun

The questionnaire given to garden owners was helpful in revealing the reasons for the physical differences between gardens in Xidi and Hongcun. (See Table 5.7)

Table 5.7 Attitudes and approaches towards garden: a comparison between residents in Xidi and Hongcun

	Xidi	Hongcun
Historical knowledge	–	+
Time spent in gardens	–	+
Gardening work	–	+
Place of enjoyment	–	+
Garden expenses	1x	100x
Garden modified	none	all
Vision	–	+
Adapt to improve quality of life	–	+
Preserved	+	–
Financial revenue	–	+
Plans renovation	–	+
Enhancement in processes	–	+
Responsibility to conserve	+	–
Require professional guidance on conservation	+	+
Require professional advice upkeep	+	–
Local pride	+	–
Community	+	–

Notes: '+' means that it is of greater significance than '-'. (Source: extracted from twelve questionnaires of garden owners at Xidi and Hongcun conducted by Lei Gao in August 2007)

The interviews of garden occupiers and surveys of gardens of Xidi and Hongcun reveal a wide range of issues that can be identified as indicators of attachment; it indicates how gardens are valued. It is thought that the greater the attachment, that is, the more highly a garden is valued, the more likely it is to survive. The garden occupiers at Hongcun score better on a wide range of issues; they have a greater historic knowledge; they spend more time in the garden and do more gardening work; they spend more than 100 times as much on their gardens as those in Xidi; they

have all modified their garden; they have a vision of how they might develop it, and see it as essential to enhance the living environment and the quality of life. Most residents have plans for renovation and are engaged in the process of undertaking it.



Figure 5.7 The courtyard at the *Linxi Bieshu* (By-the-Brook Villa), Xidi. A hundred-year-old peony tree and a few pieces of stone carving on the wall are the only surviving features of this once abundant garden. As a result of conservation restrictions and a lack of funding, the owner was unable to renovate the deteriorating houses and courtyards. As a result, this property has been neglected. (Source: photo by author, June 2006)



Figure 5.8 Yi Yuan, Xidi. the upper picture is from the tourist guide book, which was probably taken in late 1990s (when the village is applying for or was just granted as WHS); the lower picture is taken in 2006, where overgrown plants showed a lack of care and maintenance. (Source: (upper) from *Xidi tour guide book* (Xidi: Xidi Tourtist Company, 2006); (lower) photo by author, June 2006)



Figure 5.9 The historical fish pond at the *Songhe Tang* (Pine-and-Crane Hall), Hongcun in 2006 (left), and the same fish pond with a newly constructed pavilion a year later (right). (Source: photos by author, June 2006 and August 2007)



Figure 5.10 A new garden of Hongcun constructed in a traditional manner, designed by its owner and used as a home restaurant. (Source: photo by author, August 2007)

Garden occupiers in Xidi see conservation as the prime objective, and while they have learned to accept this as their responsibility, in fact they have little motivation to undertake any maintenance or upkeep of their gardens. There is insufficient official advice to enable them to manage their garden with confidence. Conservation is largely understood as 'preserving the old buildings and constructions as they were in the year of 2000 (this year the villages were designated as WHS)'. Therefore, 'doing nothing' has seemed the safest way, and that is what the majority of residents have actually done. As a result there is minimum maintenance and expenditure, which is just enough to preserve them. There is no, or much less, engagement in the processes of gardening and residents do not see how this might improve the quality of their lives. (Figures 5.7 – 5.10) The notable difference to Xidi is that there is a stronger sense of community and local pride, which suggests that garden making in Hongcun is probably quite competitive, but also that residents of Xidi are all in the same boat and are 'subordinate to the central power'. Their situation might be interpreted as living in a museum and being custodians of their heritage. So from these observations it is clear that, in terms of managing private gardens, the main decision makers in Hongcun are the property owners, while those in Xidi are governmental officials, professionals and tourism managers.

New Gardens as Heritage? A Comparison between Surveyed Gardens and traditional Huizhou Gardens

While in Xidi surviving gardens are preserved as they were in the year 2000, in actuality this has led to a social detachment resulting in a gradual deterioration of the fabric. In Hongcun, old gardens are renovated by their owners, as well as new gardens constructed. This raises questions about the heritage values of these gardens. Are legally preserved, but deteriorating gardens more 'authentic' than those which have been renovated? Therefore, which village preserves its garden heritage better? In order to answer these questions, the new and renovated gardens at Hongcun are compared with traditional Huizhou gardens, as they can be understood from historical research and neighbouring examples. This distinctive Huizhou character is then measured against the surveyed gardens at Xidi and Hongcun.

Historically, Huizhou garden culture was the result of a prosperous trade economy developed by merchants, and it might be argued that trade is once again the economic foundation of the gardens here, although this is now in the form of tourism related trade. Gardens were initially built mainly for two purposes: to create a comfortable and meaningful place for living and to provide an admirable social space to entertain a business network. The recent revival of the garden culture in Hongcun is the result of the tourist economy: villagers renovate their gardens in order to increase competitiveness in attracting tourists, as well as to fulfil their desire for a better quality of life.

Traditionally, the design of Huizhou gardens adopts fengshui theories and values of Neo-Confucianism in, for example, the selection of the site for a dwelling place (facing open land and backed by a hill), and the orientation of the entrance. The best direction is believed to be facing southeast (a south facing entrance, normally the most popular in other areas of China, is seen as inauspicious because south has the nature of fire, and fire was thought to destroy the wealth accumulated by merchants). Fengshui also determined ideas about the direction of water flow; that is, never let water flow outside, but lead it into the courtyard, since water has the symbolic meaning of wealth. To let water escape from one's house is compared with becoming poor. Huizhou, the hometown of Zhu Xi, one of the foremost founders of Neo-Confucianism, was strongly influenced by Neo-Confucian ideas. This is evident in its gardens as they have been laid out on an ordered plan, and are rich in symbolic meaning through their various features and decoration, with an emphasis on diligence in study and agriculture, and obedience to social hierarchy. Neo-Confucian ideas survive in Hongcun today, where visitors are told by the local residents about the unique fengshui values of gardens and the symbolic meanings, often with good awareness of the programmes of historic garden features. Additionally, some historical gardens of Huizhou have exotic garden features (such as fountains, Western style ornaments) and themes adopted from other garden cultures in China.²⁶ This resulted from trading connections with other regions, and the inherent curiosity to introduce new things. Interestingly, in various conversations with today's garden owners in Hongcun, it appears that they also have collected ideas from distant places, either by visiting gardens in Suzhou, best known for its famous gardens, or through advice given by visitors. (Figure 5.11)

²⁶ Lei Gao, 'A Comparison between Huizhou gardens and Yangzhou gardens', Masters dissertation at the Hefei University of Technology (Hefei, 2003)



Figure 5.11 A new garden of *Dunhou Tang*, Hongcun. The garden, still under construction when the photo was taken, was designed by the garden owner, who had travelled widely and taken inspiration particularly from gardens in Suzhou. This source is revealed in the shape of the irregularly shaped pond with little bridge across it, which contrasts to rectangular ponds traditionally used in Huizhou gardens. However, most building materials, plants and detailing used here are local and maintain the Huizhou character. (Source: photos by author, September 2006)

In terms of garden making, most renovated or new gardens of Hongcun are designed by their owners based on their requirements (such as for private use by the family, or to serve as a house restaurant) and constructed by local carpenters and craftsmen familiar with vernacular techniques inherited over many generations. Before 2000, many local craftsmen left their hometowns and worked in factories as a consequence of limited scope of employment in their craft. But the boom in garden construction has provided good opportunities and has meant that many have returned to their home town. It is clear that this has helped to restore traditional building and garden design techniques. (Figure 5.12)



Figure 5.12 A new garden in Hongcun under construction on the location of an orchard. This was said to have previously been a garden, but few historical features had survived. The craftsmen who constructed this came from neighbouring villages and their techniques reflect vernacular construction methods. For example, the raised bed under the tree was encompassed by pebbles from the riverbank in the village, and was constructed in the same way as the traditional drainage ditches in the village. (Source: photo by author, August 2007)

The new gardens reflect the unique Huizhou character in an appreciation of order and regularity, which, in contrast to the naturalistic character of most gardens in the region of Lower Yangzi River, adopted simple orthogonal layouts with straight paths and walls, without any hidden serpentine walks concealed by rock work, for example. Planting also was simple, often planted in lines. All this reflected continuing influence of Neo-Confucianism.²⁷ Some of the new gardens of Hongcun however are more generic and depart from these local characteristics, while in Xidi they have lost their completeness, and have literally turned into ‘cultural relics’. (Figures 5.13, 5.14)

²⁷ In terms of the order/formality of Chinese gardens, the author has done a research through the case study of Huizhou gardens. This research shows that, instead of irregularity or naturalistic characters, some of the Chinese gardens have strict sense of order under their loosely constructed shapes. Such formality is mainly a reflection of the people’s perception on the order of nature. Lei Gao, ‘A Comparison between Huizhou gardens and Yangzhou gardens’, Masters dissertation at the Hefei University of Technology (Hefei, 2003)

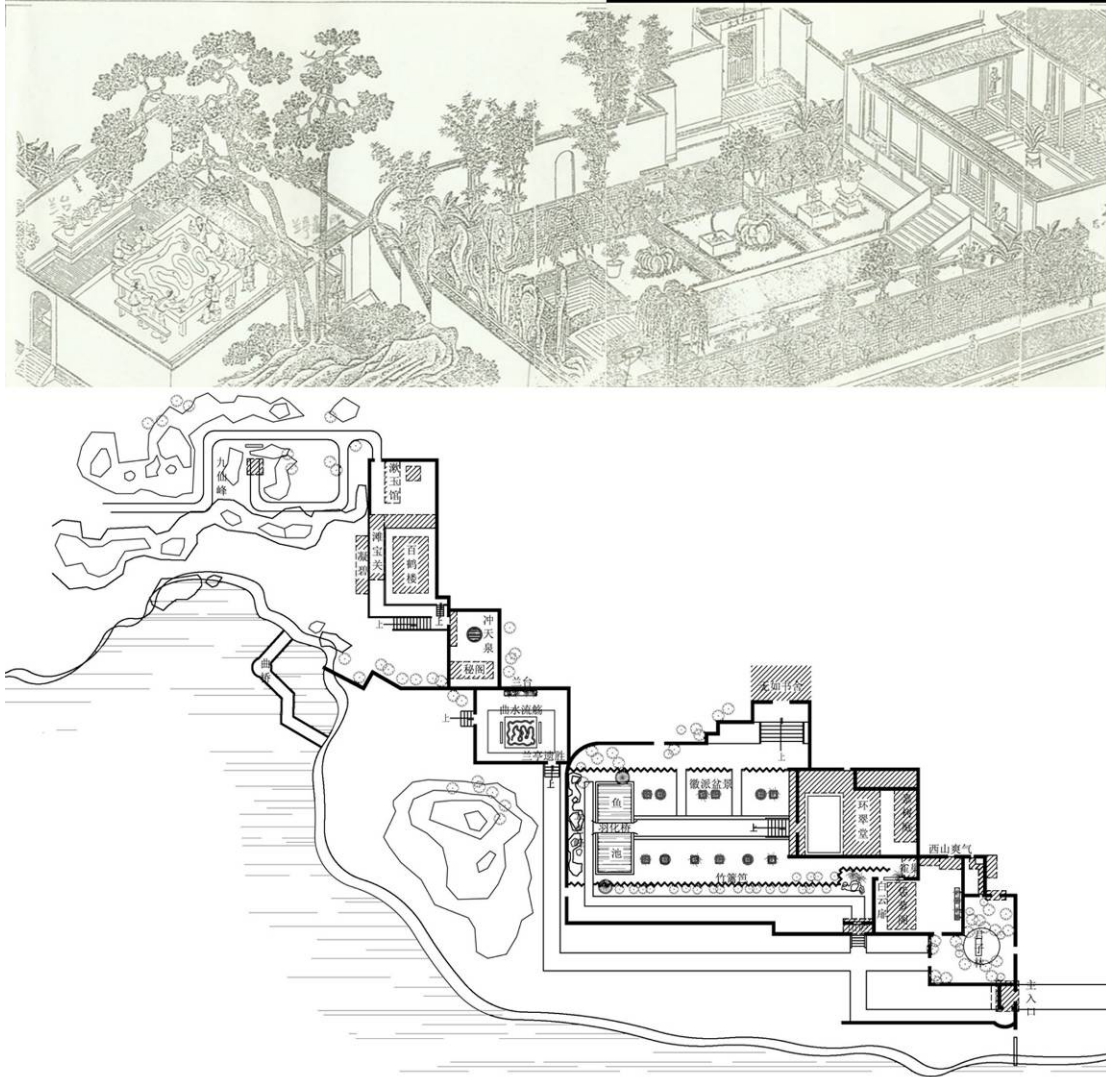


Figure 5.13 *Zuo Yin Yuan* (The Garden of Sitting in Reclusion) in Huizhou. It was built in the early 1600s and was recorded on a hand-scroll painting (a section of which is shown here) and prose. These provide valuable insight into contemporary Huizhou gardens. Although the site of *Zuo Yin Yuan* is still traceable, there appear to be few surviving garden features (some rocks at Huangshan Airport were said from this garden). This conjectural garden features plan was drawn by the author based on the painting only. The gardens consist of a series of courtyards with a formal layout. (Source: (upper illustration) *Huancui tang yuanjing tu* (环翠堂园景图 wood carving of Scenic view of the gardens of Jade-Embraced Hall) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art Press, 1994), republished engravings from the 1600s; (lower illustration) Lei Gao, 'A Comparison between Huizhou gardens and Yangzhou gardens', Masters dissertation at the Hefei University of Technology (Hefei, 2003))

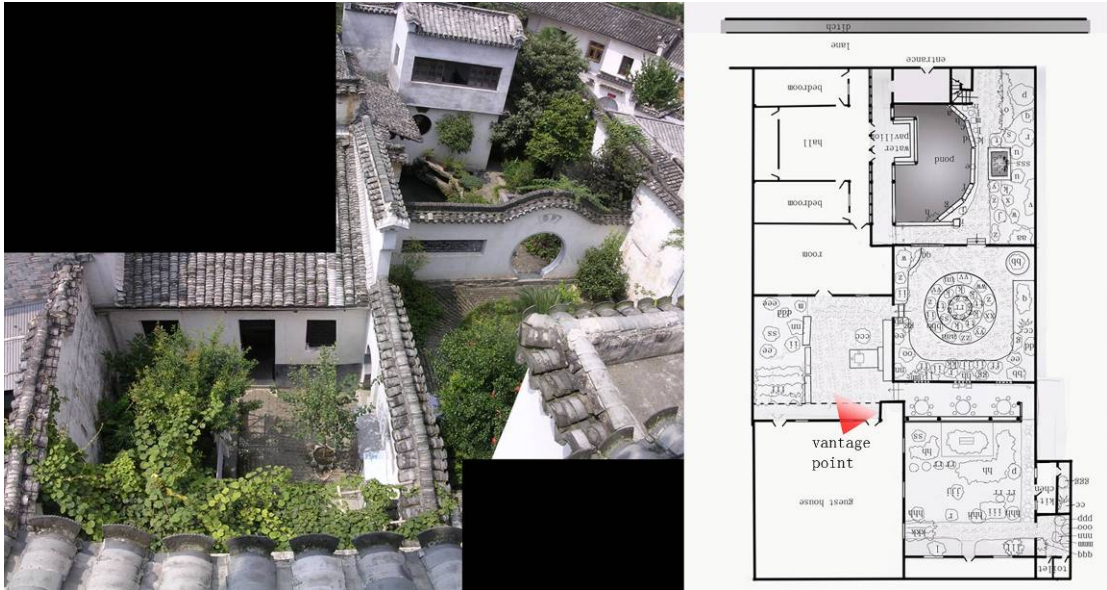


Figure 5.14 *Bi Yuan* (Jade Garden), Hongcun was destroyed during the peasant uprisings of the 1860s, with only a fish pond and one building surviving today (seen on the upper right of the picture). In 1997 the gardens and buildings were reconstructed according to designs by the owner, a retired arts teacher, who uses them as his home and tourist hostel. The plan of *Bi Yuan* shows the gardens being composed by six courtyards that connected next to each other. These courtyards follow a geometrical layout rather than a naturalistic one, which is unique to gardens in Huizhou. (Source: photo by author, June 2006; conjectural plan was drawn by the author based on the field survey in August 2007)

Study of the historic planting tradition in Huizhou suggests that more than half the number of species of plants were utilitarian species, including fruit trees, kitchen herbs and medical plants. Although exotic species were also appreciated by Huizhou residents, most ornamental plants in their gardens were local species. Many plants in Huizhou embed moral values and have therefore been planted for educational purposes also. For example, wintersweet (*Chimonanthus praecox* (L.) Link) in gardens provides the spirit of endurance and confronts hardship with beauty and elegance. Today, the plants grown in private gardens in Xidi and Hongcun are mostly native species. Useful, beautiful and meaningful are still key values for local people in choosing their plants. This reflects the continuity of garden tradition in Huizhou. However, there are fewer plant species in Xidi gardens than in Hongcun gardens, suggesting a greater enthusiasm for active gardening with plants in Hongcun. (Tables 5.3-5.6)

PUBLIC GARDENS AT XIDI AND HONGCUN

Unlike residential gardens at Xidi and Hongcun, which have been handled in a very different way because of respective officials' attitudes towards conservation and renovation, the projects on public gardens at Xidi and Hongcun are very similar. Both governments appointed the same architect Cheng Jiyue (程极悦) who is believed the best architect in the region and has long experience in Huizhou-style building and garden design.²⁸

The three projects are: Watermouth Garden at Xidi, Nanhu Private School at Hongcun, and the southern foot of *Leigang Hill* at Hongcun.

A History of Three Public Gardens

Watermouth Garden at Xidi

The project at Xidi is the watermouth garden. The watermouth garden is a unique garden type in Huizhou region. It is built at the entrance and/or exit of the village, normally by the river, because most villages are built upon a river which provides a source of water for the village. In fengshui theory, water represents wealth, therefore it is important to protect wealth from flowing outside the village. The common method of providing such protection is to build a watermouth garden at a place where the river has a U-turn (if a U-turn is not available, sometimes the river is artificially turned). A watermouth garden normally includes a fengshui grove, which is strictly protected from any damage or cutting (damage to a fengshui grove is believed to bring misfortune for the whole village), and various fengshui buildings such as pagodas, bridges and pavilions. The watermouth garden at Xidi is located nearly one kilometre away from the village, at a place where the river has a sudden turn and two hills sandwich the river and the main road which links the village to the outside. It is said to have been first built in the 11th century, when the ancestors of residents at Xidi first emigrated to this place due to its unique value in terms of fengshui. A 19th century archive reveals that the watermouth garden at that time included a Buddhist temple,

²⁸ Cheng Jiyue's garden designs include: Gui Yuan (c. 2006); Chunhua Yuan in Germany (1989); conservation projects include: Qiankou off-situ preservation of Huizhou buildings. source from interview with Cheng Jiyue, conducted by the author in June 2006.

a Daoist temple, a Confucian Shrine of scholars (to be worshiped by people about to take examinations), a Temple to the local Earth god, and the Temple of *Hua Tuo*. (Hua Tuo was a famous doctor in ancient China who, since his death, has been worshipped as a god of medicine. Traditionally, if people get ill, worship at the Temple of Hua Tuo is believed to help them recover from their illness.) There were also six *paifang*. (A *paifang* is a type of gateway-like structure which can only be built by the decree of an emperor. It is often made from locally produced stones and decorated with symbolic patterns and inscriptions which are carved on stones to show who this *paifang* dedicated to and why they deserve it. *Paifang* is a symbol of great honour, both to the person themselves and their entire family and clan.) The garden also included an ornamental garden, a viewing terrace, a lotus pond, a bridge, a fengshui grove and some other landscape buildings.

In the early 1950s, after standing for nearly a millennium, the Watermouth garden at Xidi was destroyed. The temples, *paifang* and other fengshui constructions were dismantled because of their 'feudal' and 'superstitious' ideology. The ancient fengshui grove was chopped down and used as firewood to feed the hundreds of furnaces used for iron production in the 1950s. A few years later, a middle school was built on the empty site and stood there until 2005, when the site was reclaimed to be remade into a watermouth garden. By 2000s, the only surviving historical features were a bridge, a pond and one old tree from the original fengshui grove.



Figure 5.15 The middle school on the ground of a former temple at the Watermouth garden, Xidi. In 2006, the school was demolished to make way for the restoration of the Watermouth garden. (Source: photo by author, June 2006)

After Xidi became a World Heritage Site, the local government planned to restore the Watermouth garden and make it a gateway to tours of Xidi, providing a ticket office, tourist information, a transport interchange and so on. Cheng Jiyue, the most famous architect of the region, was appointed to realise their vision.

Nanhu School at Hongcun

Nanhu School was built in 1814 by the Wang family as a private school for local children. The school consisted of three parts: main hall, memorial shrine and a garden. In the early 20th century, this school was converted into a primary school by the Republican government. In the 1950s, the garden was destroyed, and on the land a new building for the primary school was constructed. At the end of the 20th century, the garden site was again converted, becoming the Memorial Hall of Wan Jialin, a businessman in Hongkong originating from Huizhou, who generously donated the money to improve the livelihood of Huizhou.

When Hongcun became a World Heritage Site, the primary school moved out and has relocated elsewhere. What remained on Nanhu School Site were the main hall, the memorial shrine and one tower of the former garden. That is, only historical buildings survived, not the garden.

Southern foot of Leigang Hill at Hongcun

Leigang Hill is part of the extended range of the Yellow Mountains, and was seen as a sacred place by the local people. In fengshui theory, a mountain symbolises a dragon in which supreme power is embedded.²⁹ Therefore when choosing a location for a village, it is important to analyse a locality's terrain in order to find somewhere suitable for the settlement's protective dragon to live. For this reason, the first generation of Hongcun settlers occupied the southern foot of Leigang Hill. Backed by the hill to the north and facing towards open land with abundant water supply in the south, the location at the southern foot of Leigang Hill was believed to be the best omen for the continuity of generations. Hongcun gradually developed from there, extending towards the south.

²⁹ The Chinese dragon is the symbol of power, and a sacred animal, which is not the western view of dragons.

Because Leigang Hill is the village's fengshui hill, its natural environment was carefully protected. No tree was allowed to be chopped down on this hill. Also, a few pavilions were added at selected places on the hill to provide resting points as well as a good view. Leigang Hill gradually became a favourite place for the locals to spend some time, as well as a place of inspiration for literati, who made poems on the nature and culture of Leigang Hill.

In the mid 19th century, the Tai-ping Rebellion affected Hongcun, destroying many houses at the southern foot of Leigang Hill. In the 1970s a middle school was built and occupied a large area of the south foot of Leigang Hill, which provided the most 'disturbing' element in terms of the 'historical texture' of Leigang Hill. In the 1990s some surviving houses were demolished by local people in order to build new houses. For these reasons the local government and tourist company appointed an architect in 2005 to repair the village's 'broken historical texture'.

These three public gardens have had a similar past. They once served as shared space for the villagers for spiritual (temples), social (the village entrance garden at Xidi was a popular gathering place) and educational purposes (school garden), and were damaged or destroyed in the latter half of the 20th century due to society's ideological shift, and then, at the beginning of the 21st century, after being recognised for their academic, aesthetic and economic values, they have been restored to 'restore the integrity of these two heritage villages'.³⁰

Restoration Projects for Three Public Gardens

To make the analysis easy to follow, the design aim (or intention) and designed functions of these three projects are extracted from the original project plan provided by the architect, from which the new values of the historical sites can be perceived.

³⁰ Sources of historical information on the three sites were provided by Jiyue Cheng (程极悦).

Table 5.8 Three public garden projects at Xidi and Hongcun, Conducted by Cheng Jiyue (程极悦) and others, and commanded by local government and tourism organisations.³¹

	<i>Watermouth garden, Xidi</i>	<i>Nanhu School, Hongcun</i>	<i>Leigang-Hill middle school site, Hongcun</i>
Project intention/aim	'to authentically and completely preserve and continue the characteristics and values of the Watermouth garden of Xidi; and to reconnect the watermouth garden with the village of Xidi'; 'reveal and enhance the unique topography of Xidi'	'to preserve the original buildings, and the authenticity and integrity of the former garden; to organise the historical environment of Nanhu School and to continue its historical appearance'	'to improve the environmental character and enhance values of the place, which can also boost the [economic] development of the north part of the village' ³²
Use/function of the restored place	A site of tourist attraction (restored watermouth garden and some preserved ruins; as well as folk custom show); tourist centre; the tourist entrance of the Xidi village	Restored Nanhu School as a site of tourist attraction; also, some part of buildings can be used as tourist centre, as well as cultural heritage museum and research institute	'Ecological tourism' (that is, to restore the natural environment on the Leigang Hill, and the local tradition of bird fighting as a new theme for tourists entertainment); New buildings (which are to be constructed on the middle school site) will be served as tourist services, museums, research and conference centre and so on.
Users (For whom)	tourists	academics, tourists, tourist company and government	academics, tourists, tourist company and government
Perceived values (extracted from the use)	Historical value (in architectural perspective); economic value	Historical value (in architectural perspective); Academic value; economic value	Historical value (in architectural perspective); Academic value; economic value

³¹ Sources of the three restoration projects provided by Jiyue Cheng (程极悦)

³² Research Institute of Ancient Huizhou Buildings in Anhui Province, *Inscriptions of the environmental conservation and organisation project of the south foot of Leigang Hill in Hongcun, Yi County* 黟县宏村雷岗南麓环境保护与整治方案 说明, 2006, unpublished project book provided by Cheng Jiyue, the leading architect of this project and the main author of the book.



Figure 5.16 Vision of the restored Watermouth Garden after restoration, which will be used as a tourist centre as well as the entrance of Xidi Tourist Site. (Source: provided by Jiyue Cheng (程极悦))

The designs show a careful consideration of the village's aesthetic values; the new design aims to adopt some historical characteristics by following the original buildings' style and arrangement. However, although a historical survey had been carefully done by the architect, the functions of the new designs have been changed entirely, from a previous 'internal' space for the villagers to a place for 'externals', namely tourists, academics and professionals, and tourist company and government. The reason for this change is obvious: the ownership of these public gardens lies with the country (in this case, the regional government as the representative decision maker) instead of with the local community. It is the regional government (and the tourist company in the case of Hongcun) who determines the values of these places and appoints architectural professionals to realise their vision.

By transferring the right of decision making, the perceived values of these garden heritages change. Although the new designs will no doubt benefit tourists and probably academics as well, the local people are isolated from their indigenous built environment. As a consequence, traditional lifestyles and values by and large change.

The study of the public gardens at Xidi and Hongcun reveals that architectural professionals can repair a broken aesthetic texture or historical appearance. But without returning the power of decision making to the local community, professionals on their own are not able to repair a broken continuity of that lifestyle which is deeply embedded in a locality's cultural and social contexts, and which gives meaning to its cultural heritage.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

These case studies of residential gardens reveal that the Huizhou garden tradition has been restored by the Hongcun residents. The designs and features not only add new meanings to the gardens, they also generate an attachment to the place that is not found in sterile museum like approaches, such as at Xidi. Therefore it is believed that the loss of historical features and authenticity through renovation can be justified because of the revival of tradition which these losses enable. While this may not be a general rule, it seems to be applicable in this situation which concerns residential gardens only. Unfortunately these are unique instances; every day thousands of similar properties and gardens in China are demolished to make way for high-rise buildings. For this reason it is even more important that traditional living quarters with gardens should be preserved, as they may indeed once again form models for sustainable ways of living. In this context it is even more important that the traditional and threatened garden culture should be kept alive.

Also, the residential garden examples reveal distinct means of providing heritage management through untrained residents. While the importance of training was recognized as part of the process by which one village was declared as heritage, this was not the case at Hongcun, where vital information was instead passed on from one generation to the next. This has resulted in an affordable and therefore more sustainable way of conserving garden heritage, and has meant that the broken continuity with respect to the meanings of heritage to local people has been repaired.

The examples of public garden restoration projects reveal that, when the power of decision making is moved from the people who are associated with a site to people from external organisations (tourist organisations, architects, officials at a higher

level), the values and purposes of the restoration project are also changed. It merely restores the physical substance or 'aesthetic values', rather than the original culture or the meanings and their attachment to local people.

In terms of garden conservation, there are two contrasting approaches. One is to preserve historical features by preventing changes to them, and to restore lost buildings and landscapes by reinstating their historical appearance (aesthetics), but adapt them for a new purpose (for example for tourism, as a museum). The other way is to handle places (for example, gardens) in a way one's forefathers would have done: for the general purpose of improving the living environment by maintaining and adapting them to new requirements. The residential gardens of Hongcun are an excellent example of the latter; they are less 'authentic' in terms of original materials and designs; they are more 'authentic' in meanings and uses. This example highlights that heritage does not only consist of objects, but also the activities, memories, knowledge and skills which are carried by the people who are associated with it.

Today, the villages and countryside in China are facing two challenges: the increased speed of urbanisation and the scheme, 'New Villages Construction', both promoted by central government and put into action by governments at all levels. The idea is, for the first, that by 2020, three quarters of the Chinese population are to live in cities;³³ for the second, to improve living standards in the countryside and villages of China, which in many places were simplified into reconstructing buildings or re-planning villages. Chinese villages, once the mainstay of Chinese society and the carrier of a dynamic Chinese culture, are now on the way to modernity. When people leave their land and the lifestyle their ancestors continued for generations, when they all aim for a future which is 'modern' and of a better 'standard', there is a reason to worry about the future.

³³ Chinese government aims to build 400 cities of 1 million inhabitants each in 20 years (i.e. by 2020) <<http://www.dynamiccity.org/summary.php>> [accessed 28th January 2010]

Towards Sustainable Living:

A Thesis on Garden Conservation for the 21st Century

CHANGING GARDENS AS A REFLECTION OF CHANGING VALUES IN 20TH CENTURY CHINA: A SUMMARY

A Summary of Four Stories about Gardens

Yuanmingyuan, a walled, ordered landscape and a miniature representation of China, has been a mirror of Chinese attitudes towards the West, as well as towards its own traditions. The making and remaking of Yuanmingyuan tells the story of how two civilisations, East and West, looked at each other: with curiosity and admiration at first, then by persuading and devaluation of each other, finally coming to a state of coexistence. This has been the driving force for various movements in China in the 20th century. The value of Yuanmingyuan resides beyond its physical domain, and even though it has not been reconstructed, Yuanmingyuan will not die.

From the story of imperial altars, we see how China has converted itself from a state of gods to a state of men. If the 1911 Revolution was an incomplete change (since the Heaven was still alive—at least partially), the 1949 Revolution finally pushed all the gods away, and left the land for material use only. Although throughout the century new spirits had been introduced to the altar parks, they did not last long. Whenever a new regime (and ideology) took the place of the old, it followed the rewriting of the altar landscapes. Today, although Chinese traditional culture is respected, and even worshipped, by all levels of Chinese, from central government (as for example the Harmonious Society; Confucius Institutes all over the world) to the ordinary people (for example in the popularity of Confucius's Analects interpreted by Yu Dan), one puzzle left unresolved is: of the power of Heaven (Nature) and the

power of Man, which stands higher? Without this being resolved, the altars are merely a thing of the past.

Suzhou gardens reveal how a personal world can be translated into a national art. Through selective restoration accompanied by demolition of large numbers of 'ordinary' gardens, in the 1950s and later, the most 'valuable' gardens in Suzhou have been preserved and displayed as representatives of Chinese garden art. But this has two negative impacts. Firstly, it changes the function of Suzhou's gardens from being part of a home to a museum, separating people from their garden culture in daily life. Secondly, the separation of gardens and their owners also causes irreparable loss—of the forgotten meanings in their spiritual realm. Without this, the beauty of Suzhou gardens exists only in its physical space.

Huizhou gardens are a story for the 21st century, where we see that it is people who are the carrier of traditional culture (but what we need to bear in mind is that tradition has never been a *fixed* term, but rather, a *relative* norm). Without their power being acknowledged, top-down guidance or international standards do not always help in conservation. The concept of heritage should include and consider the needs of the people who live with heritage (we might call them internal professionals, in order to distinguish them from external professionals such as university trained architects and conservation specialists); the goal of conservation needs to move from heritage preservation towards the conservation of cultural continuity.

China's 20th-century values

In 1919, the New Culture Movement launched by a group of young people (university students and intellectuals) appealed for science and democracy, which they warmly called Mr. De and Mr. Sci.

Today, Mr. Sci has been embraced by the Chinese at all levels, from school education to governmental administration. But Mr. De is a shadow to the Chinese government, (and vice versa). The spirit of Mr. De is equality and freedom, opposite to traditional Chinese values of hierarchy and obedience.

This welcome to Mr. Sci and refusal of Mr. De can be understood if we look back to the 1870s, a time when the boundaries and balance of traditional China were broken

by the West, and China began to seek a new way. The Imperial Qing government worked out an answer, 'Chinese learning for essential principles and western learning for practical application' (Zhang Zhidong, 1875), which can be interpreted as 'to preserve Chinese traditional values (that is, hierarchy and obedience) and to adopt Western modern tools (that is, science and technology)'. Democracy is the essence of Western values, and science of Western tools. After a hundred years of experiments, with bitter lessons being paid, China finally walked onto this way. Every year (according to the statistics in 2009), the Chinese government sponsors 12000 students and scholars to study abroad (mainly in Europe, US and Japan), most of whom are studying science and technology related subjects.¹ Meanwhile, the Chinese government keeps tight control of culture and ideology. The hierarchy of society is strong, and so are the constraints on freedom. This helps to build (or rather, restore) a nation, fast growing and with a strong identity, but what is less cared for is the spiritual world of individuals.

FROM GARDEN HERITAGE TO GARDEN CULTURE: A MOVE

The idea of this thesis is to discover China in the 20th century through the mirror of its garden heritage.

Although this is a 'heritage' study, the aim is not to judge the treatment of heritage in China, but rather, through exploring how heritage is valued and treated, to understand the relationship of heritage to its wider political, social, economic and cultural context. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to find an answer pertaining to sustainability, and a possible future for garden conservation.

Heritage conservation (in terms of architecture and gardens) rose above the horizon after the mass destruction of traditional living environment by industrialisation and

¹ Key subjects are: energy and resources, environmental science, agriculture, manufacture, information technology, life science, space and ocean science and technology, nanotechnology, new materials, humanity and practical social science. (能源、资源、环境、农业、制造、信息等关键领域及生命、空间、海洋、纳米、新材料等战略领域和人文及应用社会科学). Information from *China Scholarship Council*, <<http://www.csc.edu.cn/chuguo/169f1d94a9fa41b6856732dcb256aa5c.shtml>> [accessed 6th February 2010]

modernisation. In order to save the rapidly disappearing past, laws and regulations were developed to preserve heritage sites (this term comes from the China Principles; other equivalents are 'historic environment' in English Heritage; 'places of cultural significance' in the Burra Charter). Therefore, heritage means '*selected* past/tradition', which is believed to be of *value*. In terms of the garden sphere, what is seen as heritage is 'historic gardens'.

This thesis had an initial focus on investigating the conservation of historic gardens, but later on looked at 'gardens' instead of only 'historic' ones.

The difference between the two is about values. 'Historic' means 'historical' and 'valuable'. But the line between 'historical' and 'contemporary' is vague, from '300 years' old' in the traditional Chinese sense to '30 years old' in a modern conservationists' perspective, though of course all gardens can be 'historical', as long as they survive long enough. Therefore, *values* are the real division line between historic gardens (or garden heritage) and gardens.

The modern history of conservation shows that although the evaluation system worked well in the late 19th and the early 20th century, when authorised decision makers (that is, the people who select what is valuable and should be preserved) extended from archaeological specialists to a broader range of specialists, and from professionals to ordinary people, conflicts between values appeared, and the term 'heritage' began to prompt questions: 'whose heritage?', 'heritage for whom?'

These are still open questions, but what can be perceived is that, just as the study of architectural history moved its focus from monumental buildings to ordinary buildings and constructions, the study of garden history will soon be interested in looking at 'ordinary' gardens and garden culture in general.

Because of these issues, when thinking about conservation for tomorrow, it is reasonable to look at today's garden culture in general rather than just 'historic gardens'—we cannot decide values for the people of tomorrow. By dissolving the boundary of 'heritage', one can be released from a conservationist's perspective, free to connect and construct dialogues with people across a wider horizon. But removing a fixed standpoint (that is, the conservationist's and garden historian's perspective) also causes new problems, especially when decisions need to be made (such as writing a thesis, or making a policy). A new standpoint (value) is needed.

So again, we come back to the earlier question (but this time, the objective ‘tradition’ is removed): what should be valued?

This is another heavily debated question, to which the Chinese answers throughout the 20th century have been presented in the above chapters. But that is not enough for setting up a conservation ethic for tomorrow.

PEOPLE AND PLANET: AN ETHIC FOR GARDEN CONSERVATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

People

Garden conservation ultimately is for people, their identity and their well-being.

‘People’ have two levels: *individuals* on the personal level and human *societies* on the social level. Both individuals and societies need identity to be distinguished from others, or say, to have a meaning of existence. The building of identity can come through inheriting the old, creating the new, or the combination of both.

One place to find an answer for individual ‘satisfaction’ is in psychology (or anthropology), where the research objects are humans. What they think and how they behave, and what matters to them (value).

Although different schools of psychologies may give different solutions, the one introduced here is done by Jonathan Haidt, who studied both traditional wisdom and scientific experiments in this sphere. He concludes that the personal fulfilment (in his word, happiness) can be achieved from between, that is, between an absolute ‘meaning of life’ and a practical basis of daily life, of which the key is the flow of work and love.²

When judging values of garden heritage through these two perspectives, we may find that the internal values of garden heritage (that is, the values to the people who live

² Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis—putting ancient wisdom to the test of modern science* (London: William Heinemann, 2006), p. 223.

with it) is closely related to personal sentiment and daily life (which are related to work and love), while the external values (that is, the values to the people who do not live with the heritage) is about knowledge acquisition (academic values), earning money (economic values to external bodies) or entertainment (recreational values). Therefore, heritage provides real satisfaction to its internal group more than external group. When conflicts exist among various values of a heritage and a choice must be made, the preference should be given to the internal values of the heritage.

In terms of social sustainability, this can be achieved through the care of all people instead of selected few. In terms of garden conservation, the garden conservation should stay on the conservation of garden culture, that is, to return gardens to ordinary people's life, rather than excluding private gardens from the majority of people's living place (such as apartment blocks. Today only wealthy people who can afford a villa can have their gardens).

Planet

A sustainable 'Planet' is about a sustainable use of resources, both human resources and natural resources. The overuse of natural resources has caused the question of sustainability for tomorrow. When there is not enough resource left, we have two directions to choose from: To make (create, find) new resources, or to reduce the use of resources. Both directions aim to provide better quality of life to human society—the first one by giving what people want (which leads to the increase of demands); the second one by remoulding people's demand (reducing what they want).

The first direction is to rely on high-tech, including finding or inventing new energy and resources, developing energy-saving techniques and resource recycling rules. By achieving these goals, it is believed that human desires and progress can be endlessly fulfilled. This route is most favoured by scientists and technicians, as well as some politicians. However, what left less considered is the cost of human resources. As David Haley warned, it leads to 'labouring to exhaustion'.³ Also, David

³ This idea is presented by David Haley entitled 'Ecology and the Art of Sustainable Living', on the 'Ecology—student-led theory Forum 09' at the University of Sheffield on 14th November 2009. The Forum is organised by the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, on 13-14 November 2009. <<http://architecture.dept.shef.ac.uk/theoryforum/>> [accessed 26th February 2010]

Phillips in his *Quality of life and sustainability* pointed out that the combination of two goals requires us to restrain our demands of pursuing a high 'standard' life.⁴

Therefore, what is left for us to work with is the second direction, readjusting values.

Values for the 21st century: a Thesis

Boundary:

As long as we have a physical body, we can not deny the existence of boundary. A world without boundaries (that is, having complete freedom) only exists in a virtual world such as the internet (but even on the internet a hierarchy is being developed now).

In terms of heritage conservation, the knowledge we gained from heritage helps us build up an identity, or say, a boundary. But how much knowledge do we need indeed?

So, the key is the state of boundary. It should neither be so strong as to block communication or overuse resources, nor too thin to hold an identity.

A balance is needed.

Balance:

Balance includes the balance of structure and the balance of movement.

In terms of movement, there are two ways to keep balance: stillness and moving. If the 'stillness' has been broken, then the 'moving' has to be accepted, which means 'to change' in order to find the balance in its contemporary context.

In terms of balanced structures, equality (flat land) is one model, but so may be a hierarchy—as long as being built upon and maintained by a Heavenly Law (that is, accepted rules by all) rather than a short-lived ideology. As long as a system is in its balance, a flat, a pyramid, or many other forms can all be sustainable.

⁴ David Phillips, 'Quality of life and sustainability', *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2008), pp. 103-113.

(For this reason, for a sustainable future, shall we readjust the value of Democracy, or, at least, to reinterpret the concept of freedom and equality?)

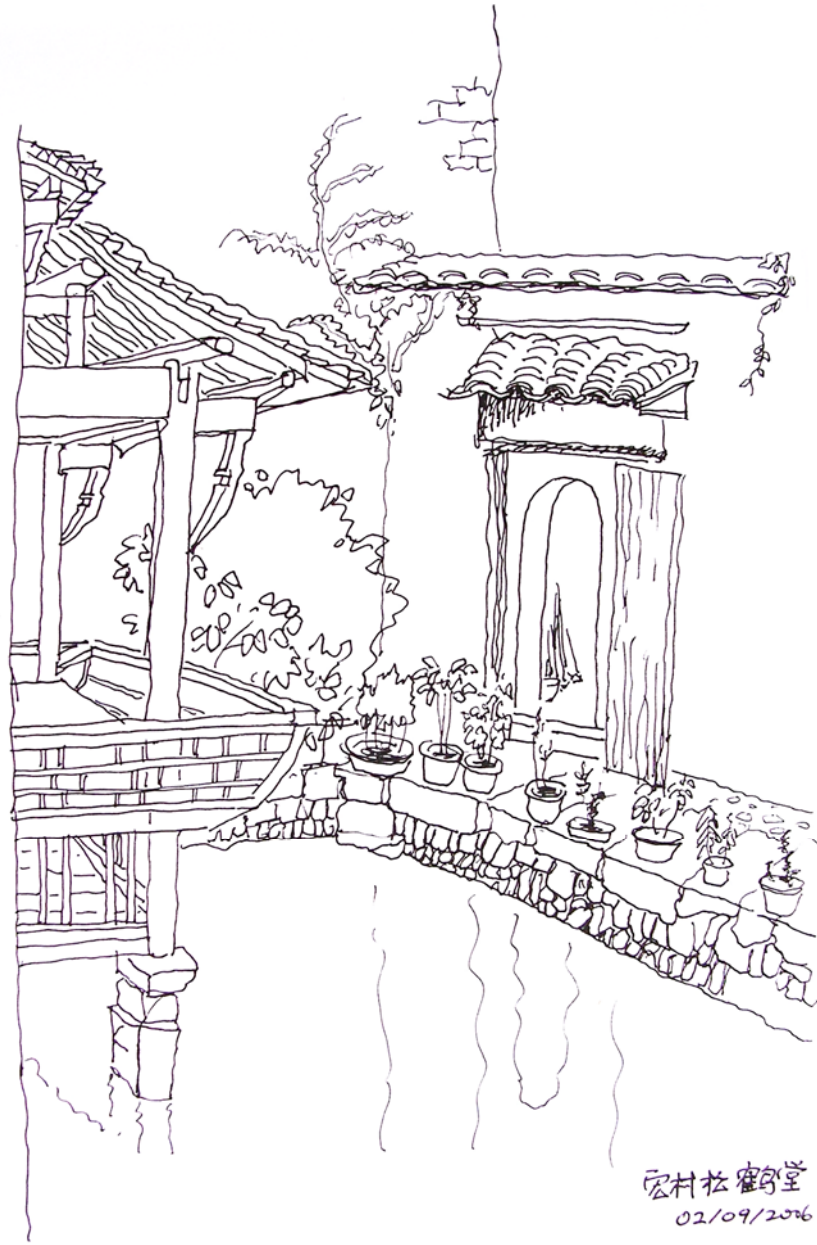
In short, sustainability can be achieved through a wise handling of *Boundary* and *Balance*. This idea is not new. Our ancestors (both from the East and from the West) have been fighting for boundary and balance (either for keeping, or for breaking) for many centuries. Therefore, we can call it a *heritage*.

CONTINUING GARDEN CULTURE IN CHINA: RECOMMENDATIONS

On the level of politics and policy: first, in terms of heritage conservation (or cultural continuity), more freedom should be given to local community and the individuals who are carriers of such cultures and traditions. Secondly, in a wider perspective, critical reviews and reflections are needed to reinvestigate the history of the 20th century China, maybe through rewriting history text books first. This will help the Chinese at large to form a less partial view, and make wiser decisions in terms of garden conservation in regard to places like Yuanmingyuan.

On the level of Landscape Architecture education and gardener's training: it is better to incorporate the Chinese traditional learning system (such as the integration of philosophy, art and techniques; and apprenticeship) with modern education. By doing so, Chinese garden culture tomorrow can rest upon a more authentic Chinese character.

On the level of city planning: residential gardens should be considered as a necessary part of every housing plan. By returning gardens to their people, garden culture can be maintained and garden heritage achieved its continuity. Giving people control of a garden of their own is a way to enhance their satisfaction and for them to achieve a better quality of life. By nurturing a garden, one can nurture their spirit. Not to mention that Planet Earth is our garden.



The End

Keeping Yuanmingyuan:

A new vision through a holistic approach to conservation and authenticity¹

Lei Gao, Jan Woudstra

Abstract: The debates over the proposals for Yuanmingyuan Relics Park touch the very essence of conservation. As a compromise between restoration and preservation, the philosophy for this project adheres to the latest Chinese conservation principles which emphasise the preservation of authenticity. Critical observation of conservation and authenticity shows, however, that neither is a static issue, and that sometimes there is little merit in preserving original fabrics only, particularly if the site cannot be understood from limited visual evidence. The treatment of architectural heritage has changed over time due to technical and scientific advances; the notion of authenticity has evolved as a result of cultural differences. The essence of conservation, of historic environments particularly, is to sustain a living heritage for the interests of people both now and in the future. Based on these critical observations of the notions of conservation and authenticity, current approaches to Yuanmingyuan are questioned as well as the idea of sustaining it as living heritage, which emphasises the experience of the site as a garden, rather than an archaeological site as in the official approach. The experience of the site as a garden would entail restoration of, or at least part of, the site in order to provide a physical, emotional and sensual experience. Such an approach might be emphasised by the establishment of a curator-directed design team as a way forward in the exploration of a wider range of demands and higher expectations for the site.

Keywords: Conservation, authenticity, garden landscapes, Yuanmingyuan

¹ This paper is published at *Architectural heritage of China within global vision—proceedings of the international conference on Chinese architectural history IV*, (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2007), pp. 417-426.

Yuanmingyuan dilemma: restoring gardens or preserving ruins?

Yuanmingyuan, the ‘Garden of Gardens’ made and altered from 1707, once covering more than 350 hectares of the land, was the most ostentatious imperial garden during the Qing Dynasty. In 1860, the garden was looted and burned down by English and French troops as ‘a punishment to the Qing emperor’. After the sacking, there were various attempts to restore the garden, but these were aborted mainly through a lack of resources. Between 1904 and 1976 the garden was forgotten with no one organisation claiming responsibility for the site, which was used for other purposes and quarried for garden features as a result. In 1976 the Yuanmingyuan Administrative Department was founded by the Haidian District Government in Beijing under whom the site was again regarded as a garden and since then various proposals were made and actions taken to protect and utilise the Yuanmingyuan site for the economic, patriotic and social needs of the country. Meanwhile, debates as to the future of the site continued, with the views divided in two distinct camps: one aiming to restore the garden while the other set out to preserve the ruins^[1]. However there were also those who sought a compromise between these two opposing views. The rationale for restoration of Yuanmingyuan has remained more or less constant over these past thirty years, namely to reveal the artistic significance before destruction, as well as optimising recreational use and achieving an economic return for the land. The rationale for preserving the ruins, i.e. to maintain it as an archaeological site, have evolved over time: firstly for retaining intangible meanings, as an expression of ‘national humiliation’; later on the tangible values which stressed the importance of the remaining features were emphasised, and were seen to represent authenticity as a solid link to the past^[2].

In 2000, the *Master Plan of Yuanmingyuan Relics Park* was published, which sought to reconcile between the two camps of restoration and preservation, and proposed restoration of garden areas to include landform and planting schemes and to preserve the building relics^[3]. This proposal, put forward by the government and an academic consultancy, brokered a compromise and a programme of works was launched shortly afterwards. The proposals included the restoration of the lakes, but instead of traditional methods of making the lake watertight, an artificial lining was incorporated. This was soon criticised by a member of the public who thought of this as an ecological disaster. The ensuing public debate that followed soon expanded to include issues of heritage and historic authenticity, environment and wildlife protection, political democracy etc., and ultimately resulted in the Yuanmingyuan project being halted in spring of 2005. A year and a half later, in late 2006, the state government gave the garden authority permission to continue with the works and announced that the project would be completed within a period of five years. Simultaneously a private enterprise announced that it intended to build a full scale replica of Yuanmingyuan in Zhejiang, some 1,100 kilometres southeast of Beijing. Contrary to the official representation of the site, this envisages an evocation of the pinnacle of garden history of the heyday of imperial China. Seen in the context of Yuanmingyuan, this might influence the approach taken on the site itself, in order to fully experience the multiple dimensions of the site.

The official notion of the Yuanmingyuan Relics Park is pursued through reconstructing the ‘original’ contours and plantings to give a sense of the park and a pleasant recreational

location, while leaving the majority of building remains as relict follies. This is seen as fitting in well with the latest conservation principles that recommend that authenticity of remaining elements must be preserved. As a result alternative proposals that involve restoration or reconstruction of buildings are refuted since it is thought that these will inevitably mean a reduction of authentic building relics. Anyone desiring to physically experience Yuanmingyuan as a garden is therefore relegated to a remote reconstruction. In a way that might be interpreted as an ideal solution in which both ‘preservationists’ and ‘restorationists’ have their way, with an authentic memorial site and a theme-park-like fantasy. Yet these are both very artificial notions, with little sensual experience in the first instance and a lack of ‘grounded-ness’ (of how the site relates to its surroundings) and little sense of history in the second instance. Considering the continual pressure on resources, such as land, building materials and capital investments, as well as increased public expectation on quality of life, why not combine efforts to consider a site treatment that is meaningful and considers a wider range of issues, than is addressed currently in the Relics Park. Is it possible to address formidable changes in Chinese society and provide an alternative approach that reflects increased expectations with reference to the historic environment? If this were the case it may be that current conservation philosophy in China is unnecessarily inflexible and may have to be reviewed with evidence from practice.

These deliberations bring us back to some fundamental issues. Firstly, what is conservation and why do we conserve our heritage in China? Secondly, what is authenticity and its relationship to cultural relics? Thirdly, what is Yuanmingyuan to be kept for and for whom? A review of these issues should enable a sound basis to be formed from which the treatment of Yuanmingyuan may be debated and taken forward.

What is conservation and why conserve?

The modern (European) concept of conservation, as a general term to include various treatments, was first introduced into China in the 1930s and has remained largely unchanged since. Yet, conservation itself has been through various phases of development and its meaning changes as a result. In order to fully appreciate the changing meaning of conservation, the nuances of this evolution should be understood. This therefore requires it to be contextualized with respect to the predominant philosophies, so that those in China can be compared with international developments.

Restoration, preservation and conservation: European treatments of ancient monuments (15th -early 20th Century)

The concept of architectural conservation originates in Western Europe with the beginning of Italian Renaissance, since when treatments of ancient monuments and works of art of the past may be considered to have evolved via the following approaches:

Traditionally, built heritage, or property, is kept in a similar manner to that in which people

today keep their houses or theatres, i.e. by retaining the function of the property intact, which can be done through renovation and renewal. It rarely shows concerns about material substance and is a tradition that has existed as long as society, and is still prevalent in some 'un-modernised' cultural or ethnic groups^[4].

The early modern approach, known as 'romantic restoration', was established in the Italian Renaissance when humanists and artists recognised ancient monuments as nostalgic remains of the past and material fragments that documented national identity. Therefore ancient structures and objects of significance were 'preserved, protected, as well as restored and completed in order to give them new actuality, new function and new life as a part of reference of present society'^[5].

From the 1830s, romance was superseded by realism and utilitarianism. Genuine relics became much more highly valued than imitations since it was understood that the study of history was confined to examination and verification of material remains from the past. Grown from the anti-restoration philosophy, the approach of preservation was enhanced to protect and re-evaluate the authentic object, which was more concerned with substance than with form.

In late 19th and early 20th century, two fundamentally different approaches to the treatment of ancient monuments and works of art emerged: 'restoration' and 'conservation'. 'Restoration' aimed to retain the aesthetic and other values related to the completeness of the monuments, in this context 'falsification' was seen as unavoidable, due to the necessary reproduction of original features. 'Conservation', that focused more on historic values retained in original objects appealed for historic significance, which was believed embedded in the authentic objects. In England these issues were first highlighted by John Ruskin in 1849 and adopted as an article of faith by William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877. This thus made preservation increasingly 'respectful of surviving structures as faithful repositories of human experience'^[6].

So, by the beginning of the 20th century, the treatment of architectural heritage had evolved considerably. Generally speaking, restoration aimed more at the present; it relied on and served subjective interpretation. Preservation -of material authenticity- was intended for the community at large and aimed at the future as a way of understanding human history. Conservation was somehow a reconciliation of restoration and preservation, aiming to retain both the aesthetic and historic values, and later on social and other values. These made conservation complicated and hard to be defined, and the meaning of the term has changed considerably over time with conservation becoming the general term in England, whereas preservation is used in the United States. This reflects the general confusion of the topic around which the international guidelines have been developed.

International and national guidelines on architectural heritage conservation (1930s-2000s)

The first international charter relating to the protection of monuments *The Athens Charter*, adopted in 1931 at the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic

Monuments, defines the basic principles on the subject. In 1964 the Second Congress approved the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (the *Venice Charter*), which was a landmark in built heritage conservation. In 1981, aiming to reinforce the *Venice Charter* by applying it to ‘living monuments’, the *Florence Charter* was produced dealing with historic gardens and has remained the only internationally recognised charter to do so. It has however been a local charter, the *Burra Charter*, first conceived in 1979 (latest revision 1999) as guidance for Australian heritage conservation, that has gained an international reputation. The *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* (*China Principles*) produced in 2004, were based on the philosophies of the *Venice Charter* as well as the *Burra Charter*.

An analysis of a number of important issues relating to each charter enables an understanding of the development of conservation philosophy and provides a context for the *China Principles*. (See: Table 1)

Table 1. Selected international and national charters on the historic monuments and sites^[7,8]

<p>The Athens Charter, 1931</p>	<p>Objectives: buildings (static), their artistic, historic, scientific values and ‘style of any given period’</p> <p>Ethics: retain material/fabric authenticity as the ‘warden of civilisation’</p> <p>For whom: professionals (art/architecture historian, archaeologist)</p> <p>Treatments: preservation, restoration. Modern techniques and materials can be installed but should be distinguishable</p> <p>Decision makers: collaboration between archaeologist and architect</p>
<p>The Venice Charter, 1964</p>	<p>Objectives: architectural works and urban or rural setting, their historical, archaeological or aesthetic value; ‘Valued contributions of all periods’</p> <p>Ethics: retain material authenticity since the historic monuments ‘imbued with a message from the past...ancient monuments as a common heritage’</p> <p>For whom: ‘future generations’, and limited ‘socially useful purpose’</p> <p>Treatments: conservation (preservation based) and restoration. ‘Recourse to all the sciences and techniques’</p> <p>Decision makers: ‘can not rest solely on the individual’</p>
<p>The Florence Charter, 1981</p>	<p>Objectives: historic gardens (‘a living monument’), their aesthetic, scientific, ecological values and function of amenity, and ‘successive stages of evolution’</p> <p>Ethics: retain design, scale and material authenticity (‘physical fabric and</p>

	<p>cultural message’), and unity of the whole, since gardens are a ‘direct affinity between civilisation and nature’</p> <p>For whom: future generations, and the public</p> <p>Treatments: ‘maintenance, conservation, restoration, reconstruction’</p> <p>Decision makers: ‘responsible authorities’</p>
<p>The Burra Charter, 1999</p>	<p>Objectives: ‘places of cultural significance’, their aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value</p> <p>Ethics: ‘cautious approach to change’ in order to ‘make the place usable’; change may be necessary to retain cultural significance, which can enrich people’s experiences of the past and diverse culture, as well as provide the identity of certain groups</p> <p>For whom: local people, general public. ‘Past, present and future generations’</p> <p>Treatments: ‘Retention or reintroduction of a use; retention of associations and meanings; maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation, reinterpretation’; and ‘a combination of more than one of these’. Traditional materials and techniques are preferred</p> <p>Decision makers: ‘involve people in the decision-making process, particular those that have strong associations with a place’</p>
<p>The Principles for the conservation of Heritage Sites in China, 2004</p>	<p>Objectives: heritage sites (archaeological sites and ruins, tombs, traditional architecture...), their historical, artistic, scientific values</p> <p>Ethics: ‘to preserve the authenticity of all the elements’ (retain the historic condition), in order to ‘retain for the future its historic information and all its values’</p> <p>For whom: ‘not only of the various ethnic groups of China but are also the common wealth of all humanity’; ‘not only to the present generation but even more to future generations’</p> <p>Treatments: regular maintenance, physical protection and strengthening, minor restoration, major restoration, reconstruction (as an exceptional measure and priority should be given to conserving the remaining ruins without damaging them in the process)</p> <p>Decision makers: ‘a sound, independent and permanent organisational structure’</p>

Within less than a century there has been a notable evolution in approaches to heritage sites (Table 1). From the *Athens Charter* to the *Burra Charter*, the coverage of heritage has broadened from monuments to place; the ethics of treatment have moved from preserving object substance to retaining broadly meant cultural significance; the perceived interest groups have extended from professionals and future generations to involving the general public and the present, as being the decision makers. Conservation in the *Venice Charter*, paralleled with restoration, is restricted to the preservation based treatments, but 35 years later this was altered by the *Burra Charter*, where conservation means ‘all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance’. Therefore changes are allowed, although which ‘should not distort the physical or other evidence’ that a place provides. However, such changes have not been reflected on the recent *China Principles*, which defines conservation as ‘all measures carried out to preserve the physical remains of sites and their historic settings’. Therefore it returns the meanings of conservation to preservation based protection, maintenance, technical intervention and management. The *China Principles* rely heavily on conservationist’s interests of authenticity and sets their sights on future generations rather than the present. It does not reflect the diverse nature of heritage sites and their contemporary values to society, which both the *Florence Charter* and the *Burra Charter* have as a core interest. Such reluctance to change is potentially counterproductive when dealing with a landscape, which by its nature always changes.

Sustaining historic environments: lessons from English Heritage and National Trust

Based on the spirit of international charters, various British conservation bodies have continued debates surrounding the topic of conservation from its principles, policies and practice into one asking more fundamental questions, led by English Heritage and the National Trust. English Heritage, the government's statutory adviser on the historic environment, and the National Trust, a non-governmental body that owns property to preserve this in perpetuity, are both responsible for a wide range of cultural heritage, including gardens and designed landscapes. Although both take a national perspective, some of their considerations can apply worldwide.

Since the late 1990s, English Heritage has been developing its new principles to respond to social and political pressure. In 1997, it produced the discussion document *Sustaining the Historic Environment: New Perspectives on the Future*. As the keyword in the document, sustainability, ‘the continuous process of conservation rather than achieving any particular final position’, is about people, and its central tenet is to achieve ‘an acceptable quality of life’ via ‘the right balance between new and old and between keeping and using the historic and archaeological resource[...in doing so,] we should not be afraid of creating tomorrow’s historic environment, or of using our historic and archaeological resources for the benefit of the present, as long as we do so wisely’^[9]. Developed on such ideas, in 2006 English Heritage produced the draft *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (EH Principles, to be revised in 2007)*, to guide conservation thinking and practice in the UK. It resets the term of conservation to involve ‘sustaining, revealing or reinforcing the heritage values of a place in its setting’ and declares that conservation ‘is not limited to physical intervention, and...may be achieved through

making major changes. Decisions about change to a place may involve balancing the heritage values of what exists now against the potential benefits and disbenefits of the proposed change, and the public interest in the historic environment with other public interests.’ Although still under consultation, the *EH Principles* clearly marks a new approach towards the historic environment as ‘a resource that should be sustained for the benefit of both present and future generations’, and aims to balance the protection with ‘the economic and social needs and aspirations of the communities who live in it’. Therefore, the essence of the *EH Principles* can be condensed as follows: conservation is about managing change for sustaining heritage values, conservation is for people, both present and the future, the communal and in common^[10].

The National Trust’s care for gardens started in 1947 and it currently manages over 270 gardens and landscape parks, over half of which are listed by English Heritage as being of national importance. Because few controls exist to ensure the protection of Britain’s historic parks and gardens, the Trust has been developing its understanding through sixty years of practical experience. At first, the National Trust set its sights far into the future and regarded its principal duty as securing all the significance or value of the inheritance. Later, with ownership, it came to an obligation to ‘maintain the relevance of historic gardens to society, i.e. to provide ‘not only public benefit, but also the financial means to support their maintenance’. From its practice in garden restoration and maintenance so far, two issues can be highlighted. Firstly, restoration without conjecture is an ideal, but is impossible. Even to the best garden restoration work done by the Trust, its archive, consisting of three-quarters of a million documents, only provides what they suggest as 5% of the information needed to restore details beyond the overall layout. Therefore ‘restoration’ should better be thought of as ‘evocation’. The second is, successful garden conservation related to necessary ‘re-creation’ and management for benefits of society, as well as good maintenance. The latter is being achieved through proper gardener’s training schemes^[11].

The examples of English Heritage and the National Trust highlight the new perspectives in landscape heritage. By redefining ‘conservation’, comprehensive treatments of wider choice, including conscious sacrificing of the original fabric, are allowed to manage change, and ultimately to sustain the heritage for its balanced values and wider benefits for today and tomorrow.

What is authenticity and why authenticity?

Authenticity has remained the main theme of conservation. Originating from the Greek *authentēs*, meaning author, its connotations were originally; genuine and first-hand. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, conservation practice ‘has tended towards considering and admiring works of art and architecture as documents, thus placing increased importance on their material expression of authenticity’^[12]. Under such influences, the *China Principles* settled their aims on authenticity of original elements in particular, which eventually re-shaped Yuanmingyuan as a Relics Park, in highlighting the archaeological remains as

authentic. Yet it may be questioned whether these remains are all authentic and whether authenticity is just about surviving fabrics. In order to deal with these issues it is necessary to briefly address the understanding of the word authenticity.

Authenticity in anthropology—a humanistic view

Authenticity, viewed by anthropologists, emerged from the modern world view of society, self and nature. It is therefore a cultural construct of the modern Western world, and functions a Western ontology rather than of anything in the non-Western cultures. Authenticity closely relates to Western notions of the individual, which has a central place in people's understanding of reality of both physical universe and the human world. It takes nature as a big universe of equally independent entities, in which each object is a special centre of activity and element of necessity. Each thing is authentic because it exists. Authenticity is also bonded to nationalist and ethnic ideologies, which treat cultures as the individuated entities of world society. To the nationalist ideologies, the fundamental premise is that a nation, bonded and distinctive, exists, and 'we are a nation because we have a culture'. Therefore the cultural and historical substance or attributes are needed, upon which national existence can be said to rest. In modern society, the temple of authenticity is the museum, where visitors contact with authentic piece of culture and incorporate that magical proof of existence into 'personal experience'^[13].

However, the anxiety over individual authenticity, or say credibility of individual existence, simultaneously exists because of the lack of reality, so as to the collective authenticity such as of national or ethnic groups, especially when they find themselves 'in a struggle for recognition, seeking either national sovereignty or equal rights within a large polity'. Thus, it comes to the necessity of authenticity and the idea that the more authentic substances one possess, the securer its independency is, and the easier its high culture be constructed^[14].

Authenticity in architectural heritage—from Western preference to international plight

In architectural conservation, the rise of authenticity emerges from 'late eighteenth-century antiquarian criticism against the restoration of mediaeval churches in England'. In this case, any reconstruction was refused to the built structure, and additions were recommended in a contemporary form in order to keep the monumental objects as honest evidence from the past and for future generations^[15].

When such preservationist's account encounters increased arguments in conservation approaches, the focus of authenticity gradually flows away from object substance. In the *Venice Charter*, for instance, the restoration respecting the 'original material' and 'authentic documents' as evidence is thought acceptable to retain authenticity. In 1994, an ICOMOS assembly in Japan on the subject of authenticity produced the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, which declares 'it is ... not possible to base judgments of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must [be] considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong.' Therefore, authentic conservation includes 'all efforts designed to understand cultural heritage, know its

history and meaning, ensure its material safeguard and, as required, its presentation, restoration and enhancement'^[16].

Authenticity in historic gardens—does it exist?

As a main difference from built architecture, a garden is 'an architectural and horticultural composition...which constituents are primarily vegetal and therefore living, which means that they are perishable and renewable'. It is because of this main difference and special nature that, in 1981, the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee drew up the *Florence Charter* on historic gardens. Categorising the historic garden as a monument, the *Florence Charter* proposes to 'preserve it in accordance with the spirit of the *Venice Charter*' but 'must be governed by specific rules'. So, the authenticity of a historic garden 'depends as much on the design and scale of its various parts as on its decorative features and on the choice of plants or inorganic materials adopted for each of its parts', where firstly the contents of intangible authenticity is increased, and secondly, to the vegetal material, the replacement and renewal are believed authentic as well^[17].

However, the practice of garden conservation reveals the gaps between the ideal approach and the reality. The National Trust admitted that 'gardens are in a constant state of flux, making the identification of their essential qualities, let alone any attempts to preserve them, rather like trying to hit a moving target.' Also, the lack of sufficient documents fails to satisfy the needs of an authentic restoration. The practitioner of the Trust directly questions the pursuit of authenticity and notes 'we should not delude ourselves that a restored garden is a historically "authentic" one. Authenticity in garden restoration is a quest...returning a garden to particular period is effectively a reworking and reinterpretation of history...we talk in terms of "re-creation"...this may be an acceptable way forward'^[18]. Similarly in its conservation principles for historic environment, English Heritage introduces 'sustainability' to replace the target of authenticity.

Authenticity in traditional and modern China—different value systems

Since authenticity is a reflection of the world view of society, self and nature, it is possible to trace traditional understanding of authenticity in Chinese philosophies on universe and history. To the universe and all its substances, the typical Chinese view is 'all entities at all levels behave in accordance with their position in the greater patterns of which they are parts...by the spontaneous cooperation of all beings in the universe brought about by their following the internal necessities of their own natures'^[19]. Therefore, not authenticity of each individual, but harmonisation of the whole sets the fundamental standard for an 'authentic' organism, or more precisely, a sustaining organism. From this traditional viewpoint, the Chinese see human history as a cyclical process rather than a linear progress. 'Human history belongs to the total cosmic process...moves according to a similar cyclical pattern'^[20]. This view helps the Chinese avoid the modern Westerner's anxiety of self reality caused by the loss of authentic evidence of the past; also it makes reconstruction rather than preservation morally feasible.

Therefore, of a building monument the authenticity of the original fabric is not of pre-eminence, neither is it necessary to retain the exact form or style when reconstructing, let alone of a garden which is mostly composed of perishable vegetation and tradable static features. If there is something to be sustained which makes the building or garden ‘authentic’ in the Chinese context, this is contained within the internal structure and meanings, and their external links with temporal and spatial contexts. Before the 1930s, such understanding of authenticity dominated architecture and garden maintenance in China. If resources were available, old structures and features were periodically changed and renewed in order to maintain structural stability and visual perfection.

In the 1930s, *Liang Sicheng*, after his training as an architect in America, returned with the latest Western theory of architectural conservation, with the emphasis on material authenticity, which he popularised as ‘restoring the old as the old’, as a juxtaposition to the traditional notion of ‘restoring the old as the new’^[21]. Although the digest of this ‘new’ philosophy had taken more than half a century, by 2004 the official document of the *China Principles* eventually authorised the orthodoxy of material authenticity as the key issue for Chinese heritage conservation. Considering this in the context of China today, where modernisation is rapidly removing any vestiges of the past, and globalisation is reinforcing China’s acceptance of international standards, it is understandable as this represents a clear stance with respect to remaining heritage. But, like many traditions in modern China once spurned and later reprised, will traditional values with respect to authenticity return in the near future? During the middle of the 20th century a strand in modern science and philosophy returned to traditional Chinese wisdom, which believed ‘the harmonious cooperation of all beings arose, not from the orders of a superior authenticity [...], but from the fact that they were all parts in a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern, and what they obeyed were the internal dictates of their own natures’^[22]. More than fifty years later such a notion has been translated into a heritage context, and even that of English Heritage appears to have derived here independently, as for instance, in moving the focus from material authenticity to environmental sustainability.

Sustaining Yuanmingyuan: a living heritage for the present and future

There are various options for the future of Yuanmingyuan, with completely restoring the gardens on one end, and fully preserving the relic site on the other. The Relics Park plan considers Yuanmingyuan into two parts with respect to treatment; the buildings and the landscape. Building relics are to be preserved, which allies to positivist, data-driven scientific disciplines as well as patriotic sentiments of history; landscape contours and plantings are to be ‘restored’, which responds to public expectation of experiencing the former reputation of Yuanmingyuan. Yet this remarkable uncoordinated approach makes no sense in the Chinese context where building and landscape performed such an integral part of each other in the creation of a designed landscape. The result here is that of an anonymous renovated green space, which does not even begin to reveal the original character of the site. So, the Relics Park Plan values Yuanmingyuan for its archaeological remains-cultural relics firstly, and secondly as a public recreational space. But is this an adequate solution for Yuanmingyuan,

once the finest imperial garden in China, which now lacks any sensual experiences? Before considering alternative options for the site, both the values of Yuanmingyuan and the approaches to realising such values need to be examined.

Valuing Yuanmingyuan: reflecting on new attitudes towards conservation and authenticity

Yuanmingyuan today represents a ‘conservation entity of cultural relics with national significance’, a ‘national education base of patriotism’, and also a district park to serve the people^[23]. None of these values reflect its former artistic accomplishments, which were so highly praised by Qing emperors, overseas travellers, and those who cared for this garden. The desire to restore Yuanmingyuan has never diminished, but this was either blocked by emotional sentiments with respect to the derelict land, or rejected by preservationists based on the value of archaeological building remnants. So, two questions require to be raised, firstly with respect to the value of the (archaeological) relics, and secondly the value of Yuanmingyuan as a whole.

Today, building relics are considered as a scientific document which retains authentic information of the historic garden, as well as provides historic evidence for nationalistic purposes expressed as patriotic education with respect to its sacking in the late nineteenth century. On the one hand, the accuracy of these values needs to be questioned, since the display of relics gives no sense of Yuanmingyuan at any period of its history except for the 21st century. It is an interpretation that is shaped by emotional and partial views of conservation and authenticity. On the other hand, even though scientific and patriotic values of relics are important, with careful conservation processes, such values can be retained through other methods, such as detailed documentation and selective preservation, rather than keeping the majority of buildings as archaeological fragments.

The current values of Yuanmingyuan are a subjective issue which heavily relies on propaganda. In order to make the assessment as impartial as possible, it is necessary to consider broader interest groups including both specialists and general public, both Chinese and international visitors, who all reflect differently on the scientific, historic and artistic values. The value of the Relics Park plan is seen primarily as an archaeological park with high scientific and historic interests. However, there is no general consensus on this; for example what is the value of these archaeological remains of garden buildings in Yuanmingyuan as opposed to those in other imperial gardens, particularly since vandalism and tidying up has seriously affected their understanding since they were sacked in the late nineteenth century. As a result of the fragmentary condition of the archaeology the site has been difficult to interpret as a garden and has been criticised for lacking any artistic interests that appeals to the senses^[24]. Yet as the one time finest imperial garden of Qing China, that was also the most famous one internationally, the artistic values responding to the senses should at least not be ignored, since this remains the true attraction of Yuanmingyuan for the majority of people. The best way of revealing such value is by restoring the garden so that it can be physically experienced. There is a wealth of information retained both on site and in the archives as well as in numerous publications that would enable a properly argued restoration to take place. A restoration may also be argued philosophically in that in the latest attitudes the aim of

conservation is no longer just to preserve the past for the future, but also, and more important, to integrate the past in today's life.

The argument around authenticity with respect to the current situation can easily be dispelled. It is clear that there is no universal and constant term of authenticity, and each interpretation is within its cultural or historical context. Within our context of historic gardens authenticity is not only reflected in the surviving fabric, but also in form and function. During its 300 years of history, Yuanmingyuan has experienced various alterations and restorations, re-use and abuse, as a result of which it is difficult to concede at which time Yuanmingyuan was authentic. By sacrificing potential possibilities of revealing the spatial character and design philosophy of Yuanmingyuan, the current relics approach provides a very limiting understanding of the site.

Considering that gardens are fragile and living environments, authentic 'restorations' or 'reconstructions' as defined by the *Venice Charter* and *China Principles* can never be achieved in garden conservation. But if this stops historic gardens from being renovated and represented, depriving people today to enjoy of the rich sensual experiences of the past, there would not have been a Versailles in France, a Het Loo in The Netherlands, a Privy Garden at Hampton Court in Great Britain, Kyoto in Japan, or a Chengde Summer Resort. These and other sites form national tourist attractions, they determine the identity of a nation, and are the sites which people are proud of and long for.

Therefore, instead of valuing Yuanmingyuan as a static, non-renewable cultural relics and memorial site, it appears to be more beneficial to value Yuanmingyuan as living heritage which provides people today a chance to experience and enjoy an historic environment. A site also that provides increased revenue in providing a focus for tourism.

Sustaining Yuanmingyuan: a more dynamic approach towards garden heritage

Due to the political constraints and lack of resources it appears not to have been possible to consider a wider range of options for the site. However the situation is changing rapidly with considerable resources being increasingly available for key projects. In order to consider further options it will be necessary to provide an appropriate framework in which proposals may be considered. At the moment, it appears that one of the main problems is that it is burdened by administration that makes decision taking cumbersome and difficult. The Administrative Department of the Yuanmingyuan Relics Park, an administrative entity, is subordinated to three authorities: the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage, the Beijing Municipal Administration of Construction, and the Haidian District Government, which each has different interests. It would therefore be necessary to provide a greater autonomy so that the proposals may be re-thought within an international, national and local context.

A possibility might be to set up an administrative system comparable to that at the Palace Museum in Beijing, where curator takes full responsibility for decision taking. The appointment of a curator at Yuanmingyuan would aid this process which would not only

enhance the efficiency of decision making, but would also help long-term planning for sustaining Yuanmingyuan. The curator should preferably be a specialist in landscape architecture/ history and archaeology, a leader, firm enough to take decisions efficiently and carry them through, but also be sympathetic enough to listen to and consult the various interest groups.

Guided by the curator, a design team might be established charged with a comprehensive reassessment. The team members would be specialists from a range of disciplines, and include academics and practitioners (e.g. a garden historian, archaeologist, dendrologist, landscape architect, architect, engineer, etc.) and representatives of governmental bodies, as well as those in charge of the site and involved in the daily management. For example, in retaining and enhancing the information from surviving fabric (material authenticity), it will be necessary to involve archaeologists, landscape historians, architects and engineers from the on start in order to be able to take decisions about possible approaches and their affect. In this manner it would be possible to achieve a well-balanced direction that is defensible and sustainable.

A possible approach for the design team might be:

1. To investigate a comprehensive history of Yuanmingyuan from available documentary and archaeological evidences and establish the cultural significance; to survey the perception of Yuanmingyuan from both the public and the specialists' point of view. In the latter case it would be vital to prevent 'prescribed' doctrines being advanced and consider physical and intellectual access as comprehensively as possible.

2. To draw conclusions from the investigations and surveys by drawing up clear objectives, for example of Yuanmingyuan as a museum of gardens and history, as well as an exquisite landscape embedded in history for everyone to enjoy. This of course would respond to the cultural significance and helps to clarify the various values of Yuanmingyuan. Some of the questions that might be answered at this stage include those regarding the feasibility of the restoration of the garden and the ethical acceptability and desirability of the park as an active recreation ground for the local population. At this stage it might also be established whether there would be sufficient practical skills to carry out restoration work, and whether it would be possible or desirable to set up training programmes, were this not the case.

3. To present preliminary proposals for public discussion.

4. To revise the proposals in response to consultations; to develop a strategy with schedules and programmes for development of detailed plans, and organise various action plans.

5. To organise regular design team meetings to monitor progress and revise proposals if necessary.

6. To supervise the work on site; to publish the results of the research and record the works undertaken.

To conclude

The conservation of architectural heritage has progressed from preserving to sustaining; from being intended for future generations to that for both present and future ones; from a focus on objects to the benefits for people. So, conservation indeed is for people, and has been shaped and is being shaped by people. The same might be said for authenticity, which is rooted in people's understanding of the world and human history, and serves to provide grounding for the meaning of life. In the instance of Yuanmingyuan it appears that such spirits are not reflected in the *China Principles*, nor do they particularly seem to cater for the specific peculiarities of garden landscapes. It might be questioned therefore whether they should be revised taking this in mind. Sustaining the historic environment for wider benefit groups, both today and tomorrow, both public and specialist, is also compatible to the social development in China today, which aims to build a harmonious society of caring for the majority of people's interests. Additionally such an approach might also be seen as a continuation of traditional wisdom in which Chinese philosophies treated the world.

This brings us back to the future: keeping Yuanmingyuan and its various values, both tangible and intangible, should be rooted in both contemporary society and a sustainable future. While not presuming to know the interests of future generations, it is safe to suggest that surviving features should be preserved as much as possible; however, a careful restoration or renovation can also contribute to the creation of heritage for tomorrow. There is no absolute wrong or right, only gain and loss. The directions for the future of Yuanmingyuan remain open. Will it be an archaeological relic site, a restored garden, a newly designed park, or a mixture of all of these? A rational and impartial debate may lead us to an answer.

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Suggestions on Yuanmingyuan Project

(Original document in Chinese [see next page], was which submitted to the National People's Congress for discussion, March 2007. This is the translation of the framework only)

Foreword

Foci of the Yuanmingyuan Dilemma revealed through thirty years' debate

To present "beauty" or "sadness"?

Official Results: *Master Plan of YMY Relics Park* (2000)

Analyses of the Current *Master Plan of Yuanmingyuan Relics Park 2000*

First, did the plan solve the dilemma? (No, neither 'beautiful' nor 'desolate')

Second, represent educational functions/values in a limited/old way

Third, failed to realise aesthetic and artistic values

Fourth, the way to realise archaeological and other scientific values

Fifth, on dealing with historic gardens & public parks

Sixth, disobeyed international charters on historic garden conservation

Reconstructing YMY in situ is a better solution

First, what is reconstruction in the case of YMY?

Second, reconstruction respects international charters and national laws

Third, reconstruction respects Chinese traditional ethics on garden conservation

Fourth, reconstruction represents public will

Fifth, reconstruction best reveals and enhances the multi-values of YMY and its site

Sixth, contemporary research, techniques and economic situations can support the reconstruction in high quality

Seventh, reconstruction doesn't affect contemporary park opening to the public

Suggestions on how to reconstruct YMY

First, management team

Second, clarify values

Third, way to realise values

Fourth, approaches (draft?)

Fifth, use

Conclusion

It is suggested that, before a thorough survey and research is carried out, it is better to stop current construction work at Yuanmingyuan Relics Park. Instead of making the real Yuanmingyuan an archaeological park with an off-site reconstruction, it might be more sensible (more authentic, more economical, more valuable) to restore or reconstruct Yuanmingyuan in situ.

关于圆明园建设的建议书

高磊¹, Jan Woudstra

前言

本建议书观点建立在对国内外历史文献研究、圆明园研究、文化遗产研究、专家访谈和现场考察的基础上,力求客观、科学和尊重实际。因为篇幅有限,建议书只列出主要观点和论据,细节(尤其是反复讨论已成共识者)将被略去。另外,由于学术局限(笔者主要站在建筑及园林史和历史园林保护学者的角度论述),部分内容还有待相关专家学者指正和补充。

关于圆明园重建与否的论争已持续多年,尤其最近三十年来,此话题反复出现并引起社会各界的大讨论。时代在变化,影响圆明园建设的一系列因素也在变化。纸上讨论可以无止境,但是圆明园的现状已经显示其工程建设不能再被误导。本建议书呼吁相关部门暂缓正在进行的圆明园遗址公园施工、修订 2000 年制定的《圆明园遗址公园规划》,成立合适的决策机构和专家组,科学制定真正适合圆明园今天及未来的建设计划。

从三十年论争看问题焦点

圆明园自从 1860 年被毁灭之后屡有重修,但囿于当时政治、经济、战争等因素,清政府于 1904 年取消了圆明园的管理机构和修缮使用企图。在此后的大半个世纪,虽然圆明园间或出现于国人记忆,但是整修圆明园的行动直到二十世纪七十年代后期才出现。关于如何整修,三十年来意见一直难于统一。根本原因在于对圆明园价值认识难达一致。作为中国清代最辉煌的园林,圆明园有着难以估量的艺术和美学价值;作为清代政治中心以及中国近代史经受最大创伤的园林,圆明园有着深远的历史价值和教育意义。因此,如何表达诸多价值成了论争的焦点。

¹笔者希望特别感谢中国社会科学院杨鸿勋教授和张驭寰教授,中国文物研究所孟宪民所长,清华大学郭黛姪教授和吴祥艳博士,北京林业大学孙筱祥教授和白日新教授,圆明园遗址公园管理处张恩荫先生、叶亮清副主任和刘阳先生,圆明园学会潘从贵先生和段宇红女士(排名不分先后)。以上诸位专家、学者和管理者热情地接受笔者访谈,并与笔者分享他们的研究成果及工作经验,为本文写作提供了重要支持。另外,加利福尼亚大学景观史学家和景观建筑师 Marc Treib 教授 2005 年参观圆明园后在与笔者合作文章中提出圆明园可以复建的设想;英国谢菲尔德大学 Natia Onisiforidou 博士的博士学位论文“考古遗址的景观设计——一个理论大纲”[Landscape Design for Archaeological Sites: A Theoretical Framework (University of Sheffield, 2001)]为本文提供了重要的理论和实证支持,在此一并感谢。

总体看来，论争的最主要分歧在于：是表达“美”还是表达“惨”。希望再现圆明园之美的人士认为，应该全面修复圆明园，使人在美的环境中得到熏陶，同时也可达到爱国主义教育之目的；希望表达圆明园之惨的人士认为，应该大范围保留遗址，使人在震撼中受到教育，同时也可体现别样的遗址美学（悲剧美学）。

2000年，建立在两种观点之上的折中方案《圆明园遗址公园规划》为持续二十余年的论争划上句号。

《圆明园遗址公园规划》分析

由北京市政府责成、北京市城市规划设计研究院制定的《圆明园遗址公园规划》（以下简称《规划》）提出：历史上的圆明园是“造园艺术、博物收藏、中西建筑文化交流、历史潮流”的载体，圆明园遗址有“文物科考、历史、艺术、爱国主义教育和历史教育”的作用与价值。在明确圆明园及遗址价值的基础上，规划原则“坚持‘整体保护、科学整修、合理利用’的方针，明确保护遗址是整修、利用的前提和核心”。

在此认识基础上，规划方案提出：“圆明园的主要建筑遗址是其精华所在，是揭露帝国主义罪行、教育后人、研究历史潮流和造园艺术之最有价值的实物……古建的恢复……本着宜少不宜多的原则……恢复建筑面积控制在古建筑遗址面积的10%以内”，“恢复山形水系……使参观凭吊者饱赏圆明园这一我国皇家园林杰出的环境风貌”，“园林植被景观的恢复……使全园能够‘收四时之烂漫’……再现圆明园三园的园林风貌”。

《规划》对圆明园的价值作了较全面的总结，方案设计兼顾恢复园林之美和保存建筑遗址两方面需求，为平息论争、推动圆明园发展做出较大贡献。在《规划》指导下，圆明园场址土地使用权基本得到收回，圆明园建设开始进入迅速发展时期。但需要指出的是，关于如何协调及实现圆明园的多重价值，以及兼顾历史园林保护需求，规划方案未能合理解决。具体分析如下：

其一、关于论争的解决思路

《规划》制定之前，关于保存废墟还是重建园林的论争持续已久，因此规划选取了折中之路，即大范围保存建筑废墟和全面恢复山形水系及植被景观，并在此基础上做出建筑复建不超过10%的规定。

但是，将园林遗址简化理解为建筑残骸，中国园林简化表达为山水和植物，此想法在学术上难以立足。而且，在考古工作进行之前就做出上限10%的建筑复建指标也缺乏科学依据。

因此，要不要把圆明园场址建成遗址公园，不妨从“贴近现实，贴近生活，贴近群众”的角度再分析；建筑复建多少，如何复建，不妨在充分的文献研究和考古发掘基础上再提出。

其二、关于教育价值的实现方式

以遗址凭吊作为爱国主义教育和历史教育的唯一方法有待探讨：是否要大规模保存建筑遗址才可以“保留罪证”和不忘历史？

而且，即使是以遗址展示作为教育手段之一，现存的西洋楼遗址已经达到此目的，再罗列更多废墟是否可加强教育目的有待讨论。

再者，教育意义可以通过多种途径实现。比如，在复建的圆明园建筑中用影像展示园史（18世纪至今天），岂不是比在重新建造的圆明园废墟上用影像展示昔日辉煌更有真实性和教育意义？从这一点看，圆明园当下的状况以及复建圆明园的全过程也应该有一份细致的纪录。

其三、关于美学和艺术价值的实现方式

《规划》希望体现中国园林的艺术价值，但是缺失建筑的山形水系和植物景观能否再现圆明园“移天缩地在君怀”的磅礴气势和细致入微的园林格局？

《规划》希望体现遗址的悲剧美，但是在传统园林风貌的山水植物背景衬托下的建筑遗址能否展示“帝国主义侵略中国的累累罪行”？

中国园林之美在于和谐。园林构成要素主要包括建筑、山水和植物。遗址美学是十八世纪盛起于欧洲的一种美学观念，以后随着保护观念的变迁而逐渐减退。² 此美学观在中国历史及当代未曾广泛普及。

无论是园林理论还是《规划》指导下的实践均显示：仅恢复山形水系而保留建筑遗址的景观难以达到理想的遗址美学或园林美学效果。况且，这样的规划方案也使景观设计陷入两难境地：是尊重历史面貌恢复山水植被？还是结合建筑遗迹塑造苍凉景观？如果是前者，在缺失建筑要素的条件下难以完整展现园林之美，而且传统园林景观会影响到建筑遗址要表达的苍凉感（实践已证实，开花植物在遗址中显得过于喧闹）；如果是后者，则极不符合历史园林保护的国际精神，是在制造有违历史面貌的新景观。

因此，《规划》方案无法成功实现中国园林之美和建筑遗址之苍凉的叠加美学效果。

² 见：Huge Prince “Revival, Restoration, Preservation: Changing Views about Antique Landscape”, *Our Past Before Us: Why do We Save It?* Edited by David Lowenthal & Marcus Binney (London: Temple Smith, 1981) pp.33-49.

其四、关于考古学和其他科学价值的实现方式

此部分有待考古学和其他相关学科的专家学者进一步探讨。但是，欧洲已有研究证明，多数仅从考古学工作者兴趣出发而忽略公众审美需求的遗址展示不能令人满意；尊重历史信息的景观设计可以在保留考古学价值的同时提升考古场所的美学价值，而为公众喜爱。³

其五、关于历史园林与公园

历史园林可以向公众开放，但决不等同于公园。圆明园作为重要的历史园林遗迹，其保护性设计沿用公园规划标准有失稳妥。

其六、关于国际历史园林保护精神

国际古迹遗址理事会 (ICOMOS) 1981 年颁布、1982 年修订的《佛罗伦萨宪章》(The Florence Charter) 是历史园林保护的国际准则。其第十条规定：“在任何维持、保护、修复或重建一个历史园林或历史园林的一部分的时候，它的所有组成元素必须同时对待。孤立不同部分的操作将损害（园林）的整体性”。(Article. 10. In any work of maintenance, conservation, restoration or reconstruction of an historic garden, or of any part of it, all its constituent features must be dealt with simultaneously. To isolate the various operations would damage the unity of the whole.) 因此，只恢复山形水系植被而忽略建筑的设计将损害圆明园作为历史园林的重要价值。

综上所述，《圆明园遗址公园规划》虽然兼顾了两种美学观念，却难以实现遗址之悲凉与园林之美丽重合共存的理想。从现状来看，已部分建成的遗址公园（圆明园西部）既减损了圆明园作为中国古典园林杰作的艺术及美学价值，也无法充分实现其考古学和其他科学价值。而且，《规划》未能充分尊重国际历史园林保护宪章以及国内相关法律和准则。

原址复建 (reconstruction) 圆明园是更适宜的选择⁴

³ 关于欧洲考古遗址景观设计的案例分析，以及考古遗址的保护及景观设计程序，见 Natia Onisiforidou, *Landscape Design for Archaeological Sites: A Theoretical Framework* (PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield, 2000)

⁴ 在此，笔者将“reconstruction”译作“复建”，其释意应与《中国文物古迹保护准则》定义的“重建”相同，而非《准则》定义的“复建”(re-creation 重新设计)。之所以未译作“重建”，是因为考虑到中文语境下“重建”可能包括“重新”的含义，而“复建”则有“恢复，复还”之意，更贴近《布拉宪章》(Burra Charter, 澳大利亚 ICOMOS 1999 年修订的文物古迹保护宪章，是继《佛罗伦萨宪章》之后最具影响力的文物保护宪章之一) 对于 reconstruction 的解释：“‘复建’是指将一个场所恢复到一个已知的早先状态，它与‘修复’的不同之处在于‘复建’在构筑中引入了新材料”(Article 1.8 Reconstruction means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric.)

从以上论证可以看出，遗址公园建设不是充分实现圆明园价值的最佳方式。在对圆明园历史及园林艺术、圆明园研究、以及文化遗产保护等研究的基础上，笔者提出：复建圆明园是目前更合适的方案。具体论述如下：

其一、关于“复建”的定义和理解（就圆明园一例而言）

“复建”在此不是指 100% 恢复 18 世纪或 19 世纪某时期的圆明园原形——这是无论史料还是材料条件都不可能满足的。这里的“复建”是指融入今人设计的、最大程度尊重文献和遗址证据、保存（甚至提升）圆明园场址的历史及当代价值的恢复性建设。

复建的过程将是长时期、分区域进行的——如圆明园 300 年前的建造历程。不要囿于 10% 的复建指标，而是根据现场和史料，实事求是地论证哪些场址有条件恢复原貌，哪些需要用当代设计加以弥补，哪些可以暂时掩埋（或其他保护手法），留待以后再处理。

总之，复建是一个长期计划（比如 10 年、20 年或更久，但这不影响圆明园公园目前的开放），其目标可以是大体恢复圆明园被毁之前的某一个时期或几个时期（根据具体研究再定）的状况，以展示这一清代皇家园林的完整风貌，以及 300 年历史留下的印迹（比如可以通过部分保留现有的绮春园和长春园改造后区域，以展现圆明园 20 世纪晚期的利用和改造情况）。

其二、复建圆明园不违背国际宪章和国内法律

《佛罗伦萨宪章》第九条明确提出：“在一些情况下，复建是可接受的”（Article 9. ...In certain cases, reconstruction may be recommended...）。圆明园的美学和艺术价值须通过复建才能最大程度实现；圆明园的基本地貌和部分遗址依然存在，大量史料已被发现和研究，这些条件为复建提供了可能。因此复建符合宪章要求。此外，无论是《中国文物古迹保护准则》（见第三十三条）还是《中华人民共和国文物保护法》（见第二十二条）都认为，重建（复建）是保护的一种形式。因此，“复建”在国际准则和国内法律许可范围内。

另外，关于“文物”之定义，本身就具有灵活性。随着时间的推移，今天复建的圆明园又将成为后代的文化遗产。

其三、复建圆明园尊重中国传统的园林保护伦理

目前，国际关于文化遗产的保护伦理是建立在“真实性”和“完整性”的认同基础上，中国也不例外。但是，关于什么是“真实性”和“完整性”，各国、各地区由于文化差异，其解读也不同。

以中国为例，中国传统的建筑修护理念是“修旧成新”，从而达到延续建筑寿命和保持“完整性”之目的。在中国历史上，以新材料代替旧材料的维修乃至重建并不被认为减损了原物的历史“真实性”。同样伦理也适用于园林保护。20 世纪上半叶，在西方传统下发展起来的“修旧如旧”的概念由梁思成先生介绍到中国，并逐渐成为通行法则。在为中国建筑遗产保护带来新面貌的同时，此概念——确切而言，是对此概念的局限理解——在一定程度上也影响了中国传统保护伦理的延续。

另外，就中国园林的保护实践来看，苏州园林可谓较成功的例子。但是苏州园林的修复并没有囿于保存旧材料以及强求造园要素的一成不变。今日苏州园林作为世界文化遗产的吸引力不仅在于“历史悠久”的园林材料，更在于其“真实”和“完整”的园林意境。

因此，如果要达到《规划》所言“再现圆明园三园的园林风貌”，一定要综合考虑建筑、山水地貌、植被景观（以及“动物”等）等园林要素。在充分理解中国园林美学和保护伦理的基础上进行恢复性设计。简单套用国际准则的“保护”会在不久的将来显示出其弊端。

其四、复建圆明园是公众意愿的体现

众多现象表明，公众期待看到圆明园盛时的面貌。近百年一再出现的圆明园复原图，圆明园实物和虚拟模型，以及大众支持异地重建圆明园的热情，俱为佐证。

其五、复建圆明园可以最大程度保留和提升圆明园及其遗址的价值

无论是从国家、集体或公众利益出发，还是就专家学者兴趣而言，复建圆明园均是最好的选择。

首先，复建的圆明园可以更生动、更丰富的体现其作为爱国主义教育基地的价值。比如：维持现状的西洋楼遗址可继续发挥遗址教育功能；基本恢复的圆明园西部（及其他）景观可以展现中国园林文化艺术之精粹；选择保存的二十世纪后期圆明园面貌则从一个侧面反映了中国的当代发展史……当参观者身处园中，在感受圆明园园林风貌的同时，还可以不时看到结合复建精心保留的历史遗迹（不仅仅有建筑遗址，还可能是道路铺装、土壤、木植遗存以及其他），可以欣赏复建建筑的室内装修、艺术品陈列和诸多展览……此效果无疑是《规划》单一的教育形式力不能及的。

其次，复建的圆明园可以表达更丰富的历史价值——不仅是圆明园在清朝中期以及 1860 年被毁灭的历史，还可以是之后一个半世纪的中国社会变迁史。

再次，复建圆明园可以基本实现圆明园盛时的艺术及美学价值。

并且，通过最大程度表达真实历史信息的复建以及合理使用，圆明园将可以发挥比遗址公园更大的社会价值。就公众教育而言，圆明园将不再是简单的说教场所，公众将不再是被动的受教育者，而是赋予解释权利的思考者和探索者；就公众休闲而言，圆明园将不仅提供富含历史信息、环境优美的公共绿地和园林场所，而且，园内开展的多种娱乐和文体活动可以使圆明园更好的为社会各阶层服务和为公众喜爱。

同时，在考古学家和建筑师、景观建筑师、历史园林保护专家合作下的复建可以使圆明园场址的考古学和其他科学价值得到保存和实现。在此需要强调的是，遗址信息保存和园林景观复建不应简单理解为“由考古专家作遗址保护，景观建筑师作景观设计”，而应是考古专家、景观及建筑师以及其他专业人员的合作产物。比如考古学家鉴定需要保护的历史信息，景观和建筑师进行保护方案设计，并和考古学家共同论证。因此，圆明园遗址不仅不是复建的障碍，相反，它可以提供有利的条件，保证复建的圆明园比遗址公园或异地重建的圆明园更具真实性，遗址信息被更有效的保留和为公众所解读。

此外，复建的圆明园可以比遗址公园创造更大的经济价值，而且无需沿用《规划》提出的“以外养内”的方法（即通过对圆明园遗址范围外 100 余公顷的土地开发来筹措圆明园遗址公园的建设资金）。因此在圆明园原址范围内的复建可以避免过多占用土地，形成良好的园内经济循环，甚至实现“以内养外”。但是需要认识的是：实现经济价值不应作为历史园林保护之主要目的，经济价值的追求要以保护历史园林的其他价值为前提。

其六、当前的研究、技术和经济条件允许复建圆明园

圆明园由于其丰富的价值及意义，已成为当代国内外极为关注的课题之一。就笔者所见，除已发现的丰富史料外，对圆明园复建有直接帮助的当代研究成果（不完全举例）包括：清华大学建筑学院近三十年来多方面研究和设计成果，圆明园管理处原副主任及圆明园史专家张恩荫先生关于圆明园保护管理的见解和史料研究，法国毕雪梅（Michele Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens）博士带领的小组对西洋楼图像文字史料和建筑艺术的研究，中国人民大学清史研究所王道成教授等对圆明园历史的研究，法国华夏建筑研究学会的圆明园保护和利用研究，德国柏林工业大学 Zhang Shuang 博士的圆明园图纸档案系统研究等等。此外，澳大利亚 Geremie R. Barme 博士、加拿大 Anne-Maire Broudehoux 博士等对圆明园的当代意义研究也有一定参考价值。而且，正在进行的样式雷图档的整理研究还将揭开大量清代圆明园修建史料。以上研究成果能够为高质量的圆明园复建提供保证；同时，复建圆明园也是实现以上诸多研究价值的最好方式。

关于文化遗产保护，国际上对此方面的理论研究和实践探索已较为成熟。虽然保护伦理可能

与中国有异，但是其规范性程序和管理组织可以为中国借鉴。

从技术层面来看，由于“文革”等原因，园林施工工艺的传承受到较大影响，但是并没有完全断层。比如苏州等江南地区，古典园林的施工工艺和人员仍然存在并延续，历史园林得到较好的维护和保养，新建的古典园林也越来越多。而且退一步说，即使施工质量不如往昔，我们仍应尽最大努力而不是轻言放弃。在此意义上看，复建圆明园也是对无形文化遗产——中国传统园林工艺——的保存和展现。

就经济条件而言，当前的中国经济状况有能力提供复建圆明园所需费用。虽然复建的资金是庞大的，但是通过多种渠道——比如设立圆明园基金会等——是可能解决的。而且复建是分区域逐步进行，并不要求所有投资一步到位。此外，就劳动力和建筑材料而言，今天复建的费用一定比将来要为节约。再者，复建圆明园也可避免重复建设（比如后代可能对今人所作遗址公园不满而重新设计，或者异地重建圆明园）带来的资金浪费。

其七、复建圆明园不影响目前的公园开放和使用

复建虽然是一个长期过程，但因为分区域进行，不会影响其现有开放。而且可以考虑通过有控制的开放部分考古和复建场所，达到与公众交流之目的，并增加游园趣味。

综上所述，原址复建圆明园是更贴近生活、贴近群众、贴近圆明园实际的选择。复建圆明园可以解决过去和当前圆明园建设中出现的一系列矛盾；复建圆明园可以和谐体现和提升圆明园的诸多价值；复建圆明园可以最充分的利用已有研究成果，而且费用会比将来为低；高质量的复建圆明园，其过程——而不仅是结果——既可向世界展示我们对待文化遗产的态度和方法，也可体现我国各学科研究和管理水平之进步；而且，复建的圆明园也是今人留给后代的珍贵文化遗产。

关于怎样复建圆明园的几点建议

其一、建立适合的决策组织

具体组建方式有待讨论。在此仅就笔者经验提供一种方案供参考：

比如：可以由政府授权委任一名建设组长。建设组长代表政府对建设工程负总责，拥有工程方案决策权，并负责筹措和分配建设基金。建设组长须既具备管理能力，又熟悉文物保护（及园林保护）以及建筑、园林等方面知识。

建设组长授权组建和领导建设组，建设组之下是各工作队（比如考古队、古建队、园艺队等等）。建设组成员构成如下：相关学科领衔专家暨工作队队长（比如考古学家、建筑师、景观建

筑师、园艺师、艺术史学家、工程师、法律顾问、经济顾问、健康安全顾问等各一至两人)、圆明园管理部门领导(一人)、相关政府部门领导(比如海淀区政府、北京市文物局、北京市建委各一人)。建设组总人数建议控制在20人左右(以不超过25人为佳)。建设组定期开会,交流各工作队及部门的成果和意见,以及制定下一步计划。工程和设计中的矛盾也可在建设组内协调解决。

另外,根据具体项目需要,还可以由建设组长灵活授权,成立项目小组(比如西洋楼保护小组、九州清晏复建小组等等),以满足子项目的综合需求。

其二、明确和协调圆明园的性质和价值

首先应该明确,圆明园遗址是保留丰富信息的历史园林遗址。复建后的圆明园首先是历史园林。决不可把圆明园简单等同于旅游点或经济区来开发——即使是以“为圆明园建设筹措资金”为理由。

至于圆明园及其场址的价值,可由多学科专家在各自领域内明确其政治、社会、历史、文化、考古、科学、景观、建筑、环境、经济等价值,在“学科间相协调”、“历史、今天和未来相协调”的基础上明确圆明园建设所要实现的主要价值,以及各种价值的实现方式,从而从根本上减少价值观不统一带来的冲突。

其三、寻求适合的价值表达方式(即考古遗址的景观及建筑设计)

价值作为抽象的概念,需要由具体的设计、经营和使用来实现。同一种价值的实现方法可以是多样的。比如对于圆明园的园林美学价值,既可以通过园林语言展现,也可以通过文字语言表达。对于哪些价值需要通过圆明园的建筑、山水、植物等园林“语汇”传达,以及如何表达,建议在建设组内研究解决。

在设计和实施过程中,考古和景观及建筑设计不能分而治之。考古学家、历史园林专家、建筑师、景观建筑师应该在各司其职的基础上加强合作。比如:由考古学家提供尽可能详细的现场资料,用以支持建筑及景观设计最大程度忠实于原貌;由考古学家和历史园林专家提出要求:哪些场所和实物需要特别保护或展示、展示方式如何,哪些场所可以复建,哪些暂缓,哪些可以新设计填补空白(比如原有历史信息丧失过多,已无法寻得原貌)等等,并参与评审建筑及景观设计方案,以确保最大程度的保存和利用历史信息,丰富圆明园的观赏性、学术性和教育价值;对于复建区域,由历史园林专家、景观和建筑师在充分掌握史料和现场信息的前提下进行设计;对于考古专家反对复建的场所,可由历史园林专家、考古专家、景观和建筑师共同探索尊重历史

信息的新方案；此外，少量不考虑恢复的地区可以在不影响圆明园整体意境的前提下以新设计取代，比如“湿地”或田野。

此外要注意的是，历史园林复建在考虑公园需求时须谨慎，比如道路铺装材料和尺度尽可能贴近历史上园林面貌。在公园规范和历史园林保护产生矛盾的时候，应优先考虑历史园林要求，其与公园使用的矛盾可以通过管理方案等协调解决。

其四、科学制定复建程序

复建程序由建设组决定，在此仅提两点建议：

第一、圆明园的复建不宜把建筑、山形水系和植物分割开来专项治之。圆明园的复建可以分片进行，先作若干试点，效果理想再进一步扩展。比如可以先复建西部“九州清晏”区域，东部已开放区域暂时不作大的改动，待西部建成开放后再决定下一步方案。因此，即使圆明园复建是一个长期的过程，也不会影响到其局部开放和使用。

第二、复建后圆明园的管理规划应与复建规划同步考虑。

其五、关于建成后圆明园使用的若干想法

建成之后的圆明园可成为收藏圆明园回归文物的场所以及圆明园研究及中国园林研究的基地。

被毁灭之前的圆明园是皇家生活、处理朝政、休闲娱乐的场所，复建的圆明园也可以为公众发挥相似用途。比如，先前的正殿、寝宫、寺庙、藏书楼、画院、戏楼、宴饮、买卖街等建筑可以相应用作展览、文化艺术（乃至政务）部门的办公场所、宗教场所、图书馆、艺术馆、小型剧院、餐饮、商业等等用途（圆明园的特色之一在于园中有园，相对独立的小园林环境是不难提供以上服务的，同时也不会太多影响圆明园的园林意境和向公众开放），实现社会利益和商业价值的同时，也尊重了圆明园的历史用途。

但是，这些使用要在统一管理和严格的监督下进行。对于局部出租的场所，要在对使用人进行遗产保护培训的前提下，令其承担起对所使用建筑或园林部分的维护责任。

结论

以上论述证明，**与其建设遗址公园或异地重建圆明园，不如复建圆明园。**

圆明园的价值和其在国内及国际的影响力决定了圆明园的建设应该首先确保**高质量而不是**

高速度。

在圆明园的未来仍需慎重考虑之时，当下任务是暂停遗址公园施工，组织国内外专家讨论修订现行《圆明园遗址公园规划》。

圆明园的建设需要在适合的管理机构和多学科专家组领导下进行，需要联合国内及国际力量，需要掌握和利用已有的圆明园研究成果，需要探索和明确中国园林保护伦理，需要借鉴而非抄袭国际文化遗产保护理论和考古遗址景观设计经验。

在此条件下，可以相信，未来的圆明园将成为有国际影响力和国际水平的历史园林复建典范。

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Re-solving *Sharawadgi*: some thoughts on its Chinese roots¹

Lei Gao and Jan Woudstra

Abstract

Sharawadgi, first introduced by William Temple in the English language in 1685 as originating from the Chinese, has been extensively researched. The emphasis in more recent explorations has been on a Japanese origin, with the word understood to mean ‘irregularity’. This is proving to be limited in the context of the understanding of oriental garden history where, while gardens may have appeared visually informal and loose, they were subjected to strict organisation and rules. These were closely linked with poetry and painting and aimed to appeal to all the senses. It is the assertion of this paper that Temple attempted to communicate this in his description, of which ‘irregularity’ has been singled out in finding a matching equivalent in Japanese. By investigating a comparable Chinese word that communicates what Temple appears to have intended, namely as a contrast to the European premise on the subject, a better match is found in shǎ yú hú jǐng 澗澗菴 or Shǎ yú hú jǐng 澗澗菴. ‘Poetic and picturesque emotions’ reveal the spirit of Chinese garden and much more adequately express the essence of a relationship with the other arts, of poetry and painting. So instead of the irregularity beyond control and a lack of readability, with a spirit a garden is ‘conceivable of its inner order’. This arrives nearer to the total of sensory emotions evoked by gardens in the Far East.

The notion of *Sharawadgi*, closely associated with the development of the 18th century English landscape garden, is one of those terms loaded with various meanings, but of which the origin has always been obscure. Recent research however appears to have confirmed a Japanese origin of the word that emphasises ‘irregularity’. However in the context of oriental garden history it is clear that while gardens may have appeared irregular, they were in fact subjected to strict order. This order was determined by long traditions in associated arts of poetry and painting which so much influenced development of gardens in the East. This was to such extent that a good garden was judged as to whether it was possible to feel the emotions as in a poem, or on a painting. This is the theme that is explored here in relation to a possible Chinese origin of the word.

Is *Sharawadgi* resolved?

When Sir William Temple first introduced the term ‘*Sharawadgi*’ in 1685, he explained this was used by the Chinese as a noun to describe a garden of great beauty, ‘but without any order or disposition of parts’.² Temple’s understanding of *Sharawadgi* was partly based on what he was told by somebody who once lived among the Chinese, and was partly developed upon his own observations on oriental art, including Indian gowns, Chinese screens and porcelain.³ However, he did not provide an exact source for his knowledge and the origin of

¹ Unpublished paper, written in 2008.

² For the original text of *Sharawadgi*, see Sir William Temple, ‘Upon the Gardens of Epicurus, with other XVIIth Century Garden Essays’, Sir William Temple and others, *The King’s Classics: Essays on Gardens* (London: Chatto and Windus, Publishers, 1908) pp. 1-65 (53-54).

³ Sir William Temple, *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*, p. 54.

the word was not indicated. This omission later set off a centuries-long debate about the linguistic roots and meanings of *Sharawadgi*, carried on by both Western and Eastern scholars.

More than seventy years later William Chambers in his *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines and Utensils* (1757) highlighted that irregularity was the main characteristic of Chinese gardens. The engravings in this influential treatise work provided samples of garden buildings and features that were thought to illustrate this, and had a significant influence on the perception of Chinese gardens afterwards.⁴ By drawing attention to visual characteristics, meant that compared to European gardens, Chinese gardens were conceived as being more naturalistic, as evident from the irregularity visible on garden plans and in garden features. In the West the explanation of *Sharawadgi* was subsequently shaped by this popular perception. (Figures 1, 2)

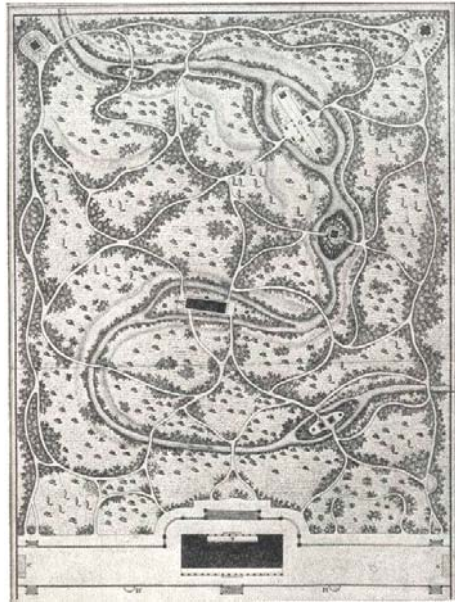


Figure 1: A Western drawing of the plan of a Chinese garden in Beijing (Ch. Krafft: *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques*, 1810) In the plan, meandering paths are the dominant features and therefore illustrate a taste of irregularity.

(Source: Oswald Siren, *The Gardens of China*, (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1949), p. 9;)

⁴ William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines and Utensils* (London. 1757), quoted from *The Genius of the Place*, edited by John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis (London: Paul Elek, 1975), pp. 283-288.



Figure 2: A Chinese historical woodcut showing a Chinese garden (Lin Qing, *Hongxue yinyuan tuji*, 1839)

As the traditional methods of recording gardens, the bird's-eye view of the garden shows notable features and surroundings, which reveals the imagery of the garden as well as the intentions of the garden design. Instead of drawing continuous lines, the garden paths can be traced through bridges, gates and doorways, buildings etc.

When in the early 20th century Chinese scholars failed to find an equivalent term to 'Sharawadgi' that highlighted the 'irregularity' of Chinese gardens, it was suggested that the word could not belong to Chinese language. In 1931, E.V. Gatenby suggested that *Sharawadgi*, instead of being of Chinese origin, was actually from the Japanese word *sorowaji*, which means 'not being regular'.⁵ This provided the basis for twentieth century understanding of the term.

Over half a century later, Gatenby's hypothesis was carried by Ciaran Murray with in-depth research, published as *Sharawadgi: The Romantic Return to Nature* (1998).⁶ This research was supplemented with a paper that showed confusion of seventeenth century Europeans in defining *Japanese* from *Chinese*. It was suggested how on an isolated island of Japan where the Dutch merchants lived the verb *sorowaji* was wrongly translated as a noun. This thesis thus appeared to resolve both the geographical and linguistic roots, thus enabling the suggestion that *Sharawadgi* was resolved. It was suggested that 'irregular but agreeable', 'artfully made in imitation of nature' were the supposed meanings of *Sharawadgi*.⁷

A paper published by Takau Shimada one year before Murray's thesis also researched Gatenby's hypothesis. Shimada however questioned the validity and suggested that, based on the Japanese way of appreciating gardens, the word would better have been translated as *sawaraji* (or *sawarazu* or their derivatives), which means 'let's not touch', 'let things as they are'. This solution provides a different angle of understanding oriental gardens, which

⁵ E. V. Gatenby, 'The influence of Japanese on English', *Studies in English Literature*, Tokyo, II (October 1931), 508-520 [re-quoted from Ciaran Murray, 'Sharawadgi resolved', *Garden History*, Vol.26, No.2. (1998), 208-213 (212).]

⁶ Ciaran Murray, *Sharawadgi: the Romantic Return to Nature* (London : International Scholars Publications, c1998.)

⁷ Ciaran Murray, 'Sharawadgi resolved', *Garden History*, Vol.26, No.2. (1998), 208-213 (210).

appreciates nature as art, ‘found in nature their model and used art as an effort to copy her’.⁸ Thus, rather than using the English word ‘irregularity’ as a starting point and matching this to a Japanese word, this new hypothesis explored this from a different angle. No research to date however has questioned the premise set by Temple, that ‘the beauty shall be great and strike the eye’, i.e. that the beauty of *Sharawadgi* is perceived by eye.

Despite the convincing-appearing explanations about the Japanese origin of the term, and similarity in sounds of *sorowaji* or *sawaraji* and *Sharawadgi*, there still remain doubts. For example, when Temple states that ‘without any order or disposition of parts’ that can be ‘commonly or easily observed’,⁹ does this necessarily imply that the order does not exist simply because it is not perceivable? Additionally it is clear that Temple had neither talked to Chinese, nor had he ever visited a garden in China (or Japan for that sake). All his knowledge on *Sharawadgi* came from imported oriental art and oral descriptions by other Europeans. The purpose of adopting *Sharawadgi* in his essay, which basically explores a biblical theme for Western gardens, is to give a hint of opposite taste to that of classical aesthetics. Therefore, irregularity was picked up as the unique character of Chinese gardens. From this perspective, it is possible that Temple did not fully understand what the Chinese meant by *Sharawadgi*. Another detail which seems to confront the hypothesis of a Japanese origin is, that he noted that ‘The Chinese scorn this way of planting, and say a boy that can tell an hundred, may plant walks of trees in straight lines, and over against one another, and to what length and extent he pleases’. This amusing comparison suggests a lack of empathy in the East with contemporary gardens in the West. Yet, while it is part of Chinese customs to comment on new or unusual phenomena with a sense of humour, would the Japanese, a people well-known for their overwhelming politeness, ‘scorn’ like this? It seems unlikely, and a reconsideration of *Sharawadgi* is perhaps not redundant. By starting with the premise that Temple’s notion that the term derived from China was indeed right, one way of exploring this is by looking for a meaning for the word *Sharawadgi* in traditional China.

A Chinese view of gardens

A great wealth of literary and pictorial sources on contemporary Chinese gardens and landscapes reveals how the Chinese appreciated the beauty of nature as seen through their gardens.

One of the main sources for aesthetic standards in relationship to Chinese gardens and landscapes derives from Tao Yuanming, an unsuccessful official, but great poet, who lived in the 4th and 5th century China, and whose landscape poetry was particularly influential since the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties. Disappointed by contemporary politics, Tao Yuanming resigned from his official occupation when only in his early forties in order to retire to the solitude of the countryside. He created a garden, grew vegetables and crops by himself, by doing so believed to achieve the personal freedom of independence from bureaucracy. In his poetry on gardens and landscapes, there is no reference to irregularity, nor does it mention anything being irregular. Instead, he appreciated ordinary natural occurrences, such as the presence of clouds and birds, wild plants, the sounds of wind blowing through bamboo and pine trees, etc. The sensory notions of these landscapes and the philosophy embedded in them were deeply loved by Chinese artists and literati, and were adopted as an aesthetic canon for landscape paintings, and a model of garden making. To artists the value of Tao Yuanming’s poems represented not just a visual impression of nature, but also a spiritual enlightenment of attaining the meaning of life from Nature, instead of from humanity as

⁸ Takau Shimada, ‘Is sharawadgi derived from the Japanese word sorowaji?’ *The Review of English Studies*, Vol.48, No.191 (1997), 350-352 (352).

⁹ Sir William Temple, *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*, p. 54.

advocated in Confucian thought. This is the true contribution of Tao Yuanming's 'poetic interpretations of nature's mystic meaning'.¹⁰ Such poetic interpretations made a significant contribution to the Chinese garden in that they expanded its aesthetics from beautiful to the eye to meaningful to the mind, and moved the meaning of life from a Confucian preoccupation in how people related to each other to a Taoist sentiment to nature.

Selected poems by Tao Yuanming¹¹

Back to my garden home (selection)

[...]
 I have cleared the wildland on the southern horizon.
 I have built eight or nine grass huts.
 Elms and willows shadow the eaves;
 Peach and plum trees give shade at my front door
 [...]
 There is no dust, and no clamouring in my courtyard.
 In my empty rooms I enjoy leisurely the idle hours [...]

Homeward bound

Daily I wander pleasantly in my garden.
 There is a gate, but it is always closed.
 I lean on my bamboo cane as I wonder about or sit down to rest.
 Now and then I raise my head and look at the sky.
 The clouds drift from their mountain recesses;
 The birds, weary of flying, return to their nests.
 Now it is getting dark, and the lovely scene is vanishing;
 Still I like to linger beneath the lonely pine.

Another significant influence of the perception of gardens was Du Le Yuan, the Garden of Solitary Delight, made by Sima Guang, a politician and literati in the 11th century, who has been considered as 'refined'. His garden was described by a contemporary observer as humble and small in scale and features, which made it hard to distinguish from other contemporary gardens.¹² However, while other gardens, their features, names and even their locations have been forgotten over, Du Le Yuan has continued to survive in Chinese memory. It was painted by artists and treated as a model by other garden owners even though none of them had ever visited the garden. The 'image' of Du Le Yuan was carried principally by texts. After completion, Sima Guang wrote a series of poems and essays on the garden—about the name and meanings of each garden feature, his daily routines in the garden, and most importantly, his values with respect to public life, politics, and landscape aesthetics.¹³ The

¹⁰ Shao Chang Lee, 'The Chinese Love of Home and Symbolism', Henry Inn and S. C. Lee, *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (London: Kegan Paul Limited, 2001). pp. 37-44 (40).

¹¹ Translation abridged from Shao Chang Lee, 'The Chinese Love of Home and Symbolism', Henry Inn and S. C. Lee, *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (London: Kegan Paul Limited, 2001). pp. 37-44 (39).

¹² Li Gefei 藺躡 (?-1106), 'Luo yang ming yuan ji' (Records of celebrated gardens in Luoyang) 翠 培 齋 , *Yuan Zong 韻 爛* (Shanghai: Tongji daxue chubanshe, 2004), pp. 44-50 (49).

¹³ The English translations of the *Records of Du Le Yuan* by Sima Guang are available at Osvald Siren, *The Gardens of China* (NY: The Ronald Press Company, 1949), pp.77-78; and Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, translated by Alison Hardie, (London: Yale University Press, 1988) pp. 123-124.

emphasis on these various aspects illustrates that the reputation of a garden depended neither on its general design, nor on its features, but on that of the garden master (owner). He provides the garden with a spirit, and this spirit remains alive in texts even though the garden has physically disappeared. (Figure 3)

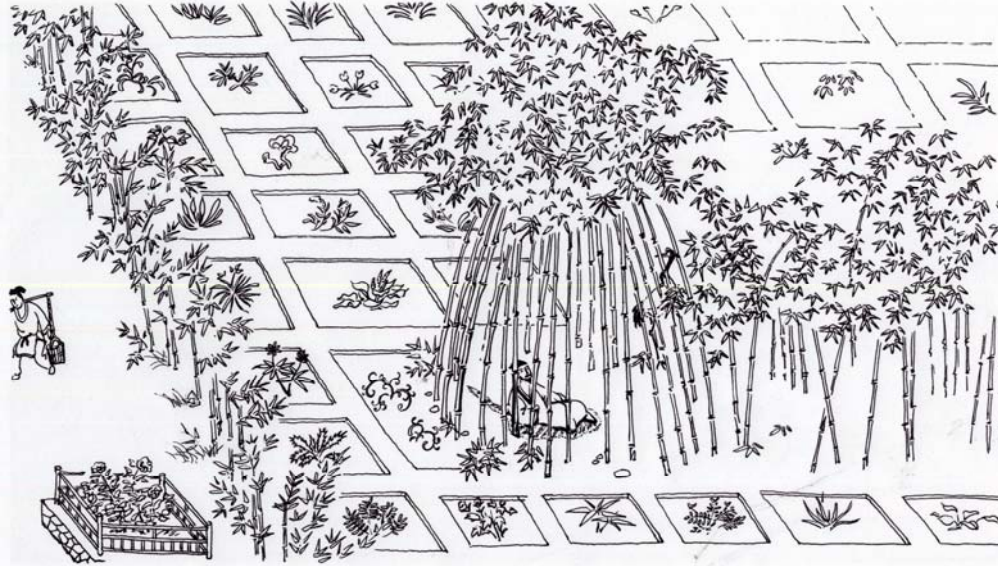


Figure 3: ‘The Garden of Solitary Delight’; This detail of a painting of Du Le Yuan was drawn by the celebrated painter Qiu Ying (c.1494-1552) based on the texts of Du Le Yuan written by its owner Sima Guang in the 11th century. It shows an ‘admirable’ life in a beautifully constructed garden, including squares planted with Chinese medicinal herbs, bamboo huts, and a dancing crane. The garden owner rests on a tiger skin and watches the crane dance, a few yards away, a servant is watering plants. All these experiences are not about irregularity, but about the sentiment of life. Redrawn in B&W by Lei Gao.

A manual on garden making, *Yuan Ye*, *The Craft of Gardens* (1637), provides a precious perspective of how the Chinese in the 17th century judged gardens. It differed from previous books in that its author Ji Cheng, a gifted garden artisan in *Jiangnan* (Southern Region of the Yangzi River), was a literate garden artisan with extensive knowledge of art and literature as well as extensive practical experience, which made this book professionally useful and academically admirable. The book, consisting of ten volumes (each equivalent to a ‘chapter’), provided both principles and examples to show how to make a ‘refined’ garden while avoiding ‘vulgar’ influences. It was suggested that the quality of a garden depended on the garden master rather than workmen (gardeners, craftsmen etc.). A garden master is the person who has the ability to ‘follow and borrow from the existing scenery and lie of the land’, and is capable of creating the ‘feeling of suitability’. ¹⁴ How a garden master would develop these skills is suggested by Ji Cheng:

As a young man I was known as a painter. I was by nature interested in seeking out the unusual; since I derived most pleasure from the brushes of Guan Tong and Jing Hao [both celebrated painter masters in history], I paid homage to their style in all my work.

¹⁴ Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, p. 39.

[...]

(When working for the Lord Wu Youyu to make a garden,) I said, ‘one should not only pile up the depth, in proportion with these tall trees scattered on the hillside here, with their roots curled around sheer rocks just as in a painting.’¹⁵

Being trained as an artist Ji Cheng’s principles of garden making were closely associated with painting theories. These guided construction and can be observed variously throughout the book: ‘the depth of your imagination should be full of pictures, and your feelings should overflow into hills and valleys’, and when arranging artificial mountains, ‘the whitewashed surface acts as paper and the rocks as the painting upon it [...] looking at this scene through a round window is just like seeing scenery reflected in a mirror’; ‘your thoughts will travel beyond the confines of this world of dust, and you will feel as though you were wandering within a painting’ etc.¹⁶

Because of this close association between Chinese gardens and paintings, a famous painting is often adopted as the theme for a garden, and successful gardens become models for painters. Even today, when a Chinese finds an admirable view in nature or gardens, the appreciation that naturally comes to mind is ‘the view is as beautiful as a painting 风景如画’ (*hu jǐng 澹 麴*), or ‘the landscape has a sentiment of poetry 诗意风景’. Therefore, poems, paintings, and gardens are often correlated in China: the poem constructs an emotional landscape which is conceivable by imagination; the painting illustrates an imaginary landscape which is visually perceivable; the garden, by adopting inspiration from poetry and paintings, brings both physical and mental experiences. This is the real magic of the Chinese garden, where the space is beyond the boundary of the wall, and the beauty is beyond the visual limitation. The aesthetic quality of painting, poetry and gardens are all determined by the aesthetic calibre of the master.

Modern writers have variously observed such close ties. Oswald Siren, Maggie Keswick, and Edwin Morris, for example, have in their books on Chinese gardens taken one or two chapters on painting and literary influences, and are in agreement that a successful garden embodies the sentiment of the poet and the eye of the painter. In garden making, forms themselves are only a starting point; the true course is to capture the vital spirit, which is the platform where painting, poetry and gardens echo each other.¹⁷

So while the basis of garden art can be sourced in poems and paintings, there remains another question that requires to be explored as Temple did not explain this properly. Does the Chinese garden, as Temple suggested, have the beauty ‘without any order’? To the Chinese perspective, the garden, although having a freedom in forms and regularity, is by no means

to be conceived as careless, orderless, irresponsible activity. It is freedom within a prescribed order. Nature is never looked upon by the Chinese as chaotic or disorganised. Heaven and earth co-exist in harmony, and the four seasons run their course regularly. Thus the Confucians and the Taoists unite in reminding the Chinese that there is a universal principle pervading all things, whether in the realm of physical nature or in the sphere of human life [...] Natural order is religiously preserved [...] In thus establishing the order of nature in the garden, man really re-

¹⁵ Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, p. 35. With a minor change of translation by the author.

¹⁶ Ji Cheng, *The Craft of Gardens*, pp. 106, 109, 120.

¹⁷ For some western studies on the relationship between the Chinese garden and the painting and poem, see Oswald Siren, ‘Chapter 5. Gardens in literature and painting’, *Gardens of China*, pp. 70-84; Maggie Keswick, ‘Chapter 4. The garden of the literati’ and ‘Chapter 5. The painter’s eye’, *The Chinese Garden: History, Art and Architecture* (NY: Rizzoli, 1978), pp. 73-90, 91-115; Edwin T. Morris, ‘Chapter 3. The garden of the poet and painter’, *The Gardens of China: History, Art and Meanings* (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1983), pp. 47-67.

creates nature. [...] nature here does not appear wild or chaotic. Order is restored and harmony is never disturbed.¹⁸

In a word, the Chinese garden is an ordered miniaturised world created by humans. This order is not expressed as regular or formal shapes as in the West, but is constructed by the associated meanings of garden features and hierarchical arrangements, which are believed to correspond to the order of nature. Therefore, to declare Chinese gardens have no order shows a superficial view of Chinese gardens. To the Chinese, the sense of ‘irregularity’ seems rarely been considered as a measure of the beauty of gardens.¹⁹

Poetic spirit and picturesque scenery—an alternative solution for Sharawadgi

With the above perspective on the Chinese aesthetics on gardens, paintings and poems, it is worth re-reading Temple’s original text, highlighted by emphasising phrases in italics:

But their greatest *reach of imagination*, is employed in contriving figures, where the beauty shall be great, and strike the eye, but *without any order or disposition of parts, that shall be commonly or easily observed*...where they find it hit their eye at first sight, they say the *Sharawadgi* is fine or is admirable, or any such expression of esteem. And whoever observes the work upon the best Indian gowns, or *the painting upon their best screens or purcellans*, will find their beauty is all of this kind, (that is) without order.

There are three indicators within these sentences. First, *Sharawadgi* is about imagination, or say, mental image. Second, there is not an order which can be ‘commonly or easily observed’. If the word ‘observe’ here means ‘to be perceived by eye’, the alternative interpretation of this phrasing might be ‘this order is not perceivable by eye’, but this does not necessarily mean that there is no order. Some kinds of order, as we have discussed before, are conceivable rather than perceivable. Third, *Sharawadgi* is not only applicable to gardens, but also to paintings—such as those painted on screens and porcelain.

Thus it is more appropriate to define *Sharawadgi* as *sh y hu j níng* 詩意畫境, as ‘the poetic spirit and the picturesque scenery’, or ‘the spirit of a poem and the landscape of a painting’.

The first and third characters, *sh* 詩 and *hu* 畫, respectively mean ‘poetry’ and ‘painting’, are the two most popular arts among traditional literati and scholars played both as leisure and were the chosen methods of self expression. The second character *y* 意 means ‘meanings’ or ‘conceptions’; the last character *j níng* 境 means ‘realm’ or ‘circumstances’. *y j níng* as a term, commonly translated as *artistic conception*, means ‘the sentiment and realm that appeared in

¹⁸ Wing-Tsit Chan, ‘Man and Nature in the Chinese Garden’, Henry Inn and S. C. Lee, *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (London: Kegan Paul Limited, 2001). pp. 30-36. Wing-Tsit Chan was professor of Chinese philosophy and aesthetics at the University of Hawaii. The article was written in the late 1930s, and the book was first published in circa 1940, a time when much of the Chinese tradition was still well kept. Therefore, his perspective of Chinese gardens valuably reflects traditional Chinese view of gardens.

¹⁹ In terms of the order/formality of Chinese gardens, the author has done a research through the case study of Huizhou gardens. See Lei Gao, *Huizhou yuanlin yu Yangzhou yuanlin zhi bijiao* [Comparison of Huizhou Gardens and Yangzhou Gardens] 徽州园林与扬州园林之比较, unpublished Masters dissertation at Hefei University of Technology (2003). This research shows that, instead of irregularity or naturalistic characters, some of the Chinese gardens have strict sense of order under their loosely constructed shapes. Such formality is mainly a reflection of the people’s perception on the order of nature.

art and literature'. A few decades before *Sharawadgi* first appeared, *y j ŋg* was already commonly in use to establish the quality of a poem.²⁰

Since the Chinese language, compared with English, is poetic rather than scientific, it frequently occurs that the sequence of characters within a term or phrase can be changed according to context or even the personal preference of its users while remaining its meaning unchanged; it is also common for one Chinese character to convey multiple meanings, or vice versa. Due to the inherent variability, a few alternatives are worth consideration. For example, by changing the sequence of the words, *sh y hu j ŋg* can also be contrived as *sh hu y j ŋg* 澗簾菴 without much change of its meaning. Additionally there is another term *Sh q ng hu y j ŋg* 澗澗簾 that conveys similar meanings and is more popular in Chinese literature. Table 1 provides an analysis of the information for the meanings of the Chinese characters and terms referring to the supposed *Sharawadgi*.

Table 1: English translation of the Chinese words and terms

<i>Pinyin_ (Cantonese pronunciation)_Chinese characters</i>	Definition given in modern dictionary ²¹	Author's interpretation
<i>shī</i> (si)	Poetry; verse	
<i>hu</i> (wa) 澗	Drawing; painting; picture	
<i>q ng</i> (tsing) 澗	1) feeling; emotion; affection; sentiment 2) kindness; favour 3) love; passion 4) situation; circumstance; state; condition 5) reason; sense	
<i>y j</i> (ji) 簾	1) meaning; idea 2) wish; desire; intention 3) believe what is going to happen; anticipate; expect 4) suggestion; conception; hint; trace	
<i>j ŋg</i> (ging) 菴	1) border; boundary 2) place; area; land; territory 3) condition; situation; circumstances	
<i>y j ŋg</i> (ji-ging) 簾菴	Artistic mood or conception	
<i>q ng j ŋg</i> (tsing-ging) 澗菴	Circumstances; condition; situation	
<i>Shī q ng</i> (si-tsing) 澗澗	Poetic charm	
<i>shī y</i> (si-ji) 簾	Spirit of the poem; poetic spirit	

²⁰ The definition of *y j ŋg* see *Ci Yuan* [Source of Words] 鈿, (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2006) p. 1143. Original Chinese text was 簾菴: 諱鑠鮫氣個依葉澗 P 菴嚏Q 灑鷲瀟諫鄒 碯 个 柵嚳 偈撰簾菴 に謂 峯 苾柵銓 昂蠅攝偏Q 个 (*y j ŋg* means the sentiment and realm that appeared in art and literature. Zhu Chengjue [Ming Dynasty] in his *Poems and Essays at Cunyu Hall* [printed between 1522-1566] says “The mystery of a good poem is nothing except for a thorough and integrate *yi jing*. When only going beyond sound and voice [which means ‘words’], one can find the true taste of the poem.”)

²¹ *New Age Chinese-English Dictionary* 饋讓秣椽法陸 皇, edited by Wu Jingrong 嫫驪麦 and Cheng Zhenqiu 唵 燴 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2001)

<i>Shī j níng</i> (si-ging) 麴	Artistic conception of a poem; poetic atmosphere or setting	
<i>hu y</i> (wa-ji) 澗		Picturesque scenery
<i>hu j níng</i> (wa-ging) 澗麴	Picturesque scene	
<i>shī y 'hu j níng</i> (si-ji-wa-ging) 澗澗麴		poetic spirit and picturesque scenery
<i>shī hu y j níng</i> (si-wa-ji-ging) 澗澗麴		poetic and picturesque landscape or conception
<i>Shī q níng hu y</i> (si-tsing-wa-ji) 澗澗澗	Poetic beauty; picturesque scenery	

While checking the database of *Si Ku Quan Shu* (The Complete Library of Four Treasures), the biggest collection on Chinese books before the 18th century, it appears that the four characters *shī y hu j níng* 澗澗麴 were not used together in written language, however there are hundreds of examples where *shī y ' 澗* (spirit of poem) and *hu j níng* 澗麴 (picturesque scenery) are used to describe an admirable quality of a painting or landscape. Additionally *Shī q níng hu y ' 澗澗澗* (poetic beauty; picturesque scenery) as a single phrase appeared twelve times, which was first used by the Chinese several centuries before Temple, as an expression of their sentiment towards a landscape.²²

Although *shī y hu j níng* and *Shī q níng hu y* provide a more suitable explanation than 'irregularity' for understanding Chinese garden aesthetics, there is another issue to be resolved before drawing the connection with *Sharawadgi*, which is how the pronunciation has been altered over time. The spoken Chinese language today is very different from that in the 17th century, with Mandarin only adopted in 1956 as the standardised Chinese language. Although Chinese share the same character system since the First Emperor Qin (259-210BC) unified writing, the ways of pronunciation are very different from time to time, and place to place. In the 17th century most European visitors, mainly Jesuits and merchants lived in the Southeast China such as Macao and Canton. It is therefore possible that the term was transmitted in Cantonese, but it is not possible to confirm this without further evidence. As an example, Table 2 shows several ways of pronunciation of the terms possibly relating to *Sharawadgi*.

²² The search was conveyed on *Wenyuange Si Ku Quan Shu dianziban* (The digital version of Complete Library of the Four Treasures, *Wenyuange* collection) 鐫清 嬭橐偃鄴 輯艱, (Hong Kong: Dizhi wenhua chuban youxian gongsi, 2003)

Table 2: pronunciations of *shī yì huà jìng* and its derivatives ²³

Chinese characters and their meanings	<i>pin yin</i> (mandarin, official Chinese pronunciation since 1956)	<i>Zhong gu yin</i> (official Chinese pronunciation in Imperial China)	Cantonese
詩意畫境 (poetic spirit and picturesque scenery)	<i>shī yì huà jìng</i>	shīə-iə-wai-kiaŋ	si-ji-wa-ging
詩畫意境 (poetic and picturesque landscape or conception)	<i>shī huà yì jìng</i>	shīə-wai-iə-kiaŋ	si-wa-ji-ging
詩情畫意 (Poetic beauty; picturesque scenery)	<i>Shī qíng huà yì</i>	shīə-dzieŋ-wai-iə	si-tsing-wa-ji

Whether there is a compatible term in Japanese. *Shī qíng huà yì* frequently used in Chinese historical literature equated with *Shijyo gai* 澗澗簫 in Japanese, with *Shijyo* (the first two characters) expressing the feeling that people want to describe in the poem, or the character of the poem. *Gai* (the last two characters) is something described in the picture. In Japan, when people see a beautiful scene, *Shijo gai* comes into their hearts and this is used as a basis for their poetry. Later, the characteristics of *Shijo gai* were continuously developed in Japanese art. Today, it is infrequently used by researchers who are related to Chinese history and culture, but it is no longer in common usage. ²⁴

Conclusion

The above suggests that *Sharawadgi* has perhaps not been as well resolved as common perception makes us believe, and that its perceived Japanese origins are not as well assured when the English evidence is subjected to greater scrutiny. In looking at this evidence it is clear that there is a possible Chinese connection, but in order to draw any positive conclusions more research needs to be undertaken as to how the term was transported from the East to the West. If for example Temple heard this term in the Netherlands and provided the spelling based on how he heard it, the pronunciation would appear as less concrete evidence. This amplifies the necessity for a fuller understanding of Chinese and Japanese garden history within the context of art and literature, etc. However this initial investigation based on a slightly more holistic interpretation of the contemporary context suggests that there may be Chinese roots. In all this it is interesting to note that what really matters is not so much the exact oriental term for *Sharawadgi*, but the history of studies into its origins, which reveal our attitudes to how foreign cultures are conceived and interpreted.

²³ Sources from Guo Xiliang 羸, *Han zi gu yin shou ce* [Manual of Ancient Pronunciation of Chinese Characters] 椽鄭備 羸 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1986), and Parker Po-fei Huang, *Cantonese Dictionary* (London: Yale University Press, 1970).

²⁴ The Japanese sources on *shi qing hua yi* 澗澗簫 was provided by Ayako Nagase, in the email with the author on 8th April 2008.

A Pictorial Note of Huizhou Today



When I was doing my field work at a village in Jixi county, Anhui Province in 2002, I met these boys in the village. They came to me and talked. Four boys have the same surname *Hu* (胡), one boy has the surname *Ding* (丁). They told me the story of this village: some hundreds years ago, the Hu's family/clan moved here because a Feng-shui master saw that the juxtaposition of water and mountains was wonderful. 'The flat surrounded by water and mountains has the shape of a boat', the master explained, 'this means good fortune. However, a boat without an anchor can never be settled and therefore is not a good will, so you need to find a family whose surname is *Ding* (丁, the form of the character looked like an anchor, or a nail) to be on this boat. Living with them, your life will be peaceful.' The Hu's family/clan accepted this suggestion and invited one Ding's family from another village, built them a little house and provided them with food. This Ding's family have lived in the Hu's family since then. But the growth of Ding's family was carefully controlled by the Hu's family (that is, they only allowed very few boys to be born in each generation). Because Hu's family thought too many 'nails' 丁 would stop the boat from moving—that's not a good will.



This is an interesting story. And the boys in front of me smiled happily when they saw that I listened to them with full attention. Then I asked to take a picture of them. They agreed and began to arranging themselves by standing on a stone stool. They were naughty boys and never worked out a way of standing still. So I only took pictures like this. When they were playing together, I observed that the Hu boys (in the last picture, four boys standing on the stool) presented as brothers in a group and sometimes pushed away the Ding boy (the one who stands in the front) or made fun of him, but the Ding boy never got angry and very soon they played together again.



(Source: photos by author, *Longchuan Village, Jixi County,*

This is the village where those boys lived:



Entering the village, I felt embraced by the opening arms of the mountains



The main street of the village, with houses on one side and a canal on the other. People rest here, meet here, work here.



At the end of the street, the view suddenly opened. Maybe this is the view you get when standing on a boat?

(Source: photos by author, *Longchuan Village, Jixi County, Huizhou*, Nov. 2002)

Stone construction *Paifang* (gateway):



All values of paifang rely on spiritual meanings. It is a great honour given by emperor.



The stone caplet with two Chinese character *En Rong* (恩荣 Bestowed Honour), written by the emperor, in the centre, and encircled by dragon carvings. This is a way Emperor rewards his subordinates who had done excellent deeds for the country or family: giving him or his family permission to build a *paifang* at their hometown.



(Source: photos by author, *Longchuan Village, Jixi County, Huizhou*, Nov. 2002)

Use of water:



The water channel carries fresh water from nearby rivers and runs through almost every door of the village. Regulations were made among all villagers: the early morning is for getting drinking water from the ditch, and no washing is permitted in order to keep the water drinkable; later comes the washing clothes time, and then the time for washing dirty things (such as agricultural tools, sanitary facilities and so on). And after a night, the channel is cleaned again by the flowing water.

(Source: photo by author, *Jiangcun Village, Jingde County, Huizhou, Nov. 2002*)

Bridge:



The bridge is made of timber and iron chain.

When a flood comes, the bridge can be destroyed by rushing water, but because it is bound by the chain, the timber is not lost.

After the flood, locals can collect the timber and put it back into the bridge



The use of the bridge: it is narrow, but when people from opposite sides meet on the bridge, one of them (perhaps a man on his own, or people who have less luggage) would give way by standing on the side support.

(Source: photos by author, *Longchuan Village, Jixi County, Huizhou*, Nov. 2002)

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submit the application: granted Department of Agriculture and Forestry being given the empty lands surrounded the Altar of Heaven, Altar of Earth and Altar of Agriculture), 4th October 1912, no. 21 (Nanjing: Number Two Historical Archives of China (中国第二历史档案馆))

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Interview Transcripts (of author conducted interviews with relevant people)

No.	Name (Surname first)	Position *	Dates of interview	length of audio records (min)	Words of transcripts	Transcripts producer
Huizhou						
HS-HH	Hu Huisheng	HS	21 Jun. 2006	206	41500	USTC**
HG-CD	Cheng Dan	HG	21 Jun. 2006	88	15210	USTC
HM-ZT	Zha Tianfu	HM	21 Jun. 2006	70	16350	USTC
HS-WS	Wang Shuangwu	HS	22 Jun. 2006	150	28600	USTC
HG-LB	Lu Bangsheng	HG	22 Jun. 2006	89	19000	USTC
MA-CJ	Cheng Jiyue	MA	23 Jun. 2006	120	10200	Lei Gao
HM-WG	Wang Guoping	HM	23 Jun. 2006	105	21000	Wei Jinfeng
HM-HZ	Huang Zhimin	HM	23 Jun. 2006	90	11430	[unknown]
Beijing						
YA-WX	Wu Xiangyan	YA	7 Jul. 2006	70	17000	Tang Ruihua
YS-PC	Pan Conggui & Duan Yuhong	Y- society	19 & 26 Jul. 2006	150	26700	Gao Weiqing
YM-YL	Ye Liangqing	YM	20 Jul. 2006	120	21400	Gao Weiqing
YM-ZE	Zhang Enyin	YM / YS	21 Jul. 2006	160	30300	Zhang Ming
SA-SX	Sun Xiaoxiang	SA / YA	23 Jul. 2006	132	6200	Gao Lei
YA-GD	Guo Daiheng	YA	24 Jul. 2006	120	24500	Zhang Ming
SA-YH	Yang Hongxun	SA	30 Jul. 2006	200	25000	Lv Dong
YG-MX	Meng Xianmin	YG / YS	2 Aug. 2006	145	9300	Gao Jia
Suzhou						
SM-ZW	Zhang Wenying	SM	17 Aug. 2006	47	8500	Wei Jinfeng
SM-SZ	Sun Zhiqin	SM	18 Aug. 2006	95	16000	Wei Jinfeng
SS-CF	Chen Fengquan	SS	18 Aug. 2006	115	21300	Wei Jinfeng
SM-CZ	Chen Zhong	SM	19 Aug. 2006	111	21000	Wei Jinfeng
SA-HW	Huang Wei	SA	20 Aug. 2006	120	20900	Chen Weiwei
ST-BF	Bu Fuming	ST	21 Aug. 2006	150	27100	Chen Weiwei
SG-YX	Yi Xueling	SG	22 Aug. 2006	42	7200	Gao Jia
SS-CL	Cao Lindi	SS	22 Aug. 2006	250	24000	Chen Weiwei
SS-WJ	Wei Jiazan	SS	23 Aug. 2006	160	33500	Wei Jinfeng
SO-CJ	Chen Jingen	SO	23 Aug. 2006	65	1900	Gao Lei
SG-ZZ	Zhou Zheng	SG / SS	24 Aug. 2006	140	27400	Chen Weiwei
In total						
27 interviews				(3304min)	532,490	
				>55 hours	words	

* key for official position

Suzhou garden **Governor**
Yuanmingyuan **Manager**
Huizhou villages **Architect**
 Scholar
 Owner of garden
 Teacher

**USTC: students at the University of Science and Technology of China

